

THE SECOND EVENT OF BRIDGE PROJECT

22nd- 26th MARCH 2022

The second international meeting of “BRIDGE - Building Relationships Into a Democratic Goal for Europe” Project took place from 22nd to 26th March, 2022.

The Project was held in Hungary, in particular in the towns where the partner Organization of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County General Assembly is situated, namely the municipality of Bükkábrány and the municipality of Miskolc. The Project involves pairs of organizations that belong to two different Countries but that are situated on the border with each-other. Therefore, this event was carried out also in Rožňava Municipality (SK), which is partner of the Project as well and which is situated close to the border with Hungary.

BRIDGE, being a Network of Towns, foresees the realization of five different events in the locations involved in the initiative and chosen during the design phase. The initiative was funded by the European Commission to the Municipality of Vila Nova de Cerveira and it is part of the "Europe for Citizens 2014-2020" program. BRIDGE began in October 2019 and it should have had a duration of 24 months: due to the Covid-19 pandemic which made it impossible to carry out the scheduled events within the established timeframe, however, an extension of one year was requested, therefore the conclusion is scheduled for October 2022.

The main objective of BRIDGE is to involve pairs of partners with the same geographical characteristic: all of them are located on the border of their own nation and share policies with the contiguous cross-border organization (which belongs to another nation). This aims at promoting cross-border citizenship and social cohesion across borders. This drive for cooperation takes the form of the choice to focus on two of the main phenomena affecting Europe in recent times: Euroscepticism and xenophobia. The main theme of this project is to promote cross-border citizenship and cross-border social cohesion, as well as to share best practices among neighboring partners. Each organization involved will need to be able to develop strong and effective cross-border practices to share with other partners.

The pairs of organizations that make up the BRIDGE partnership are: Vila Nova de Cerveira (PT) + Tomiño (ES), Sdruzhenie na Yugozapadnite Obshtini (BG) + Municipality of Dimitrovgrad (RS), GECT GO / EZTS GO (IT) (which alone represents an Italian-Slovenian organization), Borsod-abaúj-zemplén county government (HU) + Rožňava Municipality (SK), Panevezio miesto savivaldybes administracija (LT) + Daugavpils (LV), Lighthouse Languages (IT) (individually involved for guarantee added value to the Project) and Deryneia Municipality (CY) (individually involved due to its particular situation which sees the island of Cyprus half occupied by the Turkish army).

The second meeting was focused on a specific topic: “The Evolution of cross-border relations: how the relations between cross-border Countries changed in the last few years”. In particular, the partners were asked to carry out presentations about the relations with the respective bordering Countries. In addition, the participants were asked to carry out interviews to local citizens analyzing their opinions about European Union during the Covid-19 crisis.

During the event, the delegations had the opportunity to have a confrontation on the selected themes, and to learn from each other, by exchanging best practices. In addition, the delegations visited the Slovak city of Rožňava, partner of the project and bordering Hungary, and the city of Košice.

Beside the conferences and the institutional moments, the participants also had the opportunity to learn about the peculiarities of Borsod region, getting in touch with local communities and discovering the local and natural beauties. This ensured a direct confrontation between the participating delegations, an exchange of ideas, objectives and best practices for the future of the European Union, especially post-pandemic.

The Project assumes a strong importance for the participating delegations, offering them the opportunity to open up to Europe, interact with other communities and enhance their local characteristics.

The next scheduled event, namely the third International Meeting, will be held in Nova Gorica (Slovenia) / Gorizia (Italy) in May 2022.