

Minutes of the 42nd General Meeting Bad Kötzing, May 11th – 14th, 2017

LIST OF ATTENDANTS

Agros, Cyprus

Nikolas Christofi	GM
Marios Agathokleous	EM

Altea, Spain

Vicenta Perez Barber	GM
Angeles Berenguer	GM
Jesus Pons Pons	EM
Marta Guillen Martinez	YM
Carlos Oliver Ferrandiz	YM

Asikkala, Finland

Mira Nieminen	GM
Merja Palokangas-Viitanen	GM
Anniina Potka	EM
Inkeri Kaukoranta	YM
Millamaari Hämäläinen	YM

Bad Kötzing, Germany

Wolfgang Kerscher	GM
Agathe Kerscher	GM
Isolde Emberger	GM
Hans-Peter Jobst	EM
Simon Haselbauer	EM
Simona Gogeissl	YM
Caterina Gogeissl	YM

Bellagio, Italy

Donatella Gandola	GM
Paola Rossi	GM
Gino Paolo Vaccani	EM
Evelina Marella,	YM

Bundoran, Ireland

Shane Smith	GM
Joe Mc Nulty	GM
John Campbell	EM
Hannah Mc Nulty	YM
Rachel McGee	YM
Denise Connolly	nd GM

Chojna, Poland

Janusz Salamończyk	GM
Janusz Babiarz	GM
Anna Rydzewska	GM
Sylvia Łozińska	GM
Norbert Oleśków	EM
Rafał Czubik	EM
Zbigniew Stachnik	nd
Jerzy Kołaczik	nd

Granville, France

Pascale Vallee	GM
Michel Lemonnier	EM/GM
Solène Lemonnier	YM
Manon Prouha	YM
Fay Guerry	Translation
Jean Claude Guerry	Translation

Holstebro, Denmark

Mette Grith Sørensen	GM
(Vice-president)	
Lene B. Larsen	GM
Jette Hingebjerg	GM
Søren Hinrichsen	EM
Victoria-Louise Tilsted	YM
Josephine C. D. Tilsted	YM
Anne Lise Holst Jensen	nd
Bjarne Jensen	nd
Klaus Warming	nd

Houffalize, Belgium

Alphonse Henrard	GM
Luc Nollomont	GM
Martin Cugnon	GM
André Malarme	YM
Tanguy Malarme	YM

Judenburg, Austria	
Eva Volkar	GM
Andrea Kober	GM
Elke Spekner-Florian	EM
Sabine Rinofner	EM
Katharina Kreiter	YM

Köszeg, Hungary

Istvan Matrei	GM
Norbert Sas	GM
Peter Rege	GM
Ilona Talos	EM
Eszter Takacs	YM
Henrietta Doka	YM

Marsaskala, Malta

Sandro Gatt	GM
Charlot Mifsud	EM
Daniel Spiteri	YM
Ryan Portelli	YM

Meerssen, the Netherlands

Annie Luns-Kruijtsbosch	GM
(President)	
Wil Schrijnemaekers	GM
Irene Raedts-Schreuder	GM
Karel Majoor	GM
Femy Kengen	GM
Noel Vossen	nd GM
Pascale Vossen	nd GM
Manna Majoor	nd GM
Harry Crombag	nd GM
Marie Therese Crombag	nd GM
Alexander Luns	nd GM
Herman Langenveld	nd GM
José Langenveld	nd GM
Bert van Doorn	EM
Mechtild Schiffrs	nd EM
Lonneke Frijns	nd EM
Sivaani Sivamoorthy	YM
Sadé De Munck	YM
Naomi Pijpers	nd YM
Romy Jongen	nd YM

Niederanven, Luxemburg

Paul Greis	GM
Romaine Greis	EM
Claire Brumat	YM
Julien Hanin	YM

Oxelösund, Sweden

Christina Fredriksson	GM
Johan Persson	GM
Patrik Edström	EM
Monica Höglén	EM
Jonathan Brasch	YM
Niklas Thelin	nd

Preveza, Greece

George Fragoulis	GM
Georgios Sakkas	GM
Christos Bakas	EM

Rovinj, Croatia

Robert Lešič	GM
Ana Karlaš	GM
Erika Folo	EM
Zorana Miučin	YM
Tea Lukic	YM
Dean Herak	nd driver

Sesimbra, Portugal

Felicia Costa	GM
Célia Ribeiro	GM
Cristina Conceição	GM
João Rodrigues	nd
José Ribeiro	nd

Sherborne, United Kingdom

Jeremy Barker	GM
Marcus Ainley	GM
Michael Balfour	GM
Michael Morrell	nd GM
Pat Morrell	nd GM
Clifton Jelbert	nd GM
Scilla Copper	nd GM
Christopher MacAdie	nd GM
Robert Bygrave	nd GM
Linda Bygrave	EM
Elisabeth Does	YM
Charlotte Grimstone	nd YM

Siret, Romania

Alina Butnariu	GM
Viorel Haiura	GM
Liliana Mocrei	EM
Remus Capitanu	YM
Ovidiu Oniciuc	YM
Boiciuc Ioan	nd

Sigulda, Latvia

Valters Mačs	GM
Aivars Ķirķelis	GM
Dagnija Nuķe	EM
Sabīne Birzniece	YM
Edīte Kuzmina	YM

Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Miha Ješe	GM
(Vice-president)	
Marko Mohorič	nd GM
Jože Bogataj	EM
Ana Prevc Megušar	EM
Jakob Zarnik	YM
Sergej Novak	YM

Sušice, Czech Republic

Věra Veselovská	GM
Olga Melkusová	GM
Anežka Nová	EM
Daniel Hubáček	YM
Veronika Maresová	YM

Tryavna, Bulgaria

Silvia Krasteva	GM
Daniela Petkova	GM
Evelin Koev	YM
Borislava Dimitrova	YM
Viktoria Ivanova	YM

Türi, Estonia

Pipi-Liis Siemann	GM
Sirle Võtti	EM
Elis Järvisoo	YM
Sulo Särkinen	YM

Zvolen, Slovakia

Dáša Melicheríková	GM
Zuzana Lászllová	GM
Michal Almaši	EM
Michael Mottl	YM
Radovan Melicherík	YM
Miroslav Goga	nd driver

1. **Opening of the General Meeting**

The mayor of Bad Kötzing, Mr. Markus Hofmann, gives a warm welcome to the General Meeting of Douzelage. He stresses the importance of integration, the main theme of the GM in Bad Kötzing. The opening evening proved to be a beautiful example of integration, as the refugees that are hosted by Bad Kötzing, celebrated the evening together with all the representatives of the Douzelage towns, serving each other their traditional meals. Mr. Hofmann hopes the General Meeting will have fruitful discussions on this important theme, and hopes the delegates feel comfortable in the host town Bad Kötzing.

The president of Douzelage, Mrs. Annigje Kruytbosch, opens the General Meeting. She welcomes the delegations on behalf of herself and the vice presidents, Mette Sørensen, Miha Jese and Tibi Rotaru (the last one could not attend the meeting because of the wedding of his dear friend, Tibebru Taciuc). Annigje is proud of the fact that 27 of the 28 Douzelage towns are present. She also compliments the delegation of Bad Kötzing for a very well organised GM so far.

She stresses the fact that there are many topics on the agenda so it is necessary to move forward quickly. She gives an outline of the way the meeting will be organised, and informs the delegations on wifi-codes and the questionnaire that representatives should fill in. The Sports Competition is withdrawn as an activity, because of the time needed for the General Meeting.

From this point on the workshops will be held. The General Meeting will resume after lunch. The workshops are:

- A. Refugees and migrants; chances, risks and problems
- B. Migration in Europe
- C. Possibilities of integration in Europe
- D. The European crises

See conclusions workshops in attachment A.

2. **In memoriam Jos Mouton**

Paul Greis, representative of Niederanven, speaks warm words in remembrance of a dear friend of Douzelage, Jos Mouton. Jos Mouton was a loyal European who witnessed the founding of Douzelage in 1991. Photo's of Jos were projected on a big screen. The General Meeting gave Jos a minute of silence.

3. **Approval of the Minutes of the GM 2016 in Tryavna**

The minutes of the 2016 GM were approved unanimously.

4. **Approval of the 2016 Accounts (May 2016 – December 2016) and the new auditing procedure**

The accounts that are presented run from May 2016 (Tryavna GM) to December 2016, because of the transfer from the presidency from Chojna to Meerssen. The Tryavna GM had already approved the accounts of the first months of 2016. The Douzelage accounts have been checked by two auditors, Donatella Gandola (Bellagio) and Shane Smyth (Bundoran). The accounts were presented by Mr. Harry Crombag from Meerssen, who handles the accounts of the presidency from May 2016 on. The net total in February amounts to € 16.549,06. The auditors propose to the General Meeting to approve the accounts. The accounts were unanimously approved by the General Meeting, and the auditors were granted discharge.

The presidency proposes a new auditing procedure. Each year a new auditor is appointed who will check the accounts with one of the auditors of the previous year. The proposal is accepted unanimously by the General Meeting. Marcus Ainley volunteers to be the auditor for the accounts of 2017 and 2018, together with Shane Smyth.

5. **Annual Douzelage membership fee**

The presidency proposes to keep the annual fee for Douzelage towns at a level of € 350,-, including the costs of the translation equipment (€ 50,-) which was decided upon by the GM in Siret. The General Meeting unanimously agrees.

6. **Future General Meetings**

The future General Meetings of Douzelage are planned as follows:

2018	Oxelösund
2019	Asikkala
2020	Skofja Loka
2021	Marsaskala

The presidency presents an overview of the towns that already have organised a GM in the past. The president asks the delegations to volunteer for the GM of 2022. Kőszeg and Holstebro are candidates.

See attachment B.

7. **(Social) Media**

7.1 **New Douzelage website: www.douzelage.eu**

A new website has been made for Douzelage. Instead of www.douzelage.org, the presidency chose for www.douzelage.eu.

John Pettersson has been thanked for his work over the last years and will not longer be webmaster of the new website.

The new website, built in Wordpress, is easy to master, which is done in Meerssen.

The website needs news feed from all towns. So please send your activities/projects, dates of activities/projects to the secretariat and they will be published on the website. Every news item will be published with a photo (preferably in landscape, width 1000 x high 550 pixels).

7.2 **Members only section**

The documents that are meant to be seen only by the Douzelage committees, can be accessed in the "Members only" section. An extensive instruction ("Instruction 'Members Only' section Douzelage.eu") was mailed to your towns last week. If there are any questions on how to register, please mail them to the secretariat of the presidency.

7.3 **Douzelage Facebook page**

In June 2016 we launched the Douzelage Facebook site. Last week it had 216 followers. These followers are members of Douzelage or people interested in following the news of Douzelage. The idea is to have a social platform with news of Douzelage (also on the website) and community news (not always on the website). This last category could contain not so important, but connecting topics which are more in place on social media.

In order to keep track of all the Douzelage related posts on Facebook, we invited co-editors to help out. Each Douzelage town has one Facebook editor. From 28 Douzelage towns, 19 editors have been found willing to help (still 9 to go: Bad Kötzing, Chojna, Kőszeg, Preveza, Prienai, Sesimbra, Sigulda, Skofja Loka, Susice). These towns are again invited to appoint an editor and mail this to the secretariat of the presidency.

For those without Facebook: you can take a look on the Douzelage facebook page, without subscribing to facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/DouzelageEurope/?fref=ts>

7.4 **Douzelage Wikipedia page**

There is an existing Douzelage page on Wikipedia. It was quite outdated. Mette Sørensen wrote an updated and revised text for our Douzelage Wikipedia text. Immediately after uploading the new information, it was deleted by the webmaster of this particular page, who goes by the name of KAPO3. His answer to him doing so was that he did not find the new information constructive. We have tried to identify him, but did not succeed. The result in the end is that he did add the 'new comers' plus the link to the new website. Does anyone know who he is? The delegation of Chojna points out that this should be in the minutes of the 2008/2009 GM (the information was not found there).

If anyone knows who KAPO3 is, please send this information to the secretariat.

7.5 Douzelage Dropbox account

Would it be an idea to create a Douzelage Dropbox? We can all 'drop' our pictures of on that site and all of us with log-in authorisation, can copy the pictures that are on display. It would be a great asset for GM's etc.

The General Meeting supports the idea of the Dropbox. The presidency shall create the account and share the folder with the towns.

See dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n52mtlo166s87wl/AAAe69COVDMTy-TzANP42GIaa?dl=0>

7.6 New Douzelage Brochure

The presidency has made a new leaflet for the douzelage as a whole. All towns get hundred new leaflets to use for communication purposes.

When towns would like more leaflets, please contact the secretariat of the presidency in order have this done.

The General Meeting is positively surprised and thankfully receives the leaflets.

8. (Future) projects and activities within our towns

8.1 Youth project Houffalize

The program is presented by the delegation of Houffalize. The powerpoint presentation is available on Douzelage.eu.

Title:	Memory work, democratic engagement and civic participation for the future of Europe.
Date:	22 – 28 July 2018
Target Group:	Young people (16 – 22 yrs)
Participants:	28 Douzelage towns, delegation of 5 youngsters and one accompanying adult (Douzelage committee or teacher).
Theme:	The common theme of this meeting will be considering the creation of the European Union, born from the war, as a mean to preserve peace, which is useful to remind a generation that did not know war. Peace keeping is very important to keep in mind in those times of obvious Euroscepticism. Overall, the project proposed by the town of Houffalize will lead to a wide reflection in relation to the following related themes: destruction – (re)construction – war – peace.
Funding:	Houffalize will make a proposal for the EU Program "Europe for Citizens".

The Douzelage towns are all invited to take part in the program with a delegation of youngsters. The deadline for enlisting is 1 October 2017. Mail directly to Houffalize with the names of the participants: manuela.dipinto@houffalize.be

8.2 36th International Choral Festival of Preveza

The delegation of Preveza describes the International Choral Festival of Preveza. It is a large festival for high quality choirs. The 35th festival is in July and is fully booked. The Douzelage towns are kindly invited to participate in the 36th festival in 2018. (prevezafest.blogspot.com).

Title:	36th International Choral Festival of Preveza
Date:	5 – 8 July 2018
Participants:	High standard choirs from many countries with around 20 singers.

Preveza cordially invites the Douzelage towns to participate with a choir. When deciding to participate, some things are to be taken into consideration:

- Transport is for the cost of the participating choir;
- For early bookers, accomodation will be free of charge (first 300 beds), so if you consider participating, please registrate quickly;
- If you are registering later, Douzelage Preveza will look for suitable low cost hotels.

Skofja Loka, Sherborne and Sušice are interested.

More information on the 36th International Choral Festival of Preveza will be sent to the towns by the secretariat.

8.3 Via Douzelage Meerssen

The delegation of Meerssen gives a description of the project Via Douzelage. The idea is to introduce a network of paths, cycling roads that connect the Douzelage towns. The aim is to promote and strengthen the idea of European cooperation with the Douzelage towns as an example. The network should eventually connect all towns, but it starts with a few. Douzelage Meerssen is active in creating the first Via Douzelage between Meerssen, Houffalize and Niederanven. The Douzelage delegation of Meerssen is also exploring a connection between Bad Kötzing and Sušice.

All towns are invited to participate in this initiative. The delegation of Meerssen will contact all towns in the coming year.

8.4 Presentation new projects Chojna

An exchange of students on Technical Vocational Schools (Erasmus+). Participants are Sherborne, Kőszeg and Marsaskala.

An exchange of teachers in Technical Vocational Schools (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training Network EQAVET). Participants are Sherborne, Kőszeg, Marsaskala, Niederanven. Chojna would like to invite others to join, especially Bad Kötzing.

Women in Society. The project "Women in Society" is a Transnational Youth Initiative. There will be 24 participants aged 16 -18 (12 women and 12 men), 8 from Douzelage Association in Chojna (Poland), 8 from Town Twinning Association from Kőszeg (Hungary), 8 from Konya (Turkey), plus 1 coach per each partner organisation. The idea of the project appeared among young people who were interested in the situation of young women in their local areas, their lack of involvement in citizenship issues and the problems they face. In the project activities, partner groups would like to investigate the role of women deeper on local levels in Chojna, Konya and Kőszeg as well as on national levels. The aims of the project will also be encouraging the discussion on changing the role of women in the contemporary world, motivating girls and young women to take active part in the life of local communities, fighting false stereotypes, concerning professional women, promoting successful women from local communities and disseminating positive solutions to women's problems. The program runs under Erasmus+.

More information: www.womeninsociety.eu

8.5 Non formal learning (The Danish Model)

The delegation of Holstebro lays out the plans for the project. The project focuses on different kinds of non formal learning, the teaching of school subjects in a different way than the traditional teaching methods. The aim is to organise a seminar. The initiative is part of the Baltic-Nordic Cooperation.

The subject is also part of the discussions in the Educational Meeting in Bad Kötzing.

Title: Non formal learning (The Danish Model)

Date: 4 – 8 October 2017

Participants: Per participating town 2 pupils (15 – 18 yrs.) and 2 teachers. Sigulda and Türi are participating.

Holstebro encourages other towns to join. If a town is interested, please notify the delegation of Holstebro a.s.a.p.

8.6 Young Musicians: Who will host the next Young Musicians? And when?

Douzelage Zvolen organised the contest "Douzelage Young Musician of the Year 2016".

Young Musicians from 10 different Douzelage partner towns performed and played in a grand finale in Zvolen Castle.

The project was originally conceived to give young musicians a range of experiences; to let them mix with their peers from other nationalities and to help them appreciate how music brings them together. The winner was Rémi Welmane from Granville.

Granville is preparing the event for 2018.

Title: Young Musicians

Date: July 1st 2018

Target Group: Young musicians (11 – 18 yrs.)

Participants: Participants from Douzelage towns (max two per town plus accompanying teacher or adult).

The funding is sought within the EU-program “Europe for Citizens”.

More information on this project will be sent to all Douzelage towns by mail.

8.7 **Project “Hobby Education” Agros**

The delegation of Agros lays out the plans for the youth project that will be hosted by Agros.

The main focus of the Youth exchange will be Non Formal Education activities and raising awareness about sustainable development through voluntary action. Through Music, Arts, Theatre, Dance, Sports and Traditional games the project will help the participants to exchange knowledge and experience, to improve their creativity, to be more open minded and to learn the cultural and educational activities of youth in other countries. Also, the project aims to develop the competences of multipliers to plan, and promote intercultural learning and participation of youth in and through volunteering projects with high impact on the volunteer and the local community. The aim is to give the participants a chance to use their imagination to make something out of unusual natural materials. The project wants to motivate them to think outside the box and make something creative and unique.

Title: Hobby Education
Date: 5 – 12 August 2017
Participants: Young people (16 – 25 yrs.)
Funding: Erasmus+

Agros has invited all Douzelage towns to participate in January 2017. The result is participation by Agros, Chojna, Holstebro, Kőszeg and Meerssen. Agros is looking forward to the start of the project.

8.8 **Santa Claus Game Meerssen**

The delegation of Meerssen has taken the initiative to create a Go Fish/Happy Family game with cards depicting and describing the different ways Saint Nicolas is being celebrated in the different European countries.

The card game shows the cultural diversity of Europe and at the same the similarities of our celebrations.

The project has suffered from delay because of the presidency of Annigje Kruijtbosch, the project leader. Annigje Kruijtbosch promises to finish the project in 2017.

8.9 **Project Boundary Stones Bad Kötzing**

The project is presented by the delegation of Bad Kötzing. The project “Boundary Stones” refers to an artwork that has been created in Bad Kötzing in 1999 by the artist Alois Öllinger. A stone circle was created in the Spa Gardens of Bad Kötzing, each stone representing a different member town of Douzelage. The stones, based on the traditional Bavarian boundary stones, are ‘picked’ by the towns themselves and sent to Bad Kötzing.

As the Douzelage has grown the circle needs an update. The same artist will change the circle into a spiral, thereby creating enough space for new member towns.

The towns yet to contribute to the artwork with a boundary stone:

- Kőszeg
- Marsaskala
- Prienai
- Sigulda
- Siret
- Tryavna
- Türi

The boundary stones need to send to Bad Kötzing. The grand opening of the new artwork will be in June 2018.

When having difficulty in finding a way to get the stones to Bad Kötzing, please contact Isolde Emberger:

isolde.emberger@bad-koetzing.de

8.10 **Book Project Skofja Loka**

This project is presented by the delegation of Skofja Loka.

In Slovenia a book has been published on historical towns in the country. It is a beautiful book with excellent photography, showing the beauty of the towns, enlarging the attractiveness of Slovenia as a tourist destination.

The idea is to create a similar book showcasing the Douzelage towns. The towns should send text (national language and English) and photo's.

The towns should pay the printing costs of the book and should sign for a minimum amount of books to order. Before the towns can agree, Miha Jese will:

1. draw up a proposal for the structure of the book;
2. make a calculation based on minimum amount of books, paper weight etc.

Based on this information the towns can decide to participate. In this case it should be all or none. Miha Jese will set a deadline for the towns to send their information (text and photos).

9. **Berlin Conference “A Soul for Europe”**

Mette Sørensen gives a short summary of the conference “A Soul for Europe” (based on a powerpoint presentation made by Tibi Rotaru) that was held in Berlin in November 2016. On behalf of Douzelage, Mette, Annigje and Tibi attended the conference.

Three debates were held: “Arts and culture”, “Flight and migration”, “Starting from the bottom up”. The themes were very close to Douzelage. The conclusions of the conference were:

“In the actual critical moment of Europe’s existence it is more than ever necessary to define a clear statement for the European integration process and to underline the important role of cities and citizens in this development – with the strong conviction that culture as a creative force has to be integrated on all levels.

The European Parliament plays a key role in this process and the active involvement of several MP’s let us confide in the fact that the discussions at the conference will have an influence on their decision making.

It is extremely important to find ways for convincing citizens from all over Europe to discover and accept their role and responsibility for our common future in Europe and the world. Together, we will gain more strength and will be able to reach out for those that have a euro-sceptical attitude. That is the challenge for our future work.

“A Soul for Europe” understands itself as a lobby group – not for Culture, but for Europe, based on the convincing and influential power of culture”.

Mette continues: “Of course, we strongly believe that Douzelage is part of the European Soul. But do we have to be part of this movement? My answer will be YES because:

- a. Douzelage will gain notoriety and visibility;
- b. Douzelage will be engaged in discussions and debates, alongside with other experienced NGO’s regarding the future of Europe through the lens of civil society;
- c. We are representative for a pro-European movement and can act like a lobby organisation in this aspect;
- d. We will be more present in the eye of European Parliament and European Commission so, maybe, our projects will be even more successful;
- e. We strongly believe that we should look for the “Soul of Europe” in small, traditional, active communities and municipalities not only in big, touristic, rich cities”.

10. **Past projects and activities within our towns**

The past projects of all the Douzelage towns are attached to the agenda of the GM.
See attachment C.

11. **Future status of Sherborne after a completed Brexit**

The president does not consider a discussion at this moment necessary for the following reasons:

Negotiations between the UK and the EU haven't even started yet;

It is not clear how the relationship between the UK and the EU will be;

There is no hurry, the Brexit will not materialise earlier than in two years;

The presidency has asked the Douzelage delegations to state their opinion on paper, only a few have yet given their views.

The presidents urges the towns to mail their ideas on this subject. With all the opinions the presidency shall draw up a proposition later this year to be discussed in the next GM in Oxelösund.

12. **Reports of the GM Workshops**

A brief report was given by the appointed workshop leaders. The minutes of the four workshops are under attachment A.

13. **Discussion with Mr. Ismail Ertug, member of the European Parliament.**

Mr. Ertug is member of the European Parliament for the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland (SPD). The European Parliament (EP) has 751 seats. The different national political parties are organised in Groups. The SPD is part of the group “Social Democrats”, at the moment the third largest group. Mr. Ertug says that agreements are always possible in the EP. The Council however, consisting of the representatives of governments of 28 member states, often is influenced by national interests. Some member states veto the decisions because of egoistic and nationalistic reasons. Other member states amend the legislation on a national level, thereby creating different laws within the member states.

The interests of the member states differ and the problems differ. For example the eastern EU members see the relationship with modern Russia as the biggest challenge, in Western Europe youth unemployment is the main issue. This makes decisionmaking difficult in the Council. With the rise of populist parties within the EU, it is very important to defend your beliefs in the European institutions. Young people have not experienced war and are not aware of the dreams the founders of European cooperation had. We must tell them.

Mr. Ertug stresses that money is not the problem in the EU, there is enough money. But problemsolving has become a problem in itself in the Council within the current political climate in the member states.

According to the delegation of Sherborne and Bad Kötzing, the EU-legislation on refugees is no longer working, and a new framework is necessary. Mr. Ertug agrees but stresses that the Council needs a certain sense of urgency. With the agreement with Turkey the pressure on the eastern border is somewhat lifted. As governments are in a defensive position against public opinion, governments are not eager to change the status quo. This is disappointing, as the Regulation of Dublin is no answer to the scale of migration of today. Greece, Italy and Malta are not able to deal with the large amounts of refugees, they can not be left alone with this problem.

More has to be done. The EU negotiates fishing rights with Somalia knowing that the money goes to a corrupt government. If the money would be invested in the countries in that part of Africa, people would not flee from their country and migrate to Europa on a large scale. The leaders of the EU have to do more in this part of the world and particularly in Northern Africa. If they do not succeed the right wing nationalists will win.

The delegation of Marsaskala asks why the member states do not take the amount of refugees that was agreed upon. They should honour their obligations. Mr. Ertug says that the amounts are not obligatory, more voluntary. There is no sanction. And the governments that have to deal with strong right wing opposition do not have the guts to go against this pressure. The delegation of Marsaskala then states that the ships with refugees come within a window of five months. The refugees are often transferred from one ship to another. The criminals that organise the transfer often try to hijack ships on the Mediterranean. Maltese ships are in danger of being hijacked. If the EU would provide for ships - during these five critical months - it would prevent this aggressive behaviour from happening, endangering Maltese and Italian fishermen and other seamen, the pressure on Italy and Malta would ease.

Mr. Ertug welcomes this concrete proposal. If the delegation of Marsaskala would put this on paper he will discuss it in the Social Democratic Group to get a mandate for discussing this in the EP. The delegation of Holstebro shall discuss it with their MEP's and asks the other delegations to do likewise. Marsaskala shall formulate the proposal and stay in touch with the presidency over the necessary actions.

The delegation of Agros refers to the White Paper on the Future of the EU and asks Mr. Ertug for his opinion. Mr. Ertug states that the White Paper describes five future scenarios for the EU. The scenarios are:

1. Carry on (change nothing)
2. Nothing but the single market
3. Those who want more do more
4. Doing less more efficiently
5. Doing much more together

Mr. Ertug prefers the fifth scenario but also realises this is too much to ask today. Again, the EP is not the problem here, the Council and the influence of national politics is.

The delegation of Sherborne points to the right wing and anti-refugee politics from some Eastern European member states and asks if the EP has plans to change this. Refugees do not want to stay in these countries. Mr. Ertug stresses the necessity of a new treaty on refugees. Now, most refugees want to stay in Germany, Sweden and some other countries. A new treaty should not give the refugees a free choice, they should also accept other countries to get asylum. A new set of rules of procedure is necessary, and other countries should be helped with money. The politics is complicated, the EU should also include the US in the solution, as the refugee crisis is a global problem.

There are limited possibilities for sanctioning other EU member states. These days sanctions apply for Poland and Hungary as these governments try to limit the powers of parliament.

The president thanks Mr. Ertug for the interesting and extensive discussion, and looks forward to contacting him for Douzelage matters in the future.

14. **Honorary Presidents**

At the request of the presidency Mike Balfour thanks Cezary Salamończyk for his presidency in a personal way. Annigje Kruyt-bosch also thanks him and gives him a present from Douzelage as a whole. Cezary is unanimously granted the title of honorary president of Douzelage.

Then Wolfgang Kerscher thanks Mike Balfour and Mario Calleja for their vice presidencies. Annigje Kruytbosch also hands out presents for them. They are also unanimously granted the title of honorary vice-president.

15. **Signing of the new Codicil**

Because of the new memberships of Asikkala and Rovinj a new codicil is necessary. The new codicil was signed by the 27 member towns present.

16. **Presentation of Oxelösund, location of the General Meeting in 2018**

The mayor of Oxelösund, Catharina Fredriksson, presented the theme for the General Meeting of 2018: Integration. The theme is a perfect follow-up for the work that has been done in Bad Kötzting. The GM in 2018 will take place from 10th – 13th of May 2018.

Oxelösund is introduced in a video presentation, showing the interesting history and attractive characteristics of the town.

17. **General Meeting in 2019: Asikkala**

The General Meeting in Asikkala will take place from 16th – 19th May 2019.

18. **Any other business**

None.

19. **Education Meeting Report**

Bert van Doorn gives an account of the Education Meeting.

Thanks to the efforts of our hosts, Hans-Peter Jobst (Realschule Bad Kötzing) and Simon Haselhaven (Gymnasium Bad Kötzing), aided by a number of speakers and colleagues, the Education Meeting managed to cover many different aspects of teaching and learning and the position of immigrants and refugees. There were over 30 teachers and ex teachers in the Education Conference, most groups made a poster presentation based upon “refugees in the community” which were displayed around the room.

The first presentation covered the structure of the school system in Bavaria. We were introduced to the three types of secondary schools: Hauptschule (technical and trade orientated), Realschule (this type of secondary school provides a well rounded education resulting in a diploma, the study of a foreign language is compulsory) and Gymnasium (highly academic, begins after 5th grade, most students go to university from the Gymnasium). Some states also have a comprehensive system (Gesamtschule). We found out that home schooling is illegal in Germany.

Parallel workshops prove an effective means of covering more ground and hearing more opinions of the attendants. It would be a very good idea to continue this format in Oxelosund.

The Education Meeting focused on the situation of schools educating and integrating refugees in the partnertowns. The delegates had prepared poster presentations which were a good basis for further discussion. The numbers and situations of the different partnertowns may differ, the approach is often similar.

Germany’s way to educate and integrate refugees was explained by those regionally responsible.

We attended a lecture on formal and informal learning and met two young students of Syria and two of their teachers of the “Bernfosschule”, a vocational college, who explained their situation and motivation to us.

Our four workshops gave people an opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas on healthy diet, education on German citizenship, personalised education and recognising gifted students.

One of the workshops decided to try and set up a platform to facilitate contact between students of all towns as part of personalised learning, deciding that this would broaden their knowledge base and foster interest in other countries and future exchange.

Thank you very much, Bad Kötzing, who has done so well. We continue our efforts during this year and meet again in Oxelosund

20. **Youth Meeting report**

Lizzy Dores and Ryan Portelli, the Youth presidency of Douzelage, give an extensive account of the Youth Meeting:

This year we managed to assist in the organisation of the Youth programma for the first time. We showed how the Youth is alive, energetic and can help shaping the future of Europe.

We were divided in 3 groups doing cooking, dancing and drumming workshops with experts. All were fun activities where we also got to know each other and learned different cultures through informal forms of teaching.

After lunch, prepared by youths and refugees we discussed several problems refugees are faced with. The majority sees a refugee problem but not a crisis. The discussion started off by stating different associations which help in relocation and humanitarian aid. The governments and local NGO's are the mayor players in organising different forms of help given to the refugees.

An interesting suggestion from the youth, in order to better integrate refugees and make them feel European, is to teach them the language of the country and cultural practices.

A major problem for refugees is that they are not always willing to integrate in our societies, and revolt against the NGO's that protect them.

Ethnic minorities also create tension between themselves and the locals. Governments can do more to provide space and services for the refugees. And what happens is conflicts between different European countries: extremist political parties and movements combine forces against governments, leading to right wing extremism, tensions and political instability. Immigration has become a major political issue.

Some Northern European countries don't realise that Europe has an immigration problem, while Southern countries look at the European Union as a political establishment which has let the immigration become a problem. Northern countries look at immigration as a cultural linguistic exchange; while Southern countries look at immigration as one of the causes of a dissolved European Union. The Douzelage can do only small things to improve integration of refugees, but it can be important things.

21. **Questionnaire**

The representatives of the delegations present at Bad Kötzing are requested to fill in the questionnaire that was distributed and hand it over to Femie Kengen, secretary to the presidency.

22. **Closing of the General Meeting 2017**

The president closes the General Meeting 2017 and expresses her gratitude for a fantastic program by Bad Kötzing and the way all delegations have dealt with the issues.

Minutes of Workshop A (Wolfgang Kerscher)
Refugees and Migrants: Chances, Risks and Problems

Expert in Round 1 and 2: Claus Wich, Head of the Aliens Department, Landratsamt Cham

Claus Wich and Wolfgang Kerscher gave a report about the situation in the town of Bad Kötzing and in the Landkreis Cham (region): see files 1, 2 and 3 in the members only section.

They say that the majority of residents of non-German nationality (8% of the population in Bad Kötzing, 5% Landkreis Cham) comes from the EU. They are nearly all employed and the main part has Eastern Europe nationalities. But there are also young Spanish trainees – a program, based on funding of the regional economy and the administration of the region. The regional labour market needs skilled workers (unemployment rate < 3%); there is a lack of German personnel, not only in craft and industry, but also in care and services. Therefore the responsible people in the field of economy think that refugees could solve the problem, when trained and integrated.

There are about 200 refugees in Bad Kötzing (2,6% of the population) and ca. 1515 (ca. 1,2% of the population) in Landkreis Cham. Most of them come from Syria, Iraq and Ethiopia, but also from countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia and Ukraine. In Bad Kötzing most of them are housed in a former hospital. There is a number of volunteers who care for refugees and help them. Besides that they get the same social benefits that a comparative German gets. For an average family with 2 children that can add up to about 1.100 € per month. Some refugees are allowed to work. Of 25% the status of asylum is denied; they can either leave Germany voluntarily or they will be deported.

Language courses in German and integration courses are obligatory. Sanctions can be imposed. The main difficulty is that integration, especially in the labour market, takes much longer and is much more difficult than expected due to great differences in social behaviour and attitude, religion and tradition of the refugees.

The crime rate is slightly higher than that of nationals, but due to the fact that the majority of the refugees are younger men of different countries, sometimes living together in collective accommodation and without a job, there are nearly no troubles and serious crimes have not happened yet. The housing of asylum-acknowledged refugees is one of the main problems: they should live in an ordinary flat and not in a refugees' accommodation, but the housing situation in the Landkreis Cham is difficult.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the native inhabitants in this region still is not afraid of the refugees and treats them well and even friendly. But of course there is racism, prejudice and fascism, although it did not lead to violence by that small minority of Germans until now.

There was some discussion about the situation in Germany as a whole, but some of the participants of the workshop (especially from Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary) also wondered about the report of the local and regional situation in Bad Kötzing. They were told by their governments and their media about a situation with serious crimes, violence and fear in Germany which definitely is not true and could be seen during the General Meeting, when refugees could be seen personally in the meeting or in the workshops.

Then Irene Raedts from Meerssen gave a powerpoint presentation (see file 4 in the members only section) of the situation in her home town. They care for the refugees in a similar way as the Germans do, but the number of refugees is much smaller and causes less problems.

The participants of Judenburg (Austria) gave a report of the situation in their town. They also care for the refugees in a similar way. Due to the fact that the "Balkan Route" is closed and Austria refuses to take more refugees, they have no more housing problems now. In their accommodation facilities they would house more refugees as they do now, but they don't get them now.

The Czech participant pointed out the fact that there have been only a few refugees in the Czech Republic (about 50) and those who came there mostly went to Germany and did not want to stay in the Czech Republic.

Then the Maltese participants gave an impressive account of the dramatic situation in Malta, where refugees from Africa, but also from Serbia come in perilous, overcharged and poorly equipped boats. Human traffickers and criminals send them from the Libyan coast, which is only about 100 kms away. Many of the refugees drown, corpses can be found in the Mediterranean Sea. There is a huge number of refugees on the small island of Malta. Many of them are not registered and the Malteses are in fear of crimes, which happen frequently now. The worse thing is, said former captain Sandro Gatt, that the EU does not help with ships either to stop the human traffickers or offer maritime salvage to the refugees. They feel left alone by the EU.

The main conclusions were:

1. There is a great imbalance within the EU. The refugees' problem should be solved jointly, although there is not a simple solution. The distribution of the refugees according to the number of inhabitants of a member states, for example, will not work properly, for the refugees do not want to stay in some countries of the EU. They prefer certain countries like Germany.
2. There is a historical reason and therefore a responsibility, if not a guilt for the problem. The Europeans, especially the colonial powers, did a lot to exploit African countries and to prohibit economical, educational and social development. They should increase their efforts in financing and developing the infrastructure of the countries where the refugees do come from. Life in the countries of origin of the refugees has to be improved in such a way that the refugees do not longer want to leave their home country and will even be willing to go back. This can no longer be put off. Time runs out.

The participants unanimously favoured Malta's proposal to apply to the EU to send more ships to the Mediterranean, especially in summer, to help Malta with the boat people and to fight trafficking. This proposal should be discussed in the GM and should be sent to all the local MP's by the Douzelage to give it more emphasis.

Note: We lost much time because of the translation (not simultaneous) into English and French. The conclusion should be that workshops should be done in English and at the most in the local language, if possible.

Minutes of Workshop B (Barbara Kerscher)
Discussion with migrants, refugees and voluntary carers
What are their expectations?

Workshop leader: Barbara Kerscher

Expert: Michael Rabl, supervisor of several refugees' homes in the district of Cham

Participants: 9 refugees, currently living in Bad Kötzing, 1 voluntary carer, about 15 participants from various Douzelage towns

1. Introduction of participants

First everyone presented themselves briefly with their name and their country of origin in order to get a brief overview of the workshop participants.

2. Report of Michael Rabl, concerning the actual situation of living conditions in the refugees' home in Bad Kötzing

Bad Kötzing's accommodation for refugees is located in the former hospital building which offers very good possibilities for a decent way of living together. Every room has its own bathroom and is used by two up to five people. There are several kitchens on every floor which are shared by all inhabitants. Mr. Rabl underlines that everyone is asked to live autonomously, i.e. to do his own shopping, cooking, laundry and cleaning.

The supervisors take care that people with different religious beliefs are living in separate rooms, as well as they try to keep families together or to make people from the same country of origin share one room in order to ensure that people help each other and to avoid quarrels in general.

According to Michael Rabl, the official supervisors get a lot of help from volunteers from Bad Kötzing. Either people help personally with teaching German or assisting with official paper work or as well donate things like clothing, articles of daily use or bikes (to use a bike is the only flexible and also the cheapest way of transportation in Bad Kötzing). He mentions Barbara Rautenberg, who is attending the workshop. She is a retired doctor and helped among others with organising medical treatment. She also organised voluntary assistance by a professional midwife for refugee women who returned from hospital after having given birth. Mr. Rabl remarks that since Bad Kötzing's refugees' home was opened, 18 children have already been born here.

Being asked about means of integration, Mr. Rabl emphasises that e.g. joining one of the local sports clubs proves to be a very good way of integrating quickly. Refugees can get in contact with the locals very easily, pick up a lot of information and improve their language skills. He reports that especially young refugees have joined sports clubs (e.g. the soccer team, the Karate team etc.). Another refugee has even joined the local amateur theatre group, another one is a member of the voluntary fire brigade.

Mr. Rabl also points out that every refugee under the age of 21 gets a kind of (secondary) education, which makes it a lot easier for young people to learn German because they get assistance not only from the teachers but also from volunteers, helping them with their homework. This also increases their chance of getting an apprenticeship training position or even the chance to study later on.

3. Reports of the refugees about their reason for leaving their home country, about the route they took to finally arrive in Bad Kötzing and about their current situation

After having heard about their living environment in Bad Kötzing, the refugees told their individual stories, why they left and by which means they reached Germany. They were very frank about their situations which impressed all of the Douzelage participants - a part of whom had never seen or talked to a refugee at all.

The participants heard the accounts of a woman from Somalia, a man from Nigeria, a young man and a young woman from Iraq, two men from Eritrea, and a man from Iran with his little boy (whose wife joined the workshop later on).

It soon became clear that the motives to flee from their native country differed greatly according to the country of origin, the personal situation and educational background. Every one of the present refugees reported that they had been in a life-threatening situation. The motives for leaving their home countries ranged from personal to political, from economic to religious reasons.

Some examples:

The woman from Somalia had fled from her husband who had been a member of the Al Shabaab militia and had been extremely violent towards her. She even left her children behind.

The man from Nigeria had left for a mainly economic reason since he could not make a living out of the small part of land he had inherited from his parents.

The young man from Iraq however had been prosecuted and threatened for being a member of a religious minority. He fled in order to save his life and to get his family out of trouble.

The girl from Iraq had also been threatened because of working for a Christian international aid organisation. Since she also wanted to be safe and wanted her family to be spared, she left Iraq and her studies she had taken on in Bagdad.

The two men from Eritrea described their situation in their home country as absolutely hopeless - living in a corrupt, chaotic state with no hope for a better life and with only the choice between 20 years of military service or being imprisoned for partly inexplicable or malicious reasons. One of them got caught while trying to cross the border, had been imprisoned and tried a second time. The man from Iran who came with his son and wife stated that he had had difficulties because of being Christian (while his parents were Muslims).

Routes and ways of travelling:

The refugees from African countries had mostly taken the route via Libya (some of them walking through Ethiopia/Sudan) and got on a boat to the Italian coast where they travelled on to Germany by train. The refugees from Iraq and Iran came via Turkey and travelled on via the Balkan route.

The woman from Somalia and especially the men from Eritrea had to fear for their lives several times during the trip. They crossed the Mediterranean Sea by far too small boats (up to 700 people on one boat) leaving from the Libyan coast. One of the Eritreans described that he lost more than 30 fellow countrymen because they drowned on the way.

Current situation in Bad Kötzing:

All of the refugees stated that they were very happy to be in Germany and would very much like to stay in Bad Kötzing. Some of the refugees have already had their status cleared, e.g. the two young people from Iraq – they both get secondary education and hope to stay in Germany and either take on an apprenticeship or even study. Another positive example was the story of the family from Iran: the husband is currently doing an apprenticeship and the wife is working in the kitchen of a restaurant. They managed to move out of the refugees' home and to live in their own apartment in town.

But there were also negative stories: one man from Eritrea might have to suffer from the impact of the Dublin agreement – one day before the workshop he had received a letter saying that he will have to go back to Italy where he had been registered first (via fingerprints).

Every one of the stories had an absolutely overwhelming effect on the Douzelage participants, but most of them took the chance to ask questions in the following discussion.

4. Discussion

There wasn't a lot of time for discussion, but several items were addressed:

First one of the Douzelage participants wanted to know if the chances for educated people to integrate were different from those of less educated people. Mr. Rabl stated that of course there was a difference, but the impact wasn't as big for younger people because everyone under the age of 21 would get assistance and a better supervised education than adults. People with a traineeship or a certificate would surely have a better chance.

At this point the girl from Iraq deplored the situation that she had received a bachelor degree in Iraq, but even though she had the papers translated, her degree wasn't acknowledged in Germany.

Another question raised was why Germany was the country everyone longed to be in even though other European countries offered the same options (like Denmark, the Netherlands...). Some of the refugees said that they had heard about the good life in Germany in their home countries. Some of them however said that they would have stayed in Italy but had had bad experiences there (e.g. they did not feel safe when they arrived; or they didn't get medical treatment even though being sore all over the body from the salty water on sea).

Concerning the problems with arriving refugees in Italy and Greece, the Douzelage members from Bellagio and Preveza had to admit that due to their geographical location they were far away from getting in touch with these problems. The members from Bellagio said that they only had experience with work migrants but were currently waiting for a decision from their prefecture if to accommodate refugees in the future.

5. Refugees' wishes for the future

Being asked what they would wish for their future, the answers of the refugees were very clear:

Most of them just wanted to be allowed to stay in Germany and to find a decent job to be able to live autonomously and not being dependent on public support any longer.

The young people from Iraq hope to finish school and then be able to study or respectively to continue with their studies.

The man from Iran stated clearly that in his opinion everyone who worked and studied hard had a chance to lead a good life in Germany.

6. Conclusion

It had become clear during the workshop that the reasons why people flee from their home countries are very diverse and so there have to be the ways of assisting them when they come to live in one of the European countries.

It also became visible that the chances to find a job and to integrate easily depend a lot on the personal background of the individual and of the personal efforts and skills.

And last not least the Douzelage participants agreed that this is a big task which is far from being solved and which can only be solved with concerted efforts.

In any case, the common conclusion was that it helps a lot to understand what can be done if one takes the chance to talk to refugees and get to know their situation better.

Minutes Workshop C (Mike Balfour)
“Possibilities of Integration in Europe”

Participants

The two 1½ hour sessions were chaired by Mike Balfour, and notes taken by Marcus Ainley. There was a very good mix of regular and new GM attendees; most of the EU countries were represented. Stimulating exchanges of information, best practice and opinions resulted. All classifications of migrants were discussed with a particular focus on refugees.

The subject is one that provokes strong feelings, but both our groups were united in the conclusions listed below.

What Do We Mean By Integration?

We felt it important to discuss this question first. Answers included:

- Becoming part of the community.
- Learning the language to a level so you are easily understood.
- Being accepted by the local people.
- Contributing by working and paying taxes.
- Having a common sense of identity: local, national, European.
- All these indicators take time; full integration is difficult for the 1st generation but should be achieved for the 2nd.

The role of Governments

1. EU

We discussed the current EU policy of making the refugees' first arrival country responsible for them. We concluded the policy was agreed at a time of low levels of migration and was no longer 'fit for purpose'. Many migrants have a country in mind as a clear target. This is based on their knowledge of differing levels of prosperity, job opportunities, language, ethnic groups already living there, and sometimes welfare benefits although this is often significantly overstated.

We discussed an EU allocation system ensuring each country accepts a specific number of migrants but concluded it would be impractical as migrants themselves will not accept it. Examples were given of placing migrants in a country but 90% of them soon moving to a country with higher wages.

It was agreed the current burden on Mediterranean countries was unfair, and that policies which encourage people-smuggling, dangerous sea-crossings and long treks on foot do not meet the humanitarian standards we aspire to. Policy should take account of the future needs of the countries of origin as well as EU countries; for example the permanent loss of a large percentage of their graduates will impact on a country's ability to rebuild its structures and good governance after a war.

Conclusion: the EU needs a new policy which reflects current reality.

(It was a great disappointment to many of us that the MEP speaker at the GM told us no new EU policy was being developed, at a time when we are starting the 4th year of the migrants crisis.)

2. National Governments

Immigration policy is set by national governments influenced by the views of their electorates, the countries' perceived needs, and the political commitment to a humanitarian stance.

In the recent past, countries have accepted varying numbers of immigrants; some are still in the process of integrating large numbers and take this into account when formulating policy.

Countries that accept large numbers of refugees were praised, although a comprehensive integration process is then very challenging. Other countries accept lower levels and have good Refugee Resettlement Programmes.

Also important is financial assistance to improve refugee camps close to a war-torn country. EU countries vary greatly in their contributions.

For migrants with refugee status, countries have differing policies about the timescale for access to welfare and eligibility to work. Work for refugees was discussed at great length; a consensus was reached:

Conclusion: restricting the ability of refugees to work should be minimised.

Assessment of their suitability for jobs should be a priority on their arrival, as well as language learning and employment training. If refugees have skills and language proficiency, permit them to work immediately; a review of their permanent residency can be made later. Most refugees want to work, will get bored and frustrated if they can't, and will integrate better and more quickly when they start a job.

3. **Regions and Municipalities**

It is local authorities who usually implement the policies of national government. They are helped enormously by

..... Voluntary Organisations

Some workshop participants were involved in their local voluntary organisations helping refugees. Their input was especially valuable.

In most countries national organisations exist but the importance of local volunteer groups was stressed; they are vital for the process of integration to succeed, for the benefit of their communities and the refugees themselves.

Conclusion: the combination of sympathetic local authority refugee officers working with local volunteers is the human face of a resettlement programme, and policy should reflect that successful integration depends on it.

Essential Needs of Refugees

It is an advantage if refugee status can be conferred before arrival in their new country; if not, it should be speedily resolved on arrival. Assistance with the following should then be given immediately:

- Access to Welfare Benefits.
- Financial help until welfare or earnings are sufficient.
- Accommodation (preferably without affecting a housing list for local people).
- Medical needs, registering with a local doctor.
- School places for children.
- Language learning; this is crucial and must be to a high standard.
- Training and Job-seeking aimed at self-sufficiency as quickly as sustainably possible.
- Adapting to a new cultural environment allowing for the particular background of the refugee, e.g. urban, rural, nomadic.
- Contact with local community clubs and groups.

Social Integration

Full integration for refugees goes beyond satisfying physical needs and must include a feeling of being made welcome and practical help to adjust to a new way of life. Volunteers are needed to achieve this aim, assisting the refugees to:-

- Meet a variety of local people, most easily achieved in a public space such as a community hall.
- Join clubs and community groups.
- Be paired with volunteer 'buddies' who provide practical help, such as "how to operate this washing machine" or "we don't haggle in supermarkets".
- Be paired with local 'grandparents' or grandparent-age people who can, to a degree, bond with the refugees' children and break down barriers.
- Demonstrate their own cultures through exhibitions, festivals and media.
- Minimise problems which can be caused by a

..... Clash of Cultures

We agreed that integration is helped by making it clear that:

- Refugees must learn and respect the national culture, traditions and laws.
- It should also be acknowledged that, over time, the people of the refugees' new nation may adapt and develop as a result of the migrants' presence.
- Women's rights can be an issue and must be addressed.
- Complying in public with the laws of their new country should be matched by behaviour at home. This is difficult to monitor without unacceptable invasions of privacy; it is an issue which may take longer to resolve.
- A range of religious beliefs are accepted in Europe and must be respected. Heartening examples were quoted of Muslim refugees accepting help from Christian churches. The veil was discussed briefly; most views were that different styles of dress are welcome but the face should be visible.

Conclusion: talk about potential cultural problems openly and clearly.

Trends

The hope was expressed that acceptance of refugees was becoming more universal. This is essential as movements of peoples will increase, driven by modern communications and continuing drought and poverty in Africa and elsewhere.

Finally

I suggested that if an intolerant person challenges humanitarian refugee policies, tell them: “if you could look back far enough in your ancestry you will find a migrant”. “We are all immigrant families.”

Minutes Workshop D (Catharina Fredriksson)
“The European Crisis?”

The workshops have tried to identify problems in European Municipalities.

Our perspective on the european crisis varies depending on where we come from and our experiences from the recent events.

It might be:

- an economical crisis
- an refugee crisis
- an political crisis
- an solidarity crisis

Our conclusions:

- The main problem is the lack of solidarity within the members of the EU
- This creates among other things a border problem
- The ones who suffer are (amongst others) the refugees

The border problem

The border problem becomes obvious when we see:

- that The UK wants to leave the EU, and create a wall against the rest of Europe
- that fences are built in southern europe to prevent people from moving freely when Northern Europe reinforces their border controls

In the long run, the border problem may counteract the idea of a european union of nations living in peace.

Regional problem

Due to economics and unemployment well educated young people leave some regions. They move to other countries and maincity regions. This is an effect of the EU principle of free movement. It's a good thought, but obviously it creates problems. Can we live with it?

Environmental problem

Due to environmental problems in other parts of the world, for example lack of water in Northern Africa, we can expect more refugees coming to Europe.






















Democratic problem

- People's low interest to participate in the local, regional, governmental and EU elections;
- People's lack of interest to take part in the democratic system;
- How do we involve people in our societies?;
- How do we deal with populism and nationalism in politics?

Solutions

If the lack of solidarity derives from low level of education, ignorance and fear, we must meet that with knowledge which is a key to understanding. So information and education can strengthen our common solidarity and reduce the border problem and lift the trust for the EU.

We in Douzelage have to keep on, step up and expand our contacts, meetings, exchanges and projects together.

				GM				
GM		Town	Number		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
2022		---						
2021		Marsaskala						
2020		Skofja Loka						
2019		Asikkala						
2018		Oxelosünd						
2017		Bad Kötzting	42					
2016		Tryavna	41					
2015		Siret	40					
2014		Sigulda	39					
2013		Bellagio	38					
2012		Zvolen	37					
2011		Granville	36					
2010		Susice	35					
2009		Altea	34					
2008	Spring	Chojna	33					
2008	Autumn	Türi	32					
2007	Spring	Köszeg	31					
2006	Autumn	Sherborne	30					
2006	Spring	Köszeg		project meeting				
2005	Autumn	Meerssen	29					
2005	Spring	Bundoran	28					
2004	Autumn	Granville	27					
2004	Spring	Judenburg	26					
2003	Autumn	Holstebro	25					
2003	Spring	Sesimbra	24					
2002	Autumn	Houffalize	23					
2002	Spring	Oxelosünd	22					
2001	Autumn	Karkkila	21					
2001	Spring	Niederanven	20					
2000	Autumn	Preveza	19					
2000	Spring	Altea	18					
1999	Autumn	Bad Kötzting	17					
1999	Spring	Sherborne	16					
1998	Autumn	Meerssen	15					
1998	Spring	Bellagio	14					
1997	Autumn	Granville	13					
1997	Spring	Bundoran	12					
1996	Autumn	Holstebro	11					
1996	Spring	Sesimbra	10					
1995	Autumn	Houffalize	9					
1995	Spring	Niederanven	8					
1994	Autumn	Altea	7					
1994	Spring	Preveza	6					
1993	Autumn	---						
1993	Spring	Bad Kötzting	5					
1992	Autumn	Sherborne	4					
1992	Spring	Bellagio	3					
1991	Autumn	Meerssen	2					
1991	Spring	Granville	1					

Towns

Agros			once
Altea			
Asikkala			twice
Bad Kötzing			
Bellagio			three times
Bundoran			
Chojna			once
Granville			four times
Holstebro			
Houffalize			twice
Judenburg			once
Köszeg			twice
Marsaskala			
Meerssen			three times
Niederanven			twice
Oxelösund			once
Preveza			twice
Prienai			
Rovinj			
Sesimbra			twice
Sherborne			three times
Sigulda			once
Siret			once
Skoja Loka			
Sušice			
Tryavna			once
Türi			once
Zvolen			once



Douzelage Bad Kötzing 2016/2017

From 8.10 to 9.October 2016 guests from Susice celebrated with us a day of friendship. Members of clubs and firefighters of both towns held workshops and changed experiences. The guests were welcomed in spa gardens with music and eating and drinking.

On this occasion the Douzelage stone circle was enlarged with a boundary stone of the city of Susice by the mayors.



Simona and Caterina Gogeissl, our Douzelage youngsters, took part in Susice project "Look around".

Risks on the Internet – Douzelage project „Look Around!“



Eva Beníšková and Olga Melkusová from Sušice invited pupils from 4 neighbouring Douzelage countries (Latvia, Poland, Hungary and Germany) to a project week focusing on safe handling of social media.

The project started on Monday evening with some short presentations of each participating town. The next morning the youngsters were welcomed in the town hall by their hosts. Lukáš Hamák, director of the new sports centre, explained during his presentation how big companies like Nike or Apple can use social media for advertisement. The following discussion showed that only 2 out of 30 participants do not have a profile on Facebook. All the other pupils would use the platform at least 30 minutes a day. The speaker admonished his audience not to believe everything that is presented online. Instead of spending hours in a virtual world the youngsters should keep their focus on reality and „LOOK AROUND“. To underline this important message Lukáš Hamák invited the group to the sports centre where the participants spent some time on doing sportive activities like soccer or volleyball. The day ended with a traditional Czech barbeque.

On Wednesday the group focused on risks on the Internet. The expert Nina Moravcová showed different kinds of cyber mobbing, its offenders and victims, and explained how to react on anonymous attacks. In small groups the youngsters had to deal with actual cases and give a short presentation. For approval every participant got a certificate. In the evening the group went to the cinema to watch „The Legend of Tarzan“.

For Tuesday the hosts had planned something special: Together with his colleagues Lukáš Hamák has prepared a paper chase through the city where you felt like living during the time of communism. Different tasks had to be solved without being caught by spies. The groups covered a distance of about 10 kilometres and in the end all the participants could give the final answer. In return for their active participation there was a surprise for the pupils: The hosts have prepared some equipment for playing paintball. After one hour of prowling through the forest (the game ended in a tie) the young adults had some free time.

The project week ended with a retro party in a club.

When it was time to say goodbye to old and new friends the participants promised to stay in contact and meet again soon.

May 2016 - Artists from Douzelage towns Sherborne, Susice, Türi, Kőszeg, Prevez, Meerssen, participated in Bad Kötztig art exhibition.



September 2016 - Runners from **Susice** and **Judenburg** participated in mountain run "Kine vom Kaitersberg"



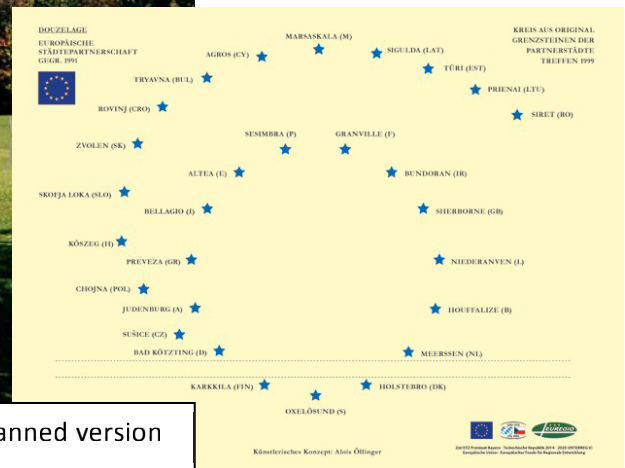
April 2017 – School exchange **Realschule Bad Kötzting** and **Gryphon School Sherborne** accompanied by Agathe Kerscher and Hans-Peter Jobst



Projects planned in 2018



Enlargement of the Douzelage stone circle in spa garden Bad Kötzing with boundary stones from all partner towns in June 2018.



- Participation in **Közseg project "Even us – little once count a lot"** with the theme "Beekeeping" by Benekikt-Stattdler-Gymnasium, teacher Kartsten Nasdal.
- Participation in Agros Project "Hobby Education"
- Invitation for mountain running "Kine vom Kaitersberg 2017" on 17th of September 2017 to all Douzelage partners.
- A day of Friendship in Susice in autumn 2017.



Douzelage Bundoran activities 2016/2017

The Douzelage Bundoran committee, together with business and community representatives from the town, were delighted to welcome French Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Jean-Pierre Thébault, to Bundoran on Wednesday 29th March. The ambassador was on a visit to County Donegal and was eager to meet as many people as possible on his trip, especially those from a town twinned with a town in his native France.

He spoke with the group about town twinning and the opportunities available through collaborating with other European towns.



The ambassador in Bundoran Tourist Office



The ambassador with the Bundoran delegation



The ambassador signs the town visitor book



The ambassador is presented with a copy of the Douzelage book



STOWARZYSZENIE DOUZELAGE w Chojnie



Activities organized by Douzelage Association in Chojna since last Douzelage GM in Tryavna.

1. Group of students and teachers participated in a project 'Look around' organized by Susice.
2. Erasmus+ strategic partnership project 'Health education for life' coordinated by Chojna with partners from Koszeg and Konya. Project activities finished in August 2016. EU support – 131.835,00 EUR.
3. Erasmus+ Youth project 'Be different, be tolerant' coordinated by Chojna with partners from Konya (Turkey), Koszeg and Nitranske Hrciarovce (Slovakia). EU support – 15.400,00 EUR
4. Erasmus+ Vocational Mobility project 'From training to work' – 24 students from technical school in Chojna had work experience in hotels and restaurants in Sherborne and Marsaskala. EU support 73.468,00 EUR.
5. Erasmus+ Vocational Mobility project 'European apprenticeships' – 11 construction and IT students from Chojna had apprenticeships in companies in Sherborne, Koszeg and Marsaskala. 4 catering and hotel management teachers had job shadowing in ITS in Malta. EU support 35.139,00
6. 5 teachers from Chojna took part in a study visit in Sherborne.
7. Guests from Sherborne participated in Days of European Integration in Chojna.
8. 20 students and 3 teachers from secondary school in Chojna went for a cultural visit to London.
9. Members of Douzelage Association in Chojna and students from European Club Douzelage participated in Schuman Parade in Warsaw.
10. Douzelage Association in Chojna organized charity event – students baked and sold biscuits, collected money was spent on poor families help.

Future project:

1. Erasmus+ Vocational Mobility project 'European quality in vocational education' – 26 construction, IT, catering and hotel management students will have apprenticeships in companies in Marsaskala, Koszeg, Sherborne and Luxembourg. 4 teachers will have job shadowing in Malta. EU support 83.180,00.
2. Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project 'Struggle against violent extremism' coordinated by Konya (Turkey). Application pending.
3. Europe for citizens project coordinated by Koszeg – application pending.

HOUFFALIZE – RAPPORT D ACTIVITES 2016

01/03/2016 Visite de la Commission européenne à Bruxelles
Avec 101 élèves de 5^{ème} et 6^{ème} années primaires des écoles de
Houffalize

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Exposés sur l'Union Européenne et les activités du Douzelage aux élèves de 5^{ème} et 6^{ème}
années primaires – Ecoles de Houffalize

13/03/2016	Houffalize	21 élèves
	Dinez	3 élèves

15/03/2016	Lycée Reine Fabiola	Houffalize	35 élèves
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16/03/2016	Mabompré	12 élèves
	Wibrin	17 élèves

17/03/2016	Nadrin	13 élèves
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08/10/2016 Achouffe
Accueil des délégations de Sherborne et Meerssen

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Novembre 2016 Contacts en vue de la constitution du Comité de pilotage
Projets 2018 : « Projet d'immersion de jeunes européens issus des 28
villes partenaires du Douzelage »

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08/12/2016 1^{ère} réunion du Comité de pilotage
Agenda – programme de la rencontre des jeunes de 2018

Manuela Di Pinto
Secrétaire

Alphonse Henrard
Président

Activity list Douzelage Judenburg 2016

- 2016 hat ein Schulaustausch zwischen der Neuen Mittelschule Judenburg und der Mittelschule Zvolen stattgefunden. Im Juni waren die Jugendlichen aus Zvolen bei uns, im Oktober war der Gegenbesuch in Zvolen.
- Choraustausch Voces Judenburg – Chor Lubnik Skofja Loka
- Besuch der Feuerwehr Bad Kötzing in Judenburg
- Teilnahme von Judenburger Läufern am Kaitersberg-Lauf auf Einladung von Bad Kötzing



ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS OF DOUZELAGE MEERSSEN IN 2016:

1. During 27 weeks (from February until September) we have described all Douzelage partners in our weekly newspaper of Meerssen, the “Geulbode”.
2. March: BENELUX meeting in Meerssen.
3. June/July: Presentations at all primary schools in Meerssen. Subject: Douzelage and the differences in culture and learning between primary schools in the different EU countries.

Simultaneously, posters, as well as the items which we received in Tryavna from partner towns, were placed in 27 shop windows in Meerssen. The posters and items were also used for an exploration tour through Europe (represented in the shop windows), done by primary school kids.

4. June: Visit to Niederanven to celebrate their ‘Fête Nationale’. We were kindly invited to join in on the celebrations organised by the Municipality of Niederanven.
5. August: Visit of the Douzelage vice-presidents Miha Jese, Tibi Rotaru and Mette Sørensen in Meerssen.
6. August: A delegation of Meerssen (including our Douzelage president) visits Sherborne on the occasion of their International Music and Dance Festival organised to celebrate 25 years of Douzelage.
7. September: Reception in Meerssen to celebrate our 25th Douzelage anniversary with the inhabitants of Meerssen.
8. October: We organised a Symposium on ‘25 years Treaty of Maastricht and the future of the European Union for unity and diversity’ in the Provincial Government Building in Maastricht. Lectures were given by representatives of the European Parliament and of the University of Maastricht.
9. October: Visit to the European Parliament in Brussels, together with a delegation from Sherborne which also participated in our Symposium.
10. October: Visit to Houffalize and la Chouffe, again with our friends from Sherborne.
11. November: Citizen Meeting on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht. A start was given to a lot of activities to celebrate this Treaty.
12. Throughout the year: monthly meetings of the working committee of Douzelage Meerssen.

2015

November Sherborne

Highlights 2015 /16

Ed Lucas evening Fundraising event

2016

February Granville France
Sherborne

Carnaval 3 Gryphon School students participate
Arturo & Anna Fundraising concert

March Sherborne
Sherborne

Young Musicians Competition – local
20 Sherborne young musicians participate
Wessex Strings Fundraising concert

Bundoran Ireland

St Patrick's Day Celebrations
3 Sherborne guests attend

Marsaskala Malta

Towards a Better Democracy Conference
8 Sherborne delegates attend

April Sherborne Bundoran

Blue Stack Walkers visit from Bundoran, Ireland

May Tryavna Bulgaria

41st Douzelage General Meeting
16 Sherborne delegates attend
Walking in Bulgaria – personal visit

June Chojna Poland
Sherborne Chojna

British Days 2 Gryphon School students participate
Chojna students and teachers stay

July Zvolen Slovakia

Young Musicians Competition – International
5 Sherborne young musicians participate

August Sherborne

Susice
Bundoran
Sigulda
Meerssen

25th Anniversary International Music & Dance Festival
22 musicians, dancers and guests come from:
Susice, Czech Republic
Bundoran, Ireland,
Sigulda, Latvia
Meerssen, The Netherlands

Chojna Poland

Days of Integration 1 Sherborne guest attends

October Meerssen Netherlands
Houffalize Belgium

Meerssen 25th Anniversary Symposium
Day visit 6 Sherborne delegates attend
Brussels EU Parliament Tour with Meerssen Douzelage (2)

Preveza Greece

with President 1 Sherborne guest attends

Meerssen Netherlands
Holstebro Denmark
Asikkala Finland
Sesimbra Portugal

Personal visit
Personal visit
Personal visit
Personal visit

Events 2017

2017

27 February	Granville	France	Carnival 5 Gryphon School students participate
12 March	Sherborne		Arturo & Anna Fundraising concert
04 May	Bundoran	Ireland	Sherborne Walkers visit to Bundoran, Ireland
10 May	Bad Kötzing	Germany	42nd Douzelage General Meeting 13 Sherborne delegates attending - 9 with 4 Youth Walking in Bavaria - personal visit Munich - personal visit
08 June	Chojna	Poland	Chojna days
June/July	Chojna	Poland	25th Anniversary Celebrations
28 August	Sherborne	Meerssen	Meerssen Walkers visit Sherborne
6 October	Sherborne		David Lough Fundraising talk Digby Memorial Hall
8 October	Meerssen	Netherlands	Meerssen Marathon

2018

April/May	Oxelösund	Sweden	43rd Douzelage General Meeting
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2019

April/May	Asikkala	Finland	44th Douzelage General Meeting
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Sigulda's activities at Douzelage

1. 17.03.2016. – 21.03.2016. Participation in the Marsaskala (Malta) project “Youth political activity”.
2. 04.07.2016. – 11.07.2016. Participation in the music festival “Douzelage Young Musician of the Year 2016” Zvolen (Slovakia). 6 young musicians and a teacher.
3. 24.07.2017. – 30.07.2017. Participation in Sušice (Czech Republic) youth project “Look around”. 6 students and a teacher.
4. August 2016. Participation in the Sherborne Music and dance festival. Dance group “Siguldietis”.
5. 25.04.2017. – 27.04.2017. Sušice's (Czech Republic) choir (65 participants) visited in Sigulda's Primary school No.1, lived in the families, performed two concerts.



Activities of Douzelage Sušice May 2016 - May 2017

- 1) 1 May 2016 teachers from Realschule Bad Kötzing and Gymnazium Sušice had a common day in Sušice. They visited the town of Klatovy including the new catacombs and had a short tourist trip around Klatovy.
- 2) The project LOOK AROUND took place from 25th to 29th July 2016 in Sušice. The main aim of the project was to show young people that the real world is much better than the virtual one. 31 young people from Sigulda (Latvia), Chojna (Poland), Köszeg (Hungary), Bad Kötzing (Germany) and from Sušice (Czech Republic) participated. The attendees had the opportunity to learn more about threats within the virtual world. They had a session with an expert on cyber bullying and they were shown that reckless behaviour in virtual world can, in extreme cases, lead to death.
- 3) In September 2016 runners from Sušice participated in 4th mountain run up to Kaitersberg organized by Bad Kötzing.
- 4) At the weekend 8th -9th October 2016 a meeting of representatives of Bad Kötzing and Sušice took place in Bad Kötzing. A stone from Sušice was dedicated in the Kurpark, which was added to other 15 stones from Douzelage partner towns. More than 100 people from Sušice participated. Some visited SINOCUR, the Prevention Centre, some of them took part in various sports activities.
- 5) In January 2017 students of Gymnasium Sušice and Realschule Kötzing took part in a project in Waldmünchen and Žihle. The topics were Life and Life Style,.
- 6) Včelky from the Sušice Children's Choir had a concert at Musikparty in Bad Kötzing in March 2017.
- 7) In March 2017 students of Gymnasium Sušice and Realschule Kötzing spent a week in Sušice with a theatre project. At the end they had a theatre performance in Smetana Hall of Gymnasium Sušice.
- 8) A new band of young singers interested in Irish music has been formed in Sušice. They call themselves Paddy's Bangers and had a few successful performances. In summer they are going to visit Bundoran and present both Irish and Czech songs there.
- 9) In April 60 singers of the Children Choir visited Sigulda for three days after they had taken part in a festival in Vilnius. They were warmly welcomed and had two concerts in Sigulda - one for school and the other for public together with some local choirs. A choir from Sigulda has been invited to take part in the spring festival in Sušice next year.

Conclusion to project LOOK AROUND

The project LOOK AROUND took place from 25th to 29th July 2016 in Sušice. It was organised by the committee of Douzelage Sušice in cooperation with the Municipality of Sušice and Sports Centre of the Town of Sušice. The reason to organise this project was to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Douzelage organisation (www.douzelage.org) and to gather young people from different countries within Douzelage to establish new connections. The main aim of the project LOOK AROUND was to show young people that the real world is much better than the virtual world.

There were 31 young people from different countries who took part in this project. They came from Sigulda (Latvia), Chojna (Poland), Köszeg (Hungary), Bad Kötzing (Germany) and of course from Sušice (Czech Republic).

The attendees had opportunity to learn more about threats within the virtual world. They had a session with an expert on cyber bullying and they were shown that reckless behaviour in virtual world can, in extreme cases, lead to death.

In addition to the learning part of the programme the participants had the opportunity to climb the mountaineering wall, play volleyball, swim in the river etc. An outdoor game was prepared for them where they had to accomplish different tasks. This game culminated in a paintball game where nearly all attendees took part and were excited about it. Hereby they were shown that there are other possibilities to spend free time in a different way than on social networks or playing games on the computer.

The mission of this project was accomplished successfully. All attendees learned about most of the threats that are hidden in the virtual world. They also learned that friendship with real people is more valuable than with the virtual ones.



**Türi participation in Douzelage Cooperation Activities
May 2016 – May 2017**

- * Türi Music school (6 flute students) will participate on May 29-31 in XXII International competition of young musicians "Sigulda 2017"
- * Teachers and pupils from Türi will participate in Holstebro project "Nonformal learning- The Danish Model" which will take place October 4-8, 2017.
- * Türi was presented in Bad Kötzing local newspaper. We sent a short description, foto and a a traditional recipe.
- * Türi Douzelage Committee renewed and we get together regular to have discussions about foreign activities.
- * Spring 2016 four persons took part in General Meeting in Tryavna and four persons taking part in General Meeting in Bad Kötzing.end