

## Minutes of the 43rd General Meeting Oxelösund, May 10th – 13th, 2018

### LIST OF ATTENDANTS

#### Agros, Cyprus

Andreas Latzias GM  
Nikolas Christofi GM  
Chloe Protopapa YM

#### Altea, Spain

Vicenta Perez Barber GM  
Begoña Cortes Diaz GM  
Jesus Pons Pons EM  
Ana Hernandez Parra YM  
Carlos Oliver Ferrandiz YM

#### Asikkala, Finland

Rinna Ikola-Norrbacka GM  
Merja Palokangas-Viitanen GM  
Mira Nieminen GM  
Jaana Lehtonen EM  
Riikka Penttilä EM  
Pirjo Ala-Hemmilä EM  
Millamaari Hämäläinen YM  
Inkeri Kaukoranta YM  
Annikki Kaukoranta YM

#### Bad Kötzing, Germany

Wolfgang Kerscher GM  
Isolde Emberger GM  
Agathe Kerscher EM  
Simon Hasselbauer EM  
Simona Gogeissl YM  
Caterina Gogeissl YM

#### Bellagio, Italy

Paola Rossi GM  
Donatella Gandola GM  
Arianna Sancassani EM

#### Bundoran, Ireland

Denise Connolly GM  
Shane Smyth GM  
Joe Mc Nulty GM  
John Campbell EM  
Aoife McMorrow YM  
Hannah McGagh YM

#### Chojna, Poland

Janusz Salamonńczyk GM  
Andrzej Będzak GM  
Jerzy Kolaczyk GM  
Dorota Szwiec EM  
Edyta Daszkiewicz EM  
Anna Rydzewska EM

#### Granville, France

Vallée Pascale GM  
Prizé Denis EM  
Lemonnier Solène YM  
Prouha Manon YM  
Picot Eden YM  
Fay Guerry Translation  
Jean Claude Guerry Translation

#### Holstebro, Denmark

Anne Lise Holst Jensen GM  
Tiahes Thiaharaja GM  
Mette Grith Sørensen GM  
(vice president)  
Jette Hingebjerg GM  
Søren Hinrichsen EM  
Line Hebsgaard YM  
Louise Hejlson YM  
Bjarne Jensen ND  
Joseph Ragunathan ND  
Klaus Warming ND

#### Houffalize, Belgium

Alphonse Henrard GM  
Luc Nollomont GM  
Martin Cugnon GM  
Claire Meyer YM

#### Judenburg, Austria

Elke Spekner-Florian GM  
Thorsten Wohleser GM  
Sabine Rinofner EM  
Clemens Sonnberger YM

#### Köszeg, Hungary

Kitti Rege-Mércz GM  
Péter Rege GM  
Rebecca Varga GM  
Andrea Bancsó EM  
Anett Pintér YM  
Ádám Csaerkuti YM

#### Marsaskala, Malta

Mario Calleja GM  
Mary Grace Debono GM  
Sandro Gatt GM  
Charlot Mifsud EM  
Ryan Portelli YM

#### Meerssen, the Netherlands

Annijie Luns-Kruytbosch GM  
(President)  
Alexander Luns GM  
Karel Majoor GM  
Femie Kengen Secretariat  
Manna Majoor GM  
Harry Crombag GM  
Herman Langenveld GM  
Jose Langenveld GM  
Pascale Vossen GM  
Noel Vossen GM  
Marie-Therese Crombag GM  
Wil Schrijnemaekers GM  
Irene Raedts GM  
Lonneke Frijns EM  
Bert Van Doorn EM  
Jan Daems EM  
Maria Knops YM  
Shanika Smeets YM  
Janne Maas YM  
Isa Kwakman YM

#### Niederanven, Luxembourg

Paul Greis GM  
Marie-Antoinette Paquet-Tondt GM  
Claire Brumat YM  
Julien Hanin YM

## Oxelösund, Sweden

Catharina Fredriksson	GM
Johan Persson	GM
Goran Cengic	EM
Johan Petersson	YM
Niklas Thelin	ND
Linnéa Stenfeldt	ND

## Rokiskis, Lithuania

Antanas Vagonis	GM
Vilma Meciukoniene	GM
Jurgita Blazeviute	EM

## Rovinj, Croatia

Marko Paliaga	GM
Maria Črnac Rocco	GM
Gordana Ivanišević Ninčević	EM
Carla Šverko	YM
Lara Kerčan	YM

## Sesimbra, Portugal

Filipe Pessanha	GM
Felicia Costa	GM
Célia Ribeiro	GM
João Rodrigues	ND
José Ribeiro	ND

## Sherborne, United Kingdom

Scilla Copper	GM
Rob Bygrave	GM
Michael Morrell	GM
Pat Morrell	GM
Jeremy Barker	GM
Marcus Ainley	GM
Jill Hogben	GM
Clifton Jelbert	GM
Janet Jelbert	GM
Sarah Whittick	GM
John Whittick	GM
Kevin Waterfall	GM
Christopher MacAdie	GM
Michael Balfour	GM
Linda Ashby	GM
Linda Bygrave	EM
Harvey Rawling-Wingate	YM
Elizabeth Does	YM
Amber Lunt	YM

## Sigulda, Latvia

Katrīna Leitāne	GM
Valters Mačs	EM
Sabīne Birzniece	YM
Edīte Kuzmina	YM

## Siret, Romania

Tiberiu Tcaciac	GM
Tiberiu Rotaru Anghelescu	GM
(vice president)	
Mocrei Liliana	EM
Ovidiu Oniciuc	YM

## Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Miha Ješe	GM
(vice president)	
Jernej Tavčar	GM
Jože Bogataj	EM
Sergej Novak	YM
Bor Dolenc	YM

## Sušice, Czech Republic

Olga Melkusová	GM
Věra Svobodová	GM
Anežka Nová	EM
Anna Nová	YM
Veronika Marešová	YM
Věra Marešová	ND

## Tryavna, Bulgaria

Boyan Grozev	GM
Ivelina Peneva-Kmetova	GM
Nikolina Nikolova	GM
Silvia Krasteva	GM
Evelin Koev	YM

## Türi, Estonia

Triin Pärna	GM
Sulo Särkinen	EM
Kristina Kooser	YM

## Zvolen, Slovakia

Dáša Melicheriková	GM
Zuzana Lászlóová	GM
Radko Melicherik	YM
Radko Pálenik	YM

GM: General Meeting  
EM: Educational Meeting  
YM: Youth Meeting  
ND: non delegate

NB: When a delegation has more than 5 members, the rest of the delegation is automatically a 'ND'.  
Nevertheless they can still be mentioned as attenders to GM/EM or YM on this list.  
Some towns may take 6 members within their official delegation, when having an honorary President among them.

Before the General Meeting commences the mayor of Oxelosund, Mrs Catherine Frederiksson, gives a very warm welcome to all representatives of the different Douzelage member towns. She stresses the importance of the "integration of foreigners", the main theme of the conference. She also underlines that it is a pleasure to have Europe in the city, this beautiful place at the seaside. Mrs Frederiksson hopes the conference will be with good discussions and very fruitful. She wishes that all delegates and non-delegates have a good time in Oxelösund.

The president of the Douzelage, Mrs. Annigje Kruijtbosch, thanks Oxelösund for organising the General Meeting (GM) and looks forward to interesting discussions and workshops.

### 1. **Opening of the General Meeting**

The president of the Douzelage, Mrs. Annigje Kruijtbosch, opens the GM and welcomes all delegations on behalf of herself and the vice presidents, Mette Grith Sørensen, Miha Jese and Tibi Rotaru. Again, the GM is well attended, only Preveza and Prienai are absent. As Prienai has decided to leave Douzelage, the Presidency welcomes the delegates of the town of Rokiškis as the candidate member town from Lithuania. They are present as a guest, their candidacy will be discussed under point 10 of the agenda.

The workshops are held in between the GM, the delegates are scheduled to attend two workshops of three topics: A. Culture, B. Civil Society, C. Language. The conclusions and the preparations of the workshops are hereby attached.

The agenda is approved and no topics are added to the agenda.

### 2. **Approval of the Bad Kötzing GM minutes**

The minutes of the 2017 GM in Bad Kötzing are unanimously approved.

### 3. **Approval of the accounts 2017 (January - December 2017)**

The accounts that are presented, run from January 2017 to December 2017. The accounts were presented by Mr. Harry Crombag from Meerssen, who handles the accounts of the presidency. The net total in February amounts to € 19.085,54.

The Douzelage accounts have been checked by two auditors, Marcus Ainley (Sherborne) and Shane Smyth (Bundoran). 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.

As decided in Bad Kötzing last year, Shane Smyth steps back as an auditor, and in his place Olga Melkusová (Sušice) will check the accounts next year, together with Marcus Ainley. The presidency thanks Shane for his good work.

### 4. **Annual Douzelage membership**

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.

### 5. **Future status Douzelage Sherborne after completed Brexit**

Mrs. Jill Hogben, Mayor of Sherborne, addresses the GM. She stresses that "the value of people stretches over politics. The representatives of Douzelage Sherborne have proved themselves to be very enthusiastic and they have given a great contribution to the town of Sherborne and

Douzelage. Projects are fun, and we chose to act together in projects across the borders. As the UK leaves the EU for political reasons, we are now in this position. But we do not build walls, we break them down. Douzelage is bigger than politics, Douzelage is family". Her words were welcomed with a round of applause from the GM.

In preparation of this important topic the member towns were asked to write their views in an official document. The majority of the member towns have sent their views, a few have expressed their wish to state their opinion during the GM.

The vast majority of the towns want Sherborne to stay within the Douzelage, the opinions on the conditions whereunder differ. Some towns are in favour of changing the constitution, others prefer a special status of Sherborne.

The documents also express a fear of losing funding from the EU in the case the Douzelage has non-EU members. The presidency has consulted several national EU agencies on this topic. The exact result of the Brexit is not clear yet, it is too early to tell. Important is the fact that Douzelage as a whole never applies for funding, it is always individual member towns who do. Sherborne can always participate in projects, even "under the radar" and expressed that it will carry the costs of doing so.

The presidency asks the individual towns to express their opinion on the participation of Sherborne after Brexit. The GM unanimously state its support for Sherborne and the wish to keep them in the family. Some towns added a view:

- Chojna quotes the Spanish MEP Esteban González Pons: "I say it with friendship, I say it with loyalty. You are making a mistake. You are going to hurt yourselves. You're going to hurt us all".
- Holstebro expresses the wish that Douzelage stays EU-based, but with a close relationship with Sherborne as a member, on terms that do not compromise the Douzelage within the EU.

The Presidency will prepare a proposition, based on the views that are expressed, on how to deal with the position of Sherborne after Brexit. The general wish of the GM is clear: keep Sherborne within Douzelage. The proposition will be discussed in Asikkala. But even then, the exact results of Brexit may not be clear enough in May 2019. The GM agrees with this proposed course.

## 6. Social Media and PR

### 6.1 Douzelage website

Brief explanation by webmaster Alexander Luns.

The highlights:

- For the website to be a successful tool for Douzelage PR, more newposts are needed, spread over all member towns of Douzelage, and better, colourful pictures to attract the attention. The newposts may be invitations to register for a project, reports on visits and projects. The pictures should be colourful and be minimum 1200 px wide (landscape orientation), with people that are active.
- The Members Only section has caused some misunderstandings, a manual is sent and still available when needed. Alexander gives a short demonstration on how to enter the Members Only section of the website.
- The General Data Protection Regulation comes into force the 25th of May. This leads to some changes, and you will be asked to give permission to store your personal data, e.g. the registration for the Members Only pages.

### 6.2 Douzelage Facebook page and Facebook editors

The presidency thanks the GM for the participation in the Facebook page of Douzelage. It has been a successful page over the last year. A few towns do not have a contact person for the Facebook page. The president asks Chojna, Niederanven, Preveza, Sesimbra, Skofja Loka, Susice and Türi to mail their contact persons to the Presidency.

The delegation of Holstebro expresses the wish to have albums per GM for the photos on Facebook.

### 6.3 Wikipedia page

The situation since last year has not changed. The editor of the Douzelage page on Wikipedia has banned the changes we made, and answers no questions. We do not know who he or she is.

#### 6.4 **Dropbox account**

The president asks the towns to drop the pictures they have made during the GM in the Dropbox. The pictures are then available to everyone.

#### 6.5 **(New) Douzelage Pin**

The Presidency has made a new pin with the logo of Douzelage. Every town gets a bag with 20 pins to distribute within their delegation.

#### 6.6 **Youth Diploma**

Mette Grith Sørensen points to the wish to give the youth participants some form of proof that they have attended the Youth Meeting. Something the youth can show when asked for. This year the Presidency has prepared official diploma's for the youth. These will be distributed after the Youth Meeting.

### 7. **Past projects and activities within our towns**

The Presidency proposes the following on reporting of the past and future activities:

- The past activities are to be published on the website, available to everyone
- Future activities: send them to the Presidency, they can be placed on the website
- In print available during the GM: restricts the past activities to maximum of 5 pages.

The GM agrees with this proposal.

Chojna points to the importance of dissemination of the knowledge that has been generated by a project. The EU specifically stresses the importance of disseminating the lessons learned, publication on a website is not enough. The minutes of a GM are a means of proving that the knowledge has been spread. We should take this into account.

The presidency shall take this into account in future GM's.

### 8. **(Future) projects and activities within our towns**

#### 8.1 **Youth project Houffalize**

Alphonse Henrar (Houffalize) gives an overview of the large youth project "Memory Work, Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation for the Future of Europe". 12 towns shall participate: Rovinj, Susice, Sigulda, Sherborne, Bundoran, Bad Kötzing, Meerssen, Chojna and of course Houffalize.

#### 8.2 **Via Douzelage Meerssen**

Herman Langenveld (Meerssen) describes the first pilot of the route Niederaanven – Houffalize – Meerssen that was cycled in april. Daily costst were about € 100,- per person. Lessons learned:

- You cannot make a route from behind your desk, you have to cycle it yourself;
- You need volunteers to complete the routes;
- It is great fun to cycle the routes with friends.

Douzelage Meerssen calls for volunteers to create new routes.

#### 8.3 **Presentation new projects Chojna**

- Europe for citizens project "Even Us The Little Ones Count A Lot" (EULOCAL) – representatives of Douzelage Association in Chojna will participate in project meetings in Bad Kötzing and Köszeg and will organise an event in Chojna.

- Erasmus+ project 'Struggle against violent extremism' – secondary school students, teachers and members of Douzelage Association in Chojna will take part in youth exchange in Köszeg and a teachers' meeting in Sweden.
- Europe for citizens project 'Memory work, democratic engagement and civic participation for the future of Europe' – 5 students and 2 leaders will take part in a seminar in Houffalize.
- Douzelage Association in Chojna submitted applications for two Erasmus+ youth projects: 'Internet – opportunities and threats' and 'Voluntary work as a stress remedy'.
- Proposal of a new Erasmus+ youth project about youth employment:  
Objective: To help students to get into professional life using non-formal education methods. Chojna has a lot of experience, there are now 10 students active in Marsaskala, 6 in Köszeg, 6 in Sherborne, and 4 in IT companies in Luxembourg. Provided that the Erasmus+ funds are available, the project runs from June 23rd until June 29th 2019 in Chojna; Chojna invites 5 young people from 5 Douzelage towns.

#### 8.4 Young Musicians Granville 2018

- The Young Musicians competition will be held in Granville from July 1st to July 8th 2018;
- The participants are accommodated in the sailing school
- Practices and competition are held in the music school
- All musicians are invited to participate in the end of the year concert in Granville, information will be sent soon;
- The stay will be rounded off by activities like a visit to Mont St. Michel and a sporting event;
- A couple of people have dropped out, any new entries from any town are welcome, aged 14 to 18.
- The Young Musicians competition in 2020 will be held in Türi.

#### 8.5 New project 2019 Agros

- Last Year the project "Hobby and Education" with 36 young participants from Chojna, Meerssen, Köszeg and Holstebro.
- The topic was how to use our hobbies in education, stimulating social inclusion, youth participation, youth empowerment, creativity and culture.
- The working methods were based on non-formal education methods.
- The participants are still in contact with each other.
- The new youth project shall be applied for in October 2018, a maximum of 60 participants are invited, from 8 countries.
- The main topic will be the "Youth participation in European elections". The project will be held from the end of March 2019 to the beginning of April 2019.

#### 8.6 Sky Race 2018 Bellagio

- A video of the Bellagion Skyrace 2017 is shown.
- The Bellagio Skyrace 2018 will be held 20th - 21st of October.
- In 2017 Sherborne and Meerssen participated, this year we hope to see more partner towns represented. The winner from a Douzelage town can win a free weekend in Bellagio!

#### 8.7 Douzelage Photo Contest

- Mette Grith Sørensen introduces the new Douzelage Photo Contest. This very first edition of the Douzelage Photo Contest had the theme "friendship".
- The rules are:
  1. The theme is "Oxelösund 2018/friendship".
  2. Each participant can only enter one (1) photo.
  3. You must send your entry before June 1st 2018
  4. By entering, you agree to having your photo and name published on the Douzelage website.
  5. Please note that, this time, there are no restrictions as to what you can do to the photo.

- Morten Stricker (Press Photographer at Dagbladet Holstebro) and Annigje Kruytbosch (President Douzelage) have the difficult task to choose the winning photo.
- The winner receives a prize of € 150,-

## 8.8 Douzelage Banner

- When visiting the hotel of Stjärnholm the presidency was inspired to replace the lost banner of Douzelage with a new one. The presidency proposes that every town receives a piece of embroidery cotton and uses it to depict something that is typical for their town. It may be the town crest, it may be something totally different.
- The results will be presented in the GM of 2019 in Asikkala.
- Every town receives a piece of cotton and a written instruction.
- The GM unanimously agrees with the idea.

## 8.9 Projects Skofja Loka

- June 16th 2018 Skofja Loka will host the Four Bridges Run. There will be 1500 runners, everybody is invited. Shane Smyth will join Miha Jese at the start.
- September 14th 2018 the Tree of Friendship shall be planted in Susice. It will be a great party, everybody is invited.
- Skofja Loka is planning a large project that must end during the GM in Skofja Loka in 2020. There will be four events, two in Skofja Loka, two elsewhere. Details will follow later on. Everybody is invited to participate. The main topic will be "Quality of Life for the ageing, with an emphasis on E-Learning.

## 8.10 Pins Bundoran

Bundoran has received pins from the Irish bureau of the European Commission. Shane encourages all Douzelage towns to contact their Europe office to get pins with the national flag and the European flag. During the GM in Asikkala we can swap pins!

## 9. Withdrawal Prienai (Lithuania) from Douzelage

Prienai has written an official request to withdraw from Douzelage. The letter is presented as Annex 3 to the agenda. The Presidency states that it feels as a defeat when a member town wants to withdraw, but having a member who scarcely participates and does not attend the GM over the last couple of years doesn't feel good either. When Prienai really does not want to participate, we have no choice as to let them go, and look out for another town that is really interested in participating.

The Presidency proposes to agree with the request to withdraw of Prienai. The GM unanimously accepts the withdrawal.

## 10. New town in Lithuania: Rokiskis

When it became apparent that Prienai wanted to withdraw, the Presidency was on the lookout for new member towns in Lithuania. Mette Grith Sørensen, while visiting a conference abroad, spoke to Mrs. Irena Mateliene from the town of Rokiskis in Lithuania, she reacted very enthusiastically when hearing of Douzelage. Later, Rokiskis showed "official" interest in Douzelage and invited the Presidency to visit the town. Annigje Kruytbosch and Miha Jese went to Rokiskis last april. Miha Jese gives a report on this visit. He was very impressed by the drive behind the people, the cultural activities and the warmth of the people. Skofja Loka and Rokiskis are after one visit already involved in a project.

The mayor of Rokiskis, mr. Antanas Vagonis, shows a video on the town of Rokiskis and stresses the fact that Rokiskis would very much like to be part of the Douzelage family.

The GM unanimously welcomes Rokiskis as a member town.

## 11. **Conference “Virtuous models of solidarity, inclusion and decentralised cooperation”, Rome**

Tibi Rotaru gives a presentation on this conference. On the 16th of October 2017, Tibi Rotaru and Annigje Kruytbosch attended the conference organised by AICCRE on “Virtuous models of solidarity, inclusion and decentralised cooperation”, held in Rome.

There were a few reasons for us to attend this meeting. First of all, we needed to be there to promote Douzelage. We gave a presentation on Douzelage, and the participants were enthusiastic about knowing about our organisation.

Secondly, there were two interesting organisations present. First we found out about a Platform of local and regional authorities, one of their goals being to work together with local NGO’s in the local development and policies. We believe local Douzelage working groups can be important for local policies. It is compulsory for local authorities to consult their NGO’s. The platform is hosted by the CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), the bureau of the European Commission responsible for local and regional development. It is important for us to keep in touch with the CEMR.

We found out the European Commission gives away vouchers for high quality WIFI for a whole city. Siret has already applied for this funding. There were also presentations given on the European program “Europe for Citizens”. This was also very useful.

## 12. **Visit to the European Parliament in Brussels**

Presentation by Mario Calleja. Mario Calleja thanks the presidency for organising the visit to Meerssen and to the European Parliament in Brussels. The reason for this visit, decided upon in the GM in Bad Kötzing, was to discuss the situation of the refugees in Maltese waters, causing dangerous situations. The following MEP’s were involved in a fruitful discussion: Jeroen Lenaers (NL), Roberta Metsola (MT), Ivan Jakovčić (HR), Ashley Fox (UK) and assistant MEP Benjamin Boegel (DE).

The aim was to appeal to European leaders to support the Maltese territorial waters. Many views on the subject were shared. Two different categories of refugees are distinguished: those who flee their country for economic reasons, and those who flee to save their lives. The latter category has to be supported. They have difficulties to prove their identity. Malta is crowded by refugees and crime figures have risen, due to the large amount of refugees. Malta can not tackle this problem on its own.

## 13. **Reports of the GM workshops**

Outcome and presentation by the workshop leaders of workshop A, B and C.

### 13.1 **Workshop A “Language” by Kevin Waterfall (Sherborne)**

- We learned about compulsory language courses for immigrants in The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.
- All participant recognised that it is hard to learn a language that is different from your own and sometimes with a different alphabet.
- It may be difficult to overcome this, but the ones who really want to, will succeed.
- Differences in culture play a large part in integration.
- Perhaps we must accept the fact that there are people who do not want to integrate, who want to stay within their own group and culture, who do not want to learn the language.
- In Meerssen, Holstebro and Bad Kötzing volunteers organise “language-café’s”, where people practise speaking the language. These are important initiatives, but it is hard to find enough volunteers.

### 13.2 **Workshop B “Civil Society” by Linda Ashby (Sherborne)**

- In this workshop we talked about the NGO’s active in the field of refugees.
- The NGO’s that are involved need to be skilled in handling the issues of refugees.
- The refugees have dealt with traumatising situations and are very vulnerable.
- There is fear in the communities, due to bad consultation, that leads to refusal to help with the integration. The government has to improve consultation to prevent this from happening.

- The language problems are huge, the refugees need specialist help.
- NGO's, the local municipalities and the community needs to help in integrating these people in their new society.

### 13.3 **Workshop C “Culture” by Irene Raedts (Meerssen)**

- In this workshop we needed to write a postcard to someone in 2028, telling how we succeeded in solving the integration problem.
- A lot of ideas, that have also been discussed in the other workshops, were put forward here.
- Many people from different towns have shared experiences. Respect for each others cultures is important. We are proud of our democratic values, we expect them to be respected by the immigrants.

### 14. **Honorary vice presidents Honorary and ceremonial status of vice presidents**

- Last year in Bad Kötzing the presidency introduced the “honorary vice-president”.
- The status of a “honorary vice-president” will be that of a normal delegate.
- Last year the presidency forgot to honour Alphonse Henrar as “honorary vice-president”. Alphonse is given a present and thanked for his effort. Alphonse thanks the General Meeting.

### 15. **Program for further meetings**

We thank the Agros and Rovinj for putting themselves on the list for a future meeting and Marsaskala for being so flexible to change dates with Agros. The result is:

2019	Asikkala
2020	Skofja Loka
2021	Agros
2022	Marsaskala
2023	Rovinj

### 16. **Presentation of Asikkala 2019**

Asikkala presents itself with a presentation and a powerpoint. The main topic for the GM in 2019 will be following up on the GM in Siret: “Sustainable Development, Global Goals at Local Level”. Asikkala is looking forward to welcoming everybody and think together of how to bring Sustainable Development a step further on a local level.

### 17. **Skofja Loka 2020**

The GM in Skofja Loka will be held from May 7th to May 10th. Skofja Loka will organise a project in preparation of the theme and the GM (see 8.9.). All teachers and all schoolchildren from Skofja Loka will be involved in organising the GM.

### 18. **Any Other Business Time for questions and announcements**

- 18.1 Agros would like to organise the GM from Wednesday to Saturday. The GM has no problems with these weekdays.
- 18.2 Altea advocates a diploma for the teachers attending the Educational Meeting. The Presidency will implement this in 2019.
- 18.3 Bad Kötzing has added Tryavna and Rokiskis to the list of boundary stones that are placed in the Spa Garden of Bad Kötzing on June 9th.

- 18.4 Bellagio announces the next Sky Race on October 21st 2018.
- 18.5 Shane Smyth is the webmaster for the sport events on Douzelage.eu. He calls for the member towns to send their sport events to the secretariat of the Presidency.
- 18.6 Chojna points to the facility of the EU to give free train tickets in Europe to youngsters 18/19 years of age, Chojna also points to the importance of dissemination of results of EU projects. See point 7.
- 18.7 Houffalize stresses the importance to organise projects for citizens with citizens.
- 18.8 Judenburg announces that it is forming an active Douzelage committee, after a few years of less activity. They shall adopt Via Douzelage.  
Judenburg also stresses the importance of the use of hashtags online. An Instagram account will be created where the #Douzelage shall be used.
- 18.9 Marsaskala announces that local elections will be held in Marsaskala in 2019. Mario expresses the wish to be still present in the GM's after the elections.
- 18.10 Meerssen has distributed a booklet called "Europe calling". It is a project of the city of Maastricht and started in 2016. Douzelage Meerssen will participate in the project.  
Meerssen also points to the importance to use the results of the project Sustainable Development in 2015 in the preparation of and during the GM in Asikkala.
- 18.11 Rokiskis is Cultural City of Lithuania in 2019. Everyone is invited to the city and the events.
- 18.12 Rovinj announces that a delegation of Asikkala will visit Rovinj in September 2018.
- 18.13 Sesimbra expresses its intention to intensify their activities for Douzelage from now on.
- 18.14 Sherborne thanks Oxelösund for their excellent GM. Also young musicians from Sweden will come to Sherborne from 4 to 7 June. A delegation of Sherborne will be present at the Young Musicians contest in Granville. And the Morris Men from Sherborne will perform in Tryavna.
- 18.15 Sigulda will adopt Via Douzelage.
- 18.16 Susice will celebrate their 100 years anniversary in October 2018. They will also celebrate with a concert in Bad Kötzting.
- 18.17 Skofja Loka announces the 4 Bridges Run on June 16th. The book that has been discussed in Bad Kötzting last year has had mixed reactions from the member towns. Main problem are the costs. Skofja Loka shall carry the costs and the organisation, the member towns are asked to give their information and details of the towns.
- 18.18 Tryavna points to the EU-project Wifi4You, enabling towns to organise free wifi.  
Tryavna also organises a cultural event June 7th – 9th. Everyone is invited to join.
- 18.19 Zvolen stresses the importance of the theme of Asikkala, "Sustainable Development". Zvolen sends young musicians to Granville. At the end of May Zvolen celebrates its 750 year anniversary. Everyone is invited.

## 19. Education Meeting report

Bert van Doorn (Meerssen) gives a report on the Educational Meeting 2019.

The Educational Meeting was, as always, inspiring and the discussions branched off in every direction, as long it had anything to do with education. The main topic being Integration, but other subjects came by as well. Four workshops were held:

- E-Learning;
- Cultural education;
- Second language acquisition;
- How to decide what refugees already know if they don't speak your language.

The discussion focused on best practices, but also on the above themes in general, not specifically in relation to integration. The following things are decided upon:

- A Facebook-group where all ideas present and future will be shared;
- Practical information on all the schools will be published on the Douzelage.eu website.
- Three schools are involved in testing formative testing methods. All attendants will be kept informed on the projects and the outcome and conclusions.

A new chair for the Educational Meeting has been elected. Pirjo Ala-Hemmilä (Asikkala) has been elected as chairwoman for the Educational Meeting, Liliana Mocrei (Siret) shall assist the chair.

Pirjo thanks the General Meeting and invites all towns to join the next Educational Meeting in Asikkala. The president thanks Bert van Doorn for his work as a (vice) chairman for the Educational Meeting for the past five years.

## 20. Youth Meeting report

Elisabeth Does gives a report on the Youth Meeting 2019. The youth present on this meeting in Oxelösund has prepared their discussions with homework on best practices concerning integration of refugees. The attendants have also thought about practices that did not work and practices that did work and might work in other towns. The list consists of the following practices and ideas:

- Language lessons;
- Information on cultures and inhabitants;
- Lectures in schools;
- Conventions for NGO's;
- Common activities with refugee children;
- Free computer courses and first aid qualifications;
- Language cafe's;
- Peer mentoring programs;
- Cultural cuisine: restaurants run by refugees (startup grants);
- Compulsory volunteering by students, enabling them to earn extra credits from their school or university.

To be able to do all this the following is needed:

- Funding;
- Education on taxes, guidance, cooking training;
- Volunteers;
- Mentors;
- Compulsory volunteering/extra credits;
- Locations, venues;
- Time;
- Materials.

The youth has also engaged in a social media competition, competing for the best way to promote Douzelage in social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, hashtags), raise its social profile. The winner will receive a small prize.

All participants were asked to write a postcard with information on their towns. The aim was to exchange postcards in the meeting. The same was done with social media profiles, and traditional food from their home towns.

The youth also engaged in a game called Limit 20. It is a game about inequality, manipulation and discrimination. Activities were deployed to explore discrimination and exclusion. It was exciting and fun, and the teams had to play 8 rounds. The issues addressed were:

- Discrimination;
- Exclusion;
- Inequality;
- Power relations in society;
- Social conflict.

The objectives were:

- To explore power and its dynamics;
- To explore injustice and discrimination;
- To work on attitudes key to develop social peace and cohesion, solidarity and empathy.

Ryan Portelli (Marsaskala) reports on the elections for a new DouzYouth Committee. The aim was holding elections this year, but it was decided that during the coming year more youth are involved in the committee work, and that candidates are brought forward in June. During the coming year the committee shall create a clear organisational framework so it is clear for everyone what the tasks will be and who is candidate for what position. The elections will be held in 2019.

The youth that has come to this year's meeting has partly also attended the previous meeting(s). Elisabeth and Ryan are very enthusiastic about the youth from this year's delegations.

The Youth Meeting has also decided that the DouzYouth website will be an integral part of the Douzelage.eu website instead of creating a separate one.

Elisabeth and Ryan thank Oxelösund for their support, also Annigje Kruytbosch and Mario Calleja from Marsaskala.

The diploma's are signed and will be distributed among the youth delegates. Elisabeth asks for a questionnaire/review on the meeting. She wants the attendants to fill it in before they return home.

## 21. Questionnaire

The questionnaire attached to the agenda has been handed in to Femie, Secretary Presidency, by 12 towns.

## 22. Closing the General Meeting 2018

The president closes the General Meeting 2018 and expresses her gratitude for a fantastic program by Oxelösund and the way all delegations have dealt with the themes of this GM.