

REPORT
2ND DOUZYOUTH MEETING
MARSASKALA, MALTA
8TH-11TH FEB 2018

The DouzYouth planning meeting was a great success; mixing ideas and integration with government visits and culture.

Participants arrived on Thursday night and were picked up by Ryan Portelli and Charlot Mifsud. We settled into our accommodation and then went for dinner at a local restaurant.

On Friday we had breakfast at the apartment and left early on the bus to Valletta to Meet with Roberta Buhagiar, at the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security. We discussed the four open centres in Malta for refugees, and the Government Integration Strategy; including how it has helped migrants and refugees integrate within Malta.

We also talked about how refugees commonly came to Malta, and how this has changed over the years. This summer Malta once again expects more boat arrivals of refugees; but stresses that they have taken all of their allocation quota required and will struggle to cope with the predicted influx.



In 2015 the legislation in Malta for refugees was amended, and the detention policy reformed; meaning that refugees are now only held on medical grounds. This proved to be very positive, and refugees were moved to new open centres, integrated into schools. This made them feel less trapped, more accepted and more independent in their communities.

Another positive element included the termination of a resettlement program by the USA which proved to work in Malta's favour.

The USA set up a resettlement program in 2007/2008 that meant that migrants, after spending a few years in Malta were able to relocate to the USA. Many migrants and refugees favoured this, and only saw Malta as a temporary or transit period in their lives. This meant that they failed to see why they should integrate with the Maltese way of life, as they were anticipated only to be moved on to their new permanent residence only a few years later.

The USA used to take 300-400 refugees per year on this program.

In April last year the USA stopped its resettlement program, meaning that the refugees that landed in Malta, were potentially to remain on the island permanently. After initially being very agitated and distressed at the situation, the migrants eventually came to accept that their permanent home would likely, now become Malta.

Following this realisation the Maltese people and government have seen a very positive change in how migrants and refugees have seen Malta, and have started to become more integrated, with less resistance.

Refugees and Migrants have, themselves set up support groups and communities to help their fellow men and women. They have started up NGO's on Migrant Women's Rights, a Sudan Community, SPARK 15; supporting young refugees, and many more. The Home Affairs in Malta and Agencies that work with refugees have invited them to speak up personally about what they require, and different ways and ways in which they can help.

Another point made was that negative views of refugees were often, mainly if not all due to media and the general public being uninformed, uneducated and lacking physical contact with refugees. Maltese citizens that were regularly in contact with refugees and migrants were much more likely to have a positive experience of integrating, interacting and being accepting of them.

Education is given to migrants and refugees within Malta through a Migrant Learners Unit. This unit educates primary and secondary children, helping them to adapt to the education system before integration into mainstream schools.

The Government in Malta meets with all NGO's individually, to find the best practices and ways in which they can help. Refugee Service Malta deals with Psycho Social Services, Legal Services and Pastoral Care. Advoce focuses on Advocacy and Support. Copin works with unaccompanied minors. Malta Emigrate Commision deals with incoming integration and accommodation. There are many more NGO's within Malta that play a great part in helping refugees and migrants. Many like SPARK 15, were set up by refugees themselves.

The LEAP Project, started as just that, a project; however it was so successful that it was extended and taken on by the Government. The LEAP Project was there to increase social support for refugees and migrants at a community level. We were very grateful for the chance to have such an insight into the refugee crisis at a government level in Malta.

At lunch time we walked into the centre of Valletta and settled at a table indoors, where we all had our packed lunches. After Lunch we got at our agenda and discussed our finding from the morning. We also discussed the logistics of the meetings in Sweden; ice breakers, games and workshops that best fitted the message that we wanted to convey to youth. We looked through various books and resources that I had acquired from a previous project in Slovenia on Democratic Citizenship. It gave great examples of workshops to run for the 18-30 age range on youth in conflict and human rights. We read through a selection of relevant and bookmarked ideas, and as a group decided on the most appropriate ones.

We talked about the pre meeting research that we would send out to participants, and what we would need in order to run the meeting successfully. This included internet access, a projector, meeting room, pens, paper, flip chart, good organisation and preparation of the rules of the games.



After a great morning of successful meeting we headed to our cultural activities that Ryan had kindly organised. This included Valletta State Rooms and Palace, and a walk around the town. We had a great time, and took some wonderful pictures.



By 5pm we were back to the board room! We had a meeting with Mario Calleja, the Mayor of Marsaskala in the Town Council Offices to discuss our findings from the meetings earlier in the day. It was great to see him, and we discussed in detail what we had learned over coffee, biscuits and learning about some of the town's other proposals that were taking place this year.



At 7pm we got back to our apartment where we cooked pasta, drank wine and listened to Charlot's incredible stories of the past, and what it was like to teach back in the days of little health and safety, lots of laughter and plenty of respect - or you would in Charlot's words, be out of the window!

At Saturday's morning meeting we discussed Youth Training Courses that were available to us, how to apply, and how to receive funding. We looked at Salto Youth and other online means of applying, and gaining knowledge in subjects that interested us. We looked at KA1 and KA2 and ideas and projects that we would like to implement. We discussed ideas on how to get young people interested in Youth Politics, Human Rights, and Activism within Europe.



We discussed post brexit what challenges we may face and the options available to us within Douzelage and the EU, including the difference between an EU and European Citizen. This included what funds would be available to the UK once we left. Quite possibly the UK would become, as with many balkan countries a partner organisation that had an allocated fund separate from the EU that would go towards Erasmus projects.



After our coffee break we continued with our agenda; funding and fundraising: options available to us, Erasmus, the European Social Fund, Europe for Citizens. We discussed local organisation that we could give talks for such as Eurvoice, European Youth Parliament, NGO's, Schools, Universities and Events. We spoke about funding and fundraising ideas, and ways of generating money for DouzYouth to push our work to higher levels.

We discussed how to raise our profile, media, marketing, promotion and proposals to put forward at the AGM. Ovidiu Oniciuc from Romania very kindly took some great photos of the Committee for promotional purposes, and of the meeting throughout. Luka Nunar, from Slovenia Skyped us throughout the

majority of the meeting, giving great insights, ideas and positive feedback. Luka and I will meet mid February to discuss the meeting in detail, and continue to plans logistics of the meeting.

For lunch we ate at the apartment, followed by a well deserved outing to the beautiful Vittoriosa, Cospicua, Kalkara and Senglia. Buildings, boats, still blue seas and brilliant company. The storms were over and the sun was out. We got some great pictures and historical facts from our hosts Ryan and Charlot.



Once we got back to the apartment we spent 45 minutes writing up reports, in English and our mother tongue to be distributed once back home.

We decided to risk it and head to Valletta for the Carnival, knowing that it may have been cancelled due to the storm. We risked it and headed there on the bus. There was dancing and costumes but no floats - what a shame. However we hit 'The Pub' in Valletta for a pint then headed back to Marsaskala for Pizza at Pizza by Luca - the best pizza around! We had a great evening together with the locals.

Sunday and we're ready to go; after a good lie in! We had a lazy breakfast, packed and made lunches for our flights home

What a great meeting! We look forward to running a great Youth Meeting for you all in Sweden in May!

Thank you to everyone in the Douzelage that made this meeting possible;

Annijie Kruytbosch (Douzelage President) for the ongoing support and guidance toward the Youth section; including financing towards the meeting.

Marcus Ainley and Sherborne Douzelage for the support, guidance and financing towards the meeting.

Mario Calleja for making time to meet with us and discuss the project, and for financing towards the meeting.

Charlot Mifsud for transport, advice, great stories and company!

Ryan Portelli (Youth Vice President) for organisation of meetings, cultural activities, and transport.

Participants Johan Petersson (Sweden) and DouzYouth Committee Members; Sabine Birzniece(Latvia) Ovidiu Oniciuc (Romania), Luka Nunar (Slovenia) for their fantastic contribution to the meeting.

- Elizabeth Does (Douzelage Youth President)