



douzelage.org

European Town Twinning

AGROS : ALTEA : ASIKKALA : BAD KÖTZTING : BELLAGIO : BUNDORAN : CHOJNA
GRANVILLE : HOLSTEBRO : HOUFFALIZE : JUDENBURG : KÖSZEG
MARSASKALA : MEERSSEN : NIEDERANVEN : OXELÖSUND
PRIENAI : PREVEZA : SESIMBRA : SHERBORNE
SKOFIA LOKA : SIGULDA : SIRET : SUŠICE
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DOUZELAGE - EUROPEAN TOWN TWINNING

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39th DOUZELAGE CONFERENCE

SIGULDA

24th April – 27th April 2014

MINUTES



PARTICIPANTS

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Piret Kaasiku
Üllar Vahtramäe



SIGULDA

Uldis Elksnitis

1. GENERAL MEETING

- Welcome speeches by Mayor of Sigulda and President of Douzelage.
 - Discussion.

1. Business Matters

1) Approval of the Bellagio GM minutes

- approval of the minutes of the Bellagio GM 9th – 12th May 2013,
- approval of the Education Committee Report,
- approval of the Youth Workshop Report;

All three reports were approved. None wanted to add anything about those reports.

2) Approval of the accounts 2013

- the Douzelage accounts will be checked by two Honorary Auditors;

The Douzelage accounts were checked by two Honorary Auditors. They informed that everything is right with the accounts. The accounts were approved by general assembly.

3) Annual Douzelage membership (*Annex 1*).

- it is proposed to remain at 300 EUR for the annual fee according to the decision taken in Sesimbra;

The proposal was approved. The annual fee is still 300 EUR per each town.

4) Simultaneous translation equipment.



- it is proposed to remain at 50 EUR as the annual contribution for maintenance and transport of the equipment according to the decision taken in Oxelösund;

The proposal was accepted.

5) Programme for further meetings.

- a) Spring 2015 Siret,
- b) Spring 2016 Tryavna,
- c) Spring 2017 Marsaskala.

New host towns after 2017 are welcome.

There are some changes for further meetings. Actual dates and towns for coming meetings which were accepted after the discussion:

- ✓ Spring 2015 Siret
- ✓ Spring 2016 Tryavna
- ✓ Spring 2017 Bad Kotzting
- ✓ Spring 2018 no town has volunteered yet
- ✓ Spring 2019 Marsaskala
- ✓ Spring 2020 Skofja Loka

6) The search of a new Finnish town (*Annex 2*).

Mike Balfour presented his activities during the process of searching for a new Finnish partner.

Asikkala was formally voted into the Douzelage unanimously and became an official member of the organization.

2. Projects and activities

- 1) Projects and activities since the meeting in Bellagio (*Annex 3*);



Bellagio

29th March 2013

Candidacy of Bellagio's Municipality for the Award "Gianfranco Martini", promoted by A.I.C.C.R.E. in order to reward excellent results concerning activities of Town Twinning and European Citizenship in 2010/2011/2012.

24 municipalities participated at this project.

Bellagio won the Award for important activities into the Douzelage.

On December 2013 the Mayor, Mr. Angelo Barindelli, the President of Bellagio Douzelage Committee, Mr.

Luca Leoni and Mrs. Donatella Gandola, Twinning Town Manager, attended the award ceremony which took place at the headquarters of the Lombardy Region.

9/12 May 2013

38th General Meeting Douzelage in Bellagio attended by n. 22 Delegations.

August 2013

Hospitality to Granville's delegation visiting Bellagio for their summer holidays.

September 2013

- The school of Bellagio participated at the Project Historical Highlights, arranged by Meerssen, with the history "The bread stone".
- The school of Bellagio participated at the Project Metaphora Word Game, arranged by Meerssen.
- Mountain Running Event "Da Kine vom Kaitersberg".
Franco Sancassani, athlete from Bellagio, winner of the Marathon of the Alps and World Champion in the discipline of rowing, represented Bellagio and Italy at the competition Mountain Running "Da Kine vom Kaitersberg" organized in the twin town of Bad Kotzting in Bavaria, on the border with Czech Republic.
Franco arrived in 2nd position and was the first of his category at the competition which was held Saturday September 15th.

Thanks Franco for having represented Bellagio at his best!

Thanks to our friends in Bad Kotzting (D) too, who hosted the event and invited us to take part in it.

For info <http://www.dakinevomkaitersberg.de/index.php/english-version-race-facts>

Dicembre 2013

- We replaced the old tourist signs of "Douzelage" as they reported only 12 towns. The new ones are now installed at the entrance of our town Bellagio.
- Bellagio and Civenna, a neighboring village of just over 800 inhabitants, have joined together giving rise to a new municipality that has kept the name Bellagio and which now has a population of tot. 3.800 inhabitants.
The new town of Bellagio succeed in the Friendship Covenant entered by Civenna with the city of Friedberg (D) in Bavaria.
Following the merger, the Town Council has fallen and Bellagio is currently governed by a Prefectural Commissioner until the elections of the new Mayor, scheduled for May 25, 2014.



Chojna

1. Participation in a running event in Meerssen.
2. Leonardo da Vinci project for hotel management students. 8 students from Chojna had a work experience in hotels in Marsaskala and Sherborne (summer 2013).
3. Focus on quality, Youth in action project. Douzelage Association in Chojna organized a training course for teachers, youth leaders and youth workers from Sherborne, Koszeg, Siret, Marsaskala and Chojna (August 2013).
4. Comenius Regio project: 'Community school, school in community'. Local governments, associations and schools from Chojna and Marsaskala participated in project activities in Chojna and Marsaskala.
5. Members of Douzelage Association in Chojna took part in a running event in Bad Koetzting.
6. Leonardo da Vinci project organized by Secondary School from Chojna and coordinated by J. Salamończyk was awarded the first prize in the national competition called Eduinspiration for the best work experience project in Poland (November 2013).
7. Europe locally: hopes and fears, Polish – Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund project coordinated by Chojna. 10 students from Chojna visited Prienai (June 2013).
8. Douzelage exhibition was opened for inhabitants of Chojna (January 2014).
9. 'Youth – Participation – Citizenship', Youth in action project coordinated by Chojna with young participants from Koszeg and Marsaskala started on 1st March 2014.
10. The Comenius Regio and Leonardo da Vinci projects were presented to the delegates.

Granville

May 2013 - Trip to Brussels by Youth Town Council members and disadvantaged families, to visit European Parliament.

July 2013 - A student from Susice spent a month as a guest in a family in Granville.

August 2013 - Granville / Preveza - group of young people from Preveza in Granville.

February 2014 - 5 students from Sherborne participating in Granville Carnival.

Holstebro

From the 27th of August until the 30th of August 2013 we had visitors from Sherborne.

The four guests stayed overnight in private houses, and the Volunteer center offered an exciting programme in cooperation with Vinderup Active Center.

The programme consisted of a visit to Café Butterfly in Colstruphus, which is place with aid for people suffering from dementias. The house is run by volunteers.

The Volunteer center presented several projects for the guests.

The Jolly group from Dagcenter Sønderjylland also performed to the visitors. The Jolly Group consists of elder people playing theater, and the inspiration of the plays comes from their own lives and experiences.

We talked about the possibility of further cooperation and two projects were pointed out. The first project is cooperation with The Jolly Group, who is welcomed in Sherborne in order to inspire and pass on their experiences. The other project is IT-Friend. The concept of IT-Friend is volunteers assisting elder people at home with IT.

If a project similar to IT-Friend is started in Sherborne, it could grow in the future and involve the



complete network of Douzelage due to the fact, that all over EU the challenge for elder people in relation to digitalization remains the same.

Participation in Sherborne Music Project

The Music School of Holstebro applied to be a part of the Sherborne Music Project, but as Sherborne didn't get the funding, the number of participating towns were cut down to those, who were first to join in. And that wasn't Holstebro.

Pupils visits to Sherborne and Kötzing

According to the school of commerce pupils have been visiting Sherborne as well as Cham/Kötzing. The Douzelage-group have tried to get more information from the teachers but without success.

Judenburg

In collaboration with our twin town Massa e Cozzile in Tuscany we organized a beerfestival in July. We are also working on an illustrated book, which is produced by amateur photographers from the two cities.

We organized the event „Douzelage meets Zirbenland“ in September 2013. We invited music and dance groups and choirs from our partner towns Zvolen, Susice and Skofja Loka to this event. It took place on our main square in the evening.

Two athletes accepted the challenge and took part at the 1st International Kaitersberg Race in Bad Kötzing. This year we'll send more athletes of our triathlon club.

Our mayor honored Willi Schnedl for the representation of our town in the last 12 years with the historical ring of Judenburg in the presence of his friends.

Judenburg will take part at a project of Skofja Loka. The project „School of renovation“, will connect education and culture by promoting old skills and old crafts at cultural events, festivals and workshops.

Marsaskala

European Maritime Day

On the 19th, 20th and 21st May, 2013 the Marsaskala Local Council participated in the European Maritime Day. For the occasion an anchor monument has been inaugurated. The Anchor was donated to the Council by a resident from Marsaskala.

Apart from exhibiting various fishing tools and equipment in connection with the sea, a model of Marsaskala Bay and charts with childrens' painting were done by the school children. An excellent show was set up by Flyboards Malta where spectators were given different displays with Fly Boards. Many people attended also for a demonstration of a Cyber and a racing competition in which Jet skis were involved. After the demonstration medals and mementos were given to the participants. It was a



lovely evening where those present really enjoyed them-selves.

ARTS IN THE OPEN – JUNE 2013

After the success in celebrating the Malta Maritime Day in Marsaskala last May, Marsaskala Local council, prepared another event for the Locals and foreigners which we feel was another huge success. The amount of people who attended encourages us more to prepare these events. The feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29th marks an important event in the calendar of Maltese. Maltese Talents were exhibited in Marsaskala Promenade amongst them were artists with their paintings, handmade necklaces, filigree, pottery, handmade cards, beautiful statues carved in wood and others sculptured in Maltese stone. We had also children painting, singing, dancing and even face painting.

A Tunisian Village was made up and inaugurated by the Tunisian Minister, Tunisian Ambassadress and the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Hon. Roderick Galdes. The Tunisians' gave us one of their traditional but stunning shows in dancing whilst playing music. They also had food tasting and other colourful stands with pottery and handmade things amongst others.

On 30th June, as part from 'Arts in the open', a guided tour of four of Marsaskala Chapels and niches was also organised. The guide gave us briefly, use-ful information about the arrival of the Knights in Malta and other information on the 4 Chapels that we visited, namely, St Anthony of Padua, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Light, Holy Rosary Chapel and St. Cajetan of Thiene Chapel. Other information given were about 2 niches, one of St Thomas and the other of St Spiridione and about the 3 crosses monument which is near the Chapel of Our Lady of the Light.

Agrarian Evening in Marsaskala – 10th August 2013

Marsaskala Local Council together with the Cultural Committee organ-ised and Agrarian Evening on Saturday 10th August in Dun Tarcis Agius Square. Fruit, vegetables, olive oil, Maltese goat's cheese, honey, wine and hand creams made from herbs were exhibited and sold to the public.

Meerssen

- April 2013– March 2014
Members' meetings on 17 April 2013, 11 December 2013.
During monthly meetings of the activities committee, projects were started by Meerssen, or we decided to join other communities' projects.
Projects/ activities the committee worked on and/ or discussed, are:
 - Metaphora wordgame, for primary schools;
 - Historical Highlights, to compile and produce a book on historic events in partner towns, for secondary schools and adults;
 - The Douzelage work of art in the centre of Meerssen (working title: Art Tree);
 - Hosting (marathon) runners from other towns (Chojna this year) during Meerssen Marathon, for adults;
 - Getting Scouts from greater Meerssen in touch with Sherborne's and other towns';
 - Possible participation of basketball team in sports meet in Preveza, June 2014;



- Participation in secondary schools' project in Susice (planned June 2014);
- Application for communal project 'Listening to Grandparents' for 12-13 year-olds. (was not approved);
- Preparatory visit to Houffalize, to get together another Benelux meeting (November 2013);
- Confirmation from local school to join Houffalize's youngsters at the Adeps centre in 2015 for sports and cultural exchange;-
- Attendance at ministry information session on Erasmus+ programme (February 2014);

Sherborne

2013		
July 7-14	Volunteering Meeting in Chojna	Students from Sherborne took part
July 23-27	Polish Walkers came to Sherborne	Joined by Douzelage walkers
July 26	Hog Roast at Sandford Orcas	Polish walkers joined us
July-August	Students in Sherborne	Learning skills at local hotels
August	Italian Student came to Sherborne	Exchange visit
Aug 17-28	"Pelican" Sailing Ship	13 Students sailed to France and back, learning sailing skills
August 27-30	Holstebro Senior Volunteering	Delegation of 4 from Sherborne to Holstebro for exchange of ideas on volunteering with the elderly
September 15-19	Holstebro Students visit Sherborne	20 students spent time at local schools businesses and with social events
October 3	Paddy Ashdown talk about "Cockleshell Heroes"	Fund raising event
2014		
February	Granville Carnaval	Took 5 students from Gryphon School to take part in five day visit
March	Young Musician of the Year	Heats followed by Concert of Winners

Türi

May 2013 – May 2014

- International Newsletter. Türi wrote an article with photos in Douzelage newsletter.
- Sherborne Young Musician event "M4EU Music for You" Türi will participate

On 15th-20th July 2014 four young musicians from Türi Music School with one leader will visit Sherborne.

- April 24-27 five person taking part in General Meeting in Sigulda.



2) Presentation of new projects and activities (*Annex 4*).

- Sport and cultural stay in Adeps in 2015 (Houffalize),
- Educational support for school children in Houffalize.

Houffalize represented two projects. The first one Sport and cultural stay in Adeps in June 2015. It will be from 08th to 12nd June 2015. The project is for 75 children plus adults coming with them. The age is from 11 to 14 years old. The price of the stay will be 120 EUROS per child for the whole week. If any town is interested in this project should contact Houffalize by 1st September.

The second project *Educational support for school children in Houffalize* is for young people. There was made a brochure for headmasters, teachers and children from 10 to 12 years old. On the second part of May are going to be special classes, 28 one hour sessions. The project is mainly meant to the pupils of the town to inform them about the activities of youth and of older people that are engaged in the realization of the Douzelage: the exchange of ideas, experience and friendship links to help them discovering and understanding each others.

Bad Kotzting is inviting for taking part in marathon there in September 2014. They are offering staying for 2 nights for free and an entrance to spa. Last time people from Chojna, Susice, Judenburg and from Bellagio took part in running in Bad Kotzting. It is a great experience and great challenge. Bellagio also is planning running event in coming September and invites to Italy.

Meerssen also organizes running events and invites runners to them. There are 5kms, 10 kms, half marathon and whole marathon distance.

Granville invites in February for a very famous event – carnival. Last year students from Sherborne joined the carnival. Granville offers free accommodation for 3-4 day and absolute fun.

Skofja Loka also invites for their activities. There is also a run in Skofja Loka in mid of June. Next event is huge and takes part in 2015, March 21 – April 12 – Passion Play. Warm invitations to share this experience and come.

Mr. J. Salamończyk asked the people who presented the proposals to send them by the end of next week to the secretary. Information will be sent to all towns and put on the website.

Next future project is from Chojna. It is about the youth unemployment. Mr. Salamończyk would like to invite 9 towns to Erasmus + project. We will need 9 towns, Chojna will be the coordinator – said J. Salamończyk. The project is for 2 years, is under the action *Strategic Partnership youth*. It is also a very good opportunity to get money because each town gets 250 EURO every month for the implementation and management of the project. The project will involve quite a lot of work.

Intellectual output of the project is needed to have. We will probably have special Internet platform where students after logging in can find information, for example how to prepare themselves for the job interview, how to write CV, what are the ways for searching for jobs and so on. This issue is at the moment is at the top of priority list in Brussels. Youth unemployment in small places is a very hot issue all over Europe. We also probably publish a kind of guide in 9 or 10 languages. PIC numbers are needed from all partners. We will send you information how to get PIC number. PIC is needed if you would like to take part in any EU project. This number can be for a town or for NGO. The budget for the project can be up to 150,000 Euro per year. For 2 years it could be 300 000 EUROS. The program is quite complicated, there are a lot of work, you need to learn a lot to get funds.



Mr. Salamończyk wanted to add some comments about projects as a person who got about 500 000 EUROS from the projects he wrote in last five years. First thing it is impossible to send any written drafts to Brussels to receive comments any more. You can talk on the phone, you can ask but not send drafts. Secondly, choosing the right action and problems. He discussed with Kevin, Sigulda, Siret and it would be much better to apply for Europe for Citizens network of twinning towns. Last year they went to Brussels and they heard that such big organization like Douzelage should apply for network of twinning towns. It means there is less competition, more money. Of course it is a bit more difficult. It is needed to have cooperation of the towns. But it is possible to finance two general meetings. I know that Siret will apply for 1.2. Secondly, even good written project can be rejected. Everyone has to have this kind of knowledge. Sometimes it could be better for a town to pay for specialist agency for writing a project. It is also possible. You can pay 5000 Euros to get 15000 Euros. You can have a contract with agency, you can discuss the costs, negotiate. If the project is rejected formally it means the agency which writes the application will not get any money. If it is accepted formally but we don't have the grant you can pay certain amount of money. It is quite common thing. Next thing, meetings of associations like ours are not supported. We can have money for project for example discussing healthy problems. It is good to try to get money from different sources. And there is a real possibility to get money. There are a lot of actions paid let say 50%, 75%. Those actions are not very popular because NGOs do not have money to cover the rest. But town might have the money. It is still better to get 75% then nothing. For example at the moment we have a project with Koszeg and Marsaskala. It is Youth in Action :Youth in Democracy” and we got 75% of the whole budget.

I will talk about Erasmus. Erasmus is just starting. It is always very important to apply, there is very limited competition and there are not national restrictions. For example for Leonardo da Vinci project there was a kind of restriction that the same students cannot participate the following year. For Erasmus now there are no restrictions at all. You can have the same students every year. There might be restriction in 2-3 years time. Another thing, you had projects and now with Erasmus you can have the same thing again because it is something new. We had a very interesting project with Susice about women. I am going to apply with the same project in October. There are some differences but it is the same project and is completely legal. I was told I had done so many interesting things. Now I have new students and it is something new for them.

Mike Balfour said that Siret has applied for a meeting in Siret but it would be wise to advice Tryavna and Bad Kotzting how to apply.

Cezary said that the program Europe for Citizens is the same, it is not changed. It is still possible to get money from the programme. There are some programmes which are on the top and we should try to apply for them. We also have to look for priorities for each year separately. In 2014 it is European Citizenship. Just go on the website and check. It has to be done. It is legal to have two projects in the same time and the same place. It is not legal to have support from two sources for the same project.



3. Founding opportunities for Douzelage – European funds in years 2014 – 2020 Erasmus + and Europe for citizens

Some old programs: Comenius, Youth in action, Grundtvig and there was Erasmus for university students. Now all of them are in one basket and it is Erasmus +. The first idea to start the program was 3-4 years ago. In Brussels they prepared the name and they prepared the first idea of the programme. There were many countries, agencies against the name because they thought it was associated only with universities. After many discussions it is Erasmus +. There is separate budget line for informal education.

The EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2014-2020

Erasmus+: Why a new approach?

• Education, training and youth: a changing landscape

- Deep economic crisis and high youth unemployment
- Vacancies exist, but skills gaps and low employability of graduates
- Growing requirement for high skilled jobs
- A global competition for talent: internationalisation of education
- Extraordinary broadening of learning offer and potential of ICT
- Complementarity between formal, informal and non formal learning
- Need for closer links with world of work

First time there is an opportunity to have sport projects. But there are not money for professional sport but just for ordinary people who would like to take up sport but all sport projects are centralized so you have to apply directly to Brussels if you would like to have money for the sport event.

Erasmus+: a new approach

• We need:

- Closer links between programme and policy objectives
- More synergies and interaction between formal, informal and non-formal learning
- More cross-sectoral partnerships with world of work
- A streamlined, simpler architecture
- Stronger focus on EU added value

What's new? (1)

• A single integrated programme

- Covering all education, training and youth sectors in a holistic manner, and adding sport
- Bringing 7 existing programmes into a single coherent framework
- Seeking to achieve greater systemic impact

What's new? (2)

• Substantial simplifications

- Fewer calls and large reduction in number of actions
- More user friendly programme, easier to navigate round
- Simplified financial management: greater use of unit costs

• A substantial budget increase

- 40% increase, benefiting all sectors
- Additional funding from external action instruments to support



international dimension of higher education

Erasmus+ is divided into three groups: 1. Learning mobility of individuals 2. Cooperation for innovation and Exchange of good practices 3. Support for policy reform.

3 main types of Key Action:

Learning mobility of individuals (KA1)

- Staff mobility, in particular for teachers, lecturers, school leaders and youth workers
- Mobility for higher education students, vocational education and training students
- Student loan guarantee
- Joint Master degrees
- Mobility for higher education for EU and non- E beneficiaries
- Volunteering and youth Exchange

Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices (KA2)

- Strategic partnerships between education/training or youth organisations and other relevant actors
- Large scale partnerships between education and training establishments and business: Knowledge Alliances & Sector Skills alliances
- IT-Platforms including e-Twinning
- Cooperation with third countries and focus on neighbourhood countries

Support for policy reform (KA3)

- Open method of Coordination
- Prospective initiatives
- EU recognition tools
- Dissemination & exploitation
- Policy dialogue with stakeholders, third countries and international organizations

4. Douzelage structure and organization

1) Activities of the Presidency between General Meetings of Douzelage

Mike Balfour was very active in looking for a new Finnish partner.

Cezary: I concentrated on Erasmus + program. I took part in three or four meetings in National Agency in Warsaw. I tried to get as much as possible information about that new program and pass the information to you and try to share the knowledge. Yesterday Holstebro told me they would like to join my new project. If somebody would like to join us please inform me. I am also very happy to help and assist if you have any idea, new initiatives, new projects. I found out that there are a lot of initiatives that you do not talk about them. You did a lot of interesting things, you talked about them at the restaurants in the evenings but you do not talked about them here. Sometimes people don't know about that. There was also o kind of informal discussion about the structure of GM, what can we change in the way we work together.

2) Douzelage activities in towns, contact people, local committees.

Jeremy: The strength of the Douzelage is very, very remarkable. Many people never thought it could work. But it has and it goes working. But I think there are problems about communication particularly during general meetings. In the past when there were twelve Douzelage towns we met twice a year, we knew each other, same kind of people came and it was very easy to communicate and to discuss around the table. But now we are bigger, there are only one general meeting and it is much harder to know each other and have kind of everything which we had before. More people now come to GM who never been before. Most people operate in a second language and it could be a problem. How to make things better? Maybe at the GM we have one delegate from the town sitting



around the table. It can make the whole thing much, much easier to communicate. We can be divided into small groups and everyone has bigger chance to talk. The second idea that because we have only one meeting a year maybe there is an argument for a intermeeting. Just three or four towns. Not a big meeting, three delegates, two nights. It would be very inexpensive. How can we organize our geographic groups? That could be flexible. It might help communication. When we meet people, when we talk, see our faces more ideas come. It could be discussed at the next general meeting.

Cezary: Well, the general assembly is the most important body in Douzelage. So, whatever you decide I will try to do in the future. Also it is very important to bring all towns to general meetings. It is basic thing before we start having additional things we have to have the basic things. I know it is difficult to bring all towns, we will discuss the dates, problems, final exams and so on. Last year we were talking about local committees in towns, we tried to have wider perspective. Secondly, sometimes I send emails three, four times and I wait five months to get answer. These are very basic things. Can we try to work a bit harder inside the towns about Douzelage? We have the Douzelage exhibition. It was in Zvolen, in Susice, in Brussels, in Chojna. The exhibition is at the moment in Koszeg. I will prepare a new part for our Finnish partner. If anybody would like to have the exhibition just contact me and contact Koszeg now. Having the exhibition is a very good opportunity to invite people from the town, to invite the headteachers, teachers, youth workers, to talk about Douzelage and try to get some new people. We also need contact person from each town so please check your name, emails address, phone number, address on an contact list. You can see all contacts on our website after log in.

Another proposal, I asked you to send a list of activities. We try to inform you as early as possible. Many towns did not send anything, many towns just did it during the meeting, it is OK. It will be really easier and better if we do things on time, if we communicate a bit better. We had a very good lesson from the young people today. They talk mostly about communication which is the most important issue in Douzelage now, in associations. We should try to work on the channels of communication. For Douzelage we need to work with local people. And another thing, Jeremy told about taking part, talking during general meetings. A lot of us are not perfect in English. So, could you just do not be afraid, just speak openly, we will help each other. Be more open, do not hesitate, just talk, discuss.

Annigje: I think we are not all fluent in English but also is the number. We are sitting around the table about forty people, I suggest maximum 8-10 people, people are more free to speak up and be maybe more creative. We think it could stimulate more interactivity between the towns.

Not everyone agrees with the idea. Some people say as a non native speaking English person I find it difficult, quite hard to sit alone during the whole general meeting. I would hate to sit here alone for two whole days. Maybe it is difficult to understand but for all of us for whom it is a second language we need a partner.

Cezary: there are some people who do not speak English at all and they need assist.

Holstebro: I do not like the idea to sit alone at general meeting. Maybe we can cut down general meeting to one day and another day we can be divided into small groups and discuss interesting topic.

Cezary: during general meeting we must have all towns sitting around the table, there must be something like that.

Jeremy, if you wish to have some additional things I will help you if you have let say twenty emails where people support you and give you topics to be discussed. I will give about eight weeks for getting feedback. If you want to change something we can ask the towns to consider it and after eight weeks I am waiting for information.

Vera: agree with Cezary that we should be more disciplined. I also agree with Mette because I have been sitting here alone many times and it is terrible. Small committees for some countries can be not cheap. There are long distances between towns. And we have sometimes difficulties to find a teacher for education meeting. It wouldn't work.



The idea presented by Jeremy to make small Douzelage groups and organize more often small meetings was not accepted.

It wouldn't be cheap, some towns are far away from other towns, sometimes it is difficult to find teachers or students who can take part in meetings.

Cezary: There is something that we have to discuss. Now I am going to ask you about dates of the general meeting. Last year many people said: this time is not good, maybe autumn, maybe something. It would be very difficult to find any date which would be suitable for all of us. It is almost not possible. I would like to hear from you your opinions. Should it be spring? End of April? May? Autumn? It is up to us.

-We would like spring, it would be lovely in May because we start our holiday, May would be perfect.

- Turi- end of April is better than May.

- Sigulda- end of April.

- Susice – in May we have exams so it is postpone to April but sometimes it doesn't fit either, for me it would be better in autumn because we do not have so many activities in autumn.

- Koszeg – May is difficult for us because so many teachers have exams. Our opinion is beginning of April or rather autumn.

- Sherborne- sometime in April is the best for the Sherborne diary.

- Oxelosund – in the autumn would be perfect for us. If we choose the spring April would be better than May.

- Marsaskala – end of April.

- Meerssen – same thing like Marsaskala – end of April.

- Niederaanven – for us end of April is good, maybe be beginning of May.

- Asikkala – April is fine.

- Bundoran – April is OK, Easter's week.

- Bellagio – for us April it is beginning of the season, much better October. But we can manage.

- Skofja Loka – last full weekend of April is good for us.

- Tryavna – we prefer last weekend of April or last weekend of September.

- Bad Totzting – the actual date is perfect for us because of Easter holidays. I would like to suggest a week after Easter.

- Agros – for us the best is in September.

- Sigulda – a week after Easter isn't good. It creates additional stress when you are so busy and there are not people around you because they are on Easter holiday.

- Prienai – beginning of May.

- Judenburg – we prefer the end of April.

- Siret wasn't asked about their opinion because they are organizing next general meeting and the date is already decided.

Cezary: in most schools most exams are in May. The idea of having meeting in end of May I think was quite good. It was the first time we have GM in April. Autumn it would be quite big change for us. And it is not possible next year.

-Siret – we are planning next GM on 16 – 18 April, two weeks after Roman Catholic Easter.

Towns agreed on having next GM in Siret in the second part of April.



3) Douzelage Youth Organization

Kevin Waterfall: I went to youth workshop and asked them: what do you want to have, what do you want to do about youth organization in Douzelage. We have two delegates from Holstebro and they will tell us what they came up with. When we look at the structure we have a presidency, we have two education chairs: Agnes and Bert and from the youth side we used to have Martin from Judenburg but we don't have anyone to coordinate and youth website is rather static. So, where is the opportunity for youth to come from education throw the education side into the more maturing young people who we have about the projects and activities. What is discussed to help them to maintain contact, to build opportunities to build understanding. I want you to hear from the youth delegates what they have been talking about and from all of us to discuss what we might want to do to try to help to support them and their activities.

Joachim Pater and Victoria Louise: Good morning, everyone. Nice to see you. We are from Denmark. Yesterday we were asked how we can communicate in the best way. So, we made up a couple of solutions and we want to present the best things how we are going to work together or how we can. Our idea is to use different kinds of social media and make them work together. It is not enough to take one, important is to make a platform. Important is to start communication before a meeting and continue it after the meeting. Yesterday we talked about the main problem. The young delegates, most of the, do not know what to expect and that is a shame. We learned a lot. You have to get people excited and give them something to look forward. The idea is especially to communicate beforehand. The easiest way would be to use existed media, it is not expensive, it is for free and young people are already using them. So, it is not necessary to create new things. Young people are on Facebook, on Twitter, they are going to be on Facebook every day. The idea is to send an email beforehand to all young delegates. On that email there should be three points: to join a group on Facebook, to check texts and to make a video. For example this year we should take a picture for workshop. We could take a picture, put it on Facebook, make a video and watch it before the meeting. So, now we have a group on Facebook. All the communicate will be through there, people can see each other out and the main thing is that when you use social media it is not enough to make a Facebook group, it has to be active. You can do that in different ways, all the information should be there. It can be simple but important thing, for example information that Wi-Fi will be free in a hostel during Douzelage meeting. To get active young people you can ask them to make different groups. It is most likely that young people will watch a video then read a text. Video is supposed to be a bit funny. It is a shame that we do not know what is happening around. There should be two Facebook groups: the general group and for each year group. It is important to take a lot of pictures. We can use the Instagram profile. If it works out than it also will be much more communication afterwards.

Kevin: Thank you very much Joachim and Victoria. Have you thought who might make it happen?

Victoria: Of course it should be one of those who has responsibility all over and the hosting country, the young delegate from there.

Annigje: I think a Facebook group should be created before, should contain all people taking part in workshop. But how to connect all previous generations to this one big group and make them active. So, should be someone responsible for putting information for the up coming conference and should be some invitations to join.

Victoria: The easiest way is to put pictures which always get attention and it is really easy to get people to join something. It would be nice to send invitations from formal delegates.



Cezary: The first thing is that those comments are from our young delegates to local committees because local committees were informed about the topic of the meeting. Secondly, for the next year for example if young people want to be active it should be up to them what are they going to discuss next year. You should do thing in which you are interested in. This is not school, we are not going to give you task and you are going to do homework. In our all towns the problem was always with continuity because every ear there were different people. We have some young people they are with us for some years. We had very strong young group from Judenburg a few years ago. In my opinion, all towns will be very happy if you take over and do something. You can decide. You do not have to ask us. You just inform us about your decisions.

Could you inform us in 2-3 months time about your topic for next General Meeting in Siret?

Victoria: It is a really good idea, nice solution.

4) Douzelage newsletter.

We have the Newsletter. It can be translated into languages. There were proposals are we going to discuss about Newsletter during the general meeting. I do not think we need to discuss it. We need to have it. It was a very good proposal from Meerssen last year, we did it in Chojna and we will do it again. We will have the Newsletter twice a year. I will ask you to send me materials in the autumn. You will get it in electrical form, you can translate it, you can distribute it in the towns.

5.Provisional agenda for the General Meeting in Siret.

Cezary: We have presentations and information from four towns: Marsaskala, Tryavna, Sigulda and information from Siret about next GM.

Mario Caleja: Good morning, actually this morning I am not going to talk about Marsaskala but I'm going to talk about poverty and a small village in Peru. Maybe some of you will say it is nothing connected with GM but in my opinion it does because we are here to help, specially those people in need. I will show you some pictures and the presentation about that village which I visited. This the letter which I sent to you but unfortunately no one replied. You might ask why this village in Peru. Children and persons with disability are considers of the poorest of the poor. I visited that village twice and I'm going to visit third time that village in October. For holiday? Definitely not. One of the priest working in Peru is a very good friend of mine, he is from Gozo in Malta, and there are about ten priest over there. Actually, lately he sent me an email where he requested my help he would buy a car costs about 30 000 EUROS. We organized some events in Marsaskala, these were blessed by Marsaskala local government and so far we raised 16 000 EUROS. We have another 14 000 to reach our target. We have other activities before visiting Peru in October.

Dear Douzelage friends, these people need financing. My wish is that I can involve you in this course. I will be more than proud to say that part of the money was collected from this organisation. We have some cash to buy souvenirs for our families and friends, to buy wine in the restaurants. There is nothing wrong with that. But please save some small cash for these poor people and children and Peru. Dear friends, you can donate something which will help to but that vehicle. Thank you very much.

Cezary: Thank you, Mario. I just would like to add that every year before Christmas in Chojna we organize kind of charity event. Students from our school bake kind of biscuits, European biscuits and we sell these biscuits and we support families in need in Chojna and this year we also decided to



spend a bit on a village in Peru and we gave 50 EUROS to Mario. It is not a lot of money but it is just our support.

Tryavna showed us a movie about their country and the town.

Cezary: I visited Tryava and noticed many positive changes, so congratulations Mr. Mayor. The town looks beautiful. We have the Mayor of Tryavna here with us. So, thank you for coming and sharing time with us. We all know how difficult it is for the top people from the towns to find time to come to the Douzelage meetings. Thank you very much.

You probably noticed from our website that Wolfgang from Bad Tötzing was awarded by German government, congratulations.

Also Willi from Judenburg was awarded for his activities. So, also congratulations and greetings to our old good friend from Austria.

Sigulda: All of you know this is a very special year for us not only because we are hosting general meeting but also because Riga is European capital of culture and Sigulda is it's official partner. Now I would like to introduce to you a very, very important person involved in organizing GM and many projects including activities that we do for the European Capital of Culture – the Director of the Department of Culture Jolanta Borida: Good morning, I really hope that these short days already have the sense of feeling of happiness and joy that we have every day living here in Sigulda. Mostly I work for projects for this kind of magnitude. Today I would like to explain why Riga choose Sigulda as the only partner in sharing the honor of being the European Capital of Culture. First of all, because we are very ambitious and those ambitions are positive. Secondly, because we are many unique things to offer. And also because we have wonderful, capable and professional people working here. We have three priorities: based on the historical heritage on a wonderful natural environment and wonderful people. The main concept is culture without borders. We try to think about culture in very interdisciplinary way. We try to look for new forms of interaction and for Sigulda it is a great opportunity to present our cultural reaches on a global, international scale. And this conference Douzelage GM is one of the events for the Capital of Culture. Sigulda thrills.

Siret: The period of the organisation next GM is from 16 to 18 of April. What is new in Siret during the general meeting? We want to suggest to have one extra day, to start on Thursday and finish on Saturday evening. This extra day it will be Thursday which we want to dedicate to excursions in the area. Those who wish can arrive on Wednesday evening and Thursday would be the day for tourism. Everything will be organized by Siret and next people have two working days as always. People who cannot come on Wednesday can come one day later. Of course Siret has to know earlier who would like to come earlier for this extra day. There will be general meeting, education and youth meetings. Our main idea is education and sport in general. That will be discussed this evening with education and youth groups. We will try to have a balance between passive and active activities. Education group will visit schools, high schools and universities or to visit around official institutions. You will have opportunity to meet local people, to see them, shake hands, discuss with them.

We will give by the beginning of August all the information about the nearest airport and how you can reach from there to Siret. There will be bus and minibus to take you to Siret. We hope you will have a good time in Siret.

Cezary: Before we finish just my request: please send me by next weekend the proposals of new activities, we will prepare a kind of summary of it and we will put it on website.

Many thanks for our translators Fay and Jan Clode. As always it was great job. Many, many thanks.

Officially the general meeting is closed. Thank you very much for your time, for your work ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.



II. EDUCATION MEETING REPORT.

Douzelage Education Meeting report, 2014, Sigulda

(as presented to GM on 26 April)

We started out being informed by a representative of the Latvian ministry of Education and Science on the country's educational system and policies for 2007-2013, 2014-2020 respectively. She extended her compliments to Sigulda for its accomplishments in education.

The Latvian ministry and schools invest heavily in non-formal learning and extra-curricular activities. Most students (about two thirds) are into cultural education, such as dancing, singing and visual arts. We saw footage of a great yearly festival of dancing and singing in Riga, with some 13.000 participants, including groups from outside Latvia. The Baltic countries also celebrate a dance festival for students every five years.

Then two headmasters, one in secondary and one in primary education, told us about the projects they had successfully applied for and been involved in over the past 6 years, comprising student exchange, teacher training and management training. The secondary school is now applying for funding for projects under Erasmus+ K1 and K2.

The teacher coordinating all the international exchange in the secondary school told us about e-twinning, 2 Comenius projects (one involving hundreds of kids), which we were told she and her colleagues run mostly in their free time, funding being insufficient.

The primary school we heard from is very active as well, offering a dozen or so extracurricular programmes to approximately 150 children of widely different backgrounds (regular, SEN, psychiatric). The headmaster explained she depended heavily on the commitment of her staff to keep all these running, as funding is related to the number of children in the school only, which does not favour small schools .

After all presentations there was room for questions, which were aimed at acquiring further information and critical questioning both.

To offset the Latvian system, we heard from Prienai, Sherborne and Tryavna for comparison, then discussed among ourselves.

We talked at some length on the benefits of inclusive education and on how to implement that ideal – exchanging practices and views.



Also, we discussed the importance of education as perceived by society as a whole and policy-makers, as opposed to the dwindling status of teachers and teaching as a career. This is undesirable and dangerous, because schools/ society will need many highly qualified people to enter the profession soon. In many European countries there is so much demand for (potential) professionals, that education is at risk of losing out in the labour market, with dire consequences.

A call for future projects raised an invitation from Houffalize to 11/12 year olds for May 2015, one from Sherborne to create another ‘scrapbook’ online and one from Sigulda to find partners to organise the (two-yearly) Young Musicians’ competition in 2016 (the first was in 2014 in Sherborne; Sigulda has pledged to organise it in 2018).

Meerssen inquired after schools which might be interested in the idea of a language project on all European languages and their (communal) origins, comprising linguistics, history, literature and general culture. 6 Towns professing an interest in the idea, it deserves to be written up and applied for.

Also in Agnes’ name, I’d like to thank Ilse en Gunters for preparing the meeting and providing prominent speakers, Sigulda for an excellent conference and all participants in the Education Meeting for their devotion to their students and their cooperative spirit. See you all in Siret.

Bert van Doorn, vice-chairman of Douzelage Education

III. YOUTH MEETING REPORT.

Yesterday in the morning we introduced ourselves, we talked about our countries, we were talking about the things from our countries like a cultural things, music and the things we like in our countries.

In the afternoon we had a workshop working together on some proverbs from Latvia translated in English which we have chosen. Then we prepared some posters and we went around Sigulda to take some pictures which show the meaning of those proverbs. It was a nice experience, we had to be creative.

We were divided into some groups. In each group there was one person from Latvia who talked us about the country. In the last day of our meeting we were working in groups. One of the groups made some bracelets. We learned how to do that, we helped each other.

Another group danced some Latvian dances. It was a great fun.

The results of our work was presented during the evening meeting of all Douzelage delegates.