

Minutes of the 44th General Meeting Asikkala, May 16th – 19th, 2019

Mrs. Hilikka Kemppe, chairman of the town council of Asikkala and member of the Finnish Parliament, gives the representatives of the Douzelage member towns a very warm welcome. She stresses the uniqueness of Douzelage and the importance of the exchange of ideas and practices around the subject of sustainability. The themes of the workshops couldn't be more actual.

Via a video message Mrs. Sirpa Pietikäinen, member of the European Parliament, welcomes the representatives and encourages them to bring Europe further by exchanging knowledge.

The President of Douzelage, Mrs. Annigje Kruytbosch, thanks Asikkala for organising the General Meeting (GM) and looks forward to interesting discussions and workshops.

1. **Opening of General Meeting**

The President of Douzelage, Mrs. Annigje Kruytbosch, 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 is absent.

The workshops are held separately from the GM agenda on Friday. The delegates are scheduled to attend two workshops of three topics: A. Climate Action, B. Water Supplies, C. Waste, Recycling. The conclusions of the workshops are under point 13.

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

2. **Approval of the Oxelösund GM minutes**

The minutes of the 2018 GM in Oxelösund are unanimously approved.

3. **Approval of the accounts 2018 (January - December 2018)**

The accounts that are presented run from January 2018 to December 2018. The accounts were presented by Mr. Harry Crombag from Meerssen, treasurer of Douzelage Europe.

The Douzelage accounts have been checked by two auditors, Marcus Ainley (Sherborne) and Olga Melkusová (Sušice). The auditors propose to the General Meeting to approve the accounts.

Marcus Ainley gives two recommendations for the future presentation of the accounts:

- to present all expenses with receipts;
- to present all expenses in euro's.

The accounts were unanimously approved by the General Meeting, and the auditors were granted discharge.

Marcus Ainley steps back as an auditor, next year the accounts will be checked by Olga Melkusová (Sušice) and Sheryl van der Berg (Niederanven). The presidency thanks Marcus for his 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

The Brexit is not yet a fact, and the contours of a deal are not clear. The Presidency therefore has postponed this topic until the moment the UK will leave the EU.

6. Social Media and PR

6.1 Social Media

Shane Smyth presents a powerpoint presentation on Douzelage in social media:

Facebook (www.facebook.com/douzelage), content to include:

- Posts about national days and major local celebrations (please complete online survey)
- Content from member towns – achievements of the town/city
- Links of content posted to the website (to drive traffic back to douzelage.eu)
- Content from European Parliament or European Commission websites that is relevant – e.g. importance of voting in EU elections
- Content from Douz Youth
- Photo albums from Douzelage projects or events
- On This Day – anniversary or important historical dates

Twitter (www.twitter.com/douzelage), content to include:

- Tweets from member town/city official twitter accounts
- Tweets from trusted Douzelage delegates
- Retweets of relevant member town/city tweets
- Retweets of relevant MEPs
- Links of content posted to the website (to drive traffic back to douzelage.eu)
- Retweets from European Parliament or European Commission twitter accounts that are relevant
- All content to be positive and pro Europe

Instagram (www.instagram.com/douzelage), content to include:

- Photos of Douzelage member towns
- Photos of national day celebrations
- Instagram stories from national day celebrations for each country – “Insta Team” to be established via Douz Youth & GM members who are interested in doing so.

Youtube channel (www.youtube.com/channel/UCq4Mekg98OAl0EXGE0wjcLQ), content to include:

- Promo video of Douzelage
- Other promo videos of different aspects of Douzelage
- Promo videos of each of the member towns/cities
- Vlogs from delegates to GM/YM or EM
- To get a vanity url like www.youtube.com/douzelage we need:
- Be at least 30 days old 📅
- Have an uploaded photo as channel icon 📷

- Have uploaded channel art 🇮🇪
 - Have 100 or more subscribers
- Shane encourages the delegations to subscribe to the channel!

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/douzelage), content to include:

- Overview of Douzelage organisation
- Updates on Douzelage achievements particularly those as an organisation e.g. recent migrant appeal to EU
- Update of DouzYouth president info etc
- Promo videos about what Douzelage does
- Our profile will offer more credibility of the organisation and more visibility in the business community
- We invite those of you with LinkedIn accounts to add yourself as a delegate/member (TBC) of the company page
- Please provide the postal address of your office/municipality so that we can include it as a location.
- Shane asks the members to follow the page

In general, how can Douzelage members help:

- Make sure to follow all of our channels – list provided
- Fill out the survey with info on National Days
- Follow the channels of our partner towns – list provided
- Subscribe to our YouTube channel – link sent to email
- Send us videos of your town – instructions on sheet
- Send us scenic photos of your town – permission needed!
- Nominate a Facebook manager from your town
- Nominate a member for the Insta Team
- Send us your organisation postal address for LinkedIn locations
- Send your stories and press releases for the website
- Share our social channels on your own channels to increase visibility and knowledge of Douzelage

6.2 **Wikipedia page**

The situation since last year has not changed. The editor of the Douzelage page on Wikipedia is still unknown, but he has updated the page to the current situation. Rokiskis however is not yet mentioned on the Wikipedia page..

6.3 **Dropbox account**

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

6.4 **Douzelage Pin**

During the GM of Oxelösund the Presidency distributed a new pin with the logo of Douzelage. Shane Smyth (Bundoran) suggested to ask the EU bureau in the different countries for pins depicting the EU-flag and the national flag of the different EU countries. Now, during the GM of 2019, is the time to swap the pins. Some delegations have pins to swap, some have not.

6.5 **Diploma EM and YM**

The Presidency has prepared official diploma's for the YM for the second time, and, as requested during the GM last year, for the EM as well.. These will be distributed after the closing of the meetings.

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

The "past and ongoing activities" are available as a hardcopy report. If member towns like to have copies of these, please let the Presidency know.

Chojna

Cezary Salamonczyk thanks everyone who has supported the 20-day teachers strike in Poland.

Project “Voluntary work as stress remedy”

This is an Erasmus+ project Chojna organised with Köszeg, Marsaskala, Siret, Konya (TR). The project involved more than 25 young participants. They were encouraged to work as volunteers in animal shelters. The participants were well prepared. The project was audited by the Polish government and got compliments for the administration and the results.

Project “Internet - opportunities and threats”

This project was organised by Chojna with Konya (TR). The project dealt with all sorts of threats by the internet: addiction to games, (self) image on social media, dark web etc.

Project “European quality in vocational education”

This is a project where students are sent to companies to gain work experience. This project runs under Erasmus+. Since 2006 Chojna has organised 15 projects with a total amount of more than 1 mln euros. More than 300 students were sent from the school in Chojna to companies in Sherborne, Marsaskala, Köszeg and Niederanven. Chojna also hosted company owners from those partner towns. Chojna is proud of this project.

Project: Signposts of conscious professional choices”

In general this project is about job-counseling, starting a business, what profession will a student pursue, how to write a cv etc. This project is organised with 9 partners.

Last year Chojna invited partners towns to participate. Some have reacted but changed their minds. That is a problem when the project is already approved by the EU. Chojna asks partner towns to commit to those projects. If Chojna applies for funding and towns decide not to participate anymore, this causes all sorts of problems.

Marsaskala

Project “Integrate together for a better Europe future” (April 2019)

The project was organised by Marsaskala. Meerssen, Chojna and Bad Kötzting participated. Bellagio resigned at the last moment. The project was well organised with very good speakers and activities. Cezary Salavamonsyk from Chojna added that the students from Meerssen were very knowledgeable about European issues. He expressed that it would be very nice to be able to work more with students of comparable level.

Judenburg

Hosted the first Mayors Meeting in November 2018. Thorsten Wohleser explains: As Austria was presiding the EU, Judenburg took the initiative to invite mayors from all Douzelage towns to meet in Judenburg. The mayors and vice-mayors of Bad Kötzting, Köszeg, Marsaskala, Oxelösund, Škofja Loka, Siret, Tryavna and of course Judenburg were present. Several topics were discussed: the environmental policy of Judenburg, the city marketing, the 2019 Summer Festival and the initiative of Meerssen to create a cycling network “Via Douzelage”. Judenburg could show the mayors an exciting tradition: the “Perchtenlauf”.

The idea of these “in between meetings” is well received, some member towns need funding for travel expenses. This needs to be addressed.

Köszeg

Project “EULOCAL” (completed in Köszeg, October 2018)

The last big project that has just finished is the EULOCAL (Even Us, Little Ones Count A Lot) under the program “Europe for Citizens”. Delegates from Bad Kötzting, Chojna, Köszeg, Marsaskala and Velletri took part in a 3-day event to share their ideas about the most important questions of the EU (little countries’ role, immigration, borders now and earlier, labor market in the EU, Euroscepticism).

Professor Georg Schöpflin (MEP) highlighted in his speech the importance of the EU and also talked about the feelings of Hungarians – particu-

larly 3 days before October 23, the day of the great Hungarian Revolution. Mrs. Annigje Kruytbosch, the president of the Douzelage gave her personal view on the European Community.

In a workshop the knowledge of the participants on Euroscepticism was tested. This was followed by an activity: we all had to express our feeling about advantages of the EU membership.

Houffalize

Project “Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation for the Future of Europe” (July 2018)

In July 2018 75 youngsters joined the project and drew up a Charter for the president of the European Council Donald Tusk, The president of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and the presidency of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, with seven major points that describe concerns of the European youth:

1. Stimulate exchanging youth within the EU;
2. Draw up a common European policy on refugees;
3. Improve military cooperation within the EU;
4. Protect the environment;
5. Improve on the decision making process of the EU;
6. Improve on the information on the EU and its performance within and outside of the EU;
7. Draw up a European common social policy.

The member towns should take these themes home and make them the priority themes of local decision making, the results should not vanish into oblivion.

The idea is to pass on this project to other member towns. The youth has learned a lot about their history and about the European cooperation. Other member towns are invited to organise similar projects.

Rokiškis

Project “WINC” (ongoing; waiting for approval)

WINC is still awaiting approval from the EU. Köszeg is the first partner, Rokiškis hopes more will follow after approval. The organisation may seem difficult, but is manageable. Please join.

Indo-European origin is our past, European Union is our today and tomorrow. We will never know if common roots have helped today's Europe grow into such an integrated unit, but we know that 28 nations with different linguistic background agreed to use common language again. WINC project takes a challenge to prove that Europeans can perceive the same message communicated through music, dance, theatre and visual arts, equally to its verbal expression.

Furthermore, it gathers citizens of different nationalities and languages together for great aim – remind and respect common values of past and future Europe.

Granville

Young Musicians in Granville (July 2018)

18 Douzelage Young Musicians from Houffalize, Meerssen, Rokiškis, Sherborne, Sigulda, Sušice, Zvolen and Granville have just spent a music and fun-packed week in a hot and sunny Granville for the 3rd Young Musicians Festival. The talented young contestants gave performances of an exceptionally high standard on the violin, piano, flute, harp, recorder, trombone and trumpet, but five finalists had to be chosen and they were from Meerssen, Sušice, Zvolen and Sherborne.

The final result: in 5th place was Bee Thomas (Sherborne, recorder), 4th Kelly Kwong (Sherborne, piano), 3rd Sofija Kirn (Meerssen, harp), the runner-up was Simona Bohovičová (Zvolen, violin), with the trophy being awarded to the worthy winner, Kristýna Prančlová, a young violinist from Sušice, who had given an exceptionally talented and sensitive performance.

During their stay, apart from the musical activities, the musicians and their adult accompanists were able to make the most of the local beaches,

do a lively Treasure Hunt in the old High Town, and visit the Mont St Michel, even venturing out with a guide to find out about the surrounding mud flats with their quicksand and interesting flora and fauna.

Thanks to all the contestants for their hard work, their amazing performances and their high spirits and good humour, which created a fine group spirit, overcoming any competitive rivalry and making the whole week one of intense exchanges and friendship, strengthening the links between our towns.

Bad Kötzing

Boundary Stones Enlargement (June 2018)

Boundary stones were used to separate properties and even countries. The idea of the artist behind the project in Bad Kötzing was to arrange the boundary stones in a spiral to symbolise a dynamic community.

The first stones were placed in 1999, in 2018 the additional stones from the new member towns were placed, following a ceremony with the brass band and speeches of the mayor and the president.

Agros, Asikkala, Chojna, Köszeg, Marsaskala, Rokiškis, Rovinj, Sigulda, Siret, Škofja Loka, Türi and Zvolen placed their boundary stones in the town Kurpark. There were many visitors from the participating towns.

Sherborne

Swedish Musicians in Sherborne (June 2018)

In June 2018 21 young students and teachers from Oxelösund left home to visit Sherborne on a Sherborne Douzelage exchange visit. Their aim was to share music with a culture different to their own.

Leweston School welcomed the Swedish group. Meals were provided by the school and it gave the students time to mix with the Leweston students. Sherborne Douzelage assisted with finding accommodation in family homes around the area and over the next three days the group were taken to Bradford Abbas and Sherborne Primary School where they shared live musical activities.

On their final day the Swedish students gave a concert at Leweston School, wearing their specially designed uniforms. Much to the delight of the Swedish group, five Leweston music students joined their performance. This was followed by a history tour in Sherborne. The visit culminated in a skittles match at The Weavers, a game unknown to the Swedish group. They joined in wholeheartedly and after being presented with a souvenir gift returned to their hosts before leaving next morning for home. This was a special day for the Swedish group as it was their National Swedish Day. Sherborne Douzelage is grateful to all the hosts who helped with accommodation, which enhanced the visit immensely.

Siret

Presentation by Ovidiu Oniciuc

My first experience with Douzelage was the General Meeting I attended in Tryavna, Bulgaria. I was shy, my English was not that well, I knew no one, but at the same time I was extremely excited about what was going on. In these 4 years of Douzelage I've done so many things. I became a very active citizen because my barriers were broken in my first Douzelage experience. I broadened my intercultural understanding so much so I wanted to get involved more and more into European activities for the youth communities. Meanwhile I started my own NGO in Romania and after the General Meeting in Asikkala I organised an Erasmus+ project to fight against Hate Speech.

A few days before the General Meeting, together with 200 other young people from all over Europe, we created a manifesto on the Youth Island of Copenhagen, Denmark, in which we, the youth of Europe, came up with 10 demands to all the European politicians. This manifesto is about how we, the young people want the European Union to look like in the future. The project is called "Young Europe is Voting" and we created the "Ungdomsøen Manifesto". This has been one of the projects with the biggest impact from young people towards European politicians.

In this project I had the pleasure to work on the media team in which I've been part of the Digital Marketing workshop and I had my own presentation in front of a whole group on how to promote the manifesto and how to reach more visibility on Internet from youngsters, in order to inform them about the European Elections. I was chosen to do the presentation, because I made a short video of the importance of voting for the European Parliament and I received an extremely good feedback from the Central Institution. The video was also presented in the opening ceremony of "Democracy Alive: The European Democracy Festival" in the Netherlands.

All these things happened in a very short period of time and I have to say that everything started from the connection with the world and the interculturality I received from the Douzelage family.

The link of my NGO: ACT O'Clock

The link of the Manifesto's project: <https://www.facebook.com/YoungEuropelsVoting/>

The link of European Election video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PJ1Yw7bU48>

Meerssen

Via Douzelage (ongoing)

After the GM a new route will be cycled between Judenburg, Köszeg and Zvolen. The first pilot between Meerssen, Houffalize and Niederaanven in 2018 went very well. Although the only cyclist with a road bike found out that he will switch to electric as well! All visited towns were extremely hospitable and gave the cyclists from Meerssen in pleasant glance into their communities.

For 2020 Rovinj, Bellagio and Skofja Loka are planned. The cyclists will arrive in Skofja Loka at the start of the GM in May.

8. Banner

Last year the Presidency proposed to replace the lost banner of Douzelage with a new one. The presidency proposed to depict on a piece of embroidery cotton an image that is typical to each town. Every town received a piece of cotton and a written instruction.

25 of the 28 towns have brought their new piece of embroidery to this meeting. This is above expectations! The pieces for the new banner are on display in the hall of the hotel. They will be assembled in Skofja Loka for the next GM. We hope that the missing towns will send their contributions as quickly as possible.

9. (Future) projects and activities within our towns

Chojna

Digital citizen in digital world

This project is initiated by the Polish government and involves Polish students being sent to schools in other EU countries during a week. Chojna has found seven partners, four of which are from Douzelage (Rokiškis, Siret, Marsaskala and Asikkala). The project is awaiting approval.

Quality in vocational training through Euroapprenticeships

This is a project where vocational students are sent to companies to gain work experience and is the same scheme as the past project that is described earlier in the meeting. Sherborne, Marsaskala, Köszeg and Niederaanven are participating.

Games based learning for development of problem solving skills

This is about using games for problem solving in schools. Partners from outside Douzelage.

Sušice

Young Musicians 2020 shall be hosted by Sušice from June 23rd to July 3rd. Three musicians and one adult accompanying the youth are invited from maximum 10 douzelage towns including Sušice. Piano, solo singing, wind instruments and string instruments. Participants should be 14-18 years of age. The stay in Sušice shall be paid by the municipality, travel expenses are not covered.

Participants must send an email.

Douzelage Photo Contest II, Presidency (Mette Grith Sørensen)

During the GM in Asikkala a photo contest will be held among the attendants. This second edition of the Douzelage Photo Contest has the theme "Douzelage, Asikkala and sustainability (nature)".

Morten Stricker (Press Photographer at Dagbladet Holstebro) and Annigje Kruytbosch (President Douzelage) will choose the winning photo.

The rules:

1. The photo must be made during the General Meeting in Asikkala.
2. The theme is "Douzelage, Asikkala and sustainability". If the last one (sustainability) is too hard, then it is okay with "nature" instead.
3. Each participant can only enter one (1) photo.
4. The photo is preferably landscape oriented, and a minimum of 2Mb in size.
5. You must send your entry before the 3rd of June 2019.
6. By entering, you agree to having your photo and name published on the Douzelage website. We expect the winner to be published at the latest at the 15th of June.
7. Please note that there are no restrictions as to what you can do to manipulate the photo (e.g. photoshop).

The winner will have the honour of being the second winner of the Douzelage Photo Contest, and will also win € 150,-.

During the GM next year in Škofja Loka a photo exhibition will be shown with the winner of 2018 and all contestants of 2019.

Sesimbra

"Youth in movement ... through Europ@"

Sesimbra has been promoting a project for 15 years, called Municipal Youth Assembly with local schools, teachers and students from the 7th, 8th and 9th grades, aged between 13 and 15 years old.

The development of the Municipal Youth Assembly in Sesimbra local community and its integration in school educational projects enhance their pedagogical importance.

The project has four main goals:

1. Promote an active participation of young people in society and stimulate their critical thinking regarding nowadays problems.
2. Stimulate the integration of young people in local life community, as the first level of civic awareness around Europe's matters.
3. Enhance the knowledge and achievement of social skills, essential for their development as a real practice of citizenship in a school environment.
4. Encourage the democratic participation of citizens through an intergenerational approach in between organizations, oriented towards a more assertive vision of the future.

The project consists of four parts:

1. The Municipal Youth Assembly
2. The creation of a video and end-report of the activities in the assembly
3. European Deputy for a day! The youth will follow a member of the EP in Brussels during one day and learn about their work
4. Traditional Game Fete! Traditional games of the participating countries shall be played by the youth and other generations.

The application for this project can only be submitted if there are at least 4 partners, including Sesimbra.

The adhesion to the project must be done until June 15th, together with the Municipality of Sesimbra. The information will be distributed again by mail to all member towns.

Niederanven

International Nordic Walk, October 2019

At October 4th, 5th and 6th Niederanven will host the 20th version of the Nordic Walking Event. There will be tracks from 5km to 20km and training courses. A cultural and a historical tour will be organised.

Hotel prices are reduced and the transport from the hotel to the event and back is organised. For Douzelage partners the Friday event will be free and there is an overall discount of € 5.-. More information will be distributed on the website and by mail.

The registration can be done online on <https://nordicwalking.lu>

Bundoran

Global Greening Initiative

Bundoran invites all partner towns to go Green in March 2020 to celebrate St. Patricks Day. 470 iconic landmarks in 55 countries will be covered in green light on March 17th 2020. In 2019 four Douzelage towns participated: Granville, Judenburg, Sherborne and Bundoran. The tourism bureau in Bundoran will include the Douzelage towns in the publicity, they will be included in the global greening list of Tourism Ireland.. People will share pictures on social media. The way to do this is to put green filter paper in front of the lights that are illuminating the landmarks. It is simple and cheap. Pick a landmark or building in your town that gets lit up all year round, approach the owner of the building or the municipality to make it green. Do it early. If there is agreement please let us know. Bundoran will send a reminder in January and as Tourism Ireland starts its campaign in February, Bundoran will send the list of participating towns and landmarks to Tourism Ireland before that. Photo's are welcome. The invitation to celebrate St. Patricks Day in Bundoran is open to all Douzelage partners.

Judenburg

European Town Festival, June 2019

On June 21st and 22nd 2019 Judenburg will celebrate Europe with a festival on the main square and a yard of a former castle. There will be many friends, culinary activities, music, beer and wine! A detailed email will be sent to the towns next week.

Meerssen, Köszeg, Sherborne, Bad Kötzing and Bundoran will participate. Visiting towns can sell local goods on the culinary market.

Meerssen

Folklore Days with Sušice and Bad Kötzing, June 2019

Two folklore groups from Sušice and Bad Kötzing are invited to Meerssen from June 19th to 23rd 2019, to perform in the four villages from the municipality of Meerssen. The performances will be held in the streets, at schools and in the houses for the elderly.

Škofja Loka

4 Bridges Run

On June 15th 2019 Škofja Loka organises the 4 Bridges Run, a running event that has the mission to include everyone. It is held at night. The inhabitants of the town participate as runner or as a volunteer. Škofja Loka will be very happy when the Douzelage partners bring participants to the run and they are therefore cordially invited. The event is focussed on inclusion, the organisation works together with elementary schools, schools for children with special needs, the blind community. This year children that have grave illnesses are invited.

Last year there were guests from 13 countries, Škofja Loka hopes to have more this year. Special arrangements for Douzelage partners are sent by email. The track is 10km and goes across the town in two circles.

Intergenerational cooperation

The aim of this project is to improve the quality of life for the elderly. The project will consist of six meetings in Skofja Loka, Judenburg, Köszeg, Bad Kötzing and Kruja (Albania). The call is still under consideration. If it is approved, Škofja Loka invites all to participate.

Bad Kötzing and Sušice

Forest - Homeland - Without Borders, October 2019

The project consist of two parts. The first part is a symposium for wood sculptures where 3 artists from Bad Kötzing and 3 artists from Sušice will work together in sculpting in the Kurpark.

The second part is a painting contest among the schools of Bad Kötzing and Sušice. The last part is a vernissage showing the sculptures and the paintings in the Spa gardens. The works will be exhibited and after a month they will be transferred to Sušice for an exhibition there.

10. Possible project and exchange partnership with Kosovo

The partner town Holstebro was approached by the Wise Mens Club with the request to cooperate in projects with the town of Gjakova in Kosovo. The aim of the project will be to prevent the youth from leaving Kosovo. So the Presidency hopes that partner towns, if they have a project that trains the youth for setting up a business, please think of including Gjakova.

11. Future initiative for Autumn Meeting Mayors of Douzelage

The presidency proposes to organise “mirror-events of the European Council”, meetings of the mayors of Douzelage towns, organised by the country that holds the EU presidency. The first was organised by Judenburg in 2018. In the case of 2019 it was impossible to organise by Siret, but Škofja Loka took it upon itself to organise it in 2019.

Important subject will be “Participatory Budget”, a topic that is of importance for every municipality. The meeting is part of the above mentioned project, and Škofja Loka expects a positive reaction on the call end of May. All mayors will then be invited for a meeting in Škofja Loka in September 2019.

12. Circular economy

The guest speaker was Jeannot Schröder, climate pact coordinator for the city of Niederanven. His presentation was about a new approach to sustainability: the circular economy. The idea of the circular economy is based on how nature deals with closing the circle of materials used. In nature, no material is lost.

A circular economy is based on reuse of materials, sharing products, repair of products and recycling of materials. The aim is to lose no material, to create no waste that is not fit for reuse. To prevent plastics from polluting our environment.

The basic idea is to move towards a biological cycle, make products that are biodegradable, get products out of the technical cycle, where products are consumed until they are worthless. In the technical cycle, we end up with waste and pollution.

The Climate Pact aims at:

- Strengthening the exemplary role of municipalities
- Reduce green house gas emissions and reduce energy bills
- Stimulate local and regional investment

The municipality of Niederanven has made a plan to comply with the Climate Pact. It consists of 12 actions:

- Build an inventory (know what you have)
- Energy management of buildings (continuous improvement)
- LED street lighting
- Electric car and electric bicycle
- School renovation
- Install a “Climate team”
- Active mobility
- Public transport
- NOx measuring campaign
- Provide community roof surface for energy production
- Shared community garden “Aanwen’s Gaart”
- Water consumption evolution on invoice

Mr. Schröder mentions eight success factors for bringing the project to a success. Furthermore Mr. Schröder mentions the financial consequences of the Climate Pact, as well as the legal basis.

For the powerpoint of this presentation, go to <https://douzelage.eu/circular-economy/>.

Köszeg remarks that replacing materials like plastic and paper for for instance glass, you have to be careful because making glass and cleaning it also leaves a sizeable environmental footprint. All this creates costs for the people who cannot afford these expenses nowadays.

Mr. Schröder admits that the transition to his circular economy is a long journey with hard work ahead. In the short term we should take the measures as mentioned in the pact, in the long run new materials with new products should be produced, tax systems should change, green should be cheaper, not more expensive. The middle class needs to have access to these new products. Europe has no resources or raw materials, it has to be smart in reuse, recycling and designing new materials. This is a business issue for European companies, because there will be a shortage on resources.

13. Reports of the GM Workshops

I Climate Action (Wolfgang Kerscher, Bad Kötzting)

All countries gave brief reports about their activities on "Climate Action". No one denied the existence of climate change.

The governmental actions towards climate change consist of laws and subsidies for renewable energy, reduction of consumption by taxing consumption.

Another policy item is education, stimulating awareness for everyone, starting with the young people, and also their parents.

Priority is exiting the consumption of fossil fuels and nuclear energy, and introduction of renewable, clean energy like solar energy, bio-energy, wind-energy.

Second is energy saving by using more energy efficient devices and other measures. A nice example is the "Pedibus" in Niederanven, where schoolchildren walk to school in an organised way as an alternative for using a schoolbus.

Reduce climate change by preserving nature. Planting trees and beekeeping as examples. Even the little things count.

Being critical towards your own measures and approaches is important.

One participant made a critical remark by pointing towards Douzelage, organising a GM in Asikkala where everybody travels by plane or by car.

II Water Supplies (Sheryl van der Berg, Niederanven)

In Slovenia the right to have fresh water is written in the constitution. This is backed by public investments and by the EU. Villages who share the same source work together with joint investments to keep the water clean and free of pollution.

In Luxemburg there is the threat to run out of ground water supplies due to the drought. As a measure villages and farmers are working together to protect the fresh water resources. The authorities make the citizens aware of the problem by sending a fresh water bill that compare the water use of the household with the average. That way you can see if you need to cut back on water use.

In Ireland the surface and ground water is polluted with small particles of plastic. It is important to keep the water clean. Irish citizens get written information on how they can keep the water clean, also extra leaflets so they can spread this information further around. The information is also spread in schools to educate children on spending the water useful and not useless or in excess.

III Waste (Aet Sarv, Türi, Michael Balfour, Sherborne)

All towns use similar waste management systems, waste is separated into different bags and containers (glass, paper, tin cans, bio-waste etc.) The spread of plastic is the biggest problem.

In Türi houses all have gardens and the food waste is turned into compost and thus reused. Estonia started the World Cleanup Days in 2008, in 2018 it went in waves throughout the world. In the first weekend in May people form groups and decide as a group which place should be cleaned, then they work on it for 24 hours. It is a voluntary action.

Some towns collect the waste in bags that cost about € 1,40,-. This stimulates people to think of alternative ways to treat waste. Plastic is separated and collected in bags that are distributed for free. Bio-waste is collected in containers separately. In this way municipalities stimulate separation of waste categories quite effectively. Sherborne pointed out that they stimulate people to give their old bicycles to charity that sends them to Africa. In this way the bicycles are reused and not turned into waste.

In Türi a schoolbuilding is torn down, but first people get the opportunity to get a window or a sink from the building, so these things can be reused instead of treated as waste.

Sesimbra pointed out that there are many examples where citizens are asked to separate waste but where the municipalities do not treat the different categories of waste in the right way. This is bad for the credibility of the municipalities on this point and therefore the willingness of the people to do the effort. It is important to find out how your waste is treated so you can address the municipality.

In a more general sense the issue of sustainability is vital and concerns everyone. It should not divide people; we should all work on it together. Politicians should not use it to their own ends in their politically tainted campaigns. We should all be united to deal with this massive problem.

Research has been done on the attitudes of people concerning sustainability. There are three sorts of categories:

The Nihilists, they think they as an individual can not change anything, so they do nothing.

The Fundamentalists, they are not uniting us, they make a lot of noise.

The (Creative) Activists, they convince the municipalities and citizens by actually doing things. That creates hope and unity.

Asikkala (Merja Palokangas) adds that a new form of energy production should be stressed here, and that is energy produced by sea waves.

14. **Program for further meetings**

2020 Škofja Loka

2021 Agros

2022 Marsaskala

2023 Rovinj

2024 Niederanven will discuss the possibility of hosting the 2024 GM with the municipality

15. **Presentation of Škofja Loka 2020**

The mayor of Škofja Loka (Tine Radinja) presents his municipality and its activities by showing two video's on the city and the 4 Bridges Run. Škofja Loka is the host of the 2020 General Meeting (7th -10th May 2020), and the main topic will be "intergenerational solidarity".

The municipality of Škofja Loka is working with the government, NGO's and the EU on innovative programs touching this theme. There are some very old people living in the town, and increasingly so. These people need to be active and the municipality wants to offer them an active future.

The other topic is "cultural heritage", what the town has to offer. For instance the Passion Play is the pride of Škofja Loka.

There are no big hotels in Škofja Loka, the attendants will therefore be staying in hotels on different locations in town. Together we will make it a constructive and fun meeting, everybody is very welcome!

There will be a photo contest around the Passion Play and the scenery of the old town centre. The partner towns will be asked to send photo's of their town that will be shown during the GM and will be available to the citizens of Škofja Loka. Instructions will follow.

The attendants will receive a program, there will be three different parallel excursions on Thursday, starting at 12.00 hrs. The delegations are expected on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. Transport will be organised from the airport, from the train station in Ljubljana frequent busses go to Škofja Loka. Thursday evening the GM will officially start, and the results of the earlier photo contests will be shown in an exhibition.

16. **Agros 2021**

Agros is thrilled to be able to organise the GM in 2021 being the smallest community (800 inhabitants) of Douzelage. The Rose Festival is organised in Agros in May, so the GM is proposed to be from 19th – 22nd of May (Wednesday – Saturday). Arrivals on May 19th. Everybody agrees with these dates.

17. **Mid-term elections board of Douzelage**

Nobody has indicated that they want to be a candidate for either president or vice president. The sitting presidency is reelected unanimously.

18. **Any Other Business**

All towns thank Asikkala and the presidency for organising the GM.

Agros

The municipality is chosen as emblematic community in Cyprus for Mediterranean diet as part of an Unesco program. This is a big thing for Agros, being chosen from many towns on Cyprus.

At the moment the Rose Festival is held in Agros. There is an Erasmus+ program that helps recruit people who help organise this huge event. Information on this program will be sent by email.

Altea

There are municipal elections held in Altea now (May 26th). And Altea is chosen by the region as cultural capital. There will be several activities for which all attendants or the GM will be invited.

Bad Kötzing

In a few weeks the main event of Bad Kötzing will take place, the "Pfingstritt" (June 10th). Please visit this event!

Chojna

Chojna thanks Houffalize for maybe the best project organised within the Douzelage. In November there were elections in the municipality of Chojna. The new mayor, Barbara Rawecka, sends her greetings to Douzelage.

Granville

The mayor of Granville also sends greetings to Douzelage members.

Judenburg

Thorsten proposes to hold a coin exchange next year with Euro coins from all countries. We welcome the initiators of Via Douzelage in the coming weeks, and all attending the City Festival at the end of June. The idea of the coin exchange will be sent around in an email to all towns.

Kőszeg

Kőszeg thanks all initiators of projects where Kőszeg took part in or could take part in over the last year. Kőszeg is thinking of launching a new proposal in "Europe for citizens" around the topic of Hungary being member of the EU for 15 years. What has changed, which benefits. Before the summer the partner towns will be notified. Kőszeg will create a Euro Park in which all partner towns can place a bank. Information will follow.

Marsaskala

Next Saturday there will be municipal elections in Marsaskala.

Niederanven

First Niederanven has to organise the European elections, in October Niederanven will organise the Nordic Walking Event.

Oxelösund

Thanks for all nice words about the GM last year. It was fun and a lot of work.

Rovinj

Schoolpupils from Rovinj have joined the program in Houffalize and they came back with good memories and with a lot to talk about. This creates open minded and collaborative citizens and it helps the image of Douzelage with the people from Rovinj.

The speech of the new Youth President will be used to convince the young people in Rovinj to vote in the EU elections. A delegation from Sherborne will participate in the Cape to Cape Walk (September 14th), everybody is welcome. Information will be shared by email.

Sesimbra

The EU vote is important and we (teachers) will encourage the youngsters to vote. Sesimbra hopes to participate in more projects in the next coming years.

Sherborne

Sherborne thanks all organisers of projects they have been involved in last year, and Sherborne hopes to be able to participate in the future. If funding issues occur, Sherborne will find a solution.

Sherborne suggests that every town starts an intergenerational sustainability project as a bridge between this GM and the next one in Škofja Loka.

Sigulda

In Latvia there is a restructuring of municipalities, Sigulda will probably grow. Sigulda asks for support to host the 2026 winter Olympic Games.

Tryavna

Tryavna holds municipal elections in October. In the summer there will be a touristic and cultural program, everybody is invited to come and participate.

Türi

Türi intends to be more active and to participate in projects with the partner towns in the near future.

Zvolen

Miha will visit the mayor of Zvolen to explain the benefits of Douzelage. Next weekend Zvolen organises its Town Days. Everybody is invited.

19. Education Meeting report

Pirjo Ala-Hemmilä reports on the Educational Meeting.

120 Students of the Asikkala Highschool worked to organise the workshops of the YM.

The EM and the YM worked together this year, the youth presented the conclusions of their workshops in the EM. The EM worked around the topics:

- Students well being
- Self assessment
- Self esteem
- Learning skills

There was a presentation from Holstebro on Q-model which gave many teachers something to take home.

The EM has launched a blogsite <http://douzelageeducation.blogspot.com>.

Ecaterina Liliana Mocrei reported from the visitors point of view. All attendants were eager to come to Finland as the Finnish educational system is considered the best in Europe. The visitors learned a lot. There were visits to kindergarden, primary school and secondary school. The visitors could attend lessons and talk to teachers.

Two things to remember:

- There are no "mistakes", only "learning steps"
- The word "test" is no longer, these are "knowledge parties" now.

There were contributions from Bad Kötzting, Sherborne, Granville, Houffalize and Škofja Loka. Asikkala was impressed by the quality of all representatives for the EM. Pirjo Ala-Hemmilä and Ecaterina Liliana Mocrei want to encourage the teachers from the partner towns to join the EM, there is a lot to learn in this meeting.

20. Youth Meeting report

Elisabeth Dores reports on the Youth Meeting 2019. She thanks Asikkala and the Presidency for their support last year.

The Educational Meeting and the Youth Meeting have been working together. The youth was split into groups to work on the following workshops:

- Group hiking
- School on the move
- Communication skills
- Water
- Recycle
- Finnish school system
- European identity
- Aviation

The Finnish school youth organised the meetings. The meeting on the Finnish school system was inspiring and the discussions were fruitful. It is interesting to find out how the Finnish look at education and to compare this with ones own system.

All workshops produced posters with the work that was done. After that a game was played called "Futurama", where five groups of nine participants had to create their ideal town from the viewpoint of green sustainable living, affordable, inclusive, good quality education, good mental health and wellbeing. All groups had to draw a map of their "town of the future". This led to many ideas to create a new society that is green and inclusive. The posters are available to see what was done.

At this moment the youth is playing "human rights bingo". After this game the topic is discussed between all the groups. At the end of the meeting we shall go to a climbing park for more teambuilding.

During the elections Ovidiu and Veronica gave good presentations. Ovidiu (Siret) was elected as president, and Evelin (Tryavna) and Elisabeth (Sherborne) will support him as vice-presidents. Ovidiu addresses the GM and is confident the Youth Meeting will be a stronger power from now on. The GM congratulates him with his election. The Presidency thanks Elisabeth for her hard work during the last three years.

21. Questionnaire

The President invites all delegates to fill in the questionnaire and return it to the presidency.

22. Closing the General Meeting 2019

The President closes the General Meeting 2019 and expresses her gratitude for a fantastic program by Asikkala and the way all delegations have dealt with the issues.

Minutes of the 44th General Meeting

List of Attendants of GM, EM and YM

Agros						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Marios Agathikleous	M	GM	x		
2	Marithea Konstantinou	F	EM		x	
3	Chloe Protopapa	F	Ym			x
Altea						
				GM	EM	YM
1	JESUS PONS	M	GM	x		
2	AMPARO BALDO	F	EM-C		x	
3	1 representant TOWN HALL	F/M?	GM	x		
4	ZINO VREYSEB	M	YM			x
5	DIEGO CERULUS	M	YM			x
Susice						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Eva Benišková	F, 43	GM	x		
2	Olga Melkusova	F, 40	GM	x		
3	Věra Svobodová	F, 70	EM		x	
4	Anna Nová	F, 21	YM			x
5	Veronika Marešová	F, 23	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Věra Marešová	F, 56			(x)	
2	Eva Benišková	F, 12				
3	Jiří Kopelent	M, 49				
Bellagio						
				GM	EM	YM
1	ARIANNA SANCASSANI	F	EM		x	
2	PAOLA ROSSI	F	GM	x		
3	DONATELLA GANDOLA	F	GM	x		
Non Delegates						
1	ANNA GALIMBERTI	F				
Bundoran						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Shane Smyth	M 2	GM	x		
2	Joe Mc Nulty	M 2	GM	x		
3	John Campbell	M 2	EM			x
Chojna						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Barbara Rawecka	F	GM	x		
2	Janusz Salamończyk	M	GM	x		
3	Jerzy Kofarczyk	M	GM	x		
4	Renata Czubak	F	GM	x		
5	Miłosz Zubala	M/18	YM			x
6	Miłosz Parczewski	M/18	YM			x
Granville						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Pascale VALLEE	F	GM	x		
2	Michel LEMONNIER	M	GM	x		
3	Eden GUESNEY PICOT	F	YM			x
4	Romane HURISSE GOHIN	F	YM			x
5	Marie André LEVALLOIS	F	EM		x	
Non Delegates						
1	Fay GUERRY	F	Traductor			
2	Jean-Claude GUERRY	M	Traductor			
Houffalize						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Henrard Alphonse	M	GM	x		
2	Close Maxime	M	EM		x	
3	Schloune Estelle	F	YM			x
Judenburg						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Thorsten Wohleser	M/adult	GM	x		
2	Erwin Miesbacher	M/adult	GM	x		
3	Marion Wölbtsch	F/adult	EM		x	
4	Jenny Kuttner	F/17	YM			x
5	Katharina Freisl	F/16	YM			x

Kőszeg						
				GM	EM	YM
1	István Mátrai	M/66	GM	x		
2	Ilona Tólos	F/66	GM	x		
3	Andrea Bancsó	F/50	EM		x	
4	Hanna Andrasek	F/18	YM			x
5	Marton Juhos	M/18	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Péter Rege (Transl. Equip.)	M/35	GM	x		x
Marsaskala						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Mario Calleja	M	GM	x		
2	Mary Grace Calleja	F	GM	x		
3	Charlot Mifsud	M	EM		x	
4	Sandro Gatt	M	GM	x		
5	Josef Grech	M	GM	x		
Non Delegates						
1	Peter Paul Zammit	M 43		x		
2	Carmen Zammit	F 48		x		
3	Philip Mifsud	M 43		x		
4	Maryrose Mifsud	F 48		x		
5	Lawrence Zarb	M 43		x		
6	Marlene Zarb	F 48		x		
Meerssen						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Annigje Luns-Kruytbosch	F 59	GM	x		
2	Irene Raedts	F 73	GM	x		
3	Femie Kengen	F 55	GM	x		
4	Marie Thérèse Crombag	F 70	EM		x	
5	Wil Schrijnemaekers	M 75	GM	x		
6	Xander Steijns	M 18	YM			x
7	Daniel Willems	M 18	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Harry Crombag	M 70	GM	x		
2	Herman Langenveld	M 69	GM	x		
3	Alexander Luns	M 59	GM	x		
4	Noel Vossen	M 61	GM	x		
5	Pascale Vossen	F 59	GM	x		
Niederanven						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Marie-Antoinette Paquet-Tondt	F	GM	x		
2	Jeannot Schroeder	M	GM	x		
3	Rose Scharfe-Hansen	F	GM	x		
Non Delegates						
1	Roland Brimair	M >60		x		
2	Jacqueline Brumat-Wirth	F >60		x		
3	Barbara Rommelfanger-Quinn	F >60		x		
Bad Kötzting						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Wolfgang Kerscher	m	GM	x		
2	Isolde Emberger	f	GM	x		
3	Simon Haselbauer	m	EM		x	
4	Simona Gogeissl	f	YM			x
5	Stefan Pielmeier	m	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Markus Hofmann, Mayor	m	GM/YM	x		
2	Agathe Kerscher	f	GM/EM	x		
3	Caterina Gogeissl	f	YM			x
4	Alois Dachs	m	GM	x		

Oxelösund						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Catharina Fredriksson	F/54	GM	x		
2	Niklas Thelin	M/55	GM	x		
3	Peter Karlsson	M/51	EM		x	
Non Delegates						
1	Anna Karlsson Kaski	F/44	EM		x	
Holstebro						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Jette Hingebjerg	F/60	GM	x		
2	Søren Hinrichsen	M/54	EM		x	
3	Thiales Thiaharaja	F/54	GM	x		
4	Tiffany Flink Henriksen	F/18	YM			x
5	Nadina Delic	F/19	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Mette Sorensen,vicepresident	F/56	GM	x		
2	Allan Sørensen	M/48	EM		x	
3						
4	Joseph Ragunathan	M/	GM	x		
Rokiskis						
Thursday						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Ramunas Godelauskas	M	GM	x		
2	Irena Mateliene	F	GM	x		
3	Daiva Macjauskiene	F	EM		x	
4	Ursule Tarvydyte	F	YM			x
5	Paulius Buidovas	M	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Azuolas Rudnickas	M	YM			x
Rovinj-Rovigno						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Dr.sc. Marko Paliaga	M, 44	GM	x		
2	Maria Crnac Rocco	F, 45	GM	x		
3	Zeljko Balog	M,58	EM		x	
4	Emanuele Cvek	M, 16	YM			x
5	Ana Sosic	F, 17	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Samanta Paliaga	F, 48				
2	Flavia Paliaga	F, 14				
3	Claudio Rocco	M, 52				
4	Chiara Rocco	F, 16				
5	Giorgio Rocco	M, 13				
Sesimbra						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Drª Odete Graça	70	GM	x		
2	Filipe Pessanha	49	GM	x		
4	Jorge Lopes	51	EM		x	
Non Delegates						
1	Lara Morais	14 F	YM			x
Sherborne						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Jeremy Barker	M 80+	GM	x		
2	Marcus Ainley	M 60+	GM	x		
3	Rachel Milestone	F 30+	ED		x	
4	Eliza Dawson	F 17+	YM			x
5	George Jefferson	M 17+	YM			x
6	Sarah Whittick	F 40+	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Elizabeth Dores	F 20+	YM			x
2	Harvey Rawlings	M 20+				x
4	Michael Balfour	M 70+	GM	x		
5	Michael Morrell	M 80+	GM	x		
6	Pat Morrell	F 70+	GM	x		
7	John Whittick	M 40+		x		
9	Chris MacAdie	60+	GM	x		
10	Margit Whittick	F 70+				
11	Cllr Jill Warburton	F 40+	GM	x		
12	Hermione Warburton-Hogben	F 17	YM			x

Sigulda						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Katrina Leitane	F/34	GM	x		
2	Aivars Kirkelis	M/51	GM	x		
3	Valters Mačš	M/61	EM		x	
4	Dāvis Gavars	M/19	YM			x
5	Mārcis Klaviņš	M/17	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Jānis Mūzis	M/18	YM			x
Siret						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Tiberiu Rotaru-Anghelescu	M	GM	x		
2	Ecaterina Liliana Mocrei	F, 50	EM		x	
3	Mirela Loredana Popoiu	F, 44	EM		x	
4	Ovidiu Oniciuc	M, 20	YM			x
Skofja Loka						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Jernej Tavčar	M/49	GM	x		
2	Tine Radinja	M/39	GM	x		
3	Jože Bogataj	M/59	EM		x	
4	Bor Dolenc	M/18	YM			x
5	Jan Pipp	M/16	YM			x
Non Delegates						
1	Miha Ješe	M/65	GM	x		
2	Ana Prevc Megušar	F/49	EM		x	
3	Domen Košir	M/23	GM	x		
Tryavna						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Evelin Koev	M; 26	YM			x
2	Doncho Zahariev (Mayor)	M; 53	GM	x		
3	Ivelina Peneva-Kmetova	F; 48	GM	x		
4	Silvia Krasteva	F; 40	GM	x		
Türi						
				GM	EM	YM
1	Aet Sarv	F/56	GM	x		
2	Marleen Anderson	F/18	YM			x
3	Maris Rodendau	F/18	YM			x
Zvolen						
				GM	EM	YM
1		F	GM			
2	Zuzana Lászlóová	F	GM	x		
3	Michal Almáši	M	EM		x	
4	Peter László	M	YM			x
5	Marek Števkva	M	YM			x