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REPORT FROM THE PROJECT: FIRST STEP TO EUROPE

28th of March - 1st of April, Poland





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ORGANIZATIONS & PARTICIPANTS

LEADER:

POLAND - REFLECTIONS ON EUROPE

- KAMIL STANOS
- TOMASZ GAJEWSKI
- ALEKSANDRA NIEWCZAS
- DOMINIKA CHMIELEWSKA
- KAROL PROSTAK

ORGANIZATIONS

ITALY – MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES HAPPENING

- ROSANNA BELLOMO
- CHIARA DE LUCA
- ERICA MINNITI

GREECE - INNOVATING ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATION, TOURISM, HEALTH, AND INTERCULTURALITY KDETYD

- PANAGIOTA TSAKIRIDOU
- CHRISTOS EUMOIRIDIS
- NOTIS ZACHARIADIS

BULGARIA – ACADEMY FOR ACTIVE YOUTH

- STANISLAWA IVANOWA
- IVANA IVANOWA
- MARTIN GRIGOROV





ROE - Rozprawy o Europie

The Association „Reflections on Europe” (ROE) gathers people interested in the issues of the European Union as well as local development, education (formal and non-formal), culture, social activity, entrepreneurship, and youth policy. ROE's conceptual strategy is focused on:

- increasing knowledge about European Union – its history, activities, and values,
- increasing youth participation in social, civic ,and political engagement and decision-making,
- creating opportunities for dialogue, meetings ,and sharing of experience
- involving young people in the non-formal educational process,
- promote intercultural dialogue, and youth mobility - to express oan pinion on themes, relevant to the European citizenship





MOH - Mobility Opportunities Happening APS

MOH is rooted in non-formal education that develops transversal skills with a horizontal communication in the desire for inclusion, equality and environmental protection.

"We're active in the field of youth mobility and one of our aims is to provide disadvantaged young people with opportunities to experience mobility projects abroad and increase their participation in society and decision-making processes. As a locally active NGO we provide several types of help to groups of young people facing economical and social obstacles and we help other associations with logistics, events organisation and networking. In order to do that we organize several activities: DIY workshop (zero waste, cooking lesson), video screening, settlement work in schools, cleaning events (by boat, kayak, paddle and on the ground), youth exchanges and training courses."





KDETYD - Innovating activities in education, tourism, health and interculturality

KDETYD is an NGO founded in 2020 and its activities are expanding so it can carry out educational programs, actions, counseling or training to all people without discrimination.

"We design and organize experimental workshops and seminars related to our objectives. Our vision is to implement new techniques and methods of education and training, to bring people together and achieve real social impact. We have a great interest in finding partners and together to work on programs focused on sharing knowledge and best practices as well as their applications. We aspire to promote active citizenship in making their own strategic plans for them, creating projects, spreading ideas to all organizations, intercultural dialogue, self- development, skill-building, environmental awareness, and encouragement of solidarity, especially among youth and vulnerable social groups. We want to help create the next generation of leaders to strengthen social cohesion and decision-making centers in their places."





Academy for Active Youth Association

Academy for Active Youth is a newly founded association that works mainly on to the development of youngsters in Bulgaria.

"We are youngsters ourselves and we know how crucial is to have other people your age that inspire you to do better and to be an active citizen that not only lives day by day, but lives for the community and to leave something behind. Therefore our main activities are regular meetings with youngsters and we discuss topics from how to handle difficult situations to how to be an active citizen and ways to improve your community. We consider this activities crucial since a lot of youngsters are not familiar with the youth work, participation and Erasmus+ in general. Therefore we are strongly concentrating on the betterment of our participants, and the surrounding around them. At the moment we are working on two other projects which aim to involve rural youth into rural agriculture and social entrepreneurship."





Aim of the project:

Together as a Reflection on Europe (Poland), Academy for Active Youth (Bulgaria), Mobility Opportunities Happening APS (Italy) and Innovating Activities in Education, Tourism, Health and Interculturality (Greece) we see a strong need to invest in young people from smaller cities and show them that Europe is all of us and that no one is excluded from enjoying the privileges of being a European.

That is why our main goal of the project is to build a strong and long-term partnership of organizations dealing with the social inclusion of young people from smaller cities (and thus strengthen the potential of our organizations) and encourage young people to invest themselves in their local communities, to participate in non-formal education and spread knowledge about European Union.

The project will be filled with many developing intercultural workshops on European values and the EU's top priorities. During the workshops, young people will also generate ideas that can be implemented within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. There will also be all kinds of discussion panels on ecology, media or current events, as well as talks with experts.

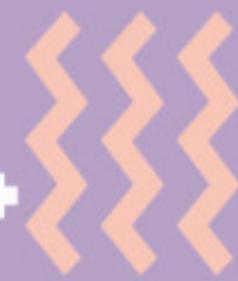
Our target groups in the project will be youth aged 15-25 participating in youth workshops and Civic Youth Festival. This target group also includes young people with fewer opportunities, especially those with learning, geographic, social, economic and cultural difficulties from small cities: Starachowice, Targovischte, Drama, Triggiano and its surroundings. A large number of young people who will take part in the events have never participated in any projects under the Erasmus+ Program.

The main results of the project will be the increase in the potential of partner organizations, mutual learning from each other, by solving problems, exchanging experiences, inspiring each other, contact exchange, awareness of cooperation, in the context of cultural differences, a sense of a common goal, solidarity.

European Union especially this year, wants to show diversity in all fields of education and self-development. They value zeal of work and cognitive curiosity of the youth.



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FIRST STEP TO EUROPE EVENT

28th of March 2022

PROGRAMME - DAY 1

Venue: Starachowice, Hotel Senator

11:00 - 12:00	Welcome speech. Partners presentations. Introduction to the project
12:15 - 13:45	1st youth workshop [ECOLOGY - Italy] - Primary School no 11
14:00 - 15:30	Lunch in Hotel Senator
15:30 - 16:00	Networking of partners - get to know each other workshop
16:00 - 17:00	Meeting of the management team - discussing project matters - finances, schedule, risk analysis, action plan
17:00 - 19:00	Free time
19:00 - 21:00	Dinner at Merkury Restaurant





FIRST STEP TO EUROPE EVENT

29th of March 2022

PROGRAMME - DAY 2

Venue: Starachowice, Radomska st. 45, City Hall, Olimpia Conference Hall

10:00 - 12:00	Partner's Presentations. Meeting with the Municipality of Starachowice - youth policy in Starachowice and Poland - presentations and discussions
12:00 - 12:30	Coffee Break
12:30 - 14:00	Meeting with Youth City Council in Starachowice - presentation and discussion on the social inclusion of young people from small towns, including people with fewer opportunities, how to encourage young people to stay or come back to small cities, introducing partner organizations and people involved in the project.
14:00 - 16:00	Lunch at Bar Miś in Starachowice
16:00 - 18:00	Museum of Nature and Technology in Starachowice - Regional Heritage
19:00 - 21:00	Dinner at Bistro in Starachowice
21:00	Coordinator's meeting - future activities





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FIRST STEP TO EUROPE EVENT 30th of March 2022 **PROGRAMME - DAY 3**

Venue: Starachowice, High School no 2 in Starachowice

09:00 - 14:00

Youth Civic Festival "Europe is HERE"

Opening - school presentation

Partners Presentation

Table discussions "world cafe" 1. ecology 2. civic education
3. fake news and dezinformation 4. european values

Experts lecturers and debate with young people on Future of Europe

Contest about European Union on Kahoot!

International Stands prepared by Youth





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FIRST STEP TO EUROPE EVENT 31th of March 2022 PROGRAMME - DAY 4

Venue: Kielce

09:00 - 11:00	Meeting with Youth Sejmik of Swietokrzyskie Region - discussion
11:30 - 13:00	NGO Center in Kielce - Study Visit and discussion
13:00 - 15:00	Lunch in Dumplings Bar
15:00 - 16:00	Meeting with Eurodesk Kielce
16:00 - 19:00	Walking Tour with guide in Kielce
19:00 - 21:00	Dinner at Rynek 11 Restaurant





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FIRST STEP TO EUROPE EVENT

1st of April 2022

PROGRAMME - DAY 5

Venue: Starachowice, Primary School no 11, Vocational School no 2

09:00 - 11:00	Meeting with youth from primary school no 11 in Starachowice – Discussion about social activity
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 - 13:00	2nd youth workshop [Bulgaria - Media education, fake news, dezinformation] - Vocational School no 2 in Starachowice
13:00 - 14:30	3rd youth workshop [Greece - active citizenship] - Vocational School no 2 in Starachowice
14:30 - 16:00	Farewell lunch





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On 28 March – 1 April, we had the pleasure to host our first international meeting within the confines of the project “First Step to Europe”. It was implemented under the Erasmus+ Program.

After the online preparations meeting, we had an opportunity to start our series of meetings in Poland. We hosted 9 representatives of the local non-governmental organizations: Innovating Activities in Education, Tourism, Health and Interculturality from Greece, Academy for Active Youth from Bulgaria, and Mobility Opportunities Happening from Italy





Day#1

The beginning of the first day was devoted to a warming welcoming meeting. Our organizations present themselves and we had an introduction to the aims of the projects. Our corporate goal was to engage young people from the small cities with smaller opportunities to be more active in their hometowns.

First day was focusing also on ecology workshops conducted by our partners from Italy. As a locally active NGO they provide several types of help to groups of young people facing economic and social obstacles and help other associations with logistics, events organisation and networking. In order to do that they organize several activities: DIY workshop (zero waste, cooking lesson), video screening, settlement work in schools, cleaning events (by boat, kayak, paddle and on the ground), youth exchanges and training courses. Therefore our youth from Primary School nr. 11 had an opportunity to participate in workshops about zero waste policy and redesigning old clothes to completely new things.





Day #2

Second day we spent in the Municipality of Starachowice where together with The Mayor of the city of Starachowice and Youth City Council we had a small discussion about the social inclusion of young people from small towns including people with fewer opportunities. We were debating how to encourage young people to stay or come back to small cities f.e.g. after college. We were also talking about the history, activities and the future of Youth City Council. Our partners drew closer history of their activization of youth as well. Greek partner association as well aspire to promote active citizenship in making their own strategic plans for them, creating projects, spreading ideas to all organizations, intercultural dialogue, self-development, skill- building, environmental awareness and encouragement of solidarity, especially among youth and vulnerable social groups. They are trying to help create the next generation of leaders to strengthen social cohesion and decision-making centres in their places.





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DAY #3

We had an opportunity to host first in Starachowice The Youth Festival "Europe is here" created by young people for young people. During our festival, young people had the opportunity to talk about ecology, civic education, media education and European values. Thanks to the presence of our international guests, we had the possibility to exchange experiences of youth policies in other countries, to later reflect on the activities that youth can undertake. There was also a debate during which we discussed the future of the European Union. During the entire festival, participants had the opportunity to try Greek, Bulgarian, Italian and Polish dishes prepared by students of the Secondary School No. 2. It all ended with the knowledge competition about the European Union, during which the winner had a chance to win a ticket for a Youth workshops with our Association.

The festival was not only an amazing event, but also an opportunity to cooperate, develop language skills and integrate among young people.





DAY #4

We spent the fourth day of the project in the City of Kielce, where we met with the chairman of the Świętokrzyskie Assembly - Andrzej Prus and Veronika Kurdybacha - chairman of the Youth Assembly of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. We visited the Center of Non-Governmental Organizations where, together with Michał Piasecki and Kamil Żuława, we discussed the future of our associations. Joanna Rudawska, Karol Kaleta and Eurodesk Kielce welcomed us in the Kielce Technology Park where we were discussing the history of the Technology's Parks in Europe. We ended our journey at the Energy Science Center.

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Day #5

The last day was devoted to another series of workshops for Primary School No. 11 and Technical Secondary School No. 2 in Starachowice. Our Greek partners talked to young people about disinformation and the dangers of fake news. With their great knowledge and experiences they are implementing new techniques and methods of education and training, to bring people together and achieve real social impact. They have a great interest in finding partners and together to work on programs focused on sharing knowledge and best practices as well as its applications. Meantime the Academy for Active Youth from Bulgaria dealt with the discussion on civic activity and activities that youth can carry out for our city. Association main aim is to create as much activities for youth as it is possible. Regular meetings with youngsters and discussion about topics from how to handle difficult situations to how to be an active citizen and ways to improve your community are frequent proceeding.

We have found out that our country has many faces. We are looking forward to the next meetings with our partners in order to continue working for young people and show the potential that the small towns of our organization create!

EUROPEAN UNION



Ivana from Bulgaria:

"I'm glad that I had the opportunity to be part of the first meeting of the STEP project. I'm impressed by how we can make a change step by step inspiring the youngsters in the communities with which we work and that this meeting show-cased some of the best practices. I enjoyed the workshops, they reminded me how at this small age we all have this genuine and clean idea that if we share and be active they can become a reality, also a great example for me is the youngest major of Starachowice make me believe that there is always a way if you're brave enough to make a difference. As a youth worker I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to cooperate and exchange the best practices and without our hosts from Reflection on Europe this program and learning experience would not be possible. I'll bring to my hometown some great ideas."

Martin from Bulgaria:

The project I was engaged with for a week First Step to Europe was a very helpfull and enriching in terms of good practices experience. The activities with the young students at the school and the meetings that we had with the city major and youth city council were inspirational and gave me a lot of ideas to implement at my hometown. The project thought us how to cooperate between organisations working in rural areas and make Europe a better place to live and develop."

Patryk from Poland:

Project First Step to Europe was an awesome event. Guest I met were interesting people to talk and everybody had something to tell. I could practice my English and learn something new. The atmosphere was great, I felt very comfortable talking with everyone. I hope there will be more in future!





Piotr from Poland:

I think that festival “Europe is here” organized in High School n2 In Starachowice was an exciting experience allowing all the students including me to taste different cultures and speak in a different language. Having to meet the guests from all over the Europe was also an amazing way to exchange knowledge on the topics such as European citizenship or fake news during the world cafe discussions. Organization of the whole event was so good, that if I ever have a chance to take part in a similar one I’m definitely going to.

Panagiotta from Greece:

The multiple activities during the week planned and organized by the Polish organization kept us awake and motivated the active participation of young people to change the current unfortunate crisis we are going through. We look forward to more meetings and activities. Apart from Starachowice, we visited Kielce, to meet and discuss with the Youth Sejmik of Swietokrzyskie Region and after that we visited a NGO Center in Kielce and the Technological Park of Kielce, an incubator for small businesses. Besides the events and the things scheduled as part of the program, we had a lot of free time, to walk around in the cities we visited, try the local and traditional cuisine and socialize with people of the region. Thank you very much for the hospitality and the participation of our association INNOVATING ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATION, TOURISM, HEALTH AND INTERCULTURALITY KDETYPD in the program "FIRST STEP TO EUROPE - boosting active citizenship among youth in small cities" the organization Stowarzyszenie Rozprawy o Europie of Poland.



Stanislava from Bulgaria:

"Being an active citizen is amongst one of the most important things a young person is good to know a thing or two about. We had the great chance to speak in-front of so many youngsters from all ages) they got really excited from all of the workshops and activities that we did. And we also managed to meet one of the youngest elected mayors in Poland. He became the head of the town at 24.

Which is very inspiring and motivating and exactly this spirit we are going to transfer to the youngsters which we meet daily. The most important advice from the meeting is: you can do everything you would like to no matter where you live. And the positives aspects of developing yourself in the rural areas is that you can build a community easily here; you can start an entrepreneurial project and then you will be the first one and the only one- so people will appreciate you, also you can communicate and suggest ideas to the for rural improved development easily to the decision makers of the town.

Chiara from Italy:

Dziękuję - This is the word that resonates in my mind, together with another word that forms a couple that is unfortunately rare these days: Hope.

Gratitude and hope, together with inspiration, amazement and admiration. a word for each day of this project, a project that has given me the opportunity to know realities that I did not know and in which I intend to immerse myself even more. Seeing boys and girls so young and so active has astonished me. their commitment and desire to improve their small reality, for themselves and for others is incredible. 4 countries, 4 associations, different in terms of themes and activities but more than similar in terms of underlying values and desire to change the world, or rather no, as someone says (to whom all credit goes for the positive things): "I didn't want to change the world, but the people's world". In my humble opinion, you are succeeding great, all these associations are succeeding.



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Video from the Festival: Europe is HERE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDmfPkGE_fg

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

