



**The Project » Debate about the future of the European Union on the countryside« was financed by the European Union within the frame of the »Europe For Citizens« programme**

## **Strand 2, action 2.1. Town twinning**

**Participation:** The project has enabled a meeting of 988 citizens out of which they were:

55 from Donja Voća (**Croatia**),  
52 from Mala Subotica (**Croatia**),  
16 from Kolan (**Croatia**),  
9 from Preding (**state Austria**),  
61 from Dobož Istok (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**),  
9 from Lovas (**Croatia**),  
9 from Gornji Milanovac (**Serbia**),  
5 from Venzone – Pušja vas (**Italy**),  
772 from the village of Starše (**Slovenia**)

**Place / dates:** The meeting took place in the settlements of Zlatoličje, Starše, Loka, Marjeta, Prepolje; Country: Slovenia; from 31/08/2018 to 03/09/ 2018.

### **Short description:**

The events that took place on **Friday, August 31, 2018** were intended for bowling with a ball on a string, a tour of the sights of the Municipality of Starše and the Municipality of Maribor, a round table on the topic "Tourism through Youth", where the director of the Maribor – Pohorje Tourist Board participated. In the evening, a musical event in a relaxed atmosphere followed, the purpose of which was to interact with one another. Through the diversity of organized events, we managed to achieve the set objectives of the project. At the arrival of the guests, the Mayor of the Municipality of Starše Mr. Bojan Kirbiš welcomed all present and kindly pointed out the importance of promoting intercultural dialogue, which is indispensable for unification, networking and mutual cooperation of members of different nationalities, which can only be achieved through respect for cultural diversity. In the introduction the "Europe for Citizens" initiative was presented, and later also a more detailed program of the acquired project, titled "Debate about the future of the European Union on the countryside". The opening of the project, which allows better cooperation and strengthening of the ties between the participating partners was enriched by the performances of various cultural societies.

The events that took place on **Saturday, September 1, 2018** were intended for sports and recreational events and competitions. Round tables followed, among which we first listened to presentations of the activities of voluntary organizations and societies on the topic "Elderly for the Seniors". Then we held a round table on the topic "History of Zlatoličje and importance of cultural heritage", followed by cooking of traditional stew pot dishes. As the content-wise the most important topic discussed at the round tables, we held the round table entitled "Euro-scepticism and the future of youth in the EU", accompanied by a cultural program. At the round table, together with other representatives from partner cities, we hosted two MEPs, which is why we started the round table with the Slovenian and the European anthems. The evening was dedicated to music and socializing. With

the events that we carried out on this day, we fully achieved the set goals, as we exchanged a multitude of personal opinions in the framework of the round table, listened to the views of various nationalities on the current European topics that uncompromisingly promoted European citizenship, intercultural dialogue and volunteering through which we could be even more connected. Many thoughts were also expressed on the topic of youth and questions about what the future brings to the young European Union were raised and answered. We have identified the positive effects that the new financial perspective of the Erasmus + program brings to young people and have raised awareness of respecting the political diversity and encouraged a more responsible behaviour when it comes to plastic pollution. We have been commended for drawing the European funds, which are used by such a small municipality, but one with a vast cultural and historical potential to promote the development of tourism.

The events of **Sunday, September 2, 2018** were dedicated to the market of various traditional products, where local suppliers and representatives of project partners participated. A round table on the local self-sufficiency on the topic "I eat healthy and traditionally" was also carried out. In the morning, in addition to the project's activities, the traditional raising of the wind rattle was organized, accompanied by a short cultural program which was followed by a healthy Slovenian lunch. The set aim of the Sunday events was met through the presentation of culinary delicacies of our local providers, which was most interesting especially for participants who came from other countries. The setting of the rattle represented the cultural heritage or tradition that has been preserved for many years in the Municipality of Starše. At the round table on local self-sufficiency, the participants learned a lot of new, interesting and, above all, useful information. All the participants were invited to intensify the use of European funds in the area of local self-sufficiency. The activities of the Maribor Development Agency and the LAG (Local Action Group) project titled "I eat Differently, I eat the Homemade", highlighting the increased access to the local food, the preservation and development of farms, new green jobs, and at the same time pointing to the protection of the environment was presented.

The **Monday, September 3, 2018** events aimed at the round table on the topic "Refugees in Europe and the integration of vulnerable groups into society", where volunteering in the fight against violence was presented at the round table. The screening of the documentary film "The Ptuj nobility", written and produced by Miran Harb followed. The film presented an insight into the life of the noble families of the Ptuj castle through history. The goal of Monday's events to facilitate the integration of refugees into Europe in order to promote mutual respect, tolerance, understanding of diversity and respect for other cultures was fully achieved by hosting primary school pupils as key listeners at the Round Table on topics of Refugees and Volunteering. It was very important that we brought this kind of topics closer to the young, with the desire to prevent the further stigmatization of refugees. At the round table we hosted a person who shared her first-hand personal experience with the refugee overflow on the borders of the Balkan Route (Šentilj) and presented to us the entire process of integration of refugees into the life of the European Union, which is however strongly connected with various forms of voluntary work. We completed the project at the Evaluation lunch, where we analysed our activities in detail and unanimously assessed them as very successful.