

GREENEU

Green transition against COVID19 and climate crisis

7th International Meeting in Agia (Greece)

23rd – 26th January 2024

Municipality of Agia

«European Youth facing Environmental and Social Challenges»

MINUTES

Participating partners:

- DIMOS AGIA (Greece)
- MUNICIPIO DE AMARANTE (Portugal)
- COMUNE DI CERVIA (Italy)
- DRUSTVO ZA RAZVIJANJE PROSTOVOLJNEGA DELA NOVO MESTO (Slovenia)
- OPCINA KALNIK (Croatia)
- ATHIENOU DIMOS (Cyprus)
- GODOLLO KORNYEKI REGIONALIS TURISZTIKAI EGYESULET (Hungary)
- AYUNTAMIENTO DE DOLORES (Spain)

Objectives

- **Increasing awareness about concepts such as European citizenship, governance and youth role in the civic life;**
- **Increasing knowledge about the role of youngsters in the environmental and social challenges generated by Climate Change and COVID19;**
- **Better involvement of youngsters in their local communities;**

Day 1

23rd January 2024

During the 1st day of the int. meeting the participants arrived in Agia, where the representatives of the Municipality of Agia welcomed them.

A welcome meeting took place at the restaurant before dinner, where the participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Day 2

24th January 2024

On the 2nd day of the int. meeting the International conference and the Creative Lab took place at “Chrysallida” Cultural Center. The Deputy Mayors Mr Panagiotou and Mrs Potoula, the President of the Town Council Mr Chatziroufas, the Councillor Mr Kraniotis and the President of the Municipal Community of Agia Mr Kostoulas welcomed the participants.

First Mrs Theodora Patsiavoudi, the project manager and Administrative Officer of the Municipality of Agia, held a short welcome speech on behalf of the Mayor and the Town Council members and presented the Municipality of Agia.

Then in the frame of the **“International Conference about civic participation and governance at local level”** the representatives from Amarante, Novo Mesto, Athienou and

Agia presented the local best-practices in terms of civic participation, the priorities their communities have set like e.g. climate change, social inclusion, integration of immigrants, waste management, environmental protection etc. and the ways they have chosen to communicate these priorities to the young members of their communities and to attract their interest. A discussion was held after the presentations since the representatives of the project partners realized that despite some differences in the everyday life actually they all face the same challenges and the biggest one among them is to engage the youngsters and give them new opportunities.

After a short break the **“Creative Lab with local youngsters, proposing ideas for youth civic participation on social and environmental challenges at local and European level”** took place.

During the Lab the students of the Erasmus+ Team of the High School of Agia and the students of the Voluntary Group “ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΖΩ” of the High School of Agia presented their projects about youth civic participation.

The Erasmus+ Team of the High School of Agia made a presentation about the activities it participates in the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme and in terms of the climate change and environmental challenges. “Activating teachers and students to deal with climate change” is the topic of their current project and having already faced a severe damage in September 2023 due to medicane “Daniel” that devastated the plain of Thessaly and a big part of the Municipality of Agia the students express their feelings and thoughts about climate change and engage themselves in environmental activities on local and European level that emphasize on the environmental protection.

The Voluntary Group “ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΖΩ” of the High School of Agia consists of 48 students of different age that are actively participating in projects regarding social inclusion. In their presentation they showed a hair donation activity for cancer patients that suffer from hair loss and the intergenerational activities they organized throughout the year. They also showed the results of a questionnaire among students about **“Active citizenship through volunteering”** The most important conclusion of the questionnaire was that for the students **active citizenship is equal to democracy and that an active citizen is a democratic citizen.**



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The Creative Lab concluded with a discussion among the students, the teachers and the representatives of the project partners about the importance of the participation of youngsters in voluntary groups and activities, about the intergenerational collaboration and about their engagement in issues like the climate change that affects their future and their perspectives.





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In the afternoon the participants visited the city of Larissa and had a study tour in the city center.



Day 3

25th January 2023

In the morning the participants visited the Cultural Center of Metaxohori “Parthenagorio” where the Members of the Board of the Cultural Association of Metaxohori welcomed them with home-made drinks and sweets. A detailed tour in the building followed where the history of the village, of the cultural association and of volunteerism in the community was presented. The Cultural Association of Metaxohori is one of the most active voluntary groups taking care of a wide range of activities like e.g. cultural, environmental, social, intergenerational, sports etc. They are working hard on giving opportunities to young people and motivating them to live in Metaxohori.



The participants walked to Agia town center, where they participated in the “Open Debate: The role of youth facing European main challenges from their local communities” in the Town Council Chamber, in the Town Hall.

The Deputy-Mayors Mrs Potoula & Mr Gkaranes, the President of the Town Council Mr Chatziroufas, the Councillor Mr Kraniotis, the President of the Municipal Community of Agia Mr Kostoulas, the Members of the Board of the Cultural Association of Metaxohori and Mrs

Evangelia Komnitsa the President of the Social Enterprise of Agia participated in the Open Debate.

The representatives of the Municipality of Agia held short speeches about the main subject of the debate since they are all young and newly elected in their positions. They emphasized on the importance of participation, cooperation and volunteering since they represent the people in need of the community and their care and social inclusion is one of their main priorities. The only way to face future challenges is for the community members to stand united and work for their common goals.

The Members of the Board of the Cultural Association of Metaxohori explained the way they set their goals and the tools they use in order to implement them and Mrs Patsiavoudi explained the way the Municipality of Agia involves the citizens through European projects and local activities and how it tries to increase the awareness of young people with the involvement of the schools and the voluntary groups and associations.

The representatives of the project partners presented their own practices and experience one by one.

The representatives from Athienou talked about giving the floor to children since the municipality has a very long and important tradition in volunteerism and its main policy is the involvement of children and youngsters.

The representatives from Cervia talked about involving young people and increasing awareness through the participation in projects and initiatives and through social media.

The representatives from Dolores talked about the interaction between young people and politicians and mentioned the activities they organize like e.g. sports and cultural events, collection of organic waste at schools, door-to-door waste management and integration activities for immigrants.

The representatives from Amarante shared with the participants the opinion that motivation and youth participation are the biggest challenges that face local communities. They use several tools in order to increase awareness about volunteerism like e.g. giving an amount of money as a prize to a school for the participation in the development and the

implementation of an idea in urban development issues and they support activities, events and festivals for youngsters.

The representatives from Novo Mesto focused on the associations for volunteerism that organize environmental actions like waste and waste water management awareness campaigns and “zero waste” or “no waste-no plastic” festivals.

The representatives from Gödöllő explained that in their case volunteerism is compulsory. They organize the Day of Elderly People and monthly events while there is no waste management.

A very nice discussion was held while everybody realized that the priorities and the challenges are similar and the solution is the same. All over Europe the communities must motivate young people and engage them in voluntary activities, starting from the schools. By giving children the opportunity to collaborate in voluntary groups for the same goals we teach them to appreciate and respect the values of justice, solidarity, equality and tolerance.





At noon the participants visited the coastal villages Agiokampos, Sotiritsa and Velika and in the evening they visited the Community of Melivia and the Cultural Association of Melivia “Omiros”.

Day 4

26th January 2024

Departure of participants