

## **Participation of the municipality of Dagda in the “DEMU” project**

The EU “Europe for Citizens” project “DEMU/Support for democratic union and active citizenship in the digital era” involves 14 countries: Spain (managing partner), Sweden, Slovenia, Serbia, Italy, Latvia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Macedonia, Croatia, Belgium, France, Czech Republic. Latvia is represented in this project by the municipality of Dagda. On 4-7 February, the opening of the project and the first meeting of the participants were organized in the Italian city Penne, to which the coordinator of the project was headed, M.Mickeviča and A.Odiņeca, Head of Dagdas Youth centre.

“All the roads are leading to Rome” – it was quite rightly considered by the old travelers. Even in the outermost corners, there was a reputation for the “eternal city.” The poets sang its greatness and richness, its greatness and its beauty. Centuries have passed, but still millions of tourists are seeking beauty, wanting to touch great history and culture, to feel the power of Rome itself in the free hours of a few hours, to get a little acquainted with the beauty of the squares of this historic city, to listen to fountains stories, and to strengthen mentally by entering one of the churches. Rome attracted many other important historical and cultural sites, but it was time to go on a bus to reach Penne, along with the rest of the project. From the bus window you could learn the breathtaking views of nature: the snowy peaks of the mighty hills (Apennine Mountains), the country of plants, and the lovely landscapes of nature. When driving on the bus, it was interesting and unusual to hear at the same time 14 languages, the unifying of which was English, with some partners also in German. At times like this, make sure that foreign language knowledge is important.

The official opening of the project took place in the evening of the first day. The project's leaders, GUILLERMO Hita, General Manager Cristina Moreno and General Coordinator Jose Barcia of Spain; Italian coordinator Aldo di Fabrizio and journalist Sabrina De Luca (Italy); project manager Gosia Wochowska, Poland.

On the second day, a conference was held, the main theme of “Digital Democracy”, which invited professors, students, and other relevant specialists in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) from the universities of Rome and Peskar. Participants were given an excellent opportunity to obtain binding information and to discuss issues such as digital participation in public-interest processes (e-voting in Italy already exists); the role of digital skills in the development of democratization processes; the impact of new technologies and, in particular, social media on democratization, etc. So few sentences from what we have heard: already kindergarten and schools are the first institutions where technology is first introduced; people in the world now have more mobile phones than toilets; what our digital skills and cyber security are; do we think about when we go on the website: www (opening eyes to the world); we are all in the midst of change and constant change.; are we ready for European democracy; or yet democracy is better than dictatorship; only education helps to understand many democratization processes; European regulations and data protection. Clearly, so much needs to be educated on the digital systems of each of us. If people are familiar with digital tools today, they can connect to different European platforms (read books, perform different transactions), be an active user of tools. At the end of the conference, each partner presented his country and place of birth in the form of presentations. Our local government presentation also briefly reflected the life of Dagda municipality, activities in the fields of education, culture and sport. A fascinating tour of the Penne City History Museum was organized after the conference late evening. At the end of the tour, it

was a great opportunity to taste traditional Italian kitchen dishes and get to know the performances of the local folklore group.

On the third day, project participants went to Pescara to visit the Business Promotion Center and a local nongovernmental organization. Industry representatives shared their experience. Examples of good practices showed that there was a strong focus on young entrepreneurs in Italy. Tourism and agriculture are mainly active in the Abruzzo region. Diverse digital capabilities help you build your business more successfully. During the course of this day, a small tour of the city of Pescara was also impressive, and of course the unforgettable moment on the coast of the Adriatic. When returning to the Penne, project participants were active in groups that evaluated the activities of this meeting and discussed the tasks for the next appointment. The third-day activities culminated with a national evening, where each country catered to other participants with its country-specific delicacies and engaged in games, dances, etc. in cultural activities.

The next meeting of the partners of the project will be organized in the Slovenian town of Novo Mesto in April 2020. However, until then, each partner will carry out the tasks set out in the project.

Participation in the project was very valuable. New ideas and partners emerged for future joint projects/activities that can help young people and other people in our country to feel more knowledgeable and secure in today's digital world. Thank the municipality of Dagda for giving the opportunity to participate in the project.

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