

## **FOURTH EVENT OF BRIDGE PROJECT**

**19<sup>TH</sup> – 23<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022**

BRIDGE – Building Relationships into a Democratic Goal for Europe – is a European Project, part of the "Europe for Citizens 2014-2020" programme, in particular of the “democratic engagement and civic participation” strand, action “Network of Towns”. It was funded in 2019 by the European Commission to the municipality of Vila Nova de Cerveira (PT).

The Project’s objective is to promote cross-border citizenship and social cohesion across borders, focusing on two of the main phenomena affecting Europe in recent times: Euroscepticism and xenophobia. The main theme of this project is to promote cross-border citizenship and cross-border social cohesion, as well as to share best practices among neighboring partners. Each organization involved will need to be able to develop strong and effective cross-border practices to share with other partners during the five foreseen meetings.

BRIDGE partnership is composed by organizations that belong to two different Countries but that are situated on the border with each other, in particular: Vila Nova de Cerveira (PT) – Tomiño (ES); Sdruzhenie na Yugozapadnite Obshtini (BG) – Dimitrovgrad (RS); GECT GO / EZTS GO (IT); Borsod-abaúj-zemplén county government (HU) - Rozsnyó város (SK); Panevezio (LT) – Daugavpils (LV); Lighthouse Languages (IT); Deryneia (CY).

During its 24 months of duration, the Project foresees five different events in the venues chosen during the design phase: the first one in Vila Nova de Cerveira/Tomiño (PT, ES) in October 2021; the second one in Borsod-abaúj-zemplén county government/Rozsnyó város (HU, SK) in March 2022; the third one in Gorizia/Nova Gorica (IT, SI) in May 2022; the fourth in Slivnitsa/Dimitrovgrad (BG, RS) in June 2022; and the fifth in Panevėžys/Daugavpils (LT, LV) in September 2022.

The fourth and second-last event was carried out from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June in Bulgaria/Serbia.

In particular, this fourth international meeting of BRIDGE Project took place in the cities of Slivnitsa (BG)/Dimitrovgrad (RS).

The meeting was organized by ASWM Organization: the Association of South Western Municipalities is a non-governmental no profit organization. It represents the interests of the members and coordinates their activities in order to attain their mutual objectives.

The meeting was focused on a specific topic: "Successful projects in the sphere of social, cultural, ecological and civil activities".

All the participating organizations were asked to prepare a presentation to share with each other, in order to create space for the exchange of best-practices and cross-fertilization.

During the meeting, the partners held conferences and debates on different topics, such as good practices in partner projects with various sources of funding, cross-border and trans-national projects of ASWM, etc.

Also some local and national public authorities took part in the conferences, namely Simana Markovska (ASWM coordinator), Madlen Georgieva (Communication and Information Expert at

the Regional Information Center of Sofia), Lyubitsa Tomova (Executive Director ASWM), Vladica Dimitrov (Mayor of the Municipality of Dimitrovgrad), stakeholders from Dimitrovgrad Municipality.

Beside the conferences and the institutional moments, the participants had the opportunity to carry out cultural visits in the most peculiar and traditional sites of the area such as the city of Sofia, the town of Dimitrovgrad, the Poganovo Monastery in Serbia and the Rila Monastery in Bulgaria. They could learn about the historical peculiarities of the territory, about the gastronomic traditions of the two Countries, getting in touch with local communities and discovering the local and natural beauties. This ensured a direct confrontation between the participating delegations, an exchange of ideas, objectives and best practices for the future of the European Union.

The fifth and last scheduled event of BRIDGE Project will be held in Panevėžys (Lithuania)/Daugavpils (Latvia) in September 2022.

