

The International Meeting for the E-CULTS - European Citizens for CULture and Solidarity project, funded by the Europe Program for Citizens of the European Union, was held in Swieqi - Malta from April 11th to 18th 2019. The E-CULTS project stems from the desire to undertake twinning processes and to promote the exchange of common opinions and reflections on issues of European relevance, such as participation in social and cultural promotion initiatives, particularly for young people. This is a theme that is deeply felt by all the partners, who have experienced common problems in recent years caused by the continuation of international crises and by the spread of Eurosceptic and nationalistic propaganda.

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The E-CULTS project was therefore created to promote the exchange of good practices and cross-fertilization of projects aimed at the inclusion and participation of young people in cultural and social activities at local and European level, fostering knowledge of European policies to promote the participation and the civic democratic commitment of all its citizens and stimulating a debate on the idea of the European Community and its future, also in view of the upcoming European elections.

During the Meeting, from 11th to 18th of April, delegations from Gradoli and Soriano in Cimino (Italy), Arnot (Hungary), Deryneia (Cyprus), Jevišovice (Czech Rep.) were present in Swieqi to participate in activities aimed at active debate and sharing of good practices and experiences.

Furthermore, the E-CULTS project has promoted a survey among young citizens of the partner communities, concerning their perception of European policies in the field of integration and solidarity. The results of the survey will be monitored in the days following the international meeting and will show important data for the construction of a shared action at European level to improve and ensure the activation of young people as European citizens. An online survey is available on the project Facebook page, all European citizens are invited to participate.

The meeting was concluded with an official ceremony during which an act of Cooperation and Friendship was stipulated, an informal contract which, however, lays the groundwork for future collaboration between the 6 participating communities. The ceremony was held at the Millennium Chapel of Saint Julian, where the delegations were guests of the Mayor Guido Dalli and of Fr. Hilary, director of the center.

The Mayor Mr. Noel Muscat emphasized that it is an honor for the Swieqi Local Council to host the E-CULTS Project, adding that it is essential that the citizens of Europe meet and take action to raise awareness of the importance of participation democratic and social development of young people both for the future of local communities and the European Union.

"As a Local Council, we wanted to promote this project as an opportunity for our citizens to broaden their horizons beyond national borders," said the Mayor. "The debate on civic participation by young people is strongly relevant for our community, which has undergone in the last decades an enormous expansion and demographic growth, linked to the arrival of new citizens, leading local authorities to develop efficient programs for social inclusion and the active participation of its citizens. Swieqi is therefore a good practice to be exported at European level and a fertile ground for receiving suggestions and innovative projects coming from the partners participating in E-CULTS".

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