



**Friends of Europe**



# Guideline

**How to start and organize “Friends of Europe”**



**November 2009**

**The Charter of European Rural Communities**



**Friends of Europe**



## **Preface**

The guideline is the result of a small meeting in Hepstedt that took place from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2009. The content of this booklet is drawn up by the participants from “Friends of Europe” in Samuel, Cissé, Bièvre, Esch, Desborough, Naestved and Hepstedt.

It appears as a collection of ideas and proposals that freely can be transformed and used in agreement with the traditions and habits in every single country and community.

The object of this guideline is to inspire, to grow new ideas and to do even better in your own community! Especially it is an aim to inspire communities without “Friends of Europe” to start an association on their own hand or with some help from the existing associations.





## Friends of Europe



### 1. Why “Friends of Europe”?

The purpose of “Friends of Europe” is to develop and keep contacts, visits and exchanges with individual citizens, families, associations, organisations and institutions such as schools in all Charter communities.

A “Friends of Europe” association or club can secure the continuity of the communication and contact with the other partners in the Charter and in case of a political change in the municipal council and keep a new council to its obligations as member of the Charter .

### 2. The objects/aims and rules/constitution for “Friends of Europe”

The object of the association is to keep and develop the contact to all partners in “the Charter of European Rural Communities”.

It’s important to create rules of the association. Examples of such rules are available by the contact to existing “Friend of Europe” associations. The rules should, for example, imply articles about objectives, eligibility, membership, board and nomination/election of committee members, duties, annual meeting, fees, sanctions etc.

The objects and rules can be different in each community according to local traditions and ways to organize a club or an association.

### 3. The relationship to the Charter

Formally “Friends of Europe” isn’t a legal partner in the Charter. The Charter is a political organization and “Friends of Europe” is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). But for the Charter it’s very important to have local supporters and fiery souls organized in “Friends of Europe”.

The Presidium of the Charter therefore very strongly recommends the establishing of “Friends of Europe”.

“Friends of Europe” can help the Charter and the communities in the Charter:

- To realize activities and projects decided by the Charter
- To organize Charter meetings and bilateral meetings in cooperation with the municipality
- To help clubs, schools and other organisations and institutions to establish contact and bilateral projects and activities
- To accommodate guests in local families
- To be ambassadors for the Charter in the community

*By every local election the politicians and the political parties in power can be replaced. The members of “Friends of Europe” organized in an independent association with a committee have the possibility to be a steady force in the realization of the aim of the Charter (“people meet people”) and inspire the politicians and municipalities to keep on in the Charter.*



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#### **4. The relationship to the community/municipality**

“Friends of Europe” should be independent of party politics and the municipal council but it’s important to have a good contact to the local authorities. This can be done by having regular meetings with one or more representatives from the local authority or by having a non-political person from municipality administration in the committee. If you have a representation from the municipal council in the committee it’s important that the political main factions in the council are represented which means at least two representatives.

#### **5. How do we start an association?**

Some ideas:

- Get organized – committee meetings are very important and have an aim/object and constitution/rules of the association
- Involve the community – advertise activity, events and get people to join in
- Produce a newsletter and create a web site for communication and advertising in the community
- Social events encourage people to take part – they start here and join visits or offer to host families
- Build links with community groups and with schools
- Make the association attractive for young people by involving them in the committee and the planning of activities from the start
- Tell about the possibilities of participating in Charter activities and meetings in the member communities (“people meet people”) to motivate young and adults to take part in the association

#### **6. How do we organize the committee?**

Examples from the existing “Friends of Europe” associations:

##### **Desborough:**

- Annual General Meeting held each October – now combined with social event
- Any member can stand – 1 year term if elected
- Structure: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Members (max 10), Two Council representatives
- Monthly meeting – held at committee’s houses
- Discuss membership, twinning visits, Charter activity, social events, publicity
- Committee are all volunteers
- Minutes taken by Secretary, available to members on request and sent to council
- Publicity – monthly e-mail newsletter, delivered by hand to those without e-mail
- Website: [www.desboroughtown.co.uk/twinning](http://www.desboroughtown.co.uk/twinning)



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### **Samuel:**

The participation in the European Charter is the result of a protocol of partnership between the Parish Council and the Association of Samuel (an organization for all social and educational activity in Samuel with about 80 employees), and the entire management of contacts, organization and logistics are the responsibility of the Association.

It deals with all matters relating to the participation in meetings: contact with the Portuguese families, scheduling trips, etc.

Meetings between representatives of the council and the association are arranged to schedule all activities related to the European Charter.

### **Bièvre:**

- No elected committee. The members are volunteers
- 6 official members in the committee incl. chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and secretary
- Meeting every month with the members but also with invited people on special occasions when we organise an activity or a trip
- Information and advertising via e-mails, letters or folders to all the inhabitants of Bièvre and through the Municipal bulletin
- Website: [www.bievre.europe.eu](http://www.bievre.europe.eu)
- The mayor, the secretary of the municipality and the committee take care of the work of the Charter
- Contacts with the schools (primary and secondary)
- When members of the charter (schools, students, groups ...) contact us to organise something we try to find the partners or organise activities or visits for them
- Contact with Europe Direct

### **Næstved/Holmegaard:**

- 8 elected members - 3 of them representing young people.
- A monthly meeting in the committee and an annual general meeting for the members where the committee members are elected for 2 years (every year half of the committee members can be re-elected or newly elected).
- Public meeting 2 times a year
- Social activities every year in connection with visits and bilateral projects with partners in the charter
- 2-3 times a year we publish a newsletter for the members and we have a website: [www.friends-of-europe.eu](http://www.friends-of-europe.eu)
- Brochures and flyers which appeal to organizations, young people and citizens in common



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- No representation from the municipal council on the committee but contact with the municipal administration about the Charter activities. From time to time we invite local politicians or employees from the municipal administration to participate in our committee meetings to present proposals or to ask questions.

### Esch:

- The board consists of volunteers that are nominated for the job.
- They are not elected, but asked or chosen for their skills.
- The mayor should always be part of the board
- Also one board member should be part of the town council of Haaren.
- The daily board meets if the need arises
- The complete board meets every 6 weeks.
- Once a year there is a public meeting for all “Friends” and interested inhabitants.
- Regularly press releases to the local newspapers
- Newsletter via e-mail to “Friends” and interested parties.
- Website: [www.friendsofeurope.nl](http://www.friendsofeurope.nl)

### Hepstedt:

- Annual meeting in February with the election of the board and report of the treasurer and the yearly report of the chairman.
- The board consist of: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and two members
- „Stammtisch“ (roundtable) for all interested citizens every last Monday in the month
- Communicate knowledge to citizens, sports clubs and other organisations about activities offered by the “Charter”
- Supporting the local council in finding host families, when it is needed for the activities
- Developing activities in co-operation with the local council or under the supervision of the local council
- Website: [www.Freunde-Europas-Hepstedt.de](http://www.Freunde-Europas-Hepstedt.de) or [www.friends-of-europe-hepstedt.eu](http://www.friends-of-europe-hepstedt.eu)

### Cissè:

- The committee with 9 members: president, 2 vice presidents, treasurer, assistant treasurer, secretary, assistant secretary and 2 active members (3 of the members are elected)
- The annual general meeting takes place in January. At this meeting outgoing members can be replaced by voting
- The board of directors include the committee and 9 other persons (3 of them are elected)



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- The committee meets 6-7 times a year to discuss ideas for activities
- The board of directors meets 4 times a year to organize the practical plan for the activities

### 7. Ideas for local activities:

- Arrange social events (All to have fun and enjoy meeting other members) such as: Quiz, Casino Evenings, Horse Race Nights, Murder Mystery events, BBQ (barbeque), Boules competition, Safari suppers, Celebration meals etc.
- Make a list of host families and others who want to give a helping hand to all sorts of local activities
- Participating in fairs (trade fairs and cultural fairs etc.) to make the association visible in the community
- Advising schools about the European Community, the Charter and the possibilities of support to participating in bilateral projects
- Create possibilities for children as well as young people and adults to come together both within the generations and across generations
- A yearly pancake evening with an exhibition of photos of the activities in the past year
- Celebration of Europe day 9 May
- Arrange public evenings once or twice a year for interested citizens, organizations and friends in the community
- In connection with the annual meeting arrange a local meeting with a representative from the embassy of the country for next year's annual meeting
- Establish co-operation with the local "Europe Direct" office about meetings and activities

### 8. Ideas to bilateral projects

- Develop co-operation and exchanges with schools and teachers in the Charter communities (Comenius projects and other educational projects)
- Establish contact with cultural clubs or organizations inside the Charter and arrange art, music and folklore exchanges
- Improve personal contacts and friendship between families and arrange activities and visits which encourage lasting contacts and friendships
- Arrange summer tours for the members to visit other member communities
- Support and arrange practical training and working abroad projects for young people
- Invite groups from "Friends of Europe" to visit our community for 3-4 days with private accommodation
- Helping communities without an association "Friends of Europe" to establish one



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## 9. Economy and fees

Three ways to get financial support for the activities:

- Fundraising local, national and in EU
- Support from the municipality  
Regular or by applying for specific projects
- Membership fee.

The fee for young people should be less than for adults.

Consider the possibility of a membership fee or sponsorship from local organizations and clubs and “return” with offering practical support in establishing contacts and exchanges and fundraising

## 10. A list of all existing “Friends of Europe” organizations including contact person with mail address and phone number:

Esch	<a href="http://www.friendsofeurope.nl">www.friendsofeurope.nl</a>	Martin Greven
Naestved	<a href="http://www.friends-of-europe.eu">www.friends-of-europe.eu</a>	Erik Torm
Hepstedt	<a href="http://www.friends-of-europe-hepstedt.eu">www.friends-of-europe-hepstedt.eu</a>	Rolf Pueschel
Bièvre	<a href="http://www.bievre-europe.eu">www.bievre-europe.eu</a>	Pierre Lejeune
Samuel	<a href="mailto:a.c.r.s.samuel@mail.telepac.pt">a.c.r.s.samuel@mail.telepac.pt</a> (e-mail)	Teresa Pedrosa
Cissé	<a href="mailto:a-savin-cisse@c86.fr">a-savin-cisse@c86.fr</a> (e-mail)	Annette Savin
Desborough	<a href="http://www.desboroughtown.co.uk/twinning">www.desboroughtown.co.uk/twinning</a>	Jill Freeman



“Friends of Europe” starts in the kitchen and by the dinner table!





### **How to communicate the guideline?**

- A brochure and flyer with a shorter text. NB – lot of photos to illustrate the activities!
- Power Point Presentation on CD-Rom or DVD
- Video with sequences from previous activities in existing Friends of Europe associations (from word to action!) on DVD
- Upload text, Power Point and video onto the Charter website
- Establish a network for all existing “Friends of Europe” with contact persons who are able to guide and advise people in communities wanting to start an association of “Friends of Europe”.
- Arrange small meetings or a bilateral meeting with (eg) two existing “Friends of Europe” associations and 4 communities who want to start an association. Common presentation and introduction and two workshops with existing associations by turn and two newcomers

### **Other ideas:**

- Establishing of a network with primary and lower secondary schools
- Establishing of a network with community centres