



# Newsletter 52

October 2019

## Charter of European Rural Communities

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Boy Scholtze

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### Dear friends,

In September the Charter celebrated its 30th anniversary. A proper milestone in the history of our communities. Almost all members were represented in Cissé to commemorate the start of 30 years of European friendship. During the meeting, the strength of our unique network was proven was again: a mixture of youngsters and adults, culture and discussions and the hospitality of staying in host families. In France, I expressed my wish for the Charter to stick to our goals and motto: People meet People. It's the most essential part within our network. We are 28 different communities from 28 different countries, with 28 different cultures. But underneath all that, we are all members of the Charter family. For at least another 30 years!

Autumn is always a busy time of year when it comes to Charter meetings. After the celebrations in Cissé, youngsters from several countries gathered in Hepstedt for the second small youth meeting of the LYCEUM-project. And this weekend, Tisno hosts a library conference which will be attended by several members. A praiseworthy initiative that proves the advantage of exchanging knowledge on specific topics all small rural communities face.

Unfortunately, we have some less nice news to share with you as well. During the Mayors' Meeting in Põlva, we shared our concerns regarding three of our members. Fortunately, the municipality of Kolindros in Greece reactivated their membership of the Charter and they are very willing to fulfil their duties and to actively take part in our activities again. However, our members from Moravce (Slovenia) and Slivo Pole (Bulgaria) again expressed their wishes to leave the Charter. Personally, I deeply regret their choice but there is no other option then accept their decision. On behalf of everybody, I would like to thank both the inhabitants and municipalities of Moravce and Slivo Pole for their participation over the period of their membership. The official memberships finish by the end of this year, however I express my sincere wish that the existing friendships will remain intact, even when the municipalities are no longer a part of our network. The presidium will start the search for new members in Bulgaria and Slovenia. In case you have any good connections to municipalities which might be potential new members, please don't hesitate to inform us.

Wishing you all the best,

Boy Scholtze  
President  
Charter of European Rural Communities

Boy Scholtze



## 2. Final meetings of 2019

September 2019 had not one, but two Charter meetings! The meetings marked the end of the Charter year as there are no more official meetings in 2019. A short look back at Cisse and Hepstedt, as these memories will need to last us through the winter.

### Cissé (France) 19-23 september 2019.

From 19-23 September we had a wonderful time in Cissé where we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our Charter. For this special occasion both adults and youngsters were invited; something that normally only happens at the annual summer meeting.

After a warm welcome on thursday evening by our host families we had a full program on both friday and saturday. The adults had a wine tasting at a former vineyard and a guided tour through the old city of Poitiers among other things. Activities that were well enjoyed by everyone. The youngsters had their own program which included Bubble Ball and Laser gun. The joint program included the opening with the flag parade and the unveiling of two large statues at city hall that had all the names of Charter municipalities on them. And of course the cultural evening; the highlight of many a Charter meeting. This evening included a very special honor for some Presidium members among others as they became honorary knights! Sunday was a day without an official program. like any good (rainy) sunday this was a day spend with (host) families.

Thank you very much to the municipality of Cissé and the host families for making this pearl anniversary of the Charter a beautiful and memorable meeting!



### Hepstedt (Germany) 26-29 september 2019.

The second youth meeting of Lyceum took place in Hepstedt over the last weekend of september. Delegations from Lefkara (Cyprus), Starý Poddvorov (Czech Republic), Næstved (Denmark), Kolindros (Greece), Bucine (Italy), Troisvierges (Luxembourg), Nadur (Malta), Esch (Netherlands) and Lasseo (Austria) were welcomed on 26 september. Again, this meeting went perfectly so thank you to everyone involved in organising everything.

The program: Repetition of tomorrow's history - tackling Euroscepticism at a local level in small rural communities. This resulted in lively discussions and workshops. This involvement and dialogue is what the Charter is all about and is what we love to see happen at Charter meetings. So hats of to the youngsters in Hepstedt!

During the same weekend of our Charter meeting, Hepstedt celebrated its Harvest Festival. On Saturday there was a ceremony to honour the 'Erntekrone', a parade with participants from the entire region. The parade went through the streets of Hepstedt. Of course, the European visitors also took part with their own car, which they had decorated the day before with paintings representing their home countries."



### 3. Update members Greece, Slovenia, Bulgaria

At the mayors' meeting last summer in Estonia it was decided that the Presidium would contact the municipalities in Greece, Slovenia and Bulgaria. These municipalities had not paid their contribution to the Charter and were considered inactive as they were absent from recent meetings, including the annual summer meeting in Estonia.

#### - Kolindros (Greece)

The President received positive messages from our friends in Kolindros (Greece). After some years of silence, the new mayor who came into office this September, supported by the council of Kolindros, decided that they want to reactivate their membership of the Charter. Part of the decision, includes the payment of overdue membership fees and the desire to establish a Friends of Europe Association. We are very happy that Kolindros (a founding member of our network) took this decision and hope to meet Greek delegations during the upcoming meetings. The President is planning to visit Kolindros soon to discuss their future participation and to inform them on the running projects.

#### - Moravce (Slovenia)

Unfortunately the municipality of Moravce has let us know they wish to end their membership of the Charter. This was an official decision taken by the Moravce city council. Moravce has paid their contribution for 2019. Their participation in the Charter will officially end on 31 December.

#### - Slivo Pole (Bulgaria)

Unfortunately, after several contact attempts we must conclude that the enthusiasm for continuing to actively participate in the Charter of European Rural Communities in our (second) Bulgarian member community is zero. After failing to respond to the writings of the Presidium (the Mayors' Meeting had asked them to give our Bulgarian friends an ultimate opportunity to be heard before October 1), we had to decide to end Slivo Pole's membership.

The Presidium now will start looking for another member in Bulgaria and Slovenia, which is required according to our statutes (one member from each member state of the European Union). We thank all people from Slivo Pole and Moravce who participated in our meetings and hope friendships will continue in the future.

## 5. Upcoming meetings

The meetings in Cisse and Hepstedt were the last official meetings in 2019. We will not meet again until 2020. For the youngsters this will be in Cashel, Ireland and for the adults in Esch (Haaren) in the Netherlands.

The annual summer meeting is in Bienvenida, Spain in 2020. We also know the locations for 3 summer meetings following the one in Spain. These are:

- 2021 Romania (Ibanesti)
- 2022 Hungary (Nagyecenk)
- 2023 Croatia (Tisno)

Thank you very much to the municipalities for signing up to organise the summer meetings.

### Meeting reminders

Finally we have some reminders to share with you regarding meetings

Firstly, we are looking for municipalities that are willing to organise a youth meeting in 2021 or 2022. So far, 2 municipalities have let us know they are willing to do this, but we need more. So, if your municipality would like to organise a youth meeting in 2021 or 2022, please let the president/secretary know and send us an email. Even if you are not 100% sure yet and would like more information, please get in touch.

Secondly, we would like to remind you of a few starting points regarding (youth) meetings.

1. Youth participating in meetings must be between 18 and 30 years old.
2. Meetings are fun, but not a holiday. Participation in workshops is mandatory. Lyceum is a great learning experience and a good time; it is not just one of these things.
3. Cannot find the right amount of people for your delegation to a meeting? Please contact the secretary and the host municipality immediately! If we are informed in a timely fashion we can invite another municipality to a meeting or invite a larger delegation from one already travelling to a meeting. Why is this vital?? In the Lyceum application we stated the number of participants at every meeting. Brussels has given us funding based on these numbers and can check up on this.

Thirdly, we were asked to shed some light on giftgiving at the meetings as there seems to be some confusion on how and when to do this.

At the annual summer meetings, when all municipalities of our Charter are invited, there is a gift giving ceremony. At this ceremony the host municipality is thanked for undertaking the mammoth task of organising a Charter meeting in which hundreds of participants from every European municipality take place.

Gift giving is not mandatory at the small meetings (decided at a previous mayors meeting) and therefore there is no gift giving ceremony. However, if you do wish to show your appreciation you can of course bring a gift. However, please do so informally.

## 5. Project REFORM

After the RECKONER program for adults was regrettably rejected by Brussels; the application team came up with another project called REFORM. Project REFORM is about: Retelling the European Future – Opportunity for Rural Municipalities to decrease the impact of Euroscepticism at local level.

The project was officially applied for by the municipality of Nagycenk (Hungary). The presidium would like to thank Nagycenk for this commitment. Also a big thank you to Tisno (Croatia) for being the formal applicant for the previous program.

In december we will be informed by Brussels on whether they accept this project proposal. As soon as we know, we will send this information to you in what will be the final newsletter of 2019.

