



Newsletter 53

December 2019

Charter of European Rural Communities

Index

1.

From President
Boy Scholtze

2.

Presidium
Meeting

3.

Project Reform

4.

Update members
Greece, Slovenia
and Bulgaria

5.

Upcoming
meetings

Dear friends,

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Not only because of the approaching holidays, but most of all because we got the results from the adults application. Brussels has given us the best Christmas present we could have wished for: they approved the REFORM-application! This means, that the Charter will carry two projects again in 2020. The LYCEUM-project will enter its second year and the adults will start with REFORM. The municipalities of Ockelbo (LYCEUM) and Nagycenk (REFORM) will be in charge of the administration of these projects, the Projectteams, Presidium and YCT will take care of the content. I would like to thank the application team for yet another successful application. Two years ago, we decided to bundle the knowledge in a team and it has proven to be a good choice.

In 2019, the Charter has taken some big steps forward. Not only did we celebrate our 30th anniversary and improved our digital exposure through social media and www.europeancharter.eu, we also adapted our statutes. The YCT has gotten an official status in our organisation and we are no longer an organisation exclusively reserved for EU-members. The Mayors' Meeting 2019 showed its willingness to maintain our friends from Desborough as a member when Brexit occurs and the Desborough Town Twinning Association gladly accepted this offer. We managed to involve our friends from Kolindros again by reactivating their membership. And although we unfortunately had to say goodbye to Moravce and Slivo Pole as members of our network, we already established contacts with potential new members from both Slovenia and Bulgaria.

I hope that in 2020, we could elaborate on the successful year 2019 appears to have been for our network. We will meet each other during several events: small meetings in Esch and Tisno, Youth meetings in Cashel and Ockelbo and of course the annual meeting in Bienvenida. Moreover, I'm certain that several bilateral encounters will be arranged throughout our network. We will focus on what we love to do most: People meet People. The projects, our organisation structure and the enthusiasm in all our member municipalities will enable us to make 2020 a great year for the Charter of European Rural Communities!

Wishing you happy holidays and a fantastic, European 2020!

Boy Scholtze
President
Charter of European Rural Communities



2. Presidium meeting

On 14 December 2019 the Presidium gathered in the municipality of Haaren (Esch) for a meeting. The Presidium evaluated 2019 and looked forward towards 2020. What went well in 2019, where can we improve and what events and challenges lie ahead next year. The Presidium also prepared some propositions for the mayors meeting in Bienvenida in the summer.

The presidium meeting in Haaren gave the YCT and the webteam the chance to meet face to face and discuss the future together. We are happy to announce that our webteam will give the Charter website a new and modern look in 2020.

This year saw the official launch of our youth project Lyceum and its first meetings. And so far this project is going really well. Meetings are interesting and well organised. A big thumbs up to the YCT, host municipalities and of course the host families for this. Financially the project stays within budget so that's positive as well. Want to know more about Lyceum? Visit the website <https://www.lyceumproject.eu/>

The presidium also took some important decisions with regards to future meetings:

The municipality of Bienvenida hosts the summer meeting in 2020. Originally this was set to take place in the first week of July, but at Bienvenida's request this is rescheduled to the second week of July. **The Bienvenida Summer meeting will take place from 9-13 July 2020.**

Another meeting that is rescheduled is the closing conference for the Lyceum project in Ockelbo. **The Ockelbo meeting will now take place from 27-30 August 2020.**

3. Project REFORM

We are delighted to announce that our project for adults was accepted by Brussels! This means the Charter has funding to organise meetings for the over '30's in 2020 and 2021.

The REFORM project aims are to decrease the level of Euroscepticism at the local level, strengthen democratic engagement, encourage volunteering, and help in building the future European society. Through REFORM participants will gain knowledge on the EU institutions and benefits, common values, history and different cultures, but they will also learn from each other and help one another understand and tackle Euroscepticism.

The project will be carried out as a University believing that only education can aid in making changes/reforms in the world. We will organize three Seminars (The Netherlands, Croatia and Latvia) where the participants will challenge the problems Europe is facing at the moment, and big Summer Academies (Spain, Romania) with all the partners involved, where participants will have the opportunity to share experience and good practice about the main topics. As the final outcome, a Joint Decision will be published and signed by all the mayors or representatives of the municipalities.

4. 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. This is the latest news.

- 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.

To that end they have paid their membership contributions of this year and the previous years. The municipality is open to a visit from the president. This will happen in early 2020. The aim is to acquaint Kolindros again with the Charter and the current projects so that they can fully participate in the future.

- (Slovenia)

The municipality of Moravce has decided to end their membership. The presidium regrets but accepts this decision and has let the municipality know that their membership is terminated by 31 december 2019. Moravce has paid all membership contributions they owed.

We are looking for a new partner municipality in Slovenia and have received hopeful news on this front. One municipality has expressed interest in joining the Charter and the president will visit them at the earliest opportunity.

- (Bulgaria)

The municipality of Slivo Pole is now no longer a member of our Charter. After several failed attempts to contact them the President has sent them an official letter ending their membership. Unfortunately this was met with no response either and the municipality still owes the Charter 3 years of membership fees.

We are looking for a new municipality in Bulgaria to join the Charter. Via a contact in Germany, Mr. Kurt Ringen, we have been brought into contact with a municipality that might want to become a member. If all goes well and an appointment can be arranged, the president will visit this municipality as well in early 2020.

Hopefully the next newsletter will be able to give another update on these new potential members.

5. Upcoming LYCEUM and REFORM meetings

2020

Esch (Netherlands) 20-24 May 2020 (REFORM)

4 participants from Italy, Ireland, Romania, Austria, Cyprus, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Luxembourg

Cashel (Ireland) 28-31 May 2020 (LYCEUM)

4 youngsters from Spain, Belgium, France, UK, Slovenia, Hungary, Sweden, Portugal, Croatia, Greece

Bienvenida (Spain) 9-13 July 2020 (LYCEUM and REFORM)

4 adults + 4 youngsters from all countries (Annual Meeting)

Ockelbo (Sweden) 27-30 August 2020.

2 youngsters from all countries (Closure Conference LYCEUM)

Tisno (Croatia) 24-27 September 2020 (REFORM)

4 participants from UK, Germany, Latvia, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Spain, Czech Republic

2021

Kandava (Latvia) Spring 2021 (REFORM)

4 participants from Belgium, France, NL, Finland, Malta, Bulgaria, Poland, Croatia, Lithuania

Ibanesti (Romania) Summer 2021 (REFORM and youth program)

4 adults + 4 youngsters from all countries (Annual Meeting)

Nagycekenk (Hungary) Fall 2021 (REFORM)

2 participants from all countries (Closure conference REFORM)

Bye bye 2019



*The end of another Charter year!
The presidium wishes everyone
happy holidays and a wonderful
new year.*

*Make it a good one. And we will
see you in 2020!*

