



EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Obec Iža - Iža
PIC number:	948101281
Project name and acronym:	<i>In the Footsteps of the EU</i> — Footsteps of the EU

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	Strudel Festival and Town Twinning 2024
Type:	public event
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Slovakia – the municipality of Iža
Date(s):	23 rd – 25 th of August, 2024
Website(s) (if any):	<p>https://www.iza.sk/obec-2/town-twinnig-strudlovy-festival-2024/ https://www.iza.sk/obec-2/town-twinnig-strudlovy-festival-2024/fotky/</p> <p>Project partners:</p> <p>http://almasfuzito.hu/a-celebration-of-unity-tradition-and-european-values-in-iza/ https://gyermely.asp.lgov.hu/retesfesztival-izsa https://murony.hu/2024/10/31/retesfesztival-izsa-2024/ https://www.sacueni.ro/proiecte#A Celebration of Unity Tradition and European Values in Iza 2024 / https://www.csantaver.rs/320-2/</p>
Participants	
Female:	129
Male:	103
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Slovakia]:	19 from Iža (9 women, 10 men)
From country 2 [Hungary]:	46 from Almásfüzitő (31 women, 15 men), 54 from Gyermely (27 women, 27 men), 55 from Murony (30 women, 25 men)
From country 3 [Romania]:	55 from Sacueni (30 women, 25 men)
From country 4 [Serbia]:	3 from Čantavir (2 women, 1 man)



Total number of participants:	232	From total number of countries:	4
-------------------------------	-----	---------------------------------	---

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

From the 23rd until the 25th of August, 2024 the Strudel Festival and Town Twinning 2024 event took place in the municipality of Iža (Slovakia), attended by the settlement's twin municipalities (Almásfüzitő, Gyermely, Murony, Sacueni, Čantavir) from 3 countries (Hungary, Romania, Serbia).

On Friday, after the arrival of foreign delegations and their accommodation, the mayor of Iža had an official, celebratory welcoming speech, in which he addressed the importance of positive mutual relations, inclusivity, cohesion and civic engagement for the future of the municipality, the partner countries and the EU as a whole as well. Afterwards, a ceremonial consortium meeting took place discussing *"The present and future of the partner municipalities"*. The project partners have addressed their needs and visions, shared their experience and know-how with each other. The meeting provided a platform for partner municipalities to engage in discussions about their present circumstances and future goals, offering an opportunity to plan their joint activities based on shared goals. Topics such as cooperation in the field of culture, social economy and rural tradition preservation were discussed. The partners were also introduced to the work of local volunteers and institutions, their contribution to the organisation of the Strudel Festival as an example of best practices in terms of community engagement. Cultural programme took place during this day as well, including concerts of popular artists (e.g. ONE H, Kozsó, Josh & Betty, etc.) to gain public attention. The varied culture of the partner municipalities was presented alike via the performances of their local artists, highlighting the cultural diversity of Europe. The project partners and the present visitors also had the opportunity for free, friendly discussions during a retro party at the evening, which helped with breaking down social barriers and fostering cross-border friendships.

Saturday started with a cooking competition (a traditional dish - goulash making), as well as a running competition, joined by the interested partner representatives alike. A local tradition – strudel pulling and preparation – was presented, everyone had an opportunity to taste different culinary specialties from the area. This showcased the region's culinary traditions and the local gastronomy culture to the invited participants. Discussion forums took place, where everyone had the opportunity to address the following topics: *"The present and future of the EU"*, *"European values, principles and rights"*, *"Together against discrimination in the EU – Solidarity and Tolerance"*, *"Development trends of the 21st century and their impact on the lives of EU citizens"*, *"Mental illnesses caused by fear"*, *"Developing digital and green skills"*. The discussion forums therefore tackled themes aligned with the CERV Programme's core priorities, including European values, anti-discrimination efforts, tolerance and societal changes. The attendees had an opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions related to these areas, converse about them with the municipalities' representatives. They have examined the current challenges and opportunities faced by the European Union, as well as their visions and expectations toward its future. Perspectives and experiences related to the reflection of EU values in everyday life have been shared. Combating discrimination and fostering an inclusive society was addressed also via the personal stories of the attendees, who shared their experiences with discrimination in their surroundings (mostly in case of the elderly, the Roma community, women and people living in poorer conditions). Among the brought up current trends and happenings, the following ones were mentioned the most: artificial intelligence, ethical use of social media in terms of advertising, inflation and economic shifts, armed conflicts in Ukraine, the after-effects of the pandemic. Current fears (ones heightened by media and public persons) have been discussed, as well as their effects on mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression, etc.). In the final section of the forum the importance of digital and green expertise has been addressed, as well as the manifestation of such solutions in the consortium's partner countries. Thanks to the discussion forums the representatives of the partner municipalities have gotten acquainted with public opinions on important matters, which will allow for improving local governance. On the other hand, the public got informed about the importance of civic engagement and the EU as an institution, enabling progress in this area.

To answer the public's additional questions, a Europe Direct stand was available at the event as well, with experienced personnel and multiple information brochures related to the EU available to the public, in various languages (EN, HU, SK). The stand was sought out mostly by young people and local seniors. Moreover, in the set-up "EU tent" the following programme elements were organised as well to attract public attention: Falcon show, Movement changes lives (a workshop aimed at the benefits of sports), From garden to kitchen: Gastronomic adventures (a workshop aimed at the benefits of consuming healthy, local produce). Folklore groups and performers from Iža and its partner municipalities have presented their art during this day as well. Programme elements aimed at children were included too, to offer day-long entertainment to entire families (e.g. a performance of the local kindergarten's children, performance of the "Buborék" music group, etc.). Various further cultural and accompanying programme elements were ensured, including musical and dance performances, interactive archery, face painting,



a bouncy castle, traditional craft workshops, a photo theatre, fair, DJ, etc., catering to the needs and interests of a wider target group.

Sunday was focused primarily on the project partners and their direct representatives. A holy mass took place in the local church in honour of the foreign delegations and the developed partnerships. The project partners have visited the main local cultural and natural heritage sites, including the Millennium monument, where a commemorative ceremony took place. The project partners have discussed the event, evaluated its results and addressed concrete opportunities for further meet-ups and joint development initiatives based on issues discussed during the event, including potential cross-border projects focused on the preservation of historically relevant sites and application of environmentally friendly solutions, organisation of joint events and cultural activities. The project partners have agreed upon the organisation of a following joint event next year, as well as on the signature of updated partnership agreements. Afterwards, they have returned home after successful three days, where they informed the public about the project's implementation,

The event was attended by 232 direct (registered) participants (56% of them being women): 19 from Iža, 46 from Almásfüzitő, 54 from Gyermely, 55 from Murony (Hungary), 55 from Sacueni (Romania) and 3 from Čantavir (Serbia). The number of participants (general public) has overall exceeded approx. 3000 people. Among others, the vice president of the Nitra Self-Governing Region has visited the event as well.

The project aimed at supporting the exchange of ideas and opinions among citizens of different nationalities and languages, contributing to a more democratic European Union through its specialized programme elements, and to strengthening citizens' sense of belonging to the EU, as well as their sense of responsibility for its further progress and development. The cultural elements and the intercultural discussions have highlighted the citizens' shared European values. The event helped enhance mutual understanding and cross-border friendship between them. They were provided an opportunity to get acquainted with local and partner traditions, gastronomy and culture, broaden their understanding of EU values and principles, the rights of EU citizens, EP elections, 21st-century trends, and their manifestations within the EU, as well as to exchange opinions and ideas in this area, thus strengthening their sense of belonging to the EU. The overall public response to the event and the project itself was very positive. The participants have voiced their intentions of being more active in the life of the municipality, their country and the EU alike.

Via the different programme elements the municipality of Iža drew public attention to the diversity and richness of European culture, the importance of cohesion and respect for the shared values and fundamental rights of all of us as EU citizens, and the need to promote tolerance and acceptance. All of these elements form a stable foundation for Europe's cultural heritage and are essential for continued, effective, joint development.

Cooperation between the involved governments was facilitated, along with the exchange of best practices, know-how, and experiences. The event provided space for citizens to share views, engage in education, participate in open discussion, and enjoy cultural and social activities during the course of three days. The project therefore laid the foundations for future collaborative activities among partner municipalities.

The event was available to everyone for free, without any discrimination and with a barrier-free access. A presentation, photographs and articles related to the project have been published on the coordinator's webpage dedicated to the project: <https://www.iza.sk/obec-2/town-twinnig-strudlovy-festival-2024/>