



Final Partnership Meeting Report



Brussels 11th - 13th October 2010

SEVEN - Senior European Volunteers Exchange Network

Seven – Senior European Volunteers Exchange Network Final meeting Brussels, 11th October to 13th October 2010

Monday 11th October – Afternoon Session Venue: Hotel des Colonies, Brussels	
h. 15:00	Welcome, presentation of the agenda
h.15:30	How SEVEN will continue...(presentation of follow up projects by all partners concerned)
h.16:00	Presentation of the materials produced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training handbook • Handbook for volunteers and organisations • Research • Evaluation report • Website Discussion on dissemination of these materials
h. 17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative tasks for partners for final report – quick communication
h. 17:45	 Coffee break
h. 18:15	Working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of statements for the European Parliament (Moderation Karin Stiehr) • Recommendations for the SVP – Grundtvig (Moderation Davide Di Pietro) • Follow up actions to the network (Moderation Rory Daly) • Involvement of seniors in young people activities (Moderation Aleksander Kurushev)
h. 20:00	Dinner at Brasserie Saint Germain
Tuesday 12th October – Morning Session Venue: Hotel des Colonies	
h. 09:00	Working Groups continue
h. 10:15	 Coffee break
h. 10:30	Report and discussion
h. 12:00	Buffet Lunch at Hotel des colonies

h 13.15	Leave for afternoon session – Transfer by bus at the European Parliament
	Tuesday 12th October – Afternoon Public session Venue: European Parliament, Room P4B001
h. 15:00	Opening: MEP Mrs Marian Harkin
18,30	Mrs Grazia Naletto – Lunaria: volunteers exchanges and the fight against racism and xenophobia
	The Perspective of the European Commission DG COMM - John Mac Donald: 2011 The European Year of Volunteering and senior citizens DG EAC – Géraldine Libreau: Senior Volunteering Programme in Grundtvig: the educational perspective DG EMPL – Detlef Gerhardt: 2012 the European year of Active ageing
	The Perspective of a National Government Elisabeth Hechl – Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs: senior volunteers exchanges and social cohesion.
	The Perspective of Regional and Local Governments Local governments discuss their experience of senior volunteer exchanges. A panel discussion with: Stephan Wurtz – regional Government of Hessen Hans Lucas – Provincial Government of Offenbach Augusta Rabuiti – Municipality of Ferrara Nacho Compans – Municipality of Lleida Gertraud Dayè – Seniorenbuero, City of Graz
	Volunteers as protagonists: Two experiences of volunteering abroad Dietmar Eisenhammer Maria Bordini
	Questions and debate
18:30	Reception at the European Parliament
	Wednesday 13th October – Morning Session Vertretung des Landes Hessen bei der EU Avenue de l'Yser 19
h. 8:30	Transfer by bus to Avenue de l'Yser
h. 9:00	Evaluation of the session at the EP Evaluation of the three years of network
h. 10:30	Coffe Break
h. 11.00	Where do we go from here: brainstorming of follow up
h. 13:00	Evaluation of the meeting
h. 13:30	Lunch

h. 15:30 Welcome, presentation of the agenda and the participants

Davide Di Pietro (Lunaria) introduces the meeting, thanking the participants for their cooperation and welcoming all the guests who are in SEVEN meeting for the first time. Introduces the material distributed to participants in the folders.

Short round of presentation of participants. Apologies from partners from Municipality of Roma and for sudden illness Concordia FR and FCEI IT.

Davide introduces the agenda of the meeting. In November 2010 the SEVEN network will conclude its activities, 5 members from LLP national agencies accepted the invitation to participate in this meeting: participants acknowledged the possibility to deepen the cooperation with them in the dissemination of results and transmission of the educational objectives reached through the SVP programme.

h. 16:00 Presentation of the material produced

1) Presentation of the materials produced

- Training handbook
- Handbook for volunteers and organisations
- Research on the impact of the exchange on voluntaries and organisation
- Evaluation report
- Website

Training Senior Volunteers for international Exchange Handbook (Rory Daly).

This handbook is dedicated to organisations wishing to send volunteers abroad. The handbook will be published soon but it is still open for additional contributions. Background: the success of an exchange is strictly dependent on the preparation of volunteers either in the sending and in the hosting organisations. Research demonstrates that where training took place there was greater satisfaction shown by hosting and sending organisations. The content of the handbook foresees: an introduction and background, plus sections on: motivations, expectations and reflections, skills audit, learning experience and how we learn, cultural awareness and intergenerational learning, problem solving and conflict resolutions, evaluations. These materials can be useful also for smaller organisations to make them independent in organising the exchange. See **ANNEX 1**

Research on the impact on trans-national exchange experiences on Senior volunteers and organisation (Karin Stiehr)

Mrs Stiehr has presented the result of an analysis of learning impact of trans-national exchanges either on senior volunteers (enquiring their reasons and motivations, the impact on personal skills and competences, the impact on the home communities etc) and on the sending/hosting organisations (impact on management, impact on practical arrangements etc). The survey by written questionnaires that were sent to:

Wave 1

- participants of projects 2000-2005
- 293 emails

- With a response rate of 42% (122 questionnaires returned)

Wave 2

-participants of recent projects

62 answers to online questionnaires

Survey among Senior Volunteers

The results showed that the typical project participant

- is retired
- is around 60
- lives in a big city
- has volunteered before
- stayed abroad for 2 or 3 weeks
- had to speak a foreign language
- worked in the field of culture, ecology, social work and education

The results have also showed that the strongest reasons and motivations are:

- to make the world a better place
- to help other people
- to transfer personal experience
- to stay in a country without being a tourist
- to find new challenges
- out of curiosity

The conditions that facilitate the exchange are:

- Personal contacts before the exchange
- To receive written information about the placement
- To get pre departure training
- Working conditions
- Lodging conditions
- Financial conditions
- To get a feedback seminar
- To get support for follow-up activities

The impact on personal skills and competences:

- Work in a team
- Work independently
- Manage a voluntary work project
- Perform voluntary work
- Cope with people with different background
- Cope with people with different habits and cultures
- Make and maintain friendship
- Cope with younger people
- Speak a foreign language
- Learn how to use ICT (computer, internet etc)
- Adapt to changing conditions
- Adapt to new surroundings
- Manage conflict

The impact on home communities:

- Contribution to town twinning activities
- New projects and initiatives

- Further development of voluntary work
- Promotion of trans-national exchange

Survey among Exchange Organisations

The respondents were the Seven network partners. The data are the result of a questionnaire with 14 respondents and in-depth interviews with 8 organisation representatives

Impact on management:

- Strong networks contribute to the success of the organisation
- The bigger the network, the more diverse the placements
- Need for different strategies in guidance of seniors
- Resentment of young group leaders if not adequately trained

Impact on practical arrangements:

- Fewer working hours per day
- Less physical challenging work
- Increasing number of offers in the social sectors
- Single room and apartments
- Shared rooms with 2-4 persons

Conclusions for the design of SVPs:

The current concept of SVP reflects the most important aspects to enhance the learning of both senior volunteers and the participating organisations.

It would be highly recommendable to support a pilot project which tests different ways and procedures for the valorisation of the newly gained experiences of senior volunteers at community level

(for further details see **ANNEX 2**)

Evaluating the SEVEN-Network (Charlotte Strümpel)

Questionnaires for the evaluation of the Seven Network have been submitted as follows

Partners	24
Associated partners	13
National agencies	15

The projects submitted are:

Total:	34
Accepted:	21
Rejected:	13

Overall, the evaluation is very positive (for further details see **ANNEX 3**)

SEVEN Website (Gabriela Koerting)

The website has now some new sections. Among them:

- 1) a new section called *Internet Tools* (together with some instruction on how to use the tools)
- 2) *SVP Funded Projects* + descriptions of 8 SVP projects
- 3) Course *ACTIVE 1* – “Active Citizenship Training Initiative for Volunteers in Europe”, held in Venice 9th - 13th December 2008.
Focus on introduction to the subject of use of the new media and the Internet and presentation of examples of good practice.
- 4) Course *ACTIVE 2* – “Active Citizenship Training Initiative for Volunteers in Europe”, Rome 24th -

29th January 2010. Focus on practical aids such as language and communication tools to foster interaction between SEVEN-members – a major challenge

- 5) blog on the SEVEN website for exchange of information between the volunteers. You are invited to make use of it to share your experience!
- 6) The volunteers document their experiences from the SVP exchanges in a blog <http://www.svp-project.eu/>

Conclusions

The first important steps had been done for implementing the new information and communication tools and the Internet in the SEVEN and the SVP work, however, these tools are until now not so well known and nor widely used.

It makes sense to recognise their benefits and to give them more importance by the institutions, the mediators – and give the SVP good examples for the future

(for further details see **ANNEX 4**)

h. 18:15 until 12:00 AM the next day Discussion in Working Groups

Participants split into 3 working groups:

1. Follow up actions to the Seven network
2. Statement on involvement of seniors in young people activities
3. Recommendations for the Grundtvig SVP

WORKING GROUP 1 - Follow up actions to the Seven network

A wide variety of SVP projects and learning partnerships have been planned and accepted: ARC, BRC, Unarec, Lunaria, ZAWIW, Raeren/Graz, BCC, GSM, Hilfswerk, Munic. Ferrara, Munic. Offenbach

The French National Agency and UNAREC will be running a contact Seminar for Senior Volunteer Exchanges in November.

The SEVEN-network must be kept up and enlarged. Key points are:

A large amount of knowledge, materials, know-how and contacts have been gained within the SEVEN-network. This must not be lost!

The SEVEN-network should be a key player in the issue of senior volunteering in Europe. E.g. should be in the position to put together a proposal for an important call in short time [e.g. flagship projects].

It will work on creating new opportunities and developing new ideas for senior volunteer exchanges. There will be a representative / one person responsible to contact.

SEVEN-network organizes meetings on volunteering in different cultures, new developments in volunteering, recognizing small associations, raising awareness for volunteers etc.

Partners meeting once a year.

The **website** will be regularly maintained, very well known and will include:

- ✓ comprehensive, easy-to-use partner finding data base, including good practice examples, including opportunities for individual volunteers to find a placement
- ✓ a discussion forum that will be a lively place of exchange including newsforum and email messages when news is posted.

- ✓ Tools and materials remain available and are up-dated regularly.

Practical issues:

- ✓ Funding
- ✓ Who is responsible?
- ✓ Who does the website?
- ✓ One organisation applies for funding in the same way
- ✓ Never give up
- ✓ Be flexible
- ✓ Self-organized network – civil society

There were several concrete ideas for further projects

A joint **project Kaunas, Ferrara, Poland, Graz?**: on working in e.g. botanical gardens. Aim is to raise awareness for senior volunteering. Flagship project?

A **Grundtvig-workshop** on different cultures of volunteering, raising awareness for volunteering, recognizing small associations that work with older volunteers.. Inputs from experts as well as inputs from participants. [Interest: Gabi, Eva, Arturo, Edita, Maria, Gertraud (input from Learning Partnership)]

Project idea Multilateral Grundtvig-project

ISIS [Interested: GSM - Turkey, SIC -Lithuania]

- Workshops on local level with returning volunteers
- Partners municipalities and educational organisations
- Curriculum and Brochure how to profit from skills of returning volunteers

Mapping existing voluntary services and small associations on local level as a first step to bringing twin towns together and matching them appropriately.

Several other ideas / wishes were brought up:

- ⇒ Start up European Association of Senior Volunteers.
- ⇒ Exchange of knowledge on volunteering in different countries:
- ⇒ Survey on volunteering structures in different countries
- ⇒ Putting in at least one proposal for flagship projects until 12.11.10
- ⇒ Sending Estonian senior volunteers abroad

1) A large amount of knowledge, materials, know-how and contacts have been gained within the SEVEN-network. SEVEN partners are running a wide variety of exchange projects. This expertise must not be lost! **The SEVEN-network promoting senior volunteers exchanges in Europe must be maintained and enlarged.**

2) In order to support and facilitate exchanges of senior volunteers, e.g. in SVP-projects, Learning partnerships etc. an information and communication platform is needed. **The widely known existing SEVEN-website should be further maintained and developed to include a comprehensive, easy-to-use partner finding data base, a functioning discussion forum and a comprehensive collection of practical tools and materials that are up-dated regularly.**

3) The SEVEN-partners are willing and committed to create new opportunities and develop new ideas for senior volunteer exchanges and to keep on being key players in this field. This is shown by all the exchange projects already running and in planning, that would not be feasible without adequate funding. **In order to maintain the high quality of this work in the future the SEVEN partners request further financial support from public bodies on European, national and local levels.**

WORKING GROUP 2 Statement on involvement of seniors in young people activities

How to bring senior in youth activities? Recommendations either to the commission or to organisations

Good experiences or practices

- Interest for **intergenerational activities**
- **Different experiences or expectation of young people or senior**, different rhythms, different interests
- Different levels: **1) senior volunteers coming to work with young people or 2) joining a youth group/group of younger volunteers**
- Fighting the stereotypes means to support projects that are “places of experimentation” (e.g. exploring different forms of living together or integrating socially disadvantaged groups)
- Good Long voluntary service experiences mixing group (preparation seminar broke down possible barriers, young and older volunteers started good dialogue, showed huge respect one to each other – preparation is important!)
- **Preparation of seniors, leaders and young volunteers is essential for the success of the whole project!**
- Define common goals and **work more skills-oriented, not linked to ages** (“youth programme” – “seniors programme”): future of Europe
- Grant criteria limit (usually targeting young people), Grundtvig limits => recommend to have smooth management of project and possibility to combine different funding lines or make it easier to realise trans-sector projects..

Discussion

Workcamp experiences: one easy access, broad (thousands of projects open every year) ... but limited in terms of participants!

Question: how to develop access to senior volunteers?

To give access to bigger number of senior volunteers to activities/projects in Europe. This needs to support networks or mobility instead of only projects.

But maybe it is better to keep on the current programme instead of looking other mixed projects.

Grundtvig is already offering a huge variety of possibilities for seniors and other age groups (starting at the age of 16 up to seniors → possibility to realize intergenerational projects)

Different directions:

- **Joint (mixed) activities for senior/young**
- Senior action in youth activities
- Future of Europe common projects
- Short or long projects, accessible to senior
- Supported activities and funding
- Recognition of existing activities (not only the project)
- Networking support

The working group agrees

- On the **goal of intergenerational projects**, i.e. that senior and junior volunteers should be mixed – but only in suitable projects (not recommended for all kinds of projects)
- On the importance of a good **preparation** for organisations, placements and volunteers
- That there should be **pilot projects** and appropriate evaluations (to run a diversity of projects, e.g. with regard to the length of service (long-term and short-term), to different topics, group exchange/individual exchange, mix of different social backgrounds...)

Recommendations:

- We should also think about disadvantaged youth – voluntary services should give them the possibility to take part in it -> workcamps already having those projects (e.g. SVP projects of Unarec were about working with this target group)
- One possible request towards the EC: percentage of projects where seniors are involved should grow (a fix percentage for SVP projects)

- **money for intergenerational projects may not be taken from the small Grundtvig budget** (so that the Grundtvig budget is reduced to spend money on young people – the youth programmes are very well financed!)
- What should be financed? Is travel really necessary? – depends also on different programs (e.g. long-term/short-term)
- **Essential: do training together with older and younger volunteers, dialogue on the same level, mutual learning process**
- Money is also a kind of appreciation (volunteers could pay their travel themselves, but having it paid is a kind of appreciation)

Why are we concentrating so much on barriers between generations? There are already intergenerational projects that work very good, e.g. family workcamps – non-formal learning is easily happening in intergenerational contexts

The Working Group finally came up with the following statements:

International Senior volunteering is a recent development in existing voluntary service in a European dimension.

New supports (Grundtvig) gave good results that brought new developments for many actors involved either in senior volunteering, local communities and international voluntary service organisations. SEVEN partners followed these developments in order to improve and disseminate such practices.

SEVEN partners strongly believe that international volunteering is a great opportunity to bring together generations on the same level. Many projects are already supported by local/national authorities, and financed by volunteers.

New supports are needed at a European level in order not to exclude people from disadvantaged background and, in general, to develop access to international (senior) voluntary service.

In SEVEN, we trust that mixed intergenerational group is one key action to facilitate involvement of seniors in young people activities.

Therefore, mixed group projects are a goal and one essential issue for senior volunteering.

When we mentioned mixed groups, we consider: generation, but too gender, social, culture ... including population facing exclusions.

Workcamps AND long term projects can fulfil such action.

To achieve this, preparation (organisation and volunteers) as well as adapted action conditions are needed.

Pilot projects are necessary to explore as much as possible different fields of action.

This should be prioritised, and therefore be supported by European programmes

We recommend more flexibility within EU programmes in order to ease a large variety of projects and new approaches on either short or long term (e.g. co travel and co preparation seniors and young people, peer concept, future of Europe, fair trade ...).

This is a new policy, not a replication of other educative programmes: if senior volunteers got skills to share, they have to learn out from young people. Voluntary service is a very good tool to achieve this: different generation being on the same level!

Statistics show that these two populations (senior and young people) are either voting against most European development or not voting at all! Following survey (i.e. Youth programme), participating to European project helps to change such fact!

As conclusion, we strongly support that networking is essential to ease access for senior to international voluntary service at European level and to prepare or train project stakeholders.

Networks (as SEVEN) need a sustainable support by European bodies.

WORKING GROUP 3 Recommendations for the Grundtvig SVP

All participants in this working group agree on the general features of the SVP. The application form doesn't seem to be too complicated, the funding are in most cases sufficient to cover all expenses, the 2 years duration of the projects seems appropriate. The two organisations need time to establish a relation between the parts, organise the exchange, train the volunteers, take care of the language preparation etc). It is very important that the organisation doesn't work alone but tries to establish contacts with the local community to train the Seniors. Other actors from the local community could be useful to find additional human resources, structures, logistics and so on.

The minimum duration of the exchange (3 weeks) is fair. If the duration was shorter, it would be impossible to get any impact on the volunteers. Some seniors would like to be hosted in a family, other would rather share an apartment. In any case it is very important to understand beforehand what are the desires and expectation of volunteers (for example, some senior could be used to live alone and could have some problems in sharing a place with others). It is also very important to remind them that they are not going on a vacation and that they should try to be as flexible as possible: it is easier to adapt to differences if you expect them.

It is not necessary to have more funds for the same project but more funds for approving more projects.

One of the strongest aspects of this projects is the use of TIC.

Suggestions:

- we would like that the experience made by volunteers were recognised to facilitate their re-employment into the labour market.
- We would like a common procedure for the preparation and training of volunteers (a certain amount of hours etc). That could be certificated together with the hours of volunteering.

Tuesday 12th October – Afternoon Public session
Venue: European Parliament, Room P4B001

Ms Marian Harkin, hosting MEP has opened the session with welcome speech and a brief presentation of the Agenda.

Mrs Grazia Naletto – Lunaria: volunteers exchanges and the fight against racism and xenophobia

Ms Naletto shows how Senior European exchanges offer big opportunities either to Senior Volunteers citizens and to hosting organisations to fight against racism.

Through these exchanges, Seniors are given new opportunities of active citizenship and the possibility of taking part to the social life after retirement. They are able to think themselves into a European dimension, to learn new styles of life and new cultural habits, to gain new competences in an international context, they open up their minds and stimulates their curiosity. At the same time, sending/hosting organisations enrich their competences and points of view and open to Europe through the volunteers hosted and sent.

Considering that Europe is facing a process of *new cultural, political and social legitimization of discrimination and racism*, we need to find strategies that involves a variety of dimensions such as culture, social relations systems, political debate, media debate and so on. In this context, the promotion of international volunteers appears as a very good tool to improve, among other things, intercultural relationships and deconstructing cultural prejudices and stereotypes. It is crucial that civil society organisations promote the value of a peaceful intercultural society through all their activities. International Volunteerism is one of the actions who can make this possible thanks to its constitutive values like solidarity, active citizenship and intercultural education. **SEE ANNEX 5**

John Mac Donald - DG COMM - 2011 The European Year of Volunteering and senior citizens

The objectives of the 2011 Year of Volunteering

1. Create an enabling environment for volunteering
2. Empower volunteer organisations
3. Recognise volunteering activities
4. Raise awareness about value & importance of volunteering

The Commission's Budget for the Year is € 3 million for Preparatory Actions in 2010 + € 8 million for the Year itself + other sources. There are many parties involved in the 2011 Year Beyond the Commission such as: Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, Non-EU Countries, European Parliament, Council of Europe, United Nations, the Alliance, non-alliance volunteering organizations etc.

A Call for Proposals for flagship has been published last 1st October 2010 (Details: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1092_en.htm) Deadline: 12 November 2010. The Call is for projects that satisfies these conditions:

- A partnership of at least four partners, with at least one organisation from each of these two categories:

1. non governmental civil society organisations
2. public sector organisations,

and if you are going to develop and encourage new and innovative schemes and approaches with

long-lasting effects.

Among the various events that will be organised there is the EYV TOUR. The tour will visit one city per Country and will last for 1 or 2 weeks.

Future events:

- 2010: EY against Poverty and Social Exclusion
- 2011: EY of Volunteering
- 2012: EY of Active Ageing (to be confirmed)
- 2013: EY of the Citizen (also to be confirmed)

SEE ANNEX 6

DG EMPL – Detlef Gerhardt: 2012 the European Year of Active Ageing

Mr Gerhardt has introduced the European Year of Active Ageing 2012, giving us some fundamental data. First of all: why dedicating a European year to this topic? Active ageing: creating better opportunities and working conditions to

- enable older workers to play their part in the labour market,
- combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society
- encouraging healthy ageing
- The objectives are to raise general awareness of active ageing
- to stimulate debate and develop mutual learning
 - good practice
 - cooperation and synergies
- to offer a framework for commitment to Member States and stakeholders at all levels
 - to develop policies through specific activities
 - to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing.

See ANNEX 7

DG EAC – Géraldine Libreau: Senior Volunteering Programme in Grundtvig: the educational perspective

Ms Libreau has made a general presentation of the Grundtvig programme with specific reference to the SVP and its ratio and specific features. After the first year activities the first results show that in 2009: 43 projects were approved and 450 volunteers were involved. In 2010 the figures appear to be the same in terms of projects approved: 43.

The profile of volunteers show that:

- 73 % women
- average age: 63 years old
- usually experienced local volunteers
- mainly retired people but not only

See ANNEX 8

Elisabeth Hechl – Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection: senior volunteers exchanges and social cohesion The Perspective of a National Government

Mrs Hechl briefly remembered the history of senior exchange since the year 2000 and also the commitment of its Ministry in supporting the implementation of Senior exchanges since the beginning and she also stated – according to her point of view – the importance of senior exchanges in order to promote social cohesion and active ageing. She expresses the importance of key concepts such as “participation” of senior citizens in political, social, economic and cultural life and “voluntary

commitment” as a concrete expression of solidarity, a factor of crucial importance for the social cohesion of our society. It is in this spirit that it was declared the support of the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs to the exchange programmes for older volunteers, in line with the objectives of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 as set out by the European Commission:

- to create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU,
- to empower volunteer organisations and improve the quality of volunteering,
- to reward and recognise volunteering activities, and to raise awareness of the value and importance of volunteering. **See ANNEX 9 for the full speech.**

The Perspective of Regional and Local Governments who discuss their experience of senior volunteer exchanges. Panel discussion with:

Stephan Wurtz – Regional Government of Hessen

Hans Lucas – Provincial Government of Offenbach

Augusta Rabuiti – Municipality of Ferrara and behalf of Regional Government Emilia Romagna

Nacho Compans – Municipality of Lleida

Gertraud Dayè – Seniorenbuero, City of Graz

1. Introduction of panels members

2. **Why should a municipality support the exchange of senior volunteers? Please give us examples of what happened in your municipalities.**

Municipality of Ferrara: Mrs Rabuiti gives figures on the European population over 50 that is constantly raising up. She said that through senior exchanges a Local government takes care of a big part of the population, the one over 50 who is still fit and ready to be active. Specifically the Municipality of Ferrara has been operating in a network perspective including the public, the private and the third sector and senior exchanges are a good opportunity to enlarge and involve different actors.

Municipality of Graz: Some volunteers from Graz were involved in early pilot projects on Senior Volunteers Exchanges – this started the collaboration between the Graz Seniors’ Office and partners in other European countries dealing with facilitating exchanges of senior volunteers in Europe. In the following the Graz Seniors’ Office became involved also in other EU-funded projects (I2I – from Isolation to Inclusion, Senempower, Seniorsguides). Thus, in a kind of snowball system more and more senior citizens in Graz became involved in activities that were carried out in collaboration with seniors in other European countries.

Municipality of Lleida .- Local administration is the first level of the administration and for this the best level to analyze, to decide and to develop concrete and specific initiatives for citizens and their welfare.

2.- In our society Lifelong Learning is one of the most important concept. Senior volunteering exchanges are one of the more used, innovative and direct initiatives in the frame of lifelong learning.

3.- Lleida is a medium size city and associations and ONGs are not too much developed to organize this kind of initiatives. In this situation the municipality offers organizations their own resources to create this system, this possibility. Municipality build and structure to offer all the organizations to use it to develop the exchanges.

3. **The exchange of senior volunteers is certainly a very appropriate measure when existing town twinning relations need to be re-vitalised. What about the idea of senior volunteers as ambassadors to set up new relations between towns or districts?**

District of Offenbach: *good idea and good opportunities for senior volunteers to get in contact with local people not only during work but also during leisure time. Regarding the organisers you must be careful if you have just started a cooperation with another local government. For us it was important to be in a network so we could discuss planning and managing of exchanges.*

4. **Having here also representatives of twin regions: What was done from the side of the regional governments to promote the bilateral exchange for senior volunteers?**

Region of Emilia Romagna: *the Region Emilia Romagna has been supporting the general concept of senior exchanges, especially between the two twinned regions of Emilia Romagna and Hessen, especially in the framework of the projects "Teaming Up!" in 2005 and "Twin and Go!" in 2009. We also followed the meetings of the SEVEN network and we have tried to network at local level among the Municipalities and Districts of Emilia Romagna, calling for meetings and conferences on the subject.*

Region of Hessen *Senior volunteer exchanges are a big chance for communities to develop their field of active citizenship and civic engagement. We promote bilateral exchanges as a very good opportunity to enhance senior volunteer activities in our communities. In this case we counsel communities and organisations and support them to take part in the exchanges.*

5. **We know from the evaluation of the exchanges that most of the seniors and the organisations were quite happy about their experiences, and mostly expectations were more than fulfilled. Were there also surprises in terms of unexpected – positive or negative – side effects resulting from the exchanges?**

District of Offenbach: *we started the exchanges in 2004 with the project Teaming up and that was a new thing for us, it is not the same as working with older volunteers at local level. The experience was surprising. Some of the volunteers were interested in volunteering abroad rather than at home so we learnt that we should have a wide variety of offers for senior citizens.*

Region of Hessen: *we also had some interesting side-effects. For example we had an export of good practice between the German speaking community in Belgium and the district of Marburg. One senior of Marburg reports of different measures concerning the enhancement of volunteering and after the exchange he counsels the Belgian partners in building up similar activities.*

Municipality of Lleida: *Definitively I have to say that every project is a surprise. Our duty is to build the best program for the candidate chosen but, we have to recognize that an exchange is an experience so intense for volunteers that every day is a new experience: the organizers have to pay attention to take the best for everyone in every situation. This kind of projects have the human factor, and an exchange for a person is an experience so strong that the reactions in front of a situation is every time a surprise. I advise the organizers to always paying attention to the needs of the volunteers*

6. Are you planning concrete projects or measures in the International Year of Volunteering 2011 resulting from the past experiences with trans-national exchanges?

District of Offenbach:

- 1. An exchange of older volunteers between the District of Offenbach and our partner province in Italy (Parma).*
- 2. A volunteer day with the District and the city of Offenbach, and we want to invite our European partners.*
- 3. A summer school on voluntary work and the dialogue between generations in Europe as a bridge to the European year of active ageing in 2012.*

Municipality of Ferrara

- 1. A senior exchange with our twinned town Giessen between Spring and Fall 2011*
- 2. Taking part to the festival of voluntary service that will be held in Ferrara in May with our own stall, with testimonials the volunteers from Giessen.*
- 3. We will continue to support the volunteers of the new association "Metafora" that was founded by a group of senior volunteers who took part to an exchange.*

Region of Hessen:

We have learned that exchanges are a very good possibility to get fresh ideas and good examples for the own work. In this case the state of Hessen wants to intensify contacts to European partners. Concrete measures are a day of volunteering with many people from different European countries and a little financial programme for small organisations. Both measures should support the aim of learning from our European partners. learn

Municipality of Graz

Senior volunteers in Graz founded a small independent organisation to be able to carry out projects that might not be endorsed by the Seniors' Office (which depends on the Municipality). This organisation called "Aktive Seniorinnen und Senioren Graz" is now carrying out a Learning Partnership project together with partners in Raeren/Belgium, St.Wendel/Germany and Berlin/Germany to learn more about how senior volunteers in the other partner organisations promote voluntary commitment and organise their activities.

Municipality of Lleida

At this moment we have to say that we have projects and ideas and in the next few days we decide finally what kind of activities we will do in the European Year of volunteering.

- 1.- during the last two years we discover that volunteering in our city it's not known and analyzed and we are looking for the way to start a study to evaluate volunteering in Lleida.*
- 2.- We are also organizing raising awareness activities in order to promote volunteering. In this sense we try to organize some activities where seniors offer their own experience in order to promote this kinds of exchanges.*
- 3.- We are planning future exchanges projects. At this sense we try to use our experience to improve new projects.*

7. For those municipalities, districts and regions who wish to also engage in the trans-national exchange of senior volunteers: What did you learn as local and regional authorities? What kind of good advice can you give to your successors?

District of Offenbach. *I would advise to read the booklet of the SEVEN network as it is made by people with practical experience: all aspects described there are important. Flexibility is essential: senior volunteers might require different approach than younger ones.*

Municipality of Ferrara: *it is essential to share at local level the experiences and the actions performed and to be carried out with as many stakeholders as possible. A Local Government is in the best position toward a networking action. We have tried to motivate local associations (smaller and bigger) to create local alliances where each partner can give according to its expertise. I encourage associations to approach their local governments asking for cooperation – rather than money – in the field of dissemination of information, partner search, contacts with new volunteers, free use of structures (ex. Meeting rooms) or technical means.*

Region of Hessen: *One big result of the exchanges was, that the seniors return with much new experiences and much motivation which they can use for their work as volunteers. There is not only a personal effect, there is also a big transfer of good ideas to the organisation they were working in*

Municipality of Graz: *You must be prepared to give a lot of good information about the objectives of the exchange projects and ensure a careful matching of volunteers and host institutions. And there is a monthly meeting of senior volunteers and all those interested to become committed organised by (and in the premises of) the Seniors' Office, and another monthly meeting organised by the volunteers themselves in a pub. In Graz the growing of the number of senior volunteers interested in contacts to other European countries was obtained by a kind of snowball system – those already committed told others about their experiences*

Municipality of Lleida:

- 1.- *The first advice is to try to involve all the pieces for the from the beginning of the project.*
- 2.- *Also, to develop a detailed project knowing the profile of the volunteers but having also flexibility to offer every time the best answer for every need.*
- 3.- *To prepare strongly the exchange before the trip of the volunteer: language training, practical information, task preparation. Previous information have an enormous importance.*

Volunteers as protagonists: Two experiences of volunteering abroad

Dietmar Eisenhammer

Maria Bordini

Maria Bordini reported about her experience in Scotland carried out 4 years when a group from Ferrara (Italy) exchanged with another one in Lanark (Scotland) in the framework of the European project "Teaming Up!". See **ANNEX 10**

Dietmar Eisenhammer reported about the experience of an international workcamp to which he took part last summer in Ukraine. The initiative had an intergenerational character as several young people shared with him this experience. See **ANNEX 11**

h. 9,00 Evaluation of the three years of network

Charlotte Struempel presented the evaluation of the whole project carried out through a questionnaire sent to three diverse groups: the 29 members of the network, the “friends” of the network, i.e. all those organisations who attended meeting and/or other SEVEN activities and finally the National Agencies of the LLP. The presentation was discussed and then Charlotte proposed an exercise where participants reflected about their own path through the SEVEN network and afterwards some of them shared their experience either in a hilarious or serious way. **See ANNEX 12 for the full presentation**

h. 9:30 Evaluation of the meeting

The evaluation session on the meeting, was articulated into three parts:

- 1) the evaluation of the Parliament session: this was the key moment of the whole meeting, so we hereby reproduce the main comments from the participants:

Very good job.

Not enough people we wanted to contact was there but still there were several external people.

We should be proud of having 3 Dgs there and having this session in the EP.

We should have spread it more among MEPs.

We missed the possibility to have interactive discussions.

The agenda was very full.

There were different and relevant guests during the conference.

We are starting to work together with new partners .

Marian Harkin was very interested and we will keep in touch with her.

It has been an occasion to reflect on our work and how it is well considered.

- 2) the filling of questionnaires
- 3) An exercise with the “post-it” where participants were asked to state what they would take with them as a result of the meeting and what they didn't like and would leave in Brussels. The results of the last two points can be found in **ANNEX 13**.

h. 11:00 Where do we go from here: brainstorming of follow up

All the participants were divided into 5 groups who discussed on the future of the network. The topics were the same for all the groups and were articulated as follows

- **Where do we go from here, without EU-funding**
- **Where do we go from here, with EU-funding**
- **Where do we go from here, with no direct-funding**
- **Other themes the network could tackle**
- **General considerations about SEVEN**

First of all: We want to continue! The "Network" as well as the "Website" should also be working in the future, providing all necessary information. It is a good tool and a basis for future work.

Where do we go from here, without EU-funding

GROUP 1

- Oberbauer - Wiener Hilfswerk: Not possible without, but perhaps co-funded by Austrian Federal ministry of Social Affairs
- Diaconia will not put much energy into the project; without EU-funding they are happy to have senior volunteers, but only if they pay for themselves
- Workcamps: run without EU-funding (not necessary); with EU-funding they could make more, wider, deeper exchanges of senior volunteers
- Red Cross: perhaps could fund it by themselves (because of the tremendous advantages and benefits gained from the exchanges), but much easier with EU-funding
RC-voice of a volunteer: if food and lodging were free, then RC could perhaps pay the travel expenses
- Sponsoring might be an idea – CSR becomes more and more important – international companies? But: not very ready to spend money on seniors & exchange restricted to Europe might not be so interesting for them.
Perhaps multinational companies would be more interested, if scientific research showed how empowering SVP-projects are.
Especially interesting, when companies just give some money without combining it with certain fixed ideas for which projects it has to be spent (that's how it sometimes works in Sweden)

GROUP 2

- not so far as we went

- bilateral exchanges funded by the organisations themselves – only for bigger organisations possible)
- public funding (ministries, municipalities, local governments)
-

GROUP 3

Only SVP (limited numbers). Developing current existing international voluntary service activities: workcamps, long term project. Seeking support by municipalities. No network, or very limited. A need to keep the website and update it.

GROUP 4

We must work more on an individual basis. Without money we must be very creative. But without money there would be no Network“ and no Website“ - which are both very necessary. Also there would be no more Meetings and Conferences. Professional work would no longer be possible. But we could exchange our informations by E-mails. This way we can try to find and apply for partners. All would have to be done on a more voluntary way.

GROUP 5

Look for dissemination. Keep up the website. links Maintain partner finding. Stress current existing voluntary service activities. Mailing list and sharing of information. Maintain the website as a reference point.

Where do we go from here, with EU-funding

GROUP 2

As EU funding is not directly dependend on the national political situation, it is an important guarantee for demoncratic structures. (Volunteering could for one reason or the other suddenly not be of any interest for a state):With EU money We will be willing to engage for the programmms we will try to enlarge the network all other Grundvig lines should be applied to: learning partnerships, contact seminars, data banks..

GROUP 3

Develop other projects open to more senior volunteers

- Support projects for small organisations
- Facilitate participation of disadvantaged senior populations
- Involve local authorities to prepare future steps or support Collective projects
- Workshops on senior volunteering
- Annual conference and training

- Contact seminars
Networking
- Current actions (information, empowerment, tools, web ...)
- Launch innovative concept: multilateral or European wide projects (increase exchanges, quality, validation, visibility...)

GROUP 4

When we get money we must reach all and also new people who might be interested in and able to do an exchange. For instance migrants. We have to work on a new level. We have to extend and enlarge The demand for people who are just retired. We have to contact more individual people.

GROUP 5

. Split 2 different levels: local and European for funding. Possibilities from European years opening the discussion on the intergenerational experience in volunteering. Organizing a conference on it to deepen this topic inside the Grundtvig programme. To keep the network: Grundtvig workshops. Continuing the training like ACTIVE.

Where do we go from here, with no direct-funding

GROUP 2

only a few (some individual) projects will go on. Sponsoring could be tried BY companies which have CSR projects, international companies, IT companies (e.g. for sponsoring the website), rotary clubs cooperations with AVSO, AGE, European Volunteer Centre, EVS...marketing ideas (e.g. volunteering helps you to find a job) which „sell“ to society or compaignie

GROUP 3

Direct participation of the volunteers to their costs

GROUP 4

To be able to go on depends on the interest and the size of the organisation. The future projects we will realize must be more on a very local level. But in the last step we need always some money. So we could go to the EU, asking for some money and make a kind of pressure saying: without some money of the EU there will not be any project at all. Will the EU want this?

GROUP 5

Keep the network going on. Participants paying. Sponsors. Look for other funding. Pay for membership in the Seven network. Other resources from members (e.g. conference room). Ask to EU to share costs. Fund raising from different sources. Maintain network informally. Keep contribution for disadvantaged

people. Difficulties in finding private sponsors (not so appealing for them). Target companies interested in ageing society. Like insurance which promotes health for elder people

Other themes the network could to tackle

GROUP 1

- We should put special focus on intergenerational projects/ exchanges
- Perhaps an international exchange could be co-funded by the UN?

GROUP 2

possible in the next European years to launch some ideas, yet we would prefer to stick to the original items, aims, themes

GROUP 3

ICT cooperation

GROUP 4

We should stress our interest on the intergenerational aspect. We are willing to support these new ideas. But without money all this, such as the "Network" or the "Website", is no longer possible.

GROUP 5

Not lose our main subject: the seniors. we should work on the innovation e.g multilateral service

General considerations about SEVEN

GROUP 1

- Very useful outcome: 2 brochures and network of people who know each other
- Website should be kept
- Mailing list should be kept, especially in order to inform the partners about latest developments in the EU
- Keep SEVEN at least as an address that the EU has somebody (as a key-address, key-player) to approach, if they think of exchanges of seniors

GROUP 2

The network should be kept up – at least the website, it could be a lobby organisation, there should be one contact person, some voted for a formal structures, others were against that idea. membership fees ? National funding

GROUP 4

The "Intergenerational aspect" could be a new direction for SEVEN. We must look for new partners who work already in this field. Important is to found a balance between "Young and Old" because we should not forget our roots. Our aim and target should be also in the future the "Senior Volunteer".