

REPORT

Starting today's meeting, I would like to present a report from the last meeting of the Association Presidium which was held in Austria, in St. Pölten, on November 30th, 2019.

Apart from the host city and Częstochowa, it was attended by: Mr Kęstutis Masiulis, the then Vice-President and current President of the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize, and delegations from the cities of Seged, Darmstadt, Würzburg, Altötting, Ankara.

After the meeting opening by Matthias Stadler, mayor of St. Pölten, Mr Kęstutis Masiulis presented the report on the activities of the Subcommittee in 2019.

Then, Ms Ingrid Heihs presented a film about St. Pölten, and the delegation from the city of Seged presented a photo gallery from the General Meeting and a film that was created during the Youth Forum.

During the presidium, we discussed the program of the General Meeting and the Youth Forum in Częstochowa and we selected the subject of the conference and forum that was held yesterday. Various suggestions were made: the climate, problems of refugees, smart city, activation of youth, waste management.

At the end of the discussion, we have concluded that the subject "Challenges and opportunities for the European unity" is broad enough to enable discussing various problems individual cities face, which indeed was demonstrated by the yesterday discussion.

During the vote, the subject was adopted unanimously.

Then, we moved to discussing joint initiatives for the years of 2020 – 2021:

I suggested so that the subsequent General Meeting in 2021 would be held in Strasburg, in the headquarters of the Council of Europe, under whose auspices the Association was established. Especially because Strasburg is a member of the Association, and the representative of the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize is the member of the presidium.

After the vote, the resolution was adopted.

Next, I suggested a symbolic renewal of the cooperation agreement from Udine thanks to which our association was founded in 1984. This year, many awarded cities and towns have joined us so I think that this is a good time to remind us the values and objectives we share.

In the vote, all the present participants opted for accepting this proposal.

Now, I would like to thank the City of Udine for the time and effort put in searching the document dated back to 1984, we wanted to use as a model when preparing the cooperation agreement. Unfortunately, despite the extensive search in the city's archives, we failed to find the document.

During the presidium meeting, Mr. Dierk Molter, representative of Darmstadt, proposed organisation of the presidium meeting in 2021 in his city.

At the end of the meeting, the draft resolution no. 1/2019 of the Presidium of the Association of Towns awarded the Europe Prize concerning taking a position during the presidium meeting was read.

The resolution was signed by the representatives of the cities and towns and send out to the Presidium members and published on our website.

That concluded the presidium meeting.

Dear Laureates, participants of the Association's General Meeting, taking up the leadership over our Association, I took this nomination as a great honour, but also a responsibility. Therefore, I have undertaken a series of actions.

– involving inactive cities and towns in cooperation

The Europe Prize was established in 1955. Since then, 80 local governments received this important distinction (in some years, prizes were awarded to 2 local governments), The first prize-winners were awarded over half a century ago, so they may not remember it any more.

Thus, I sent letter to inactive cities and towns of our association with the information on our activity.

So far, the following cities and towns have responded: Hague, Regensburg , Vienna, Aalborg, Dresden, Sighisoara, San Sebastian, Słupsk, Nancy, Dresden, Avignon, Kaliningrad. The rest expressed their interest but they asked for time to think.

– intensifying the cooperation with the Council of Europe and Subcommittee of the Europe Prize as well as promoting the association’s activities on the European forum

Since the association was founded in 1984, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, I would like to enhance the cooperation with the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize and the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development which grants the prize. Therefore, I have sent a letter to the then President of the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize, Mr. Ionut Marian Stroe, where I proposed:

– presenting the Association’s activity during one of the plenary sessions of the General Meeting of the Council of Europe or during the meeting of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development – I was invited to the committee meeting, however, due to the pandemic, the date was postponed,

– organising – in accordance with the resolution we adopted in 2021, in Strasburg, in the headquarters of the Council of Europe – the General Meeting of the Towns awarded the Europe Prize and youth forum accompanying; in this matter, the President of the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize suggested to contact the mayor of Strasburg. Thus, I have sent a letter to the former mayor and to the new mayor, Ms. Jeanne Barseghian. Due to the current pandemic situation, the decision was not made, but I am in touch with the Mayor.

– on the initiative of Częstochowa, on the website of the Subcommittee of the Europe Prize, there is a link to the Association website placed which may serve for information exchange regarding the events organised in the cities.

– renewal of the cooperation agreement

As I said earlier, I turned to the Mayor of Udine where, in 1984, the association was founded, asking him to find in the city’s archives the documents from this event in order to renew the cooperation agreement in a symbolic manner, referring to the document signed back then. As, despite the efforts undertaken by the employees of the Udine City hall, it wasn’t found, we have prepared our own proposition. I will present the content of the document later during the meeting.

Moved by the effects of COVID-19 in our lives, I have sent a letter to all towns and cities awarded the Europe Prize expressing compassion and solidarity.

As you certainly noticed, we have also developed a letterhead and created a special email address for the purposes of the Association.

Furthermore, we have launched an online platform to safely attend the General Meeting of Towns awarded the Europe’s Prize.