

Commission gives Golden Stars to 12 citizenship projects

The European Commission has selected 12 civic participation projects that encourage action and debate on EU issues at the grass-roots level. Later this year, these projects will be awarded the "Golden Stars of active European citizenship" in a prize ceremony in Brussels, hosted by Commissioner Ján Figel'. The 2008 Golden Stars are awarded as part of the Europe for Citizens programme, and give official recognition to initiatives that showcase cooperation, effective working methods and tangible results in the area of civic participation. The winning projects involve participants from 22 EU Member States.

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, **Ján Figel'**, said: *"Europe needs participation, needs the feedback of its citizens. The Europe for Citizens programme endorses and promotes successful efforts of active civic participation with concrete results. It is therefore not a surprise to find among the Golden Stars winners systematic, reflection-provoking initiatives that point in the same direction: the participation in, and promotion of, common European concerns. In my view, these projects clearly show active citizens constructing Europe at the level of everyday life, as they mobilise for issues that are relevant to them".*

The task of identifying this year's winners was trusted to an external jury, composed of seven members, and chaired by **Mr. Hannu Takkula**, Member of the European Parliament and Vice Chairman of the EP Committee on Culture and Education. Members in the jury included **Mrs. Brenda King** from the European Economic and Social Committee and **Mr. Keith Walters** from the Committee of the Regions.

"We were given the chance to review quality projects and identify among them those that both reflected the purpose of the Europe for Citizens programme and could be further used to encourage similar efforts in the field" stated jury chairman Takkula, adding: "This year, though, and in tandem with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, we selected three projects that build on the historical experiences of past generations and educate future ones by teaching them how to be tolerant and open".

The Golden Stars are awarded each year under the *Europe for Citizens* programme, which focuses on organised civil society and at a wider, grass-roots audience. This main EU programme in the field of active citizenship is designed to enhance citizen involvement in the construction of Europe; to this end, a budget of some € 27 million is available for the year 2008.

The Golden Stars **award ceremony will take place on 13 November 2008**, in Brussels. It will be open to the public upon registration.

For **more information** on the programme, on the winning projects as well as for the complete programme of the upcoming award ceremony event in Brussels, see <http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship>.

For more information on the winning projects this year, see annex below.

ANNEX:

SUMMARY OF GOLDEN STAR WINNERS 2008

A) Town Twinning Projects

- The Future of the European Union – Consequences and Perspectives of the Enlargement in view of German–French, German-Polish and German-Hungarian Town Twinning Partnerships, **Reichelsheim, DE** (Partners: Dol de Bretagne-FR, Jablonka-PL, Nagymanyok-HU).

A project debating the challenges of Europe at local level during the German presidency: impact of the EU and the German presidency, value of the EU for the citizens, role of citizens, people with disabilities in European societies, climate change, EU environmental policy and equal opportunities.

Contact details: Mrs Ellen Schnellbacher Tel.: +49616454255 E-mail:

geoschnell@t-online.de

- Meeting of the Citizens of the Partner Towns, **Bojnice, SK** (Partners: Bad Krozingen-DE, Rosta- IT, Jesenik-CZ, Zator-PL).

A project built around participants' active contributions on the subjects chosen: 2007 Year of Equal Opportunities, exchange of practices, workings of the EP. Well adapted methods for all age groups.

Contact details: Tam Frantisek Tel.: +421465430334 E-mail: urad@bojnice.sk

- Magic 27 – the Future of Common Europe, **Bialogard, PL** (Partners: Akniste-LV, Gnosjö-SE, Olen-BE, Caracal-RO).

Active participation of young people taking further interest in European integration and democracy in Europe. Celebration of the 2007 EU enlargement to Romania and Bulgaria. The project served also as an opportunity to show a travelling exhibition on town twinning.

Contact details: Mr Stefan Strzałkowski Tel.: +48943122127 E-mail:

gospodarka@bialogard.info

- 1st European Youth Meeting: "Mobility of Young People in Europe", **Association of twinning committees of Puy de Dôme, FR** (Partners: Moggio Udinese, Nemi, Ariccia, Sarsina, Liściana Nardi, Fosdinovo, Montessoro al Mare –IT, Beratzhausen, Gerestried, Lichtenfels, Empfingen, Grebenstein, Kallmunz, Parsberg-DE, Chelmsford/Great-Waltham-UK, Povoá De Lanhoso/Taide, Viana Do Castelo – PT, Lopik- NL, Sławków, Czarna Dabrowka – PL, Oradea - RO)

A meeting involving a grouping of French municipalities and their twinned towns. Thematic working on European identity, mobility and awareness-raising, through debate and interaction with Members of the EP.

Contact details: Mrs Evelyne Laquit Tel.: +33473873617 E-mail:

Evelyne.laquit@neuf.fr

- Forum of the EU Citizens and Municipal Officers: Fighting for Q-cities, Fighting for a Better Daily Life, **Municipality of Amaroussion, EL** (Partners: Fonte

Nuova – IT, Ghent-BE, Lakatamia, Strovolos, Limassol–CY, Nea Ionia Magnesias, Voula, Xanthi–EL, Ploiesti –RO, Porto–PT, Umeå –SE)

A consolidated network, committed to strategic working, as evidenced by the signing of the "quality oath". Focuses structurally on the issue of quality services towards citizens; pursues further development and diversification; targets municipal administration, civil society and citizens.

Contact details: Mr. Michalis Christakis Tel.: +30 210 8760351 E-mail: deeda@maroussi.gr

- Sustainable Development – Issue for European Citizens, **Plérin, FR** (Partners: Avrig-RO, Wronki-PL, Cookstown-UK)

A new thematic network focusing on sustainable development, involving a grass-roots audience and affirming their further engagement by the signing of a Charter.

Contact details: Mr Pierre-Michel Connen Tel.: +33 607772568 E-mail: sclc@wanadoo.fr

B) Civil Society Projects

- The Organized Civil Society: New Tasks in an Enlarged European Union - **Euromed Carrefour Sicilia, IT** (Partners from RO, UK, BE, AT, CZ and PL)

Exchange of practices and drafting of a set of recommendations concerning the role of civil society and their input for decision making. Takes into consideration the relations between civil society organisations on national level and the national states and civil society as well as the EU institutions and their role in developing a sense of active citizenship.

Contact details: Mr Gianluca D'Alia Tel.: +39091335081 E-mail: carrefoursic@hotmail.com

- EUReporter - **Babel International Association, FR** (Partners from CZ, BE, PL, HU, EE, PT, LT, DE, RO)

Mobility of young journalists with the aim of creating a European public opinion. A project based on informal learning and volunteering.

Contact details: Mrs Monika Oelz/Nuala Morgan Tel.: +33142718553 E-mail: info@cafebabel.com

- Bring Europe Closer to Youth – Simulation of the Summit of the European Council - **The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, PL** (Partners from ES, IT, LV, DE, FR, SK and HU)

Simulation of a youth-led EU summit and relevant workshops, an initiative aiming at capacity building, interaction, establishment of networks and intercultural learning.

Contact details: Mrs Ieva Grundsteine Tel.: +48 22 6212161, 22 6217555 E-mail: i.grundsteine@schuman.org.pl

Remembrance projects

- The Trans-national Culture of Remembrance at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site: Preserving the International Victims Testimonies for Future Generations - **International Committee of Dachau, DE** (Partners from FR, CZ, NL, AT, BE, LU, HU, SI, RO, BG)

A remembrance-related event/conference, where testimonies of the second and third generation of the families of the concentration camp survivors were presented and discussed.

Contact details: Mrs Dr Annette Eberle Tel.: +491774786628 E-mail: Annette_eberle@gmx.de

- Daughters of the Enemy - **Docs, Youth and Society, CZ** (Partners from IT and DE)

A project focusing on human rights, where students from film and TV schools filmed interviews with the daughters of political prisoners of the Stalinism era.

Contact details: Mrs Zuzana Drazilova Tel.: 00420224234452 E-mail: sunfilms@volny.cz

- The Neighbours Who Disappeared – Tribute of the Child Holocaust Victims - **The forgotten ones, CZ** (Partners from IT, DE and UK)

A travelling exhibition on Nazism, led by young people doing research about the Jewish children and youngsters who disappeared from their community during World War II and that will continue as a co-operation between schools.

Contact details: Mrs Marta Vancurova Tel.: +420233336367 E-mail: martavan@gmail.com