

**Links in Europe – Heinsberg, Germany and Komarom-Esztergom, Hungary****Report by Director, Resources****1 Background**

The Festival of Friendship took place in Komarom – Esztergom, Hungary from 15 - 20 October 2013. The Festival involved Music, Dance and Song Groups from Komarom – Esztergom and the Partner areas, Midlothian and Heinsberg, Germany.

The Fortieth Anniversary of the official commencement of the Partnerships was marked during the course of the Festival of Friendship when the representatives of the Partner areas met in the Council Chambers in Tatabanya. The President of the host Council, Mr G Popovicz led a discussion which included presentations by the Member of Parliament and the Mayors of Tatabanya and Tata on the progress made by the Komarom – Esztergom Council and the respective Town Councils. President Popovicz pledged his community to the Partnership and to mark the Anniversary, presented a framed handcrafted inscription, decorated with enamelled images depicting places and themes appropriate to Midlothian and Komarom – Esztergom and Provost Wallace replied suitably and presented Quaichs to both the Komarom – Esztergom and Heinsberg Councils. In reciprocation, the Deputy Landrat of Kreis Heinsberg, Mr Willi Pfaffen presented framed prints.

**2 Meeting to Discuss Future Activities**

The Members of the Official delegations met on Saturday 19 October 2013 to review progress and discuss proposals for the future. A Note of the Meeting is attached.

The various developments and proposals will be taken forward in consultation with the Partners and appropriate agencies.

**3 Resource and other Implications**

3.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

**3.2 Risk**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

**3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation Themes addressed in this report:**

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- x  None of the above

**3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

There is no impact.

**3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

There is no impact.

**3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

The Community and Stakeholders were involved in this activity.

**3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

Equality of opportunity is inbuilt.

**3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

Not applicable.

**3.9 IT Issues**

None.

**4 Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to note the report.

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**Background Papers:**

**File CG 5.12 (RGA/CW)**

## **Summary of matters raised at meeting in Komarom – Esztergom on Saturday, 19 October 2013.**

President Popovicz welcomed those present and opened the meeting for discussion on the various aspects of partnership activity; and suggestions as to how it may develop. As host authority, the Komarom – Esztergom Council, had faced changes in functions and cuts in budget which had produced deficit situations. The Council had enlisted the help of the local town councils there to support the Festival activities on a daily basis in order to enable it to be able to provide the resource needed – in financial terms, the budget for the Festival was 4-5% of the total allocation. The need to give adequate notice to facilitate preparation was necessary. Whilst no financial assistance had been made by the European Commission, it was imperative that if such support is available, it be sought.

Deputy Landrat Pfaffen asked that consideration be given to the following projects, namely:-

- (a) the development of contact between schools and further education colleges in vocational training eg in care, building, information, etc;
- (b) the provision of assistance with a programme of self financing visits to places in Europe which the Heinsberg Council promoted as regards visits to the Partner areas; and
- (c) the Festival of Friendship, whether a return to family home stay accommodation was perhaps worth considering.

The Meeting noted that progress could be made independently with topics (a) and (b) and that such exchanges ought to be encouraged; and, on the Midlothian side, dialogue had begun with the further education college with a view to securing the involvement of the students there. In relation to school exchanges, there had been a fair amount of activity already but there was a need to renew efforts to secure participation.

As regards the Festival of Friendship, Provost Wallace extended an invitation to the Partners to visit Midlothian in or around October 2015 for the Festival of Friendship; and invited comments in relation to the optimal period, duration, numbers of participants and programme content. In response, no particular preference emerged and it was agreed that it be left to the Midlothian side to consider and implement the planning stages ie noting that in the current financial position, changes in approach may be required. The view was expressed that there was no particular best practice in this respect as there were advantages and disadvantages in promoting the Festival with home-stay and hostel accommodation.

Owing to time and other constraints other matters described in the Annex were not touched upon and dialogue will be developed through correspondence.

## ANNEX

### **Musuems**

There had been dialogue previously about the development of a Museum link through the Scottish Mining Museum, Newtongrange, the Huckelhoven, Heinsberg Museum and the Tatabanya Museum. The delegation visited the last mentioned and the Director, Mrs G Altdorfer - Pal was enthusiastic about further contact. Exchanges of literature, exhibition material, and meetings had been mentioned as possible ways of developing contact.

### **Schoolgroups**

In relation to school groups, in the year 2000, there had been exchange visits involving Scottish and Hungarian Schoolteachers which had led to successful exchanges. In 2006 similar exchanges involving Midlothian and Heinsberg teachers had taken place and it had been hoped that exchanges of schoolchildren would follow.

### **Visual Arts**

Previously, it had been agreed that it would be of benefit if artists could be involved in exchanges. More recently, Heinsberg and Midlothian Sculptors had taken part in exchange visits.

### **Youth Seminar**

Another Youth Seminar in Midlothian had been under consideration for some time with English as the vehicle language, featuring topics of interest to and developed by young people; and European Commission funding being critical to this exercise.

### **Youth Sports Event at Easter**

The Football Team from Dalkeith High School had withdrawn from the Annual International Jugend Treff in Kreis Heinsberg at Easter 2013. There had been no news about the event in 2014.

### **Student Teachers Exchange**

The school-teacher practical training exercise involving Tynewater Primary School did not take place in 2013. Whether it will take place in 2014 is not known.

### **Scouts**

It had been hoped that it might be possible to arrange a camp in Kreis Heinsberg for Midlothian Scouts.

### **Further Education**

The Colleges in Geilenkirchen and Erkelenz had arranged / were arranging visits to Midlothian in October 2013 and Spring 2014; and it is intended to develop linkages with the Edinburgh (formerly Jewel) College.