EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 – Municipality of Melčice-Lieskové, Melčice-Lieskové
PIC number:	876584054
Project name and acronym:	European Solidarity Festival 2026: the Future of Local Governance on the 100th Anniversary of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Melčice-Lieskové — EURO-SOL 2026

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	**101292238**
Event name:	European Solidarity Festival 2026: the Future of Local Governance on the 100th Anniversary of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Melčice-Lieskové
Type:	Lectures, Workshops, Presentations, Stories, Exhibition, Public voting, Award ceremony, Festival, Competition, Competition, Social activities
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Slovakia, Melčice-Lieskové
Date(s):	28/08/2026 – 30/08/2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.melcice-lieskove.sk/obec/projekty/europsky-festival-solidarity-a-buducnosti-samospravy-pri-prilezitosti-100-vyrocia-dhz-melcice-lieskove-euro-sol-2026/
Participants	
Female:	365
Male:	333
Non-binary:	2
From country 1 [Slovakia]:	551
From country 2 [The Czech Republic]:	40
From country 3 [France]:	18
From country 4 [Serbia]:	4
From country 5 [Hungary]:	55
From country 6 [Romania]:	32

Total number of participants:	700	From total number of countries:	6

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The three-day international event European Solidarity Festival & Town Twinning Meeting 2026 took place in Melčice-Lieskové, Slovakia, from 28 to 30 August 2026 within the framework of the CERV-2025-CITIZENS-TOWN-TT project. The event brought together citizens, representatives of partner municipalities, local authorities, young people, women, volunteers, members of volunteer fire brigades, cultural performers and other community stakeholders from Slovakia and partner countries. The meeting provided an opportunity for citizens to meet directly, exchange experiences, discuss common European challenges and strengthen cooperation between partner municipalities. The overall objective of the event was to strengthen European solidarity and active citizenship at local level, deepen town-twinning cooperation and create opportunities for citizens to discuss European values, democracy, inclusion, fundamental rights, youth participation, gender equality, prevention of violence and the future of local communities. The programme combined political and civic discussions, educational activities, youth participation, cultural exchange, volunteering, inclusion, intergenerational cooperation and community celebrations. Particular attention was given to the involvement of young people and citizens who contribute to their communities through voluntary activities.

Day 1 – Friday, 28 August 2026 - Opening, solidarity and intercultural exchange

The event began with the official project opening at the Municipal Office. The welcome speech by the mayor introduced the objectives of the project and the importance of European cooperation, solidarity and active citizenship. Representatives of the participating partner municipalities were introduced and presented their municipalities and their experiences and achievements during the previous year of cooperation, including the results of “Together in Europe 2025.” The opening session provided an opportunity for the partner municipalities to exchange information about their progress, identify common challenges and discuss opportunities for further cooperation. The activity strengthened mutual understanding between the participating municipalities and provided a common starting point for the three-day programme.

The afternoon programme continued at the Cultural Centre with “Stories of Solidarity”, where citizens from the partner municipalities shared personal experiences connected with solidarity, volunteering, community life and support between people. The personal stories were followed by an interactive workshop and reflection focused on the meaning of solidarity in contemporary European communities. Participants discussed how solidarity can be strengthened at local level and how citizens can contribute to more inclusive, democratic and resilient communities. The activity encouraged direct dialogue between citizens from different countries and generations.

The first day continued with the opening of the exhibition “A Safe World through Children’s Eyes.” The exhibition presented artworks created by children and provided a space for young participants to express their ideas and visions of a safe and peaceful world. The exhibition was accompanied by a presentation of wines and products from partner countries, creating an informal opportunity for intercultural exchange.

A public vote on the children's artworks was launched and remained open throughout the festival. The winners were subsequently recognised during the project closing ceremony.

The first day concluded with the first evening of the European Solidarity Festival, featuring music, dance and folklore performances representing Slovakia and partner countries, including France and the Czech Republic. Photo and video projections presented the history and activities of the Volunteer Fire Brigade, connecting local community traditions with the broader theme of volunteering and solidarity.

Day 2 – Saturday, 29 August 2026 - Volunteering, democratic participation, youth and inclusion

The second day began with an International Volunteer Fire Brigade Competition held at the football field. Volunteer fire brigades from Melčice-Lieskové and partner municipalities participated in the competition, demonstrating practical skills, teamwork, cooperation and preparedness. The competition also included activities for children, allowing families and younger citizens to participate in the programme and learn more about the role of volunteer firefighters in protecting and supporting local communities.

At the Municipal Office, an expert forum entitled “Solidarity-based Local Governance” brought together municipal representatives, experts and citizens for discussion on key challenges facing local democracy. The discussion addressed citizen participation in municipal decision-making; empowerment of women in local governance; combating disinformation and developing critical thinking; prevention of violence from a municipal perspective; and protection of children's and young people's rights. The forum encouraged an exchange of good practices between participating

municipalities and highlighted the importance of transparent, inclusive and participatory local governance.

The programme continued with the Young Leaders Competition – TEDx, where students presented short and inspiring talks on solutions to bullying and violence. The TEDx-style format enabled young participants to communicate their ideas directly to an audience and encouraged them to take an active role in addressing problems affecting young people and their communities. The presentations were evaluated by an expert jury and the audience, providing participants with direct feedback and encouraging youth participation in public debate.

From the afternoon until the evening, the European Solidarity Festival continued in the Cultural Centre and public square. Cultural performances from Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia were presented alongside exhibitions and projections about the history of the Volunteer Fire Brigade.

Partner municipalities operated information and presentation stands, where citizens could learn about their communities, traditions, culture, local initiatives and gastronomy. Volunteer fire brigades also presented their work and activities. These activities created an informal environment for citizens from different countries to meet, communicate and develop personal relationships beyond the formal programme.

The second day also included the panel discussion and workshop “New European Bauhaus & Inclusion in Volunteer Fire Brigades” at the fire station. Participants discussed the involvement and inclusion of women, girls and people with disabilities in volunteer fire brigades and explored how local facilities and community spaces can become more accessible, sustainable and inclusive. The workshop connected the principles of inclusion, participation and community development with practical local action.

Day 3 – Sunday, 30 August 2026 - The future of European local governance and project conclusions

The final day focused on the future of local governance and the long-term impact of European cooperation. The panel discussion “The Future of European Local Governance”, held at the Community Hall “Svadobka”, brought together the mayor, municipal representatives, citizens and other participants. The discussion addressed solidarity between generations and countries; youth participation in public life; prevention of violence and cyberbullying; empowerment of women; inclusion and democratic participation; European values and fundamental rights; the future of local governance and Europe; and citizens' questions and proposals. The discussion provided a space for citizens to express their views and ask questions directly to local decision-makers. It also encouraged participants to consider how European values can be translated into concrete actions within local communities.

The event concluded with the Project Closing Ceremony and Joint Lunch at the Cultural Centre. During the closing ceremony, the organisers presented the main results of the three-day event and reflected on the achievements of the project. Participants provided feedback on the programme and discussed possible areas for continued cooperation between the partner municipalities. A Joint Declaration was presented and signed by representatives of the participating municipalities, expressing their commitment to continued cooperation, solidarity, democratic participation, inclusion and the promotion of European values at local level. The winners of the children's art competition “A Safe World through Children’s Eyes” were also announced and recognised.

The programme concluded with a special recognition ceremony for citizens who had made an outstanding voluntary contribution to community development, organised on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Volunteer Fire Brigade. The recognition highlighted the importance of volunteering and civic engagement and demonstrated how citizens' individual contributions can have a lasting impact on local communities.

The event increased awareness of European values and encouraged citizens, particularly young people and volunteers, to take an active role in their communities. It also strengthened personal and institutional links between the partner municipalities and created a basis for continued cooperation and joint activities in the future.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).