



EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	REmember TOgether to Understand each other better (RETOUR)
Participant:	European Information Centre
PIC number:	938613032

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	6 - in situ
Event name:	In-situ meeting in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria
Type:	In-situ meeting with debate, workshop, experts and visits
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria
Date(s):	18th to 20th of October 2023
Website(s) (if any):	www.facebook.com/retour.remembrance.project https://www.bbag-ev.de/project/retour-remember-together-to-understand-better/ https://www.europaiuvenis.org/en/projekty/retour-remember-together-to-understand-better/
Participants	
Female:	67
Male:	30
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 Germany:	4
From country 2 France:	3
From country 3 Bulgaria:	3
From country 4 Greece:	3
From country 5 Czech Republic:	2
From country 6 Poland:	4
Total number of participants:	97
From total number of countries:	9
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	



Objectives:

- To make a comparative research on the civil societies and their performance during the communist regime in the partners' countries
- To provide a platform for shared citizens' attitudes and concerns about memories gathered and possible compare of the collected oral memories within the preparatory event phase and during the in-situ event;
- To enhance knowledge about the lessons to be learnt from the "closed" society period;
- To identify different type of resources for history learning and increased interest towards knowing the history;
- To raise awareness on European common history and to build citizens' awareness on the protection of democratic participatory ideas;

Description of the event:

On the Oct 18th, 2023 the international participants met and had networking supper with introductory and orientation session on the agenda and getting to know each other session.

On the Oct 19th, 2023 the participants had diverse type of activities, divided into morning and afternoon sessions.

In the morning on the way from the hotel to the seminar premises, the participants had a walking "history hunt", walking along the historic street "Nezavisimost" and Gurko str.

The *first morning session* took place in the building of the District Governor of Veliko Tarnovo, in the hall of the ex-District Committee of the Communist Party. The participants had a workshop with Dr Anastasja Tonkova, artist and lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Veliko Tarnovo University. Her topic was "the Art as a tool of the Totalitarian Past (based on the Mosaics at the Ex-District committee of Communist Party)". Dr Tonkova introduced her research on the usage of art during the totalitarian time and showed the examples reserved in the building, explaining the symbols and different elements of the totalitarian symbols. She also shared with the participants the developments for the preservation of the mosaic in the Buzludja building. The participants had the chance in person to see, explore and touch the existing in the building art effects from communist time and to discuss. After the session, the participants had a "history hunt" in historic Veliko Tarnovo, guided by students from Veliko Tarnovo University (members of the local group). They walked at Gyrko street and Stambolov bridge, performed a memory picture at the Monument of the 2nd Bulgarian kingdom, visited the Constitutional building where the first Bulgarian democratic constitution was adopted.

The *afternoon session* took place in Arbanassi, ethnographical complex next to Veliko Tarnovo. There the participants were able to discuss how the city might be used as educational tool with its monuments, mosaics, old houses and traces of the past. Arbanassi gave the participants to explore UNESCO patronage museum of Nativity Church and to discuss with Dr Simeonov the role of the religion during the totalitarian past. The participants also saw the Residence of the last Communist Leader of Bulgaria Todor Zhivkov.

In the evening, from the panoramic terrace in front of the medieval castle of Tsarevets, the participants saw how history might be presented by lights and music watching the unique spectacle "Light and Sound". Also they had a discussion with Mr Kolev who shared with them the history of the performance and how it was introduced in 1981.

On Oct 20th, 2023 in the *morning* the participants went to Kilifarevo, to the Museum of Socialist Equipment and Art. There they had an "open" lesson lead by a secondary school history teacher Dragomir Dachev. He, together with a group of his students, performed "how to teach totalitarianism at secondary school". All the participants were involved in the lesson's discussions, small group activities, conclusion and evaluation activities. After the end of the "open" lesson, all participants discussed the educational techniques and tools used, shared their own experiences, good practices they have in their regions, commented the cases that occur at school. As teachers from 13 different Bulgarian towns joined the event, it was a very useful and encouraging exchange of know-how. The district history expert was a part of the discussion, as well as professors from the Faculty of History at Veliko Tarnovo University.

After the session, all participants visited the Museum of socialist equipment and totalitarian art and had a story telling session with Mr Todorov, who used to work at the District Youth Komsomol House.

In the *afternoon* a sum-up session took place. The participants discussed the shared ideas on teaching remembrance and commented country's best practices.