

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Tokod Nagyközség Önkormányzata - Tokod
PIC number:	938797429
Project name and acronym:	Tokod Picnic and Town Twinning 2025 – Tokod Picnic

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	1		
Event name:	Tokod Picnic and Town Twinning 2025		
Type:	public event		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Hungary – the municipality of Tokod		
Date(s):	19 th – 21 st of September 2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://tokod.hu/tokod-piknik-falunapi-es-szureti-mulatsag-2025/		
Participants			
Female:	110		
Male:	62		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Hungary]:	Tokod: 62 people (50 female, 12 male)		
From country 2 [Slovakia]:	Čata: 55 people (34 female, 21 male)		
From country 3 [Romania]:	Meresti: 55 people (26 female, 29 male)		
Total number of participants:	172	From total number of countries:	3
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>From 19 to 21 September 2025, the Municipality of Tokod organised a three-day international town-twinning event. The programme welcomed official delegations from the partner municipalities of Meresti (Romania) and Čata (Slovakia), continuing longstanding cooperation and strengthening cross-border ties within the framework of the CERV programme. The event aimed to deepen community cohesion, encourage civic participation and promote shared European values through educational forums, cultural exchange and community celebration.</p> <p>The programme began on Friday at the Lukácsi Máté Cultural House, where the foreign delegations were received by Mayor László Bánhidi and local representatives. The opening ceremony introduced the objectives of the weekend: strengthening long-standing town-twinning relations, exploring new fields of cooperation, and engaging residents in discussions about Europe, cultural heritage, and shared identity.</p>			



Partner municipalities presented their communities, highlighted their achievements and exchanged insights on local governance, culture and youth engagement. The atmosphere remained warm and collegial as participants shared experiences from previous collaborative initiatives and outlined areas where joint work could continue. Throughout the evening, live music provided by the band of the mayor of Čata helped create a friendly, informal space, while the shared dinner encouraged deeper conversations, personal connections and a sense of growing solidarity among the delegations.

Saturday marked the most intensive day of the programme, beginning with the Tarcsai László Memorial Football Tournament, which featured teams from Meresti, Čata, Csabacsúd and the wider region. The tournament fostered an atmosphere of fair play, cooperation and friendly competition. At the same time, the Meresti Wind Orchestra filled the morning with a musical parade across Tokod, creating a lively and festive start to the day.

A central element of Saturday's programme was a comprehensive series of thematic presentations and public discussions, designed to address topics that resonate strongly with citizens across Europe and to underline that the future of local communities must be built on mutual respect, appreciation of cultural values and strengthened European cooperation. The morning opened with the topic "The Impact of War on Our Everyday Lives", which examined the psychological and social effects of war on everyday life. The discussion focused particularly on women, young people and families, highlighting how constant fear and uncertainty can lead to anxiety, depression and trauma-related disorders. Participants also reflected on the long-term consequences of war for community life: the weakening of social ties, the breaking up of families and the transmission of emotional burdens to future generations. The session underscored the need for community resilience, accessible mental-health support and strong social networks in times of instability, as well as for initiatives that promote the message of peace in society. This was followed by a discussion addressing "Practical Ways to Protect Our Mental Health", which explored everyday strategies to protect mental health. Speakers connected the topic not only to personal well-being but also to broader areas such as education, digitalisation, employment, research, urban development, environmental protection and climate policy. Participants stressed the importance of sufficient rest, effective stress-management techniques, nurturing social relationships and taking part in community events. Volunteering and helping others were highlighted as sources of positive experience both for individuals and for the wider community. The role of sport and recreation as forms of movement that support mental well-being was also emphasised. Several contributions drew attention to the need for conscious use of digital devices, noting that balanced and mindful technology use is essential to avoid overload and maintain mental health. Many particularly appreciated hearing concrete, practical examples they felt could be implemented locally. The third topic, "Knowledge as Our Greatest Asset and the Key to Our Future", focused on knowledge as a key resource for both individuals and communities. It emphasised the growing importance of digital and green technology skills, which open up new opportunities not only on the labour market but also in community development, innovation and the green transition. The forum underlined that knowledge is the foundation of development and that the sharing of knowledge contributes not only to individual well-being but also to community progress. Attendees agreed that knowledge-sharing between municipalities should be expanded, as it strengthens cooperation, supports international partnerships and improves long-term prospects for young people. Several participants commented that digital skills and environmental awareness are essential foundations for the future and that rural communities must not be left behind in Europe's green and digital transition.

The second part of the programme turned to ethnic minorities and the diverse cultural heritage of the Carpathian Basin. A Roma cultural workshop introduced the richness of Roma traditions, emphasising the central role of family in community life and identity, as well as the importance of music and dance as everyday and festive forms of expression. Particular attention was paid to oral traditions and storytelling, which transmit cultural values and identity to younger generations and at the same time strengthen community cohesion by building a bridge between past and present. A seminar on ethnic minorities across Europe presented research findings on the historical presence of communities such as Slovaks, Romanians, Germans, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Ruthenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Ukrainians and Poles, illustrating how intertwined European histories are. The discussions highlighted that these communities, together with the Roma, make Hungarian society more diverse and that their cultural values enrich shared identity. Further contributions focused on the role of education and language use in minority communities. The forum underlined the importance of mother-tongue kindergartens, schooling in minority languages and bilingual programmes, as well as of traditional events, folk-art programmes, religious festivities and cultural centres, in maintaining minority identity. The role of minority self-governments, civil organisations and spokespersons was also discussed, as their active presence ensures that these communities remain visible and heard in public life. Economic and labour-market aspects were addressed too, with particular reference to vocational training programmes, employment opportunities and support for entrepreneurship. Participants agreed that the social and economic integration of minority communities not only improves their well-being but also supports the development of society as a whole. In the final topic of the day, attention returned to the cultural identity of ethnic minorities, focusing on how education, language and cultural activities together help preserve traditions while enabling minorities to participate fully and equally in public life. Many agreed that cooperation between municipalities is a powerful tool for enhancing visibility and



participation of minority communities in public life.

Throughout the day, a Europe Direct information point complemented these discussions by providing citizens - especially young people - with practical guidance on EU mobility programmes, volunteering opportunities, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. Europe Direct also organised creative EU-themed activities for children, including colouring sheets, puzzles and interactive educational materials, ensuring that the youngest visitors could also engage with Europe in an enjoyable and age-appropriate way.

The afternoon transitioned into the traditional highlight of Tokod's cultural calendar: the harvest parade. Decorated wagons, folkloric costumes, a miniature train and the participating delegations moved through the village accompanied by music and dance, stopping at several points for lively performances by the Tokodi Csillagfény Majorette Group and the Ízisz Gyöngyszemei Dance Ensemble. The parade was followed by an array of family-oriented activities at the cultural house and sports field, including craft workshops, playful competitions, children's games and sports demonstrations, as well as the popular Hegyeskő Strongman Cup. Children were delighted by the appearance of superheroes who added a playful element to the day.

As the afternoon progressed into evening, the focus turned toward cultural performances and community entertainment. The stage programme featured the Homoródalmási Wind Orchestra, the Ízisz Gyöngyszemei dance group and a lively family concert by Gryllus Vilmos. Well-known Hungarian performers, including Erdei Zsolt and rock singer Varga Miklós, attracted a wide audience, and the large-scale concert by Hooligans provided an energetic highlight. Late into the night, DJ sets ensured that the celebratory atmosphere continued and offered opportunities for informal interactions among residents and visiting guests. Meanwhile, municipal representatives and partner delegations convened for an evening meeting to discuss recent achievements, exchange best practices and identify future areas of cooperation. The conversations underscored mutual interest in cultural exchanges, youth involvement and exploring possible EU-funded projects.

Sunday provided a more reflective close to the event. Delegations attended a festive mass and thanksgiving service at the Roman Catholic Church, symbolising unity, respect and long-standing friendship between the participating municipalities. In the afternoon, Tokod hosted a majorette festival, bringing together groups from multiple municipalities. Performers of various ages showcased complex choreographies, contributing to an uplifting celebration of artistic expression and intergenerational cultural continuity.

A final international forum took place, providing an opportunity for deeper reflection on European cooperation, democratic participation and citizens' expectations for the future. Participants compared experiences from the 2024 European Parliament and local elections, discussing turnout, political shifts and how local communities perceived the campaigns. Many expressed that while EU membership brings security, mobility and development opportunities, citizens still feel a need for clearer communication about EU decisions and their impact on everyday life. Several attendees noted that misinformation and uncertainty contribute to growing euroscepticism. To support open dialogue, organisers placed an anonymous "opinion box", into which residents could submit comments and concerns. When these were later discussed collectively, a number of recurring themes emerged. Many citizens emphasised the importance of preserving peace and stability in Europe, highlighting current geopolitical tensions and the fear of war as major concerns. Others pointed out the need for stronger support for young people, especially regarding education, mobility and job opportunities, arguing that EU programmes should be even more accessible in smaller rural municipalities. Representatives of civil organisations from Hungary, Slovakia and Romania shared their own challenges: limited resources, bureaucratic obstacles and difficulty in maintaining cross-border activities without stable funding. At the same time, they underlined that cooperation across borders strengthens trust, tolerance and shared problem-solving capacities. Many expressed a wish for more frequent joint events like the Tokod Picnic, which help counter prejudice, foster personal relationships and keep European identity tangible at local level. The forum also touched on broader themes such as EU-funded projects and their sustainability, rural development, energy and climate policy, demographic challenges, migration and security, highlighting the importance of solidarity, equal opportunities and a strong, united Europe.

As evening fell, families gathered for the traditional open-air picnic cinema at the football field. The relaxed setting created a sense of community and shared reflection after a rich and diverse weekend.

As the event drew to a close, delegations expressed deep satisfaction with the quality and scope of the programme and reaffirmed their intention to strengthen cooperation in the years ahead. They agreed on the importance of regular exchanges, joint cultural events and exploring further opportunities within European programmes. Throughout the weekend, citizens repeatedly noted that the event made them feel more connected to their European identity, more aware of challenges faced by neighbouring regions and more motivated to participate actively in community life. Thanks to its inclusive, intergenerational and multicultural nature, the event successfully fulfilled the objectives of the Tokod Picnic and Town Twinning 2025 project, contributing to a stronger sense of local belonging, fostering intercultural dialogue and reinforcing the European values shared by all participating

municipalities.

A total of 55 guests arrived from Čata, 55 from Merești and 62 participants represented Tokod directly within the town-twinning framework, alongside the local organisers. Across the three days, the festival drew well over 1,000 visitors, making it one of the most widely attended community events in Tokod and demonstrating strong public interest in international cooperation, cultural exchange and European-themed discussions.

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