

## **Tokod Picnic & Town Twinning 2025**

From 19 to 21 September 2025, our delegation had the pleasure of participating in the Tokod Picnic & Town Twinning 2025 event, warmly hosted by the Municipality of Tokod. Over three days, the village became a lively centre of cultural performances, community gatherings and meaningful discussions dedicated to strengthening cross-border cooperation and celebrating our shared European identity. The event was organised within the project Tokod Picnic and Town Twinning 2025 (101215709), co-funded by the European Union through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV-2024-CITIZENS-TOWN-TT).

The programme opened on Friday with a warm reception at the Lukácsi Máté Cultural House, where partner municipalities Merești and Čata were welcomed by Mayor László Bánhidi and local representatives. During the evening, all delegations introduced their communities, exchanged experiences from previous collaborations and discussed opportunities for future partnership. The atmosphere was friendly and inclusive, supported by live music and a shared dinner that encouraged informal conversations and strengthened personal ties.

Saturday offered a rich variety of activities reflecting the values of cooperation, creativity and community spirit. The Tarcsai László Memorial Football Tournament brought together teams from the partner municipalities and the wider region, fostering sportsmanship and friendly competition. Meanwhile, the Merești Wind Orchestra filled the streets with a festive musical parade. Throughout the day, our representatives took part in thematic forums on topics such as the impact of war on everyday life, mental-health resilience, the importance of digital and green skills, and the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in the Carpathian Basin. These exchanges provided valuable insights and reinforced the belief that dialogue and mutual understanding are essential for a strong and united Europe.

In the afternoon, we joined Tokod's traditional harvest parade — a vibrant procession of decorated wagons, folk costumes and international participants — followed by a diverse cultural programme featuring the Tokodi Csillagfény Majorettes, the Ízisz Gyöngyszemei Dance Ensemble and the Merești Wind Orchestra. Children and families enjoyed craft activities, games and the popular Hegyeskő Strongman Cup, while evening concerts and community entertainment created an uplifting and festive atmosphere. The performances of Gryllus Vilmos, Erdei Zsolt, Varga Miklós and the Hooligans brought together hundreds of visitors and offered unforgettable cultural moments.

On Sunday, our delegation took part in a festive Mass, symbolising unity and long-standing friendship between the participating municipalities. This was followed by a colourful majorette festival and a final international forum where citizens and representatives reflected on European cooperation, democratic participation and the challenges and opportunities facing rural communities. The discussions emphasised peace, solidarity, youth engagement and the importance of maintaining close cross-border relationships.

Our delegation returned home enriched with new experiences, strengthened friendships and a renewed commitment to cooperation. The Tokod Picnic & Town Twinning 2025 event once again demonstrated that when our municipalities come together in the spirit of partnership and shared values, we contribute to a more connected, resilient and united Europe.

*Note: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*