

Summary Report on the UCUE Youth Meeting in Vienna, 5-15 July 1999

The meeting was attended by young people from Vienna and from 19 other UCUE capitals. Never before had the UCUE Youth Meeting attracted so many participants – and the favourable response further encouraged the organisers from *Landesjugendreferat Wien* (Youth Division of the Province of Vienna) to prepare the best possible programme for all young participants.

Altogether, 138 participants came to Vienna for the meeting (115 young people and 23 accompanying adults).

It had originally been planned to hold the meeting on a ship used as a school and permanently anchored on the Danube. This idea was abandoned to provide more comfortable accommodation for the participants (double rooms in a youth hotel). No changes were, however, made to the programme as such. The workshops, social programme and political debates took place in accordance with the original plans, and their success was greatly enhanced by Vienna's decision to extend the meeting to a full ten days. This gave the participants more time to focus on issues such as tolerance, acceptance, understanding and humanitarianism, but also to get to know each other better by overcoming their prejudices, differences and any remaining interpersonal barriers and inhibitions.

The "political" programme focused on the following activities:

- a) Joint trip to the former concentration camp of Mauthausen, visit of the memorial, guided tour, film...
- b) Round table discussion in the Austrian Parliament with Dr Johannes Swoboda, MEP
- c) Round table discussion in the Council Chamber of the Vienna City Hall with the Youth Officer for the Province of Vienna (optional)
- d) Joint trip to Budapest, opportunity to meet and discuss with young locals
- e) Joint trip to Bratislava, meeting with representatives of Slovak youth organisations, opportunity for discussion and networking
- f) Disco evening at a Kolping house in Vienna, together with young people from Vienna
- g) Round table discussion with the accompanying adults on installing an inter-city youth exchange network, at Café Landtmann (in the presence of the Chief Youth Officer and representatives of the European Voluntary Service)
- h) Visit of the Danube Floodplains National Park
- i) Meeting with young people from Vienna on a camp ground of the Vienna *Naturfreunde* (Friends of Nature) on the banks of the Old Danube
- j) Final presentation of the workshop results in a public event in front of the Vienna City Hall

The cultural and social programme included the following activities:

- a) Guided tour of Vienna
- b) Guided tour of the Wachau region (Danube valley, west of Vienna)
- c) Short guided bus tour of Budapest
- d) Evening at a Heurigen (traditional wine tavern) in Vienna
- e) Boat trip around Vienna
- f) Reception at the Vienna City Hall
(hosted by Dr Wolfgang Lischka on behalf of Vice Mayor Grete Laska,
Mr Otto Schwetz on behalf of Mayor Dr Michael Häupl,
Mr Josef Hollos on behalf of the team.)

In the final discussion, some of the accompanying adults criticised the general concept adopted in autumn 1998 at the UCUE meeting in Vienna. It was therefore necessary to point out that there are no UCUE guidelines for organising a youth meeting. The organising city is to prepare the event in accordance with the political focus issues and contents of UCUE, while the meeting's implementation as such remains up to the city and its individual experiences and resources. A large majority of all accompanying adults present, however, expressed sheer enthusiasm about the Vienna Meeting. In a voluntary and anonymous feedback questionnaire, almost 80% of the young participants gave an absolutely favourable response (see attachment).

Vienna was the first attempt at implementing a new concept for the UCUE youth meeting. This must be seen as a major success, as the event was not geared to the requirements and wishes of adults, but to those of the young people attending, without disregarding the actual UCUE goals.

In order to avoid further discussions on this issue, it would be necessary to adopt guidelines for the general structure and financing of the UCUE Youth Meeting that are accepted by the member states. As a consequence, the individual meetings would - most probably - become rather similar, with the same programme being repeated over and over again. I believe that only few of the accompanying adults from past meetings would call this an attractive alternative, as it would certainly not satisfy the young people's need for creativity, individuality and topicality in a joint Europe.

Vienna is at your disposal for further discussions regarding the issue of joint guidelines, and would be happy to contribute the experiences gathered at the Vienna Meeting and at numerous similar meetings the city has participated and taken a leading role in.

On behalf of the team:

Mr Josef Hollos
Youth Officer for the Province of Vienna