



## **Synergy for Diversity benefiting Democratic values**

The “European Week Against Racism 2016” gave another opportunity to local stakeholders of the city of Patras (metropolitan centre of Western Greece) to join forces for a common goal!

The “Park of Educational Activities (PEA) of the Municipality of Patras” coordinated a series of events entitled “Synergy for Diversity benefiting Democratic values” that took place at its premises from 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The whole initiative was supported by the Municipal Enterprise for Planning & Development (ADEP SA) and linked to the activation of the city in the “Intercultural Cities-ICC” network.

PEA has an exceptional location close to the seaside within a pleasant green environment and it has been recently launched to operate as a “hub” hosting actions of educational and civil society of Patras.

“Synergy for Diversity benefiting Democratic values” initiative is an outcome of a participatory design among various stakeholders, namely: PEA, ADEP SA, Municipal & Regional Theatre (DYPETHE) of Patras, Municipal Conservatory of Patras, Creative Centre of Disabled People (KOMEATHO), Directorate of Primary Education of Achaia, Directorate of Secondary Education of Achaia area (Dpt. of “Cultural Projects” and Dpt. of “Health”), Associations of Migrants (Albania, Romania, Russia), civil organisations such as: Institute of Intercultural Relations, IDIFOS photography club, Youngsters in Action, POLYMORFO club of employees of OTE-Telecommunications Organization, MAHYTES: Club of parents for education-activation of children with mental retardation, Sailing clubs of Patras and the region.

Within this process several musical events and concerts took place implemented both by organisations and by youngsters, pupils of the schools (youngsters with disabilities included). There were various theatrical performances of pupils, such as “Monologues in Gaza”, “Musical Fairytale for Diversity”, etc. In addition, mixed cultural events (dance-theatre-music-painting-constructions) touched the hearts of all, such as: “Searching for Greek civilization in Venice”, “One picture, a thousand words”, “World Pictures in my place”, “Our class has not got borders, but the world has”, “Our Big Circus”, “The longing of uprooting through music and songs”.

Migrant associations presented dances, information about the culture and heritage of their origins, tasteful food and spirits! Photo exhibitions were organised in parallel as well as posters (made even by kindergartens).

Regional sailing clubs were activated, through symbolic sea contest that took place at the coastal line in Patras golf!

Taking into account 21<sup>st</sup> March being the International Day of Poetry, a combination was achieved i.e. a workshop was dedicated to creative writing (poems) by pupils, emphasizing on refugees and migrants as well as a workshop of poetry reading (in Albanian and Greek language) of relative content.

Last but not least, a high-scale event took place at the premises of “APOLLON” main theatre at the city centre, organized by Patras Cultural Organisation in cooperation with the orchestra of Patras Municipal Conservatory. The event entitled “The foreigner of water” perfectly matched music with poetry (poems read by well known actors) tackling themes of refugees and uprooting.

“Synergy for Diversity benefiting Democratic values” initiative was also linked to UNITED network. This was mainly achieved through the participation of secondary schools in a poster competition. It is noteworthy, that the Directorate of Secondary Education of Achaia - Dpt. of “Cultural Projects” operates a network of secondary schools in the area (of Achaia, where Patras is regarded as capital) tackling matters on interculturalism (it is approved by the Ministry of Education - F20.4/47769/D2). The Dpt of “Cultural Projects” and ADEP SA have a cooperation protocol – this, was exploited and schools were urged to participate in the poster contest. It is true that they responded, indeed in a very limited period of time and their creations can be found in the gallery hosted by UNITED network.

All activities were embraced by the Municipality of Patras through a statement of the Mayor, Mr Kostas PELETIDES, emphasizing on the need for multifaceted action to combat exclusion and all forms of discrimination based on nationality, color, sex, religion, disability, living standards (full statement, is attached).

Patras promises to continue working together for the benefit of democracy, equality, human rights, solidarity, inclusive society being a trustful partner for all those wishing to act for this regard.

<http://weekagainstracism.eu/poster-competition/poster-competition-gallery/>

<http://weekagainstracism.eu/activities/patras-greece/>