



The European Day of Twinning

2nd June 2001.



To mark the progressive spirit of Europe amongst its citizens, The Association for the Committees of Twinning of Puy-de-Dôme, gathered 36 twinning committees for an European Day of Twinning. This day marked a positive step towards 'A Citizens Europe', giving the people of Europe a chance to meet face to face, to get to know each other and partake in the feeling of a shared heritage across one continent.

36 municipalities from the Puy-de-Dôme region and their twin towns from Germany, the UK, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands, in total 52 towns, took part in the event. For the president of the Association, Evelyne Laquit, "town twinning constitute a real opportunity for the citizens of Europe to meet each other and get involved in a real exchange of ideas and cultures, thus building the foundations of a future European unity."

The day kicked off with a round-table session, in front of an audience of more than five hundred people, debating topics such as the EURO, European citizenship, the enlargement of the EU, the future of town twinning and it's role in the development and changes in European industry.

The day then continued with each participating committee presenting to the public, by means of a stand, their town and twinning-partner, while stands on the EURO and more generally on the EU were presented to the public as well. The latter presented an exhibition of stamps and town twinning, and one on «Europe and its Young People».

The participants could later on amuse themselves by playing a European board game or buy a card of commemorative stamps created especially for the occasion and with the postal stamp of the 2nd of June. The evening of this day was marked by a festive gathering, where various shows were put on by the different foreign delegations (traditional Irish dance, orchestras, etc.).

This both instructive, amiable and festive event was covered extensively by the local and national, as well as the European press. And it allowed the general public an insight into the essential role of town twinning in the construction of the European idea. Thanks to the presence of more than a thousand participants, this first European Day of Twinning, made it possible for many municipalities to make initial contacts, so new twinings can perhaps be expected very soon. Finally, the various twinning committees present on the day reaffirmed the bonds of friendship that already link them with their twins.

Evelyne Laquit

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Countries involved : France, Germany, the UK, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands.

Persons involved : 1000 locals and more than 700 from twin town delegations.