



During a week of May last year one would meet Czech culture almost everywhere in a small Swedish town: in schools, shops, companies, galleries, in the local press, radio and television. The town, Borlänge, and the Czech town Prostějov had started a loose co-operation in 1995, primarily focused on areas such as the environment, local planning and IT, aimed to reach only the eyes and ears of politicians, administrative personnel and specialist. But in September 2000 the two municipalities decided to become official Twin Towns and the first major project was "Swedish and Czech Citizens Towards a Multicultural Europe – tjeckisk-svensk kulturvecka", which took place from the 20th to the 27th of May 2001 in Borlänge. During this week 120 Czech citizens came to Sweden. They represented people from the municipality, politicians, businesspeople, youth, cooks, dancers, musicians, people from theatres, as well as all sorts of different associations.

The entire arrangement was estimated to have involved more than 8.000 citizens in Borlänge, and due to an extensive mediacoverage, a lot of people in the surrounding region also got access to information about the culture-week. The main points of discussion and exchange during the week was culture, diversity and similarities in Europe, development of local economies, youth questions, democracy questions and how the Czech Republic can take an increasingly active part in the development of European integration.

One would encounter the citizens of Prostějov on the streets, Czech cooks prepared the food in the restaurants and the local buses were decorated with Czech flags. Thanks to this arrangement most citizens in Borlänge now know that they have a twin town and thus potential friends, colleagues and businesspartners in the Czech Republic. And in Prostějov people now also know a lot about Borlänge, a knowledge which will be even further enhanced in 2003, as the two municipalities have decided that there is going to be a Swedish week in Prostějov next year.

In general the project have stimulated a lot of people in both regions to think about new ways of working with questions of tourism, business and culture. And more specifically the restaurantschool in Borlänge is going to start a Leonardo da Vinci-project together with the restaurantschool in Prostějov and one in Sicily. And a primaryschool will be starting a Socrates-Comenius project in 2002 together with a primaryschool in Prostějov.

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For general information:

<http://www.borlange.se/kommun/eu/>

Countries involved : Sweden and the Czech Republic

Persons involved : +/- 300