

## ***Pouzauges***

### ***Inviting young people to live as 'one of the family'***

Pouzauges and surrounding communes in the Vendée played host to 53, mainly young, Romanians from six different towns in July. This was an exchange based on conviviality, with the guests staying in homes of host families and sharing the experience of daily life in this area rich in natural and cultural heritage.

Beyond the warm spirit of friendship lay an awareness that the different peoples of Europe need to get to know each other on a personal basis — to learn about each other's lives and to consider common concerns, such as environmental protection, local economies, the richness of Europe's cultural diversity, the lessons of history. Undoubtedly the keen interest that the Romanian visitors showed in this 'French experience' and the curiosity they evoked in their hosts about their own country helped lay foundations for mutual understanding of this kind. 'This is the future. We must learn to open our doors. We Romanians must teach our children what Europe means and what is the purpose of all these exchanges', commented Adina and Liviu, two of the participants.

A concrete lesson on active citizenship was also drawn during this grassroots event: the participants decided to write an essay on the future of Europe and to send it to the president of the convention.

#### **Contact**

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