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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL PLANNING AND
LOCAL AUTHORITIES



PACECOM047876

Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize
and the propagation of the European Idea

EUROPE PRIZE

Candidature of FURSTENHAGEN
(Federal Republic of Germany)

- Reply to the questionnaire

43.414
01.52

Question 1: Membership in organisations of local authorities

Reply

The formerly independent municipality of Fürstenhagen has been part of the combined municipality of Hess.Lichtenau since 1 January 1974. Ever since it began its work of international friendship, it has been a member of the Council of European Municipalities; and for the past few years has been a member of the German section of Europa-Union.

Every opportunity has been taken to put the guiding principles of the European idea into practice at local level with our twin towns (for example, participation in congresses in Strasbourg and CEM general assemblies). In official meetings and intensive exchanges of letters, we have emphasised the need for better relations between peoples and helped the cause of a united Europe.

Question 2: Contribution to their activities

Reply

Being a rural community with only 2,400 inhabitants, Fürstenhagen has been able to organise only small-scale conferences and events. In all national and international meetings, at the "Europa Tisch" on Europe Day, and on the occasion of concerts, school rallies and fire brigade displays, the accent has always been on Europe. Whenever we could afford it, we have also helped to finance events in Schlierbach/O.O. and Orgelet/Jura.

Question 3: "Twinning activities"

Reply

Fürstenhagen is on record as having been twinned with Schlierbach/Upper Austria since 1962 and with Orgelet/France since 1966. Since that time, the three municipalities have operated a multiple twinning arrangement. We also maintain friendly relations with the town of Ingersheim in Alsace.

Where Europe-wide understanding between young people is concerned, two facts are particularly significant:

- a. The "Nature Lovers" tourist association takes an active part through its activities abroad and in association with foreign dancing groups at home (see progress report).

- b. The local Auguste Forster Haus, which has been a day nursery since 1961, accommodates youth groups from all over Europe every year and organises lectures on the European idea (see progress report).

You will find a complete list of meetings, events and participants, together with full details, in the reply to Question 6.

It is also worthy of note that three streets in Fürstenhagen have been named after the three associated towns. They are the longest streets, and, when completed will certainly be the most beautiful.

- a. Schlierbacher Strasse,
- b. Orgeleter Strasse,
- c. Ingersheimer Strasse.

As there are no hotels in our locality, foreign visitors have always been accommodated in families or private homes, and this has made a considerable contribution to acquaintanceship and understanding.

Question 4: Other relations with municipalities abroad

Reply

The only towns with which we have direct contacts are those mentioned in the reply to Question 3. Other contacts are limited to private exchanges of letters and performances by dance groups (see Question 3, replies a and b).

The scouting association frequently travels abroad and has established relations with foreign youth groups.

Question 5: Exchange of persons

Reply

This question is answered fully in the reply to Question 6.

Young people, fire brigades, sporting associations, singing associations, riflemen's associations, scouts, Nature Lovers, church officials, servicemen's association, local representatives and mayors.

Question 6: Organisation of European events

ReplyComplete list of meetings, events, reports, photographs and speeches.

Date	Type of event	Approximate number of visitors	Official participants
1962 July	First meeting with an Austrian delegation on Twinning celebrations in the marquee with the municipality of Schlierbach and Councillor Weber from Braunschweig.	500	12
August	Return visit to Schlierbach by the municipal council and participation in a sitting of the local authority and at a small leaving ceremony in the Gasthaus Tomaset.	50	5
August	Journey to Sissone (France) to establish contacts for a further twinning arrangement.		2
1963 May	Return visit of the Fürstenhagen group to Schlierbach religious, cultural and sporting events with trips to the surrounding area.	380	117
August	Reception of guests from Schlierbach, small meeting in the conference room with local authority representatives and interested citizens.	50	10
October	Mayor and First Deputy travel to Schlierbach to attend a school inauguration ceremony speeches and tree-planting.	400	2
1964 April	Participation in the twin towns' congresses in Strasbourg: mayor.		

May	Visit by Schlierbach citizens, Nature Lovers and the municipal band, together with Mr Flamig MP, with two events in the community hall and musical performances in the locality.	790	86
Easter	Meeting with mayor and the councillors in Orgelet to establish contacts for a multiple twinning arrangement.	25	4
July	Fürstenhagen citizens travel with young people to Schlierbach. Accommodation in private homes. Small-scale events in the cinema hall and entertainments by Schlierbach schoolchildren.	150	48
October	Participation in the 7th CEM General Assembly in Rome.		2
1965 July	People from Fürstenhagen visit the Schlierbach district music festival. Mayor and Austrian representatives make speeches and presentations. First official contact with the Schlierbach section of the Upper Austria War Victim's Union.	2,000	65
August	Delegation from Orgelet visits Fürstenhagen with full powers for a multiple twinning arrangement. Representatives of the three local authorities take part in a conference.	30	11
September	Nature Lovers attend an international youth meeting in Schlierbach.	600	30
	Delegation travels to Orgelet to make final arrangements for the multiple twinning. Meeting in Hotel Valuse.	25	4
1966 June	Participation in twin towns congress in Strasbourg: mayors.		2

June	Multiple twinning ceremony between Fürstenhagen, Schlierbach and Orgelet in Fürstenhagen in the presence of Mr Ronge MP, the district president, Councillor Grundemann, the president of Europa-Union, the mayors and local authority representatives, press and radio.	510	110
June	Journey to the border zone with French and Austrian visitors, and guided tour of Witsenhausen college of adult education.	50	
September	Delegation from Fürstenhagen (War Veterans' Association representatives and mayor) travel to Schlierbach for the inauguration of the war memorial, and lay a wreath.	350	5
	Fürstenhagen having named one of its streets after Schlierbach in 1964, the Schlierbach local authorities inaugurate a "Waldeck-Strasse" in honour of the mayor and also a "Fürstenhagener Strasse" in the new housing estate.		
1967 April	Footballers and young people travel to Schlierbach: international football match	450	45
June	Inauguration of the Fürstenhagen churchyard hall with a memorial in the presence of the Abbott of Kloster, Schlierbach local authority representatives, representatives of the WVU, the army and evangelical and catholic priests.	250	21
	The stained-glass window was designed and installed by the glass painting workshop of Kloster Schlierbach.		

June	Participation in the VII CEM General Assembly in Berlin.		2
July	Meeting of Nature Lovers in Braunau with foreign groups.		28
September	Delegation of scouts travels to Orgelet to organise a camp in order to establish contacts with the local young people.		3
December	Fürstenhagen schoolchildren go skiing in Spittal am Phyrn, and visit Schlierbach.		19
1968 Whitsun	Footballers from Ingerheim in Alsace visit Fürstenhagen at Easter for a match. The meeting was organised at the initiative of an Ingersheim citizen who had done his military service with a soldier from Fürstenhagen and wished to revive his pleasant memories with his friends and the German population. Since then, friendly relations have developed with the town of Ingersheim.	250	40
June	Local authority representatives travel to Orgelet in order to get to know the place and the people.		7
July	Youth exchange trip from Orgelet, with events.	150	12
July	Youth exchange trip to Orgelet, with visits to the surrounding area and events in the school. A group of scouts camps on the sports ground in Orgelet, sings songs around the locality and fashions benches for the municipality.	120	12
	This group made an important contribution to international understanding.		55
August	Sporting delegation travels to Schlierbach.		5

December	School group goes skiing and stays in a hut near Schlierbach and visits the municipality. A party of Schlierbach schoolchildren also takes part.		17
1969 April	Return visit of footballers and young people in Ingersheim, for a match. "Europe evening" with a display of provincial flags, hoisting of the European flag and speeches.	300 250	35
May	Fire brigade and citizens travel to Schlierbach for the inauguration of premises for fire-fighting equipment and a music practice hall. Speeches and presentations. The Austrians receive the insignia of the Hessisch-Waldeckische Fire Brigade.	350	53
July	Youth exchange from Orgelet with arrival and departure ceremonies in the market place.	230	33
July	Lossetal festival attended by guests from the three foreign municipalities. Joint fire practice by the fire brigades of Schlierbach, Orgelet and Fürstenhagen. Friendly cup tie of the three municipalities Ingersheim, Schlierbach, Fürstenhagen, and junior football match, Fürstenhagen versus Orgelet. Large scale tattoo, request concert by the Schlierbach band and wreath-laying on the memorial.	1,300	188
September	Trip to Austria for the 50th anniversary of the Upper Austria War Victims Union, Schlierbach section. Wreath-laying ceremony and celebrations in the Gasthaus Tomaset. Orders conferred on the German mayor and the president of war veterans association.	450	13
1970 May	"Europe evening" in Fürstenhagen with speeches.	120	

May	Visit of the Orgelet fire brigade to Schlierbach with delegation from Fürstenhagen. The three fire brigades are given a first aid kit. Gathering in Gasthaus Platzer with speeches and dancing.	280	42
July	Journey to Schlierbach for the 100th anniversary of the local band and public music festival. Guests donate one trumpet. The mayor becomes an honorary member.	1,150	111
September	Visit by Fürstenhagen citizens to Orgelet with overnight stay in Ingersheim: participation of guests from Schlierbach. In Orgelet joint celebration in the music centre with presentations and speeches, and performances by the French hosts. Large-scale fire practice with ceremony and procession. Mr Dorr, the local fire inspector receives the French fire brigade insignia. The priest of Orgelet holds a service in the German language in honour of the visitors. Journeys to the surrounding area, with visits to the new Voulanz reservoir and the Lac Chalain.	850 350	63
1971 May	Europe Day celebration with exhibition of products and presentations to the participants from the twin towns. Dancing display by the Nature Lovers, song recital by scouts, and speeches.	280	
May	Footballers visit Schlierbach for an international tournament. Celebration of a rhythmic mass in the monastery church. Donation of a "Europe" nameplate during a dance evening.	450	45

July	Youth exchange between Orgelet and Fürstenhagen. Children are accommodated in the Reichenbach youth camp because many visitors arrive for the Lossetal festival.	29
July	Visitors from Orgelet, Schlierbach and Ingersheim, with the Schlierbach band and the young fireman's band from Orgelet, together with delegations of footballers, firemen and WVU. Reception in the festival marquee with speeches by the five mayors and addresses by the leaders of the various associations. Presentation of letters conferring honorary citizenship on the Mayors of Orgelet, Schlierbach and the outgoing Mayor of Fürstenhagen. Festive procession through the village and dance in the marquee. Wreath laying ceremony at the memorial with the various provincial streamers. Firemen's union day with the guests from Austria and France: presentation of inland and foreign fire brigade insignia. Presentation of honorary badge to the members of the War Veterans' Association. A street is named "Orgeleter Strasse" in honour of Orgelet. Journey to the frontier zone in two busses. Junior and senior football matches, Orgelet versus Fürstenhagen. In all approximately: 3,000	185
October	Visit to Orgelet by the former Mayor and Mayoress.	2
1972 March	Twin town youth exchange in Orgelet. Joint dance evening with parents and children from Orgelet, in the community hall. 180	36
June	Enrolment for Europa-Union: participation in "Europa-Tisch". 20	

July	Visit on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the twinning arrangement with Schlierbach. Guests came from Fürstenhagen Orgelet and Ingersheim Official celebration, nature lovers meeting, pensioners' meeting, festive mass, heroes' commemoration, procession, dance and "early morning concert". Mr Waldeck, the former Mayor, becomes an honorary citizen of Schlierbach.	1,250	103 3 4
October	School inauguration ceremony in Fürstenhagen with the Director and five teachers of the Orgelet school. As a memorial, each municipality planted a tree, and presents were given. Communal supper in Spangenberg castle with speeches.	150	6
1973 April	Youth exchange from Orgelet with events. Tour of the town of Kassel and Herkules rambles, journey to the border area together with the parents of the German children, closing ceremony etc.	80	33
April	Footballers travel to Orgelet for a match.	350	32
May	Europe Day combined with the 25th anniversary of the local scout group. The youth centre is given the name "Europa-Jugendheim".	180	
May	The Hesse Minister invites Fürstenhagen to participate in the welcoming ceremony for the Austrian President Jonas		5
June	School inauguration in Schlierbach, Mayor, former Mayor and Mayoress visit Orgelet and take part in the firemen's social evening for which 60 litres of German beer had been donated.	80	2

1974 March	School party travels to Orgelet with the school Director and the former Mayor and Mayoress. Termination of a football match. Welcoming ceremony and dance evening in the community hall.	250	32
May	Flag hoisting ceremony to commemorate Europe Day.		
May	Footballers and firemen come from Orgelet to the Lossetal Festival and for the Nature Lovers 10th jubilee.		27
	Visit by Nature Lovers from Schlierbach		12
	Musical comedy "Singing, ringing and dancing Europe".	1.500	
	Football match against Orgelet, sale in the marquee. Festive procession. Wreath laying ceremony at the memorial.		
1975 March	Visit by young people from Orgelet. Their stay is organised according to principles that have proved valid in the past, and ends with a large scale leaving ceremony.	250	36
May	Delegation from Ingersheim, with the Mayor, to the celebration to mark the naming of "Ingersheimer Strasse" by the new administrative authorities of the combined municipality of Hess. Lichtenau		22
	Visitors from Schlierbach		26
	Visitors from Orgelet		4
	On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Kyffhauser-Kameradschaft Fürstenhagen, some deserving foreign Europeans from Ingersheim, Orgelet and Schlierbach were presented with the honorary badge of the Kyffhäuser association for international understanding. Wreath laying ceremony and reconciliatory speeches. Journey to the border area and visit to Herkules.		

	Dance in the marquee and 25th jubilee of the Fürstenhagen volunteer fire brigade. Orgelet and Schlierbach each receive one fire brigade medal.	2,200	
September	Visit to Schlierbach by the former Mayor and Mayoress. Journey by two busses to Orgelet via Ingersheim, and one post bus. Overnight stay in Ingersheim. Occasion: concert by the Fürstenhagen vocal group in Orgelet. Members of the fire brigade take part in the ceremony to inaugurate the fire fighting equipment premises. Visit of a wine cellar with dinner and speeches. This was attended also by the Mayor of Hess. Lichtenau.	350	2 70
November	On the occasion of the 40th year of service of the manageress of the Auguste-Förster-Hauses, which has been taking in foreign youth groups since 1962, she received the silver honorary badge for international understanding from the German servicemen's organisation and the Kyffhäuser-Landesverband Hessen.	280	
1976 May	A large-scale celebration is planned in Schlierbach on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the partnership between the War Veterans' Association and Kyffhäuser with the Upper Austria War Victims Union.		
July	We plan to hold the 10th anniversary celebrations of the multiple twinning arrangement with Schlierbach, Orgelet and Fürstenhagen. On this occasion we should welcome the award of the Europe flag from Council of European Municipalities in recognition for our efforts in the cause of international understanding.		

Total figures:

Guests, participants and
interested citizens at events
in Fürstenhagen, Orgelet,
Ingersheim and Schlierbach:
23, 610

Participation in official
journeys recorded in registers
and newspaper reports
2,038.

NB: These figures do not include private visits or the number of holidaymakers visiting the twin towns. As a result of the twinning arrangement, many people have struck up personal friendships.

Question 7: Europe Day

Reply

Whenever possible, we hold an annual celebration in the community hall. Unfortunately, as a result of the municipal merger, the local authority and municipal board no longer have any influence in this matter. The citizens' association which looks after twinning matters, tries to celebrate Europe Day by hanging out the Europe flag and putting up posters. Whenever events take place, the young people always take part. The scout group always made a substantial contribution to the festivities by singing European songs.

Question 8: Support to European movements

Reply

Since 1969, we have a "Europa-Jugendheim" in the locality which is run by the scouts. It is a meeting place for young people from our twin towns as well. The centre was built, subsidised and decorated by the municipality of Fürstenhagen. Today, the town has taken over this responsibility. Young people from abroad who have worked here, have been accommodated in the centre. A local committee (Twinning Committee) operates in conjunction with the town administration of Hess. Lichtenau.

Question 9: Propagation of the European idea

Reply

With the support of the Witzzenhausen College of Adult Education in Werra-Meißner-Kreis, French-language courses are offered on a voluntary basis. So far, they have been regularly attended by more than 100 children and some adults as well. The College of Adult Education organises journeys to the border area and subsidises them in part.

The college invites French professors to lecture. On Europe Day, information about the occasion is given in schools. The Europe flag is hoisted each year, and also on other ceremonial occasions. When school exchanges take place with Orgelet, special performances are regularly held in the community hall. German and French schoolchildren compete with acting, singing, and presentations. On the occasion of the school inauguration, 3 trees were planted in front of the school building in honour of the twin towns as an external token of friendship. In the school buildings of the various municipalities one finds souvenirs, pictures and other tokens of long-standing friendship. In Schlierbach, too, one German and one Austrian fir tree have been planted.

As Fürstenhagen now has only one elementary and secondary school with the first 4 classes, the European themes which used to be presented to the children now meet with little response. These classes are not yet ready to make a proper assessment of European politics.

In the schools of the 3 municipalities mottoes of a similar style are posted on the walls. Also, pictures of the twinned towns and the sporting contests are hung in places where every visitor can see them.

Question 10: Actions of European solidarity

Reply

Donations have been made from time to time at the instigation of the local council. However, since 1974 this has no longer been possible because we had to give up our independence and our budget as well. With the foundation of a Citizens' Association in Fürstenhagen, all matters affecting our twinning arrangement have been taken over by that body. As former Mayor and first Chairman, I have tried to organise further meetings with our friends abroad.

Mr Jünemann, Mayor of Hess. Lichtenau is said to be a good European and supports our plans. Hess. Lichtenau is twinned with the Belgian town of Dessel.

Question 12: Other initiatives

Reply

Until 31 December 1973, Fürstenhagen was an independent municipality. It looked after all matters connected with the twinning arrangements quite autonomously, with the co-operation of the whole population. Since 1961, its intention has been to make friends abroad. For a rural community with about 2,200 inhabitants, it is considerably harder than for a large town whose personality enables it to find suitable partners more easily and

more quickly. Also, large towns have larger financial resources at their disposal, although the drawback there is that when the two partners get together, it is usually only the parliament and one or two officials who actually make personal contact.

It is clear from the list of meetings with our twin towns (Question 6) that almost the whole population contributes to the noble cause of international friendship.

Now that the municipality has been incorporated in Hess. Lichtenau, the town authorities would have to deal also with the maintenance and continuation of partnership obligations, especially as the town is twinned with the Belgian town of Dessel. The Mayor has visited the municipalities of Schlierbach, Orgelet and Ingersheim, and he also intends to do his utmost for these important matters. Since then he has left this work to the local Citizens' Association. As long as I am in charge, there is no danger of the contacts breaking, especially as the association gives financial support to our efforts.

Some further initiatives are:

- a. Youth exchanges with Orgelet will be continued. The next date fixed for a youth delegation to Orgelet is Easter 1976.
 - b. At the end of May 1976, there will be a meeting in Schlierbach of the War Veterans' Association and the Kyffhäuser Kameradschaft with the local WVU.
 - c. At the end of July, in Fürstenhagen, the 10th anniversary of the multiple twinning arrangement will be celebrated, and will be attended by large delegations from the three foreign municipalities, together with a band.
 - d. The football team will meet here for a large-scale international tournament.
 - e. The Nature Lovers' Group will be travelling to Schlierbach next spring for a rally.
 - f. A group of adults will travel to Alsace by 'bus in the course of next summer and will stay for a few days in Ingersheim.
 - g. The scouting association has invited the foreign youth groups to come here for the holidays and stay in the "Europa-Jugendheim".
-