



## “STORIES OF A POSSIBLE EUROPE”

**Panels of citizens working on the theme of cultural dialogue through story telling methods**

*Europe for Citizens Programme - European Union*

[www.possible-europe.eu](http://www.possible-europe.eu)

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**Realized Activities  
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## **Description of activities**

We collected a lot of very interesting stories, a part in form of written or talk texts in 2 workshops and a other part in form of written texts which was be collected in the groups of autobiographical writing of Karin Manke.

We discussed about this texts also with people working professional on the field of intercultural dialog and we decided that we don't have a individual winner and therefore each participant is winner.

You find some participants and a selection of their texts in the following texts. You can find the completed versions of the texts in German language on the website of the project and on the Berlin website <http://www.senzarete.de/html/lesegruppe.html>. For the access you need the Benutzername forum and the Kennwort forum1.

All this has been strongly underlined by the 43 texts ((prose and poetry) , having been sent to the project "Possible Europe" ( translated as "Experiencing Europe").

The previous and determining experiences in the total of 27 texts can be broken down into 20 from former citizens of the GDR and 7 from former West Germans as far as choice of topics and gained knowledge of understanding Europe are concerned.

According to age and origin of the authors, the following topics were dealt with:

- My identity/ My name
- At home abroad
- Europe in your own life story
- Europe in Berlin
- The self and the other
- Home
- Special Europeans
- Experiencing Europe through travel
- Encounters with Europeans
- That special year

## **Meetings and workshops on "Stories of a possible Europe" in Berlin**

The workshop of lecturers, writers, migrants and project partners in Treptow, at the international meeting of "Stories of a possible Europe" on autobiographical writing by migrants in Berlin-Treptow was characterized by a vivid exchange of ideas and experiences. A first "road map" with possible stages towards gaining a European consciousness was drawn up. For that purpose, reflecting on one's own curriculum vitae is of paramount importance. Through the exchange, a first level of common exercises was reached. These reflections on differences and similarities also represent a pedagogically and technically relevant basis for future workshops and seminars.

1) The documentation of experiences, of historical and at the same time private memories was written down-also via objects - in the lectures of Karin Manke of historic autobiographical material, serving as an example. That has shown important individual life traces in the Eastern Germany of the last century as well as a focus of every day life and world history in a single person.

Such traces have then been developed during the workshops on May 13, 2009, "Stories of a possible Europe" and on October 2-4, 2009 "Our stories in Europe" in and by the AWO Meeting center in Berlin.

In the first workshop, the aims of the autobiographical exercises were: remembering historically important events and developments, an understanding of their political and economical causes and of the national developments, all of it from the viewpoint of the individual participant of the workshop..

In one exercise everybody had to find 3 or 4 words or notions, synthetically explaining Europe from a personal point of view. In the next exercise, they were asked to describe a meeting with a European and the feelings arising from that. The memories of the friendship between Fatma and Helga in this report are a good example for this.

In another exercise they were asked about an experience in Europe. The results were descriptions of travels, of mutual aid between strangers, and of dialogue. The "Three Wishes for Europe" instead, awakened the political consciousness of the individual, which had certainly not always been coined by constructive thoughts. The reason for that was that negative experiences from the past emerged which sometimes left deep traces and injuries. This way the European perspective remains rooted in its historical context with a continued reflection on one's own identity and on the difficulties of the present.

2) The autobiographical exercise "Topography", offered by Elisabetta Abbondanza at the international meeting in Berlin-Treptow, had the theme of "Memories of a journey" as a

symbol of a necessary curriculum vitae which everybody can experience. Through this exercise, a written memory of the most important journey in one's own life should be produced.







The exercises in October during the Berlin workshop were characterized by the offer of a place of peace and security - one's own nest, so to speak - in different forms of memories of childhood, one's own name, of an item symbolizing one's origin, of a meal being cooked and offered to the group, so that the others could participate in one's own self, too. The participant of the seminar really became part of a culture of diversity and curiosity, not only of tolerance.



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