

YOUMIG - Study visits: Szeged to Subotica

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Three members of the Szeged YOUMIG project team (Csilla Juhász, Attila Gábor Feleky and Tibor Papp) visited Subotica, Serbia, in October 2017 to get acquainted with the experiences of the Municipality of Subotica in connection with the impact of migration processes, as well as to forge stronger ties between the two cities. The delegation was welcomed by the staff of the Municipality, who listened with great interest to an introduction of the YOUMIG project, as well as to the report on the activities that have been

carried out so far and which are to be expected in the future.

During a roundtable discussion and personal interviews, our colleagues got acquainted with the migration situation in Subotica, as well as its effects on the work of the Municipality of Subotica. Subotica is the second most populated city of Vojvodina, and the administrative centre of North Bačka District with many educational institutions. Therefore, Vojvodina attracts young people from many localities, so its situation is particularly favourable for domestic migration. At the same time, a negative impact of international migration is increasingly perceived in the town also.



Subotica local government staff have little data about migration processes and their impacts. At the same time, the local government is increasingly concerned with the impact of migration: at present mainly the decrease in the number of inhabitants comes up as a negative consequence, but in future

– based on the example of other settlements in Vojvodina - the aging of the settlement may also be accelerated.

Both Szeged and Subotica are regional centres, so they are able to attract domestic migrants from the surrounding regions, but at the same time more and more people decide to leave for foreign lands in both cities. The local governments of both cities have little concrete data in connection with migration and its effects. During the exchange, it has become obvious that the situation in the two cities is similar in many respects, so it is worth sharing experiences with each other. Several young people from Subotica study in Szeged, in Hungary, some of them remain in Szeged after their studies, or continue their lives in another European city, but there are some who return home. At the end of the discussion both parties confirmed their intention to continue the cooperation.



Subsequently, YOUMIG's thematic expert Gábor Feleky interviewed two young persons from Subotica. One of them had already lived in Szeged for a longer period, and the other one is seriously planning to go abroad in a few years. Both young people spoke honestly about their plans, and their motivation for leaving their hometown. Basically, financial motivations were mentioned by both respondents: it is difficult to find a suitable job and wages are low locally. It also came up that - although high-level education is available on the spot - the trainings offered do not cover all segments.



According to the interviewees, leaving home for abroad is a topic constantly present in discussions in their circles, all of them have several friends or acquaintances, who have already tried their luck abroad. While talking about their difficulties and experiences, the youth also mentioned their attachment to Subotica. During the personal interviews life stories were drawn up, which help to understand the causes, the motivations. The information received from them serves as an important improvement to better recognition and understanding of the migration processes between the two cities.