



Hosting organization: Esperanto Association

City: Bialystok

Period: usually from September/October to June

Topic: Education, languages, youth leisure

Number of hosting volunteers: 2

How is the hosting organization like?

The Bialystok Association of Esperantists in Bialystok comprises of 65 members. The members of the Association can be divided into three age groups:

- a) the Esperantist youth who take actions focused at the interest areas of children and youth,
- b) middle-aged people who organize the Esperanto language courses and occasional events;
- c) single persons, pensioners and retirees who found their second home in the Association's club.

As part of the statutory operations, the association develops cultural and educational activities and make efforts to deepen the knowledge about other nations and countries with the use of the Esperanto language. Using Esperanto they promote the idea of bringing nations together and peaceful co-operation among people. They also use Esperanto to popularize the Polish history and culture abroad, and especially to promote the culture of the North-East region.

They implement those objectives through language courses for children in kindergartens, children learning in schools at various levels, adults and students of the "Third Age University". The organization is interested in cyclic events such as: workshops on practical uses of the Internet for the Esperanto youth, Bialystok Zamenhof Days on the birthday of L. Zamenhof, art competitions for the best postcard design under the motto "Esperanto brings people together" addressed to children and youth, 9-days long collective summer trips of the members of the Association to foreign countries and so on. In the club they run an information centre for people interested in learning the language or participating in both local and international Esperantist events. For 7 years Esperanto Association have published an information bulletin (quarterly) on the Esperantist movement in Bialystok, Poland and worldwide.



The organization's informative actions and teaching activities are addressed to all group ages, but they also desire to develop a specific program in order to recruit young people. The organization began to co-operate with young Esperantists from Slovakia and Lithuania in the field of communication without limits through the Internet. All activities are conducted on a voluntary basis. In the centre of the city, the organization has a well equipped club of 82 sq. m in size that comprises of a meeting room (for 50 people), an office room, a guest room with a bathroom and a room with kitchen utilities and a wardrobe.

Where is the project located?

Bialystok is a dweller-friendly city with a population of 300 thousand people in the North-East part of Poland and occupying approximately 94 hectares of surface. It has a restored, historic baroque centre. Due to relatively low environmental pollution and large amounts of greenery and leisure areas, this region is referred to as "The Green Lungs of Poland". Within the radius of 100 km there are:

woods, primeval forests, national parks, nature reserves, lakes, small towns with historic buildings, villages with buildings typical of the nations of their inhabitants. Apart from native Poles, populations includes people of the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Russian nationalities, the border with Belarus runs 40 km away from Bialystok.



Volunteer's task and learning process:

During joint actions, as well as initiatives taken individually, the volunteer will have a chance to broaden their knowledge about the Polish language, the teaching methodology used in language courses, methods of animating various actions for the benefit of an individual or a group.



By promoting the work of the volunteer in Bialystok through mass media, the organization will show that common Europe is not only about taking, but also about giving. They want to encourage the youth of Bialystok to learn about the volunteer's methods of work and to become personally involved in the European Voluntary Service in the future. Esperanto Club is constantly searching for new ideas and hope to extend the mental horizons over the knowledge that the volunteer will automatically gain. In the Association the voluntary will co-operate directly with the Board. He will have a tutor in the person of the Board Member designated for teaching. The scope and timetable of the volunteer's duties will be arranged in consultation with the Board.

Furthermore:

- take part in organizing the Bialystok Zamenhof Days,
- organizing regular meetings of language cafe, assist in the Esperanto library,

- lead a workshop on culture of his / her country / or how Esperanto is seen in his / her country,
- take part in Esperanto courses carried out in mass media,
- take part in regular radio programmes on Esperanto broadcast by a local radio station,
- visit schools / orphanages / educational centres and talk on Esperanto / different cultures.

Apart from that the volunteer is free to implement their own projects, such as: animation of a student or theatrical group, organisation of a trip, establishment of a musical or singing Esperanto group, the association will take the volunteer to small, village cultural centres that are often the only option for young people who did not find employment in the city and follows only the models of living existing in their communities, but craves for colourful, not always real life shown on TV.

The volunteer should be a person who:

- a) has interest in learning Esperanto and Polish,
- b) likes animation and cooperation with children,
- c) wants to improve their teaching and animation skills,
- d) desires to adapt to the Polish lifestyle.

