

Newsletter 1/2016

Oberursel, 15.02. 2016

To all our friends in Épinay, Rushmoor and Lomonossov,

It is hard to believe that the year 2016 is already almost two months' old. We and our town council are in the throes of planning meetings with our partner towns, and we hope to have a diverse programme, which will offer many opportunities to get together during the year. For one thing our association will be celebrating its 25th birthday this year, but at the moment we are planning the framework for our current projects.

What have we planned so far? In March we will hold our annual members' meeting where we will review the past year and present our plans for this. We have about 150 members who are active to a greater or lesser extent, but whose membership fees form the financial basis for our work.

As is our tradition, we will organise the "Europadorf" during the Brunnenfest, 20th to 23rd May, with guests from our twin towns. Every year this puts a strain on our personnel and finances because we are responsible for the costs of the rent of all four stands, electricity, provision of refrigeration equipment, decoration of the area and the musical entertainment. This comes to about €3,000. We do receive a small subsidy from the town but have to cover the rest from what we sell on our own stand. In spite of the difficulties, we look forward to the Brunnenfest and the opportunity to meet our friends from Épinay, Rushmoor and Lomonossov, who bring a touch of France, England and Russia to the Europadorf every year. It is fun to work and enjoy ourselves together. This year the "European Day of the Hochtaunuskreis" (our local region) will be held on the same weekend, in Grävenwiesbach on 21st May. We will man a joint information stand there with representatives of the town of Oberursel.

Another highlight of the year will be a group visit to Lomonossov from 21st to 28th August. It has attracted a great deal of interest this year; some participants have been in Russia before while others will be visiting our twin town for the first time. I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to KALINKA which will arrange all the details of organisation and the programme. As always, people from Oberursel and Lomonossov will have many opportunities to get to know each other, and we will, of course, visit the main tourist attractions in Lomonossov and St. Petersburg.

We will be celebrating our 25th birthday on the weekend of 7th to 9th October and hope to welcome some guests from our partner towns. Mark this weekend in your diary now! What are we planning to do? We already have a broad outline plan but a special team will thrash out and implement the details. On 7th October we want to hold a forum with young people to discuss "Sense and purpose of town twinning in a globalised world". In the evening there will be an informal "get together" with an international buffet, conversation and art from our twin towns. We are planning a party on Saturday evening and "morning drinks" on Sunday where the various teams can compete to test their knowledge about town twinning. These are just our preliminary ideas, but we will be busy preparing for the weekend throughout the year. More than anything else, our birthday weekend should be fun and make the ideal of town twinning more widely known as an instrument for bringing people of various nations together.

By then -at the very latest - our cookery book, "A culinary journey through Oberursel and its twin towns" should be available although, perhaps somewhat over ambitious, we aim to have the first copies ready for the Brunnenfest.

Our programme for this year includes the usual members' meetings, summer party, and Christmas markets in Oberursel and Épinay-sur-Seine. We are still considering whether we should participate in the events in the "Oberursel Summer", either actively or in a supporting role. In addition we will, within the limits of our resources, support projects initiated by the town of Oberursel or other associations,. Of course, we will be sending out our fortnightly newsletters in German and quarterly in French, English and Russian. You can always check out the latest news on our home page (www.vfos.de) or on our Facebook page, and you can always contact us by mail at info@vfos.de.

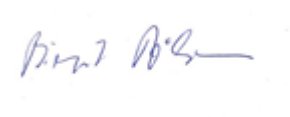
We were very pleased to receive newsletters from Lomonossov and Rushmoor, and learn details of what is happening in our twin towns. Thank you very much.

Our 2016 started well with a New Year's Reception at the beginning of January and the opening of a photo exhibition entitled "Oberursel and its twin towns" with 40 large photographs displaying scenes from Épinay, Rushmoor and Lomonossov. In February we had visitors from Épinay for discussions, and two trainees from the Sixth Form College in Rushmoor spent a week gaining work experience in the International Department at our town hall and in a lawyer's office. At the end of this month we will have the traditional exchange visits between pupils of the Sixth Form College and Oberursel's Gymnasium.

We hope that there will be many such meetings during the year and that our active town partnerships can do something to ensuring that people of various nations treat each other with respect and tolerance.

In this spirit, the board of the VFOS would like to wish you all a good time this year, and look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Birgit Roeher", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Birgit Roeher, Chairman VFOS