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Project "Live, Reside, Work in Jelenia Góra!", co-financed
by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021
and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021
under the program "Local Development"

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for a **green**, **competitive** and **inclusive** Europe

**SUMMARY OF THE BILATERAL COOPERATION
WITH THE CITY OF AKUREYRI (ICELAND)
AS PART OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT
"LIVE, RESIDE, WORK IN JELENIA GÓRA!"
IN THE YEARS 2023-2024**



Fig. Photo by Michał Kryła – UMJG
(the Town Hall) Jelenia Góra



Fig. Akureyri Town Hall –
Akureyri (Iceland)

The project "Live, Reside, Work in Jelenia Góra!" received funding totalling EUR 3.89 million, provided by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA FM) for 2014-2021, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (NFM) for 2014-2021 and funds of the state budget.

The main objective of establishing bilateral cooperation with a partner from the Donor State was to exchange experiences and good practices and transfer knowledge between local government units.

The City of Jelenia Góra and the City of Akureyri (Iceland), in the framework of the implementation of the project "Live, Reside, Work in Jelenia Góra!" on 25.01.2023 concluded a bilateral cooperation agreement in areas jointly selected by both partners.



OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTIONS OF COOPERATION

1. GEOTHERMY

One of the issues identified in the diagnosis for the City of Jelenia Góra is the deteriorating air quality. The city authorities recognize that an excellent opportunity to enhance environmental quality lies in the utilization of renewable energy sources, notably the exploitation of existing geothermal water resources within the city. Concurrently, leveraging local energy sources presents the advantage of making the heat supply system less susceptible to price fluctuations of other energy carriers. Despite being in its infancy, geothermal heating in Jelenia Góra is seen as a promising avenue for development. The city's long-term

development strategy includes the establishment of a geothermal heating plant, which would facilitate the extraction of thermal water for heat supply purposes. Collaboration with a partner from Iceland would greatly aid in the optimal advancement of geothermal energy in Jelenia Góra, offering invaluable expertise and models for reference.

2. GREEN URBAN TRANSPORTATION

Jelenia Góra was interested in expanding knowledge on practical aspects of obtaining and using bio-methane in municipal transport power, based on Akureyri's experience.

3. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY LIFE

The cooperation intended to exchange experiences and ideas on the active engagement of young people in the social life of their city. One area of collaboration involved an investment within the framework of the "Live, Reside, Work in Jelenia Góra!" project, named "Scena Młodych" (the Young Stage) – the establishment of an open-air stage on Jelenia Góra's Błonia. This initiative encompasses the conception, design, and implementation of a stage in a green area near the centre of Jelenia Góra. The Young Stage is intended to serve various cultural, social, and recreational purposes, specifically tailored to and co-created by the young generation of Jelenia Góra residents.

4. DIGITIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The City of Akureyri expressed interest in exchanging experiences and ideas on how to undertake the digitization of public services to meet public expectations and enhance government efficiency.

II.

THE COURSE OF COOPERATION

The initial study visit to Akureyri occurred from June 25th to July 3rd, 2023, involving the participation of 10 high school students from Jelenia Góra alongside two supervisors – a Town Hall employee and a high school teacher. During their visit, the students engaged in community workshops focusing on topics such as the social involvement of young individuals, fostering tolerance, and addressing peer violence prevention. Additionally, they collaborated with counterparts from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in theatre, music, and choreography workshops, culminating in a collective theatrical performance.



Fig. Akureyri City Hall



Fig. UMJG – community workshops



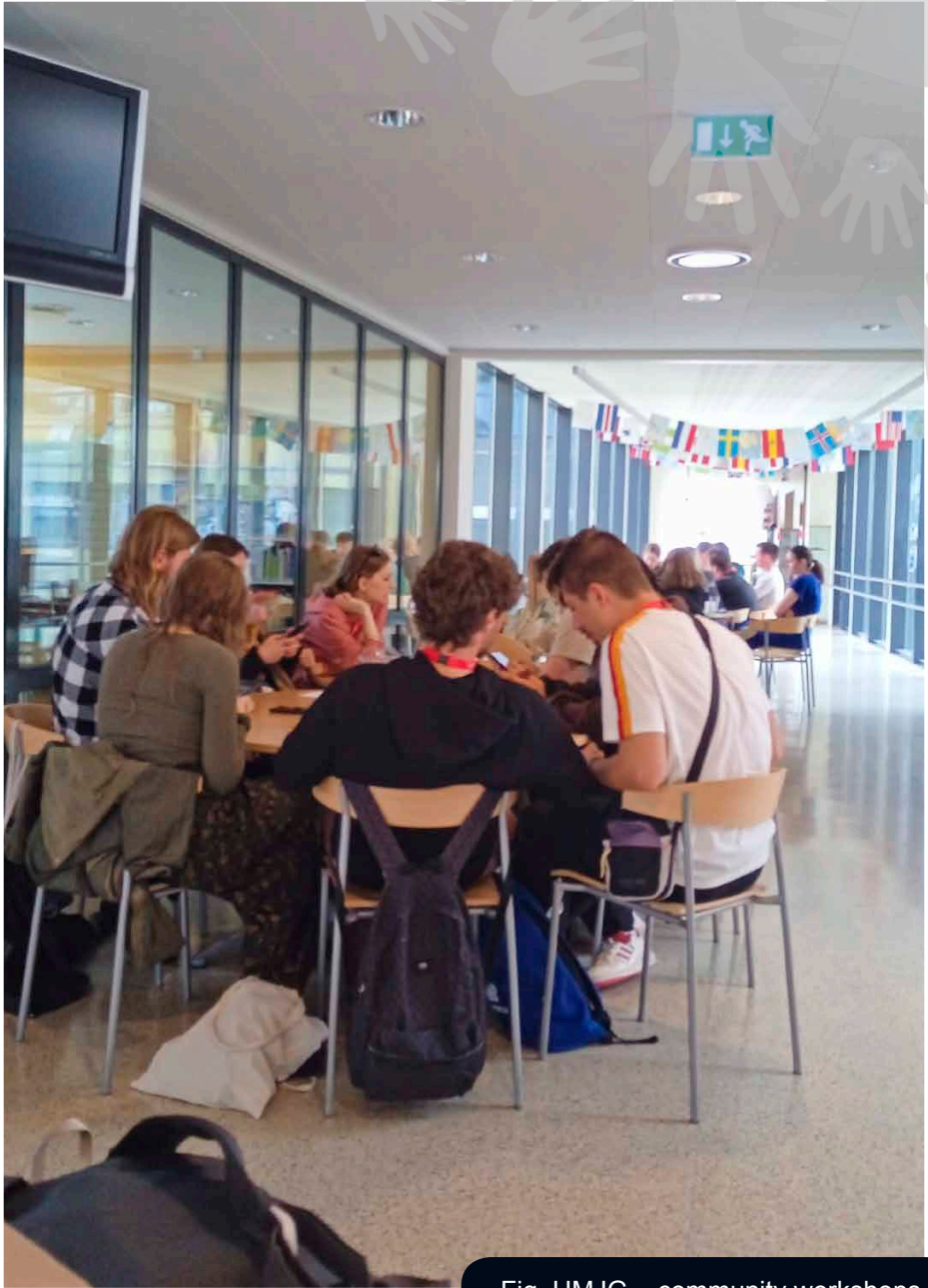


Fig. UMJG – community workshops

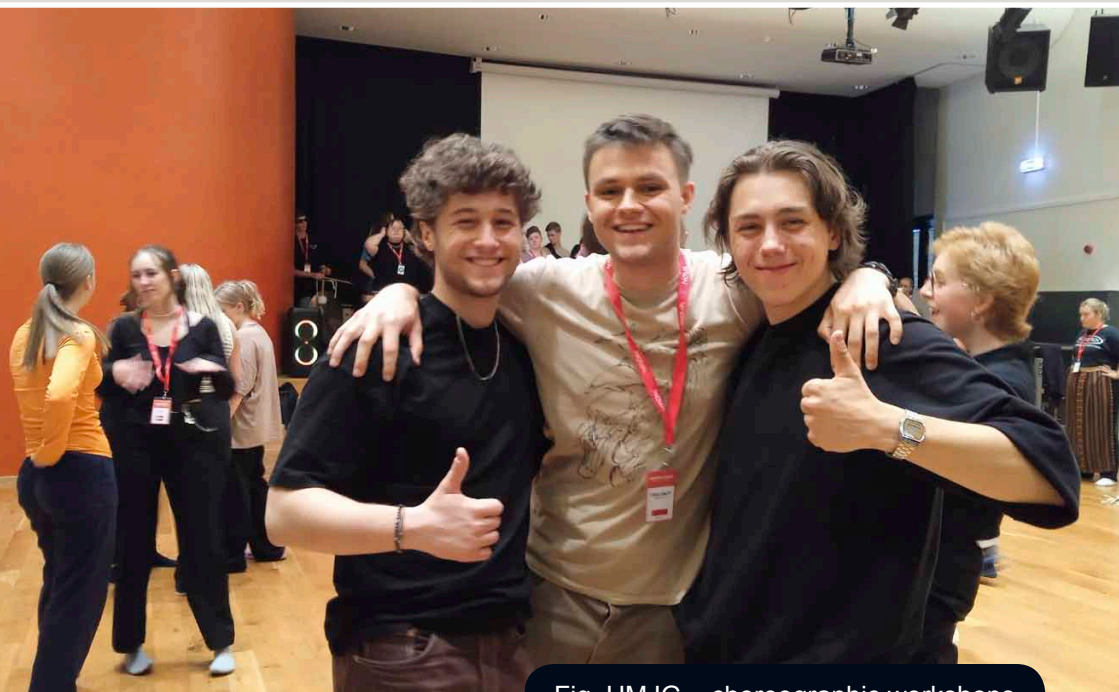


Fig. UMJG – choreographic workshops

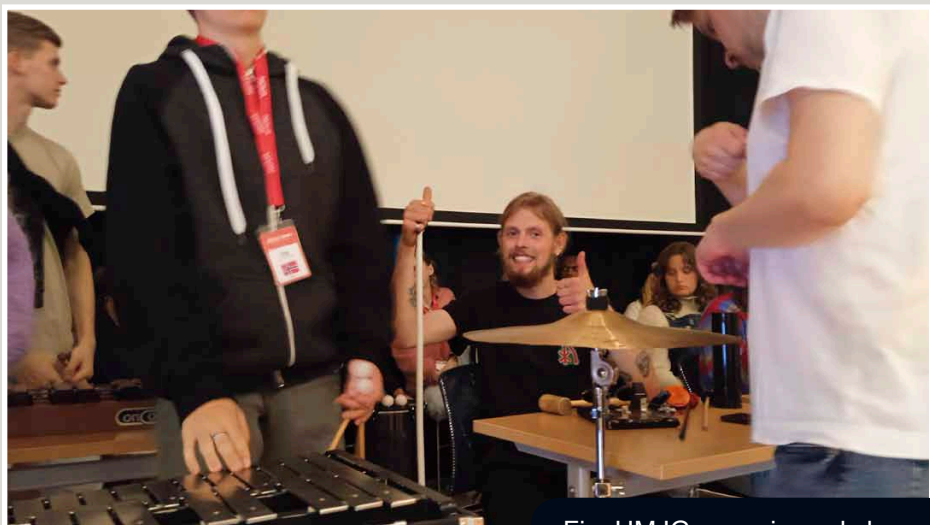


Fig. UMJG – music workshops



Fig. UMJG – music workshops



Fig. UMJG – a performance of Jelenia Góra youth during the Nordic evening

Fig. UMJG – sports activities



Experiences of Exchange Participants



The theatre workshops were intense, days full of learning and experimenting with various acting techniques. I was impressed by their dedication and passion for the art of theatre. I could also share my ideas and creative improvisations, which was inspiring.

I met Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and Icelanders. It was a great opportunity to exchange experiences and get to know different cultures. Despite the differences in language and customs, we were able to find common topics and make lasting friendships. Each of them had interesting stories to tell and a different view of the world.

A ride on Lake Mývatn was another unforgettable experience. This area is known for its unique nature, including geothermal fields, volcanic rock formations and hot springs.

A trip to Iceland was an extraordinary experience. The nature of the country is beautiful, and the inhabitants are friendly and open. Theatre workshops allowed me to develop my skills. An aspect taken up during the meeting with the youth councils from the Nordic countries, important and worth transferring to the reality of Jelenia Góra, is listening to young people.

KACPER BARANOWSKI



During my trip to Iceland, I was most impressed not only by the breathtaking views but also by the amazing people and their care for nature. Getting to know another culture was an extraordinary experience, and the hospitality of the Icelanders made me feel at home. The views of the mountains, geysers and waterfalls were magnificent, and it was hard to believe that something so unusual existed on our planet. However, the biggest surprise for me was how carefully Icelanders care about their unique natural environment. We had the opportunity to meet and connect with people from different countries. It was a very inspiring experience, as I could get to know the diversity of cultures, traditions and languages. Thanks to this exchange, I gained a lot of new friends from all over the world, which was incredibly valuable. Iceland is one of the safest countries in the world, and you can feel that when you are there. The locals are friendly and hospitable, and the atmosphere on the island is calm and safe. It was an amazing experience and definitely left a lasting impression on me.

Ecology and environmental protection: Iceland is known for its care for the environment. This country is a leader in the use of renewable energy, and its policy focuses on nature protection, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable development.

Iceland has a strong tradition of active civil society. Icelanders often engage in social and political activities, definitely raising the level of tolerance toward the LGBTQ+ community.



I think everyone has a few such places in their head that are mandatory to visit in their life. Imagine now – it turns out that you are fulfilling your dream much faster than you expected.

No one will take away the excitement I experienced when this opportunity to travel appeared before me. If someone had told me four months ago that I would fly this year to a country where people believe in elves and trolls, where the landscape is out of this world, and looking at the surrounding nature is addictive, I would never have believed it.

I am immensely grateful for being given the chance to spend a week fulfilling dream after dream. Thank you for meeting people full of love, for seven days of Nordic energy, for fun and for all that my eyes could see. Today, I came back to Poland with a new, unforgettable experience.

During the workshop, the most important were speeches about LGBT people. There was talk about tolerance; we were introduced to the reality of Nordic towns and the functioning of this community. I think this topic is worth discussing in our city.

JULIA WDOWCZYK



The atmosphere during the stay was great. I met a lot of new people with whom I keep in touch. The activities were interesting and developing.

WOJCIECH BULCEWICZ



The trip of life allowed me to break the language barrier. I just visited amazing places and met people from all over the world with whom I will keep in touch.

IGOR PROŚÓŁ

A delegation from Akureyri visited Jelenia Góra from September 28th to September 30th, 2023. The delegation comprised eight representatives from the city who participated in the study visit.



Fig. UMJG – Mayor of Jelenia Góra Jerzy Łuźniak and Mayor of Akureyri Ásthildur Sturludóttir

Fig. UMJG – Mayor of Jelenia Góra, Mayor of Akureyri
Ásthildur Sturludóttir and Head of the City Development
Department Barbara Graczyk

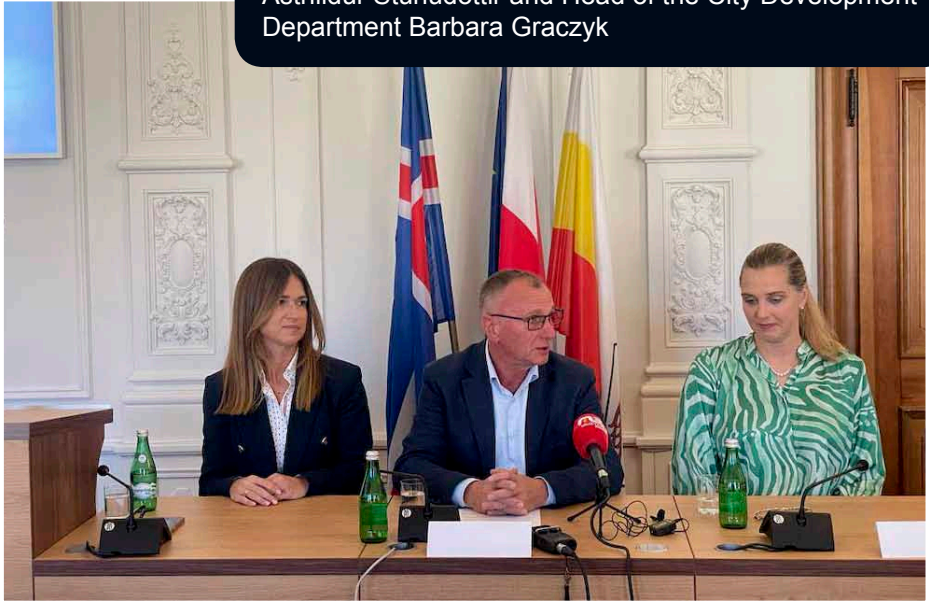


Fig. UMJG – the participants of the Akureyri delegation

Guests from Akureyri participated in workshops focused on:

- ▶ digital services for residents,
- ▶ geothermal energy – the meeting took place in Termy Cieplickie,
- ▶ ecological urban transportation – the meeting took place at the headquarters of Miejski Zakład Komunikacyjny sp. z o.o.



Fig. UMJG – the participants of the delegation from Akureyri during workshops on digitization

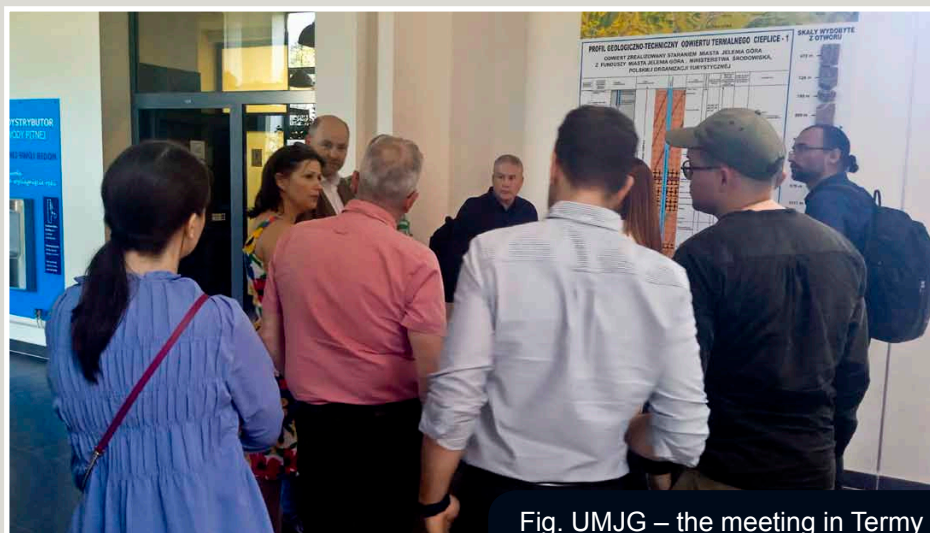


Fig. UMJG – the meeting in Termy Cieplickie on geothermal energy



Fig. UMJG – a meeting in MZK sp. z o.o. concerning urban transport

Moreover, Mayor Ásthildur Sturludóttir of Akureyri shared experiences concerning city management and the functioning of self-government in Poland and Iceland with Mayor Jerzy Łuzniak of Jelenia Góra.



Fig. UMJG – the meeting of the Mayors of both cities

Guests from Iceland also had the opportunity to visit Jelenia Góra and participated in the events of MOVI CITIES Wonderland – Jelenia Góra Festival of Light.

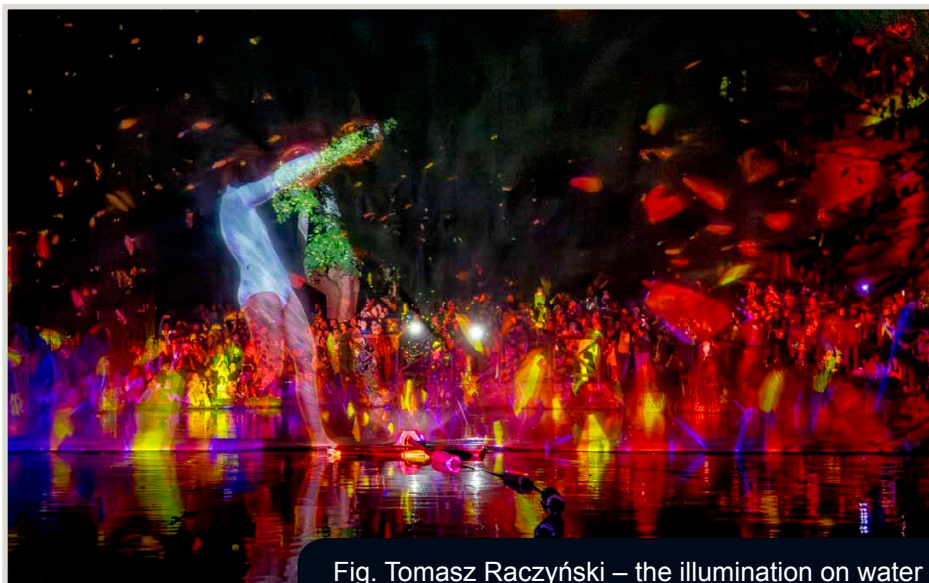
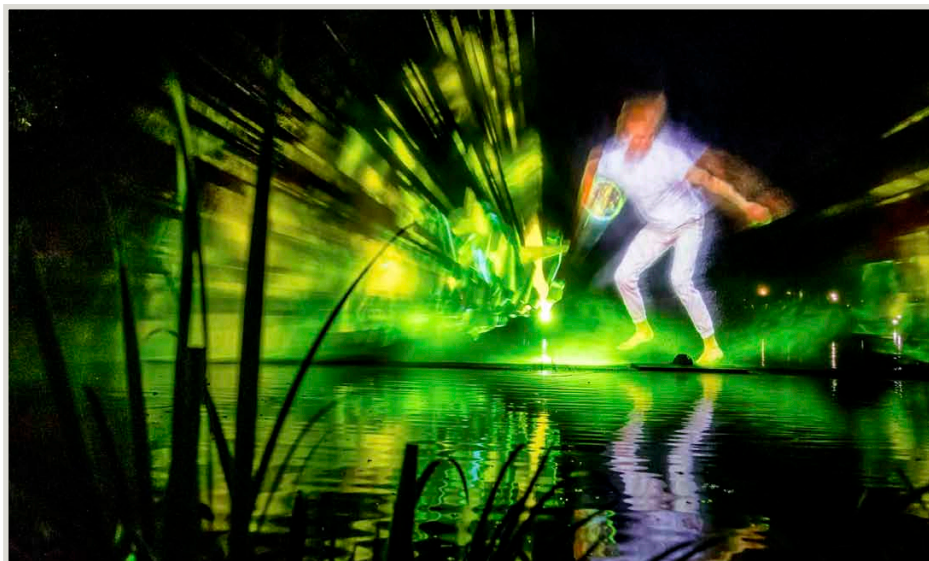


Fig. Tomasz Raczyński – the illumination on water pond in Park Norweski in Jelenia Góra-Cieplice

From September 28th to October 2nd, 2023, Jelenia Góra hosted a group of 10 young people from the Icelandic city of Akureyri, along with two supervisors.

The Icelandic youth and students from secondary schools in Jelenia Góra who had participated in the visit to Akureyri in June 2023 engaged in various activities.

- ▶ These included a community workshop focusing on the role of youth in social life in both Poland and Iceland,
- ▶ A guided tour in Jelenia Góra,
- ▶ Workshops on creating jewellery through fusing techniques and costume design, choreographic workshops, music workshops,
- ▶ A visit to the Nature and Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park – Pałac Sobieszów
- ▶ Culinary workshops in the Technical and Industry Schools "Handlówka" – learning how to make "pierogi" (dumplings).



Fig. Piotr Górka (ZMP) – community workshops at Jeleniogórskie Centrum Kultury (Culture Centre in Jelenia Góra)



Fig. JCK – a guided tour in Jelenia Góra



Fig. JCK – workshops on jewellery making



Fig. JCK – choreographic workshops



Fig. JCK – A visit to the Nature and Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park – Pałac Sobieszów



Fig. JCK – A visit to the Nature and Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park – Pałac Sobieszów



Fig. JCK – A visit to the Nature and Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park – Pałac Sobieszów



Fig. JCK – culinary workshops



Fig. JCK – culinary workshops

The youth also took part in the events of the second edition of the MOVI CITIES – Wonderland of Jelenia Góra Festival of Light and recorded a music video.

The video can be viewed on YouTube on the profile of Jelenia Góra City:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqy7bhGZB9w>

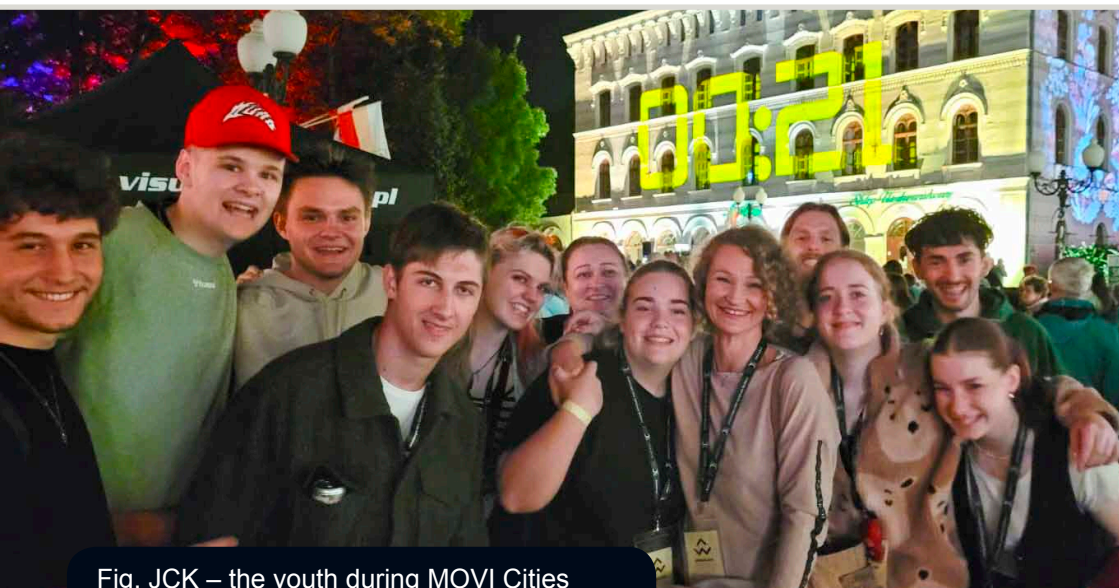


Fig. JCK – the youth during MOVI Cities Wonderland – Jelenia Góra Festival of Light





Fig. JCK – making a video

On November 14–15, 2023, a delegation from Jelenia Góra City Hall, comprising five employees led by Mayor Renata Kwiatek, along with representatives from municipal companies MZK sp. z o.o. and Termy Cieplickie, totalling three people, participated in a study visit to Akureyri.

During the visit, the ongoing work of the working groups initiated during the visit of the Icelandic delegation to Jelenia Góra was continued. Discussions centred around the respective plans of both cities regarding the digitization of services for citizens, as well as the sharing of experiences and addressing common challenges encountered in the digitization processes.



Fig. UMJG – the participants of the delegation from Jelenia Góra with the representatives of the Akureyri City Hall

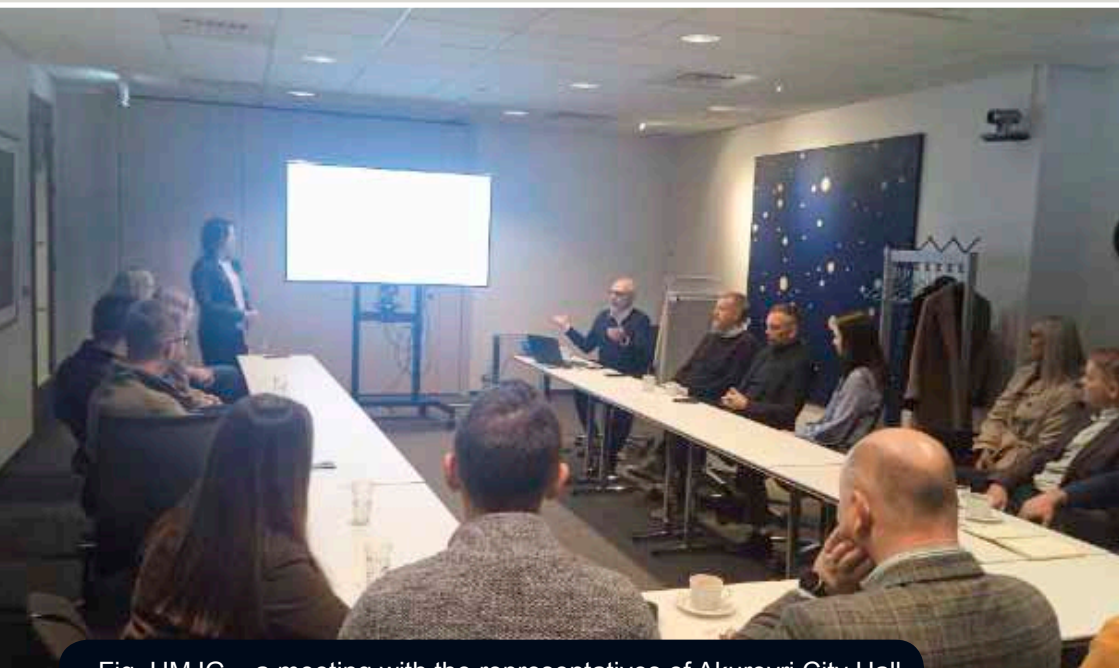


Fig. UMJG – a meeting with the representatives of Akureyri City Hall



Fig. UMJG – the workshop on the digitization of public services

Additionally, the delegation visited the headquarters of a municipal company, Norðurorka, which primarily focuses on serving residents and businesses in the processing and distribution of hot water and drinking water, electricity distribution, and sewage management. During the meeting, discussions revolved around various topics, including the Icelandic side's experiences with utilizing thermal waters, particularly regarding geothermal heating for public buildings and private properties.



Fig. UMJG – the geothermal meeting in Norðurorka



Fig. UMJG – the geothermal meeting in Norðurorka

The delegation also had the opportunity to get acquainted with the functioning of the municipal composting plant, where bio-methane is derived from municipal bio-waste. This bio-methane is utilized, among other purposes, as fuel for public transport buses.

Fig. UMJG – a visit to the municipal composting plant



Fig. UMJG is a biomethane fuel station in Akureyri



Fig. UMJG is a biomethane fuel station in Akureyri

Visitors also gained insights into the operational framework of the city's cultural institutions, including the HOF Cultural Centre. In addition to hosting concerts and theatrical performances, the centre accommodates a local music school and a recording studio within its premises.

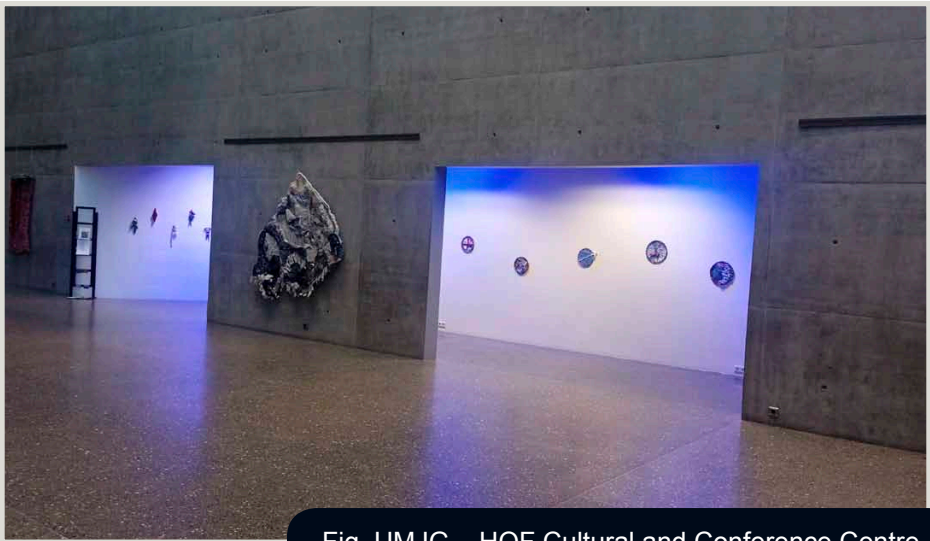
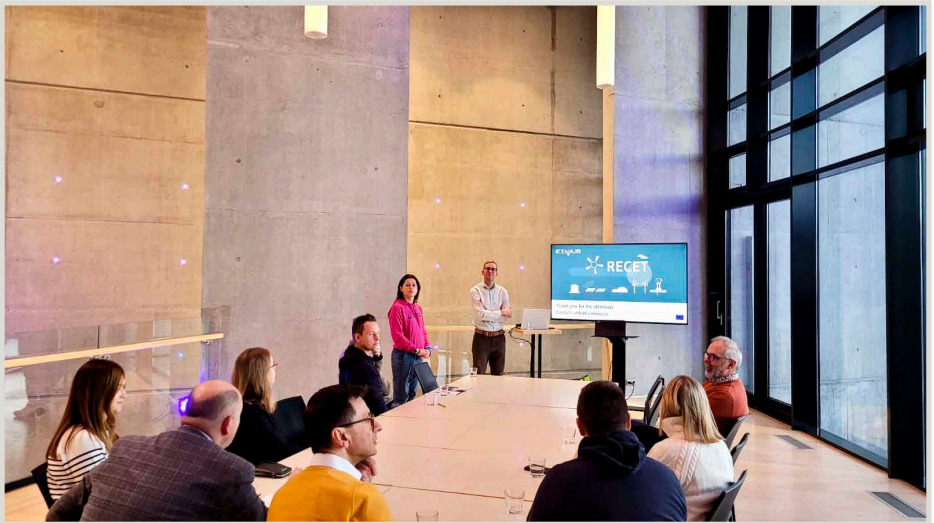


Fig. UMJG – HOF Cultural and Conference Centre

The HOF Cultural and Conference Center facilitated a meeting with a representative of the EIMUR association, which spearheads projects aimed at enhancing resource utilization in the northern part of Iceland.

Fig. UMJG – the meeting with a representative of the EIMUR association



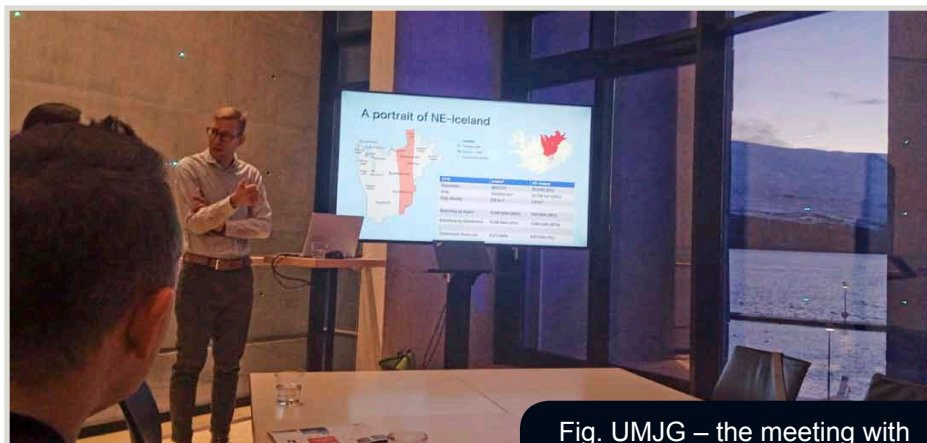


Fig. UMJG – the meeting with a representative of the EIMUR

III.

CONCLUSION

As part of bilateral cooperation of the project "Live, Reside, Work in Jelenia Góra!", four study visits were organized – two to Jelenia Góra and two to Akureyri.

These visits provided young people from both countries with the opportunity to discuss their involvement in social life, participate in city management, and contribute to its development. They also served as a platform for dialogue, where cultural similarities and differences were observed, and friendly relations were established, which persisted beyond the conclusion of the project.

Moreover, the study visits of city representatives served as a forum for exchanging knowledge and experiences in municipal management, as well as sharing best practices for addressing challenges encountered in local government structures and enhancing the quality of life for residents. It is anticipated that this cooperation will endure beyond the conclusion of the project.



Urząd Miasta Jelenia Góra

Wydział Rozwoju Miasta

Pl. Ratuszowy 58

58-500 Jelenia Góra

ewojciechowska@jeleniagora.pl

+48 75 754 61 61

Author:

Ewa Wojciechowska

(Urząd Miasta Jelenia Góra)

Photos:

Michał Kryła, Tomasz Raczyński,
Piotr Górka, Urząd Miasta Jelenia
Góra, Urząd Miasta Akureyri,
Jeleniogórskie Centrum Kultury

Composition:

VEGA Studio Adv. Tomasz Müller

ul. Grudziądzka 22/3A

82-500 Kwidzyn

www.grupavega.pl

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