

Romane
Letort

Seminar European Solidarity Corp Topic : Relationships between young people in Poland

From **11 to 15 May**, I had an online seminar with trainers and volunteers of the European Solidarity Corps. We discussed different topics to learn more about Polish people and culture. One of them was **the relations among young people in Poland**.

Some volunteers, including me, interviewed Polish friends or colleagues to get their opinion on this subject. We asked several questions such as: What do friendships and love relationships look like in Poland? How does religion influence relationships? How do relationships usually begin between Polish people? How do Polish friends and couples spend their free time?

The answers to these questions were quite similar. Usually the responders stated that it takes time to have a real friendship with someone. This type of relationship is based on trust and, especially between men, this process can take many years. Once two people get close to each other, friendships are usually true and honest. Young people meet each other at university, at work, at parties. Concerning love relationships men usually take the first step and ask women to go out, and do something together. Polish friends and couples spend their free time like most young people anywhere, walking in the city or in the nature, going to the cinema, to restaurants, doing sports.

The Church takes an important place in Poland which influences love relationships in some ways. The number of marriages is high and religion affects behaviours and habits. LGBT people are sometimes stigmatized and do not always find their place in this society, which leads to some protests for their rights. However, due to globalisation and changes in society, the impact of religion in Poland is shifting. It also depends on the region or city. People in small villages may be more conservative than those in big cities. Today's young people take more time than a few years ago to engage in a stable love relationship. Social pressure to respect norms in romantic relationships is not as strong as it used to be.

It was difficult for our Polish friends to answer these questions because relationships depend on many factors. These assumptions should not be interpreted strictly. The interesting point was to compare certain behaviours with those of our countries. For example, in Spain, a volunteer said that people do not take much time to build a friendship or a strong relationship. The culture is different, people are more "warm" at the beginning. In France, I think friendships are more like those in Poland than in Spain. At the beginning, people are more reserved, not really open and warm. We need some time to open up and then build the relationship and let it get stronger.

I asked my flatmate and EKS co-volunteer Renata about the Hungarian perspective on this issue. She said : "I can't give you any general conclusion, because there are a lot of differences among relationships/friendships among young generation. I have some friends who had been really open-minded since the first time we met. Some of them needed months to open and some , who are really closed, have been still remaining reserved, which doesn't mean we are not close friends. It's an interesting but somehow a hard question and I'd like to learn more and compare it to other countries. "