

Yellow Month – together against loneliness

Idea collection & handout: "What can I do against loneliness in society and for better togetherness?" – Building bridges between generations and nations, in your own sphere of influence, young and old, online and face to face

Loneliness can affect anyone – the schoolgirl after a move as much as the widower in the village, the family carer as much as the apprentice in a new city. The good news: what helps against loneliness is not one big programme but many small actions by many people. The Yellow Month invites you to consciously create connection for one month – in your own sphere of influence, right where you already are: in the family, in the stairwell, in the club, in the parish, at school, at work, online. This handout collects ideas for every level – from the smallest gesture to an action week – and links them to the Interreg project Com(p)AGE, which builds bridges between generations and between Austria and Hungary.

1 · In everyday life: small gestures, big impact

- Greet and speak up: an honest "How are you?" in the stairwell, at the bakery or at the bus stop is often the first antidote to invisibility.
- One call a week: phone someone you haven't heard from in a long time – relatives, former colleagues, old friends. Five minutes are enough.
- Mail instead of just posts: a handwritten card or letter says: I thought of you. Especially valuable for people without a smartphone.
- Give time: accompany someone to the doctor, to the shops or to the cemetery; offer a lift.
- Sit down with someone: the free bench in the park, the table in the café – whoever joins (with a friendly question) opens doors. The "chat bench" principle works everywhere.
- Know how to listen: ask follow-up questions, remember names, let people finish. Those who feel heard feel less alone.

2 · Between the generations: connecting young & old

- Digital café: young people explain smartphones, video calls and e-services – older people tell stories from their lives in return. Both sides go home richer.
- Reading and storytelling partnerships: children read to seniors – or the other way round; storytelling cafés and "living libraries" make life stories audible.
- Adopted grandparents & adopted grandchildren: families without grandparents nearby and older people without grandchildren find each other – via parish, municipality or neighbourhood platform.
- Recipe book of the generations: cook, photograph and collect old recipes together – every dish a story.
- Pen friendships school ↔ care home: a class writes to residents of a home – with a visit at the end of the school year.
- Gardening together: a raised bed at the parsonage, a herb garden of the generations, a village planting action – work that connects and grows.

3 · Between the nations: bridges across the border (AT-HU)

- Visit the partner municipality: an afternoon in the Hungarian or Austrian neighbouring village – church visit, coffee, music. Encounter beats prejudice.

- Tandem language café German-Hungarian: "How do you say...?" evenings where both languages are hosts; laughter is expressly allowed.
- Bilingual greeting-card action: during the Yellow Month, send cards with greetings in both languages across the border – e.g. between partner parishes or care homes.
- A joint hike or pilgrimage stage: a stretch of the St Martin route (Via Sancti Martini) from Szombathely towards Burgenland – walking, talking, resting, arriving together.
- International evenings: recipes, songs and games from both countries – everyone brings something, nobody remains a bystander.
- Browse the Com(p)AGE platform: discover organisations, events and volunteering opportunities in the neighbouring country – and simply make contact.

4 · Connected online - building digital bridges

- Fixed video-call dates: a recurring "digital Sunday coffee" with relatives or friends living alone gives structure and something to look forward to.
- Online game rounds across generations: card games, quizzes or chess via app – grandchild versus grandma, club versus partner club.
- Use digital neighbourhoods mindfully: in local groups, don't just post – invite: "Who's coming for a walk on Thursday?"
- Make support services visible: share numbers and offers such as chat lines – those who know them can pass them on before loneliness becomes a crisis.
- Your Yellow Month story: tell others online about your action (photo of the yellow bench, the card action, the digital café) and nominate others to follow.

5 · In clubs, parishes, municipalities & companies

- Open living room: a regular open afternoon at the parsonage, community hall or clubhouse – coffee, games, no registration, everyone welcome.
- Yellow table & yellow bench: at festivals a clearly marked table where you are welcome without company; in the village a yellow "chat bench" as an invitation to talk.
- Start or strengthen a visiting service: two volunteers, one list, a fixed rhythm – the beginning needs no more.
- Welcome sponsorships: newcomers and new members get a personal contact person for the first months.
- Be reachable: events with a transport service, seating, quiet zones and a clear invitation – barriers are often the real reason for staying at home.
- Companies as bridge builders: enable volunteering time, involve apprentices in intergenerational projects, celebrate the company anniversary with a social action.

The Yellow Month action box

Ten mini-actions for the campaign month – to tick off, share and pass on:

- ☐ 1. Every week, one call to someone you haven't heard from in a long time.
- ☐ 2. Set up a yellow chat bench or mark an existing bench yellow – with a sign: "Sit with me!"
- ☐ 3. Bake a cake for the neighbourhood and ring three doorbells.
- ☐ 4. Offer or visit a digital consultation hour (smartphone help from young to old).
- ☐ 5. Write letters or cards to residents of a care home – gladly bilingual across the border.
- ☐ 6. Start a generations photo project: "What connects us?" – exhibit the pictures in the village.
- ☐ 7. Extend an invitation across the border: coffee, a festival or a walk with the partner municipality.
- ☐ 8. Write a thank-you card to volunteers who create connection.
- ☐ 9. Take part on 2 October 2026 in the international stakeholder event / dialogue day against loneliness in Graz.
- ☐ 10. Make your action visible on the Com(p)AGE platform and your own channels – inspiration is contagious.

Stay mindful – for others and for yourself

Addressing loneliness is not an exposure but a sign of respect: "I've missed you" or "How are you really?" open more doors than any programme. Look after yourself, too – nobody has to carry everything alone. If you notice that you or someone else is seriously struggling, bring in professional support: in Austria, the Telefonseelsorge is available around the clock on 142; the Europe-wide number for emotional support is 116 123 (which also connects to the crisis line in Hungary). Listening does not replace therapy – but it is often the first step towards it.

Further links

- Com(p)AGE platform – organisations & offers in AT and HU: <https://www.compage.eu>
- Plaudernetz – talking helps (Caritas, AT): <https://www.plaudernetz.at>
- Sorgenetz – caring communities (AT): <https://www.sorgenetz.at>
- Via Sancti Martini – St Martin route Szombathely-Tours: <https://www.viasanctimartini.eu>
- Interreg Austria-Hungary: <https://www.interreg-athu.eu>

Status: August 2026. This handout is part of the Com(p)AGE platform's material collection and accompanies the international campaign against loneliness and social isolation ("Yellow Month") with the stakeholder event on 2 October 2026 in Graz. Com(p)AGE is co-funded by the European Union under the Interreg Austria-Hungary programme.