

"European" light in Old Negurenii, connected after community consultation

More than two thousand inhabitants of four villages in the commune of Negurenii Vechi, Ungheni district can now safely walk on the roads of the locality in the evening or early morning. In the village, work to modernize the street lighting system, carried out under the national program European Village Express, has been completed. About 140 energy-efficient streetlamps have been installed. The village mayor says the problem has been solved thanks to effective communication between residents and local public authorities.

The need to install a functional street lighting system in the villages of **Coşeni**, **Țighira** and **Zăzulenii Vechi**, which are part of the commune of **Negurenii Vechi**, has been talked about for a long time. In all four villages there were street lamps and a stray light bulb, which, especially in bad weather, was either switched off or barely blinked. A street lighting project started earlier in the commune did not cover all the villages. But the town hall could not solve the problem with resources from the local budget alone. After the government announced the start of the European Village Express program, which aims to modernize rural infrastructure, people in the four villages insisted that public consultations be held in each village to jointly identify the most pressing need. After consultations, it was decided: street lighting.

You can't ask the authorities without getting involved

Tatiana Carauş lives near the Family Doctors' Centre in Old Zăzulenii and says that, being an area with heavy traffic, the installation of street lighting was essential: "It was difficult before. I'm a social worker and wandering around the villages at night, without lights in the slums, it's difficult. It's good that more people spoke at the meetings about the need for street lighting." She says the people of Old Negurenii have been very insistent and have asked for the problem to be solved. "We have already wanted light in the locality for several years. We actively participated in those meetings, because you can't ask the authorities to do something permanently without getting involved", concludes Tatiana Carauş.

More light around school too

Lack of street lighting was also a problem around the school. **Victor Cojocaru** lives in the village of Negurenii Vechi, right next to the gymnasium. He says that in winter, when they stay at school for extra activities, children and teachers are afraid to walk in the dark: "It was really something to think about. Now, thank God, it's light for the students too. It's safer for children to walk home unaccompanied." He also took part in the public consultations on the subject.

Community involvement in setting priorities

"With money from the local budget you don't have the possibility to carry out such important projects, because in the area we have few economic agents to contribute substantially to the local budget. We organized meetings, people discussed themselves what are the urgencies for the locality and we came to the conclusion that the street lighting is the one that needs to be urgently modernized", says Mayor **Galina Uscatu**.

The locality won the project in the framework of the European Village Express program with a value of over 147 thousand lei (~31820 USD). With this amount the street lighting was extended over a length of about 11 kilometres in all four villages of the commune, with 137

energy efficient lighting fixtures being installed. Galina Uscatu said that five economic operators took part in the public tender announced by the town hall in August this year, and the offer with the lowest price was chosen. She believes that it would be good for people to be involved at all levels of planning and decision-making, including those related to the management of public money. "Organizing public debates on local issues allows people to decide on part of the public budget, directly involving the community in setting priorities and managing financial resources efficiently," concludes the mayor.

Source: [Independent Press Association](#)