



COMENIUS

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Introduction

Almost two years ago I.E.S.Alminares in Arcos, Hamar Katedralskole, K.A.Diest, K.A.Lier and Varde Gymnasium started a Comenius project called the YECCO Project.

The objective of the project is to let the pupils communicate with each other and in this way get to know other young Europeans. To let them study and discuss important items in order to increase their tolerance and understanding and their awareness of their own identity and situation as European citizens.

During the project there have been several activities. The pupils have made presentations of them-selves, their school, their town and their country. They have studied and discussed lifestyle, climate and energy problems, and they have dealt with the EU and the future of Europe.

The themes chosen for the project have taken their starting point in young people's situation and have all been part of the curriculum of the classes.

The main communication among the pupils has been electronical. We have exchanged e-mails, used Face Book, and placed the results of the work on websites and conferences, but the project meetings where many of the pupils have met each other as representatives of their classes, discussed the items and taken part in the planning of the project are probably the most important element of the co-operation.

Thus it is no wonder that the articles written by the pupils for this second magazine of the project deal with the meetings and with a globalized, multicultural world.

Meeting in Arcos

*Anouk, Laura, Hanna, Sara, Caro & Ken-
giro, K.A. Diest*

Wednesday the 12th of November 2008

On Wednesday the 12th of November we left Diest early in the morning by train to the airport of Brussels. While checking in we made the acquaintance of the group of Lier, who also participate in the Comenius Project. Our flight to Jerez, with a transit in Madrid, proceeded spotless. In Jerez we covered the distance from the airport to our lodgings in Arcos de la Frontera by bus. Two students of our group stayed in the same hostel as our teachers, while the other ones stayed in a host family. We got the time to either settle in our room or to introduce ourselves to the host families.

Afterwards we met the Spanish teachers for a snack, which was most welcome, and for a stroll in town. As the weather was rather chilly, we went for a drink in a street-café.



In the evening the students gathered in the local park. It was a big and sociable group and we got to know each other very quickly. Late at night we enjoyed a divine night's rest on Spanish soil.

Thursday the 13th of November 2008

A heavy day ahead! We had to tackle the real work of the Comenius Project. We all gathered in a big classroom of the guest school. The principal of the school gave us a warm welcome and was hopeful for the success of the meeting.

Then it was up to us! We all, Danes, Norwegians, Spanish and Belgians were very nervous because every group had to

present their PowerPoint, which had been prepared in advance.



In this way we could introduce our school, class, the methods of teaching, our town and its history, as well as our country. The Belgians from Diest were appointed to open the series of presentations.

During the break at 11 am we went to the cafeteria of the school. To our great surprise we had to state that the Spanish are not so keen about healthy food as we could buy all kinds of sweet stuff and cookies at pleasure.

Afterwards teachers and students met separately. The teachers exchanged views and suggestions on practical aspects, as e.g. on communication, solar warmth, climate and new energy resources. The students were split up into small groups to discuss similarities in behavior, mentality, attitude and friendship between young people in Europe.

As the last item of the morning session we attended a Spanish lesson. At 3 pm, almost starving, we finally had lunch at the Cookery School: an exquisite selection of 40 different preparations of tapaz! At 5 pm teachers and students divided into groups and started to brainstorm about lifestyle. This was very interesting because everybody was eager to know particularities about this subject.



After a three hour break there was a dinner for the teachers only but the Spaniards had planned a gathering in the park in the evening. This was most welcome after the strain of the passing day. We had a lot of fun there. However we were a little surprised because the Spaniards were not tied down to return home, even though it was a normal school day for them. So we already can guess what happened! Everybody returned to bed early in the morning and was not very happy to be woken up the next day.

Friday the 14th of November 2008

At 8.30 we continued our study in connection with climate, energy, and we discussed politics, culture and world economy. At 10 o'clock we had a walk to the city centre and got a guided tour through the old quarter of the city. We learnt about its history, visited the Mirador, a ceramic workshop and a rebuilt old palace.

At 1 o'clock we were supposed to be welcomed by the local authorities at the Town Hall. According to Spanish customs, we had to wait a little bit longer, more than one hour, before their arrival. After a speech and the necessary formalities, we attended a reception of local specialties.

After a lunch at school, a bus took us on a trip along some of the White Towns. We visited Zahara de la Sierra, a very typical small Spanish village on a hill.



In an old oil mill we were shown how olive oil is manufactured. Here is a little shop where you can buy all kinds of products derived from olives.

At night the students went to a disco, while the teachers enjoyed a meal at a local Italian restaurant. It was a fun night for everyone.

Saturday the 15th of November 2008

At 10 o'clock we all reunited for a closing workshop at school. We gave an evaluation of the items dealt with. This leads to the conclusion that there are a lot of differences between the countries involved into the project. We had to fill in a questionnaire and decided on the topics for the next meeting in Denmark.



At 11 o'clock the whole group started a tour throughout the 18th city part of Cadiz, the most southern part of Spain. We passed

the Cathedral, the city gates, the town hall, the bay of Cadiz.

In the afternoon we visited Torre Tavira and from an old look-over, with a camera obscura we could admire the whole city in a kind of voyeuristic way.

Afterwards we went for a stroll on the beach: "Vamos a la playa!", and to the botanic gardens. We returned by bus and had some free time for shopping. But most of the students went to their host families to pack their luggage.

At 21.30 the teachers were invited to a farewell dinner at Merche's, one of their Spanish colleagues while the students had a kind of goodbye-dinner at their hosts'.

We talked about this great experience, had a lot of fun and looked for ways to keep contact with each other. The most difficult part was saying goodbye to everyone, to all these wonderful people we had met, because the next morning we had to leave rather early.

Sunday the 16th of November 2008

Departure day.

We set out by bus to the airport of Jerez. After a two-hour flight we arrived at Brussels' airport, safe and well, where our families were waiting to pick us up.



Comenius project November '09

At the end of October we, the students of the atheneum Lier, invited our fellow students of the Comeniusproject. These students from Spain, Denmark and Norway stayed here with a native family or at a hotel for 5 days.

There were numerous activities planned. Wednesday afternoon we met the students and they got acquainted with their hosts. Thursday afternoon we had to get up early because we had richly filled schedule. In the morning several presentations were held concerning a global theme. Afterwards we got on the bus and headed for Brussels. Here we visited the cellars of the Coudenberg palace. Then we had some free time in the neighbourhood of the “Grote Markt” (Market Square).



Afterwards we went to the European Parliament. To end this fine but exhausting day all the students went to the Pita Paleis in Lier for dinner.



Friday morning we departed very early to Antwerp. We received a couple of free hours in the shopping city of Flanders. In the afternoon we went on a 3(!)hour- boat-trip through the Port of Antwerp. Not everyone enjoyed this, but some people made friendships for life(says Mike).



Friday night we all went to a party in Nijlen. There was plenty of booze and trendy music.

Saturday, looking like death warmed up, we took the bus to Leuven. In this college city we had to do a search game. In the afternoon we had some free time to eat and to explore this city some more.

The last night almost everyone got together and we went to a small Italian restaurant called the Pezo in Lier.

Some of us had to say goodbye to some of their newest friends. Others could delay this painful moment until Sunday morning when our guest had to take the train to the airport.

Briefly, we had a fun but way too short gathering.

Comenius trip to Brussels

Jasmina Memišević, Varde Gymnasium

It was finally the 28th of October 2009, a day which every single one of our Comenius team had awaited, especially I, because it was first and foremost an opportunity to get to know the Belgian students better and secondly also an opportunity to experience a different culture and school system.

Unfortunately it was a rainy and windy day in October, when the airplane took off, but we were still in high spirits and curious to see Belgium. After a few hours the airplane landed in Brussels, whereupon we went by train to Lier and received a warm welcome from two Belgian teachers, who had waited for us and afterwards guided us through the beautiful city of Lier, where we finally settled down.

I stayed at a hotel with my two classmates, while the others lived by their host families. I felt very lucky, because the hotel was very decent and very enjoyable too, especially the breakfast, where the teachers and us students were gathered and talked about the plans for the day. But I am also sure that my other classmates had a good time as well with their host families.



After the arrival, we went to the school where we met the headmaster and the other teachers. The first day in Belgium ended much better than expected and I already looked forward to seeing more of beautiful Belgium the following days.

The second day began with the presentations on 'Climate and globalisation' and 'the EU-enquiry'. Afterwards we left for Brussels, where we among other things visited the European Parliament, which was one of the places I found most interesting, because it was very instructive and exiting.

We were in the school the other days and took part in some lessons, where we saw how the school system in Lier worked. Later on we went to Antwerp, where we walked through the town and also had some free time for shopping. After that we sailed for about three hours through Antwerp harbour, where we had enough time to relax and to talk with our new friends. I forgot to mention, how incredible the evenings in the restaurants were, because all students were gathered, talked and laughed together. The food tasted very good, especially the desserts that often could be combined with waffles, which are one of Belgium's delicacies.

Sunday came and we had to leave for Denmark, which I was sad about, because I had got used to Lier and the Belgians.

I will never forget my trip to this unique country, because I had great adventures with students, who actually were strangers in the beginning, but developed into good friends. Thanks for a fantastic and unforgettable experience, Belgium!



A multicultural society - a blessing or not?

A Comenius pupil, Hamar Katedralskole

A multicultural society is marked by the influence of several distinct cultures, and today a bigger and bigger part of the western countries have become more multicultural. Large cities have become multicultural because of the influence of international trade and because of immigration from other countries. In this text I shall try to discuss positive and negative aspects of living in a multicultural society.

Because of the globalization, the multicultural societies have increased in number, and this has affected the global English language. All over the world local languages have become mixed together with the English language. This can make some varieties of English harder to understand, but this also does that it can be easier to understand people from foreign countries. But I think it is a good thing that more and more people out in the world learn English, that makes it easier to understand people

from foreign countries even if it can be hard to understand some of the varieties some times.

When we think on multicultural societies, we think of societies full of crime and poverty. But it doesn't need to be like this. One of the world's most multicultural cities is Toronto. Toronto has a low crime rate and everyone seems to be happy. Toronto's success story is rooted in projects and policies that help ethnic groups mix harmoniously while preserving the distinct flavour of individual cultures.

It has always been a debate of what it takes to unify a multicultural society. Must immigrants have help to become more like a normal Norwegian person? Or must Norway change and adopt traditions from other countries and cultures so the immigrants will have it better? I think immigrants who come to a new country must learn the new language and get a job or education. That will make it easier for the immigrants to "survive" in the new country. Immigrants can't just sit inside and do nothing, they must like all other in the population do something for the welfare state.

A positive thing about living in a multicultural society is that the society is more interconnected, you learn about new cultures and traditions. But I think it is important that immigrants must live spread and not in "ghettos". If it becomes ghettos, I think the crime rate would be high, because people only live with people from their home country and not local people.

I think multicultural societies are a positive thing, because the world becomes more interconnected. But it can be hard to hold the crime rate low, so it is important that the immigrants don't live in "ghettos", but live together with the local people.

Comenius Project: our impressions

The Comenius pupils, Arcos de la Frontera

We had never imagined the differences of customs between countries which belong to the same continent. For example, one of the things we found harder to get used to was the meals time, especially dinner. In Spain we are used to having dinner about 21:30, and one day we had dinner at 18:30. We got on well with the other partners of Comenius project, although if our English level had been some better, we would have got on with them much better, we would have been involved in more group activities.

At home, the hosts treated us very well, they were always worried about us very much, both the parents and the children. They were always very attentive. Another thing that impressed us were the buildings of the high schools that we vi-

sited, compared to ours, they are much larger, their installations are much better. We felt our stay abroad was too short, it could have been longer, at least, one week. We would like to return to these countries to be able to see our partners again. We have spent very good moments with them. This experience has been very culturally rich for us, and we have learnt a lot. Taking part in Comenius project has been a great experience. It has been an opportunity to travel abroad, know different cultures, customs...

Not everything was different and there were also similar things, like the way we teenagers enjoy our free time.

