



C4 Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils online meeting was held in Vastse-Kuuste Kool, Estonia from May 17 to 21, 2021.

We were all suppose to meet in Estonia in April 2020. The Covid pandemic decided otherwise. We all met at different times through the year but now, after a year, we are all meeting again.

It is usually quite difficult to find a week that suits all the partners. We have to take into account the partners' holidays, national holidays and exams. This year the question was: "Will we be in school or not?". A few weeks ago we settled on the week starting on May 17th. As it happened it was a good choice as it was the European Language Week.

Day 1: Getting to know the Estonian school system and Estonian curriculum.

So, here we go again! After solving some technical problems we were able to start our online mobility.

First, Mrs Inge Kalle welcomed us into her school. Pupils in traditional costumes danced and sang to welcome us too.

Then, through different activities we were able to visit the school and learn about the Estonian school system and curriculum.

We discovered the school through numbers. The students had prepared a videos to show us Vaste-Kuuste school. Our project is about maths and they had chosen to show us their school through numbers which was an excellent idea. Each pupil was then invited to show how well they understood by playing a game of Kahoot! This was good fun and was a hit!

After a short break we all met again. We had prepared an ice-breaking activity. Pupils from the different partners' school had the opportunity to introduce themselves. While preparing the mobility we had decided to let 3 pupils from each partners' school to introduce themselves. But when we started this activity the pupils were so eager to talk to each other that we had changed the rules we had set up and let all the volunteers take part in the activity.

Pupils from each school had then some time to prepare questions to ask about school in Estonia. When we were all ready, the Estonian pupils answered all the questions. They were mainly about the school, their typical school day, the school subjects and after school activities. They were all curious as how they had all coped during the lockdown. Some questions had to be clarified but this is how you learn and improve your English.

We finished our first day with a teachers' meeting. The topic was Distance Learning and teaching Maths. Teachers discussed their experiences of distance learning. This was a new process for us all. We had to adapt quickly, our schools closed suddenly last year but schooling carried on. Some schools had to follow the government rules when others were left to their own devices. We all put a lot of efforts in our work, we tried to make things easy for our pupils and used whatever we thought was best for them. Things weren't easy for us. We had to find new ways to teach.

So, things weren't easy for us but they certainly weren't any easier for our pupils. Most of our pupils did what they could to stay afloat but for a few of our pupils we all faced the same problems: technical problems, no connection, no computers, lack of involvement ...

Day 2, Knowing the Estonian culture and cultural activities.

After discovering their school the pupils had prepared different activities so that we could all discover Estonia and the Estonian way of life.

We all started a lesson: "a survival kit" in Estonian. The teachers were very patient with us. They did their utmost to teach us the basic: greetings, counting up to 5 and a couple of sentences to introduce themselves. Repeating the words, the sentences as a group was bad enough never mind daring going solo. A few students were brave and did it. However we were good pupils, we concentrated and we copied our lesson. This helped of course when we

were given a written test! We all passed with flying colours! I am not sure many of us would survive if we were left on our own in Estonia! Again, this activity was good fun.

After the lesson, the Estonian took us through Estonia and we discovered different aspects. The first step took us through the recent Estonian history. It went from being part of the Russian Empire to being under German influence. The Germans left when they were called back to join the German army just before World War II. This is when the Soviet Union stepped in. It is only in 1991 that Estonia became an independent country. They joined the European Union in 2004.

Next, we learnt about the country. Estonia is a small country, half of it is covered in forest. It has several capital cities! Tallinn is the official capital city but they have more! Tartu is the university capital. Otepää is the winter capital, Pärnu, with its beautiful beaches is the summer capital.

Tartu is 30 km north of Vaste-Kuuste. Vaste-Kuuste has 1 200 inhabitants. It is in the South-East of Estonia, 100 km from the Russian border.

Then we learnt about Estonia and its thousand and a half islands. Some of these islands become part of the main land during the winter months. The water freezes and people can drive between the islands and the main land.

Discovered many more Estonian beautiful sights.

After sightseeing we learnt about the Estonian culture and cultural activities. The Estonian pupils told us about typical Estonian food, about activities you can practise in Estonia. The partners were really surprised to learn reflectors are compulsory once it gets dark outside. We also learnt Estonia is a new technology expert. They invented Skype ! They have one the world best internet connection,

After all these information all the partners had a lot of questions to ask. With their teachers each group prepared its questions. We then shared the questions on a padlet. Whilst, the Estonian pupils prepared the answers the pupils from the partners' schools play a game of 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' special Estonia. I must admit they did pretty well!

Later we met with the Estonian pupils who answered their friends questions as best as the could.

Day 3. Workshops.

Maths workshop about Estonia.

- Workshop 1: Animals in Estonia.

Through this activity, the pupils learnt about animals in Estonia. It involved numbers and animals of course! They were given a list and to classify the animals, the tallest, the most found in Estonia, the one with the longest tail, the most teeth). Then we had the facts.

- Workshop 2: the greenhouse effects.

First we watched a video about the greenhouse effects and global warming. Then it was time to check what we understood by answering a quizz.

- Workshop 3: making paper flowers.

After break we had a craft workshop. We watched the art teacher make a flower with a napkin, she gave us the instructions then it was our turn. We spent over an hour making those bouquets. The results can be seen on our Etwinning platform.

- Workshop 4: Maths and History

France taught how to count in Egyptian. First we learnt the symbols which is quite easy. Then we did several exercises to practice and we finished with a kahoot.

- Workshop 5 and 6: Maths and Music.

We finished the day with two more dynamic workshops. Italy led the way. It was about Music / rythm and body.

The teachers met for online meeting.

First we discussed the Estonian mobility, how well it was going and how well all the pupils reacted to the different activities.

Then we tried to discuss the last meeting which should take place in Greece. At this time it is very difficult, impossible to make plans. Everything is very uncertain. We'll have to wait on see.

- Day 4. Workshops and school presentations.

The pupils had decided they wanted to show their school to everybody so this is what we did on the last day of our virtual mobility. They had prepared videos, powerpoint and they took us around their schools and what they like in their countries. It was very interesting. They all did a good job and could become very good ambassadors for the countries!

Before lunch we were ready for another workshop. Turkey introduced its workshop, Maths and Drama, how to express aim. During this workshop we had a lot of volunteers from all the countries. They were all eager to take part in the activity.

We met again after lunch. The pupils discussed a very serious subject: Distance Learning. First, the younger pupils did a survey to make things easier to discuss the topic with the others. They all had many things to say. It was very serious and interesting. We had found out that we, teachers, had faced the same problems. We saw that the pupils had also faced the same problems.

For a more positive note, Greece and France introduced their "Robot" workshops. Greece had a live presentation whereas France, not so brave and to be on the safe side, opted for a video!

Then we had to say our goodbyes.

As a whole, we believe we reached our goals and the expected results. Our pupils increased and improved their skills in using ICT tools. And, so did some teachers! They certainly learnt new techniques. Most of the activities were fun activities but they still learnt. This has changed and improved their attitude, behaviors towards learning. It can be fun.

And above all they certainly improved their English and communication skills as they all joined in the activities.

As always this mobility, although different, was a great success.

