

Erasmus Explorer



GOETHESCHULE ESSEN
FRIDAY, 29th Jan. 2016



Dear Readers,

An exciting week has come to end. We have made new friends and learned a lot about their countries' past and present. Our guests from Denmark, Poland, Croatia and The Netherlands might have also discovered one or two new things, for example that Germans are fantastic flash mob dancers and bake yummy cakes. ;-)

Enjoy this collection of photos and articles to remind you of some of the highlights of our Erasmus week in Essen and the fun we had.

Your Erasmus Plus Press Team,
Goetheschule Essen,
January 2016



Your Erasmus Press Team::

Alexandra Link, Elisa Gruber, Katharina Sroka, Martin Daescu, Timon Knapp, Victoria von Nathusius, Vincent Wittich (Year 8 – 12) with Ms Darragh, Ms Heup, Mr Franke and Dr. Link



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A Peace Conference @ Goetheschule

The whole school, all delegates and all supporters of the project could hardly wait for it, but on Monday, the 25th of January, the time had finally come: The first **Erasmus+ Peace Week** “Transforming Europe” at Goetheschule started officially.

All delegates and coordinators had dressed up in suits, so the first peace conference meeting could start.

In order to make everybody feel comfortable and warm up for the debate, the day began with a mock debate about the issue of whether children should be brought to school and afterwards picked up by their parents. This first discussion topic gave everybody the chance to get to know all the difficult conference rules.

Afterwards all delegates were ready to have a look at our great school. Divided into two groups, they started exploring every corner and most of them were quite amazed about the huge difference between the “modern” science wing and the “monumental” old wing. Some also noticed the “Abitur” memorials decorating the schoolyard.

Having caught some fresh air from the top of Goethe Tower, everybody was keen to start with the main part. During the “Opening Speech” phase, the German delegation were the first to start. The Germans condemned the war and lamented the death of millions of victims, both soldiers and innocent civilians. They also pointed out that the assumption that Germany had benefited from the war was completely wrong; there were no victors in this fight.

After the German speech, which was criticized by the other delegations, the floor was given to other speakers: the Soviet Russian, Chinese and Italian delegations argued that the war guilt - debate topic number one – should be shared by Germany and Austria-Hungary. Austria was accused of having been the leading force and having provoked the war instead of trying to find a diplomatic solution. The USA pointed out that Germany had already been thirsting for war, and then misused the Austrian crisis for their benefit. This was strongly supported by the French and Belgian delegations, who solely blamed Germany, because they had been

directly attacked by German troops. In contrast to this, Poland and the Ottoman Empire accused Russia of having used the war in order to expand their own territories, which met with heavy protest from the Russian delegation.

Particularly interesting was the speech by the Canadian delegate, who introduced the topic of colonialism by referring to the fact that Canadian and Indian troops had fought for the British Empire.

Obviously, the debate was extremely heated, but after fourteen speeches the time had come to start a “lobbying phase” with the aim of writing a commonly accepted resolution.

After lunch break and a presentation about the impact of the Arab Spring on today’s refugee crisis by Ahmed Khalifa, a well-known peace researcher, all delegates stepped up again and discussed a draft resolution, which had been submitted by the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes. It stated that Germany and Austria were responsible for the war, but should not pay all reparations. After minor changes in some less important clauses, the resolution was accepted, even by Germany and Austria.

Having debated for hours, the delegates were all exhausted but also content with what had been achieved during the first conference day. They were happy to return to their (host) families, relax and gather strength for the debates to come.



Let's dance!!!

A highlight of the Erasmus week was the flash mob on Tuesday, which was performed by the Years 6, 8 and 9 and the delegates. They all danced to “Billie Jean” by Michael Jackson. Since the musical theme is repeated several times in the song, the choreography consists of short sequences, which are to be danced repeatedly in small groups of four. After the third repetition there is the possibility for participants to show their creativity in a freestyle part. The pupils in Years 6 to 9 had been taught the choreography by Ms Antweiler in their PE lessons. As the steps could be learned quickly, everyone was able to join the flash mob after the first repetitions.

Ms Antweiler had this extraordinary idea when her sports class could not use the gym. The class then simply shoved the tables aside and danced. This success persuaded Ms Antweiler that everyone can take part in a flash mob. She aimed to bring the different nationalities closer together and overcome possible language barriers

by dancing and having fun with each other. The conference delegates had not been told about the planned flash mob, because it was meant to be a surprise for them. At the beginning they could not believe it and just watched the 200 students perform the dance. As “Billie Jean” is not a song you can easily resist, soon everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, and some participants proved to be very talented!

The small dancing groups were a perfect mix of ages and nationalities so that the students quickly got to know each other. After having performed the entire choreography a couple of times, there was a lot of applause and the delegates returned to their debates.



Katharina Sroka & Elisa Gruber, Year 12

Welcome (Party)!

On Tuesday evening, a Welcome Party was organized for everyone taking part in the ERASMUS+ programme: peace conference delegates, teachers, host families and all support teams and committees. The assembly hall was colourfully decorated with a lot of balloons and paper streamers. Amongst some tables a dance floor was arranged in front of the DJ desk. And the large selection of snacks and drinks left no one hungry or thirsty.

After a welcome address, given by Ms Lacroix, the two DJs Maik Detay and Phillip Klaus gave their best to entertain the guests. And after initial shyness many people were dancing to good music and enjoyed the night.

It was a great chance to get to know each other and come in contact with people from other countries. Even the language barrier was easy to overcome. A large thank you goes to the teachers and the support team, who made this party possible.

Victoria von Nathusius, Year 11



Interview with Ahmed Khalifa, Witten/Herdecke University

How important do you think it is to make young people aware of the current conflicts in the Middle East and their impact on Europe, and why?

I believe it is extremely important to increase young people's awareness about this important issue. It could have a great impact on their lives.

There is a constant flow of information about this subject through the social media, which is not always reliable. One must be able to separate the truth from rumours and hearsay. One must also be familiar with the positive and the negative aspects and be in a position to

understand them in order to be able to participate in discussions about this subject as well as in order to be able to build a personal opinion on the matter.

What is your background?

I am German-Egyptian.

How do you know so much about this subject?

I am a political scientist and photojournalist.

What do you enjoy the most about your field?

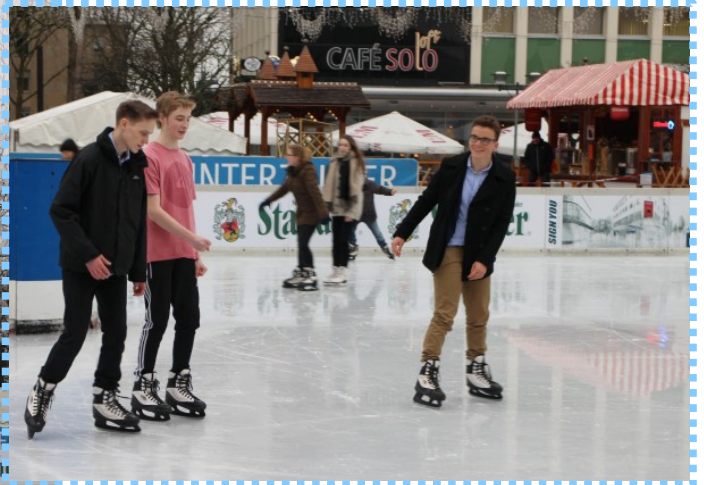
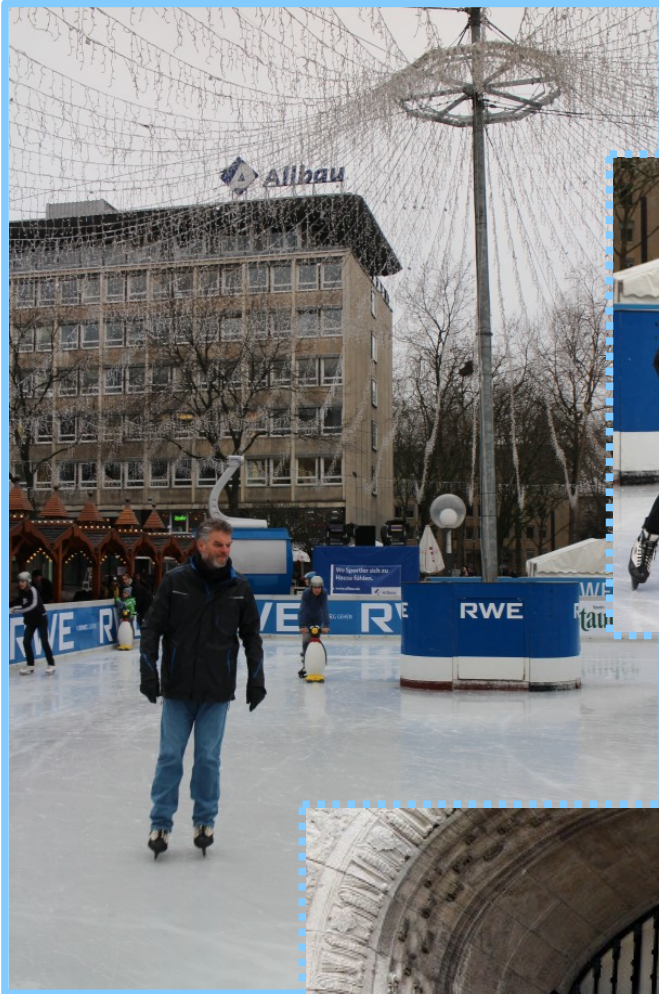
Walking around with my camera and trying to find out as much as possible about worldly and political conflicts.

Thank you very much for your time.

Alexandra
Link,
Year 8



Visiting the City Centre



Visiting Essen in January means ice-skating with Mr Boergen (Pretty cool!) or going to the Old Synagogue, a documentary centre of Jewish life and history, with Ms Darragh (Pretty interesting!).



Debating in the Town Hall



Second Mayor Franz-Josef Britz receives the Erasmus group at Essen town hall and invites the students to continue their debate in the town hall's conference room.
(Photo below: Peter Prengel, City of Essen)

Visiting the Krupp Mansion

On Wednesday after their morning debate our delegates visited the so called "Villa Hügel," a mansion once home to one of the most successful German business families of the 19th and 20th century: the Krupps. Despite the bad weather we walked from Goetheschule to the famous property and were not deceived: The 140-year-old house was impressive.

We split into two groups, and each got a guided tour through the building. My group was first led through the somewhat smaller guest house that today hosts an exhibition on the history of the family company. There we learned a lot about Alfred Krupp, the young man who took over the business from his father in 1826 and led it to success. He is seen as one of the pioneers in the industry of steel production; his most influential invention being the seamless railway wheels that have constituted the company's logo up to the present. Throughout his life Alfred Krupp managed to raise the number of employees from 12 to 20,000 and was known for treating them very well for the age he lived in, building them houses and paying much attention to the hygiene standards in his factories.

But the family's success didn't stop there. For instance, during WWI Krupp was one of the main suppliers of weapons in the German Empire, producing big cannons, like the so called "Big Berta."

During WWII the owner of the company, Alfried Krupp, supported the Nazi regime and employed forced workers in his factories, a crime for which he would later be arrested.

In the second part of our tour we visited the mansion where the Krupp family used to live up until the 1940s. There we saw many family portraits as well as portraits of the German emperors William I, Frederick III and William II. We were very impressed when introduced to the beautiful family library, the huge wooden stair case as well as the study room with its huge desk.

Overall the visit to the "Villa Hügel" was a success. The guided tour was very interesting and seeing the mansion with its 269 rooms and beautifully decorated concert and garden hall from the inside definitely paid off for the somewhat uncomfortable walk through the rain. Thanks a lot to our guides and to Ms. Heup, who was so kind to supply all of us with umbrellas before leaving the school!

*Elisa Gruber & Katharina Sroka,
Year 12*





Class visits

Class visits were planned for Thursday, the 28th of January. The biggest part of the delegation went to a fifth year class. They were asked to sit at the front of the class and a very interesting lesson for the younger pupils began. As expected, the children were curious and asked a lot of questions. Some of the questions were: "Do you learn other languages?", "When does your school start, when does it end?", "How old is your school?", "What is your favourite subject?".

Because of their large number, the delegates could give a variety of answers. In the meantime, the delegation of Poland went to a Year 11 Geography class, which focused on Polish economy, and the remaining part of the conference visited a ninth grade, where a quiz was held, called "Europe in Numbers."





Dr. Nicola Haas with Erasmus teachers and coordinators from Croatia, Denmark, Poland, The Netherlands and Germany

Interview with Dr. Nicola Haas

by Regina Jorde, Nicky Aryanfar and Victoria von Nathusius, Year 11

Interviewer: How did you first hear about the ERASMUS+ programme?

Dr. Haas: Through an internal further education programme for teachers and headteachers.

Interviewer: What was your first impression?

Dr. Haas: At the beginning, I was a bit worried about the application expenditure and asked myself whether it

would be worth it, but I was also very impressed.

Interviewer: How do you feel about Goetheschule being the first host school in the project?

Dr. Haas: I like the fact that we may coordinate this project and arrange it from the very beginning. It means that we can get to know it before our students travel to our partner schools, the Private Gimnazija Varazdin, Ikast-Brande Gymnasium, Rotterdam International Secondary School and Paderewsky International School.

Interviewer: Do you think that there will be an improvement of the students' cultural understanding?

Dr. Haas: Yes, of course! The students can get to know each other, come into contact with other cultures and are able to form their own opinion without any prejudices. This is also a chance to think about their own lifestyle.

Interviewer: How do you see the future of this project?

Dr. Haas: I think the programme will have a positive future because of the increasing importance of politics and internationality. Therefore, as headmistress I see it as my role to offer the students as many opportunities as possible. And if ERASMUS+ goes well, there will possibly be a new project in 3 years.

The Paris (Essen) Peace Conference,

a short overview with references to popular songs of 1919

At the outset of the PPC between the Allies and the defeated Central Powers the opening speeches dealt with the question of determining guilt.

"In a kingdom of my own":

Imperialism was seen as the main cause of war. War being used as a tool for expansion and domination. Therefore it was initially proposed that all imperial countries should be equally blamed for the war.

"The world is hungry for a little bit of love":

The Polish Delegation stated that WWI was the most terrible event in human history due to the amount of suffering, families torn apart, livelihoods lost, and the deaths of millions of soldiers and innocent civilians. It further stated that most of the conflict had taken place on Polish soil, which was burned and destroyed by invading Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian forces.

"After you are gone"

Many Polish were forcefully relocated, and forced to fight against their own kinsmen by the various invading forces which conscripted them into their armies. It therefore laid full responsibility on the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire. It further stated its wish that Soviet Russia be included in the treaty as a belligerent state.

"A bunch of nonsense":

Soviet Russia stated that the Russia that entered the War, Imperial Russia, was not the same one that exited the war, namely Soviet Russia. It reminded the delegates, that the new Soviet regime had removed the guilty imperial regime from power and should therefore not be held accountable for the actions of the Romanovs.

"Let us not forget":

The Italian delegation drew attention to the victims of war, the millions of military and civilian casualties, cities destroyed, families torn apart, and the many mentally and physically handicapped victims of this conflict.

"A million miles from nowhere":

The Ottoman Empire declared that the Germans allied with the Ottoman Empire had abused their alliance and had drawn the Ottoman Empire into a conflict in which it didn't want to fight.

While the Chinese delegation stated that Japan had brought the war to Asia, by betraying the agreements it had made with China and demanded punishment for Japan.

"Tell it to the marines":

The Chinese delegation further added, that in its opinion, Germany had started the war, and that its submarine tactics in particular had not been fair.



"The Americans come":

The USA delegation provided a neutral analysis of the war. In it Germany was seen as having provoked the outbreak of the war, while the Russian Empire was seen as having had no choice but to intervene.

"I'm sorry I made you cry":

The delegation of the Republic of Germany declared that it was forced to invade France by the political developments following the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia as it was afraid of being involved in a war on two fronts and therefore demanded that responsibility for the war should be laid with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

"What's this?":

The Austrian delegation blamed the war on the Hapsburg dynasty and its imperial aims. It further stated that under the Hapsburgs, who were no longer in power at the end of the war, the Austrian citizens did not have a say in the matter.

"In the land of beginning again":

The Republic of Germany argued along the same lines, that the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm which had started the war was no longer in control, and that the Republic of Germany is an entirely different country, which although acknowledging its war guilt does not wish to have to shoulder the main blame for the conflict. It further argued that all countries which had participated in WWI should be regarded as guilty of participation if not directly to blame as the cause of war.

"It might as well be you":

The allies were unimpressed by these arguments, and reiterated that in their opinion the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German Empire were to be held fully accountable in spite of a new form of government. Furthermore they found Austria guilty of participation and of neutrality towards German aggression.

"What could be sweeter":

In its defence, the Austro-Hungarian coalition stated that, as tensions rose in the Balkans Archduke Ferdinand had actively tried to release tensions and to improve relations among the Balkan nations when he was assassinated by the Serbians. It further stated, that it had tried to improve diplomatic relations through its ultimatum to Serbia. Therefore it did not recognize or acknowledge responsibility for the war. It further requested that in view of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and its consequences, Serbia be mentioned in the treaty as a belligerent state.

"Wait and see":

The delegation of the British Empire declared that blame lied on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia siding with Serbia due to complex treaties and Germany's imperial race.

"Social and industrial justice":

It further expressed anxiety over the Austro-Hungarian coalition of countries falling apart. And suggested



clarification as to which of these countries should ultimately be held accountable for the actions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Responsibility was placed on Austria by a majority vote.

"Nobody knows":

The French delegation questioned Germany's intentions when it started its offensive against France.

"Don't cry Frenchy, don't cry":

It further added that the new technology had caused great damage, as most of the fighting had taken place in French territory and demanded responsibility be firmly placed on German shoulders. In addition France demanded reparation payments.

"Say it again":

The delegation of the Kingdom of Belgium declared, that WWI had been the most terrible and blood-thirsty war to take place in Europe due to its use of the most brutal forms of warfare ever experienced, leading to the total destruction of Belgium as many battles were fought on Belgian soil.

"The right of the people to rule":

The Canadian delegation, although acknowledging participation, did not acknowledge responsibility or blame for the actions of its troops during the war, as entering the war was a decision made by the British Empire, of which Canada was merely a colony. As such it was forced to submit armed forces for the conflict, at great cost of human life, to fight alongside the British forces.

They and other countries argued that participation in the war was forced upon them by German warmongering, and that they should therefore not be held accountable.

After much deliberation and lobbying, it was stated that the main causes for WWI were the rising hate among participating nations and complex alliances between them, the overly emotional response of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and Germany's invasion of France as well as its invasion of the neutral states Belgium and Luxemburg.

"Throw out the life line"

The USA reiterated that it did not like the idea of punishment in the interest of a future friendship with Germany and reminded the delegates that this was a conference to prevent further wars and therefore should not be too harsh in its resolutions against Germany.

"The worse is yet to come":

As the debate moved onto the question of reparation some delegations demanded extreme punishment for Germany with punitive reparation costs.

"I'm sorry I ain't got it, you could have it if I had it":

Germany objected to punitive damages expressing that this was unfair, because the proposed amount would overtax its economy.



"All those in favour say aye":

Others took a more lenient approach and suggested that reparation payments be paid over time and that these should be limited to actual reparation costs at the exclusion of punitive damages. The setting up of an International Development Fund was proposed into which these payments would be made.

"After all":

The PPC has shown us that new generations are now prepared to deal fairly and constructively with each other in order to create a solid basis for a unified Europe. Perhaps this is aided by their emotional distance to the original conflict, but I believe that a global perspective, open-mindedness and a true desire for peace and prosperity for all European nations lies at the root of these new resolutions.

"After all the smiling and the weeping":

In the next couple of days the final debates on Territorial disputes and on the League of Nations will take place. I am convinced that all shall work together to reach fair and constructive solutions which will lay the foundation for a new era of peace.

"Till we meet again":

During this conference new contacts have been established, new friendships have developed, new bridges have been forged. Let us work together to let these friendships grow and become stronger in the years to come.

Alexandra Link, Year 8



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The Closing Ceremony

On Friday morning, delegates, teachers and students came together to celebrate the successful conclusion of an exciting week of international cooperation at our school.

After the festive strains of the "Rejouissance" from Haendel's "Fireworks Music" Suite, Dr. Nicola Haas, School Director, spoke a few words of thanks to everyone involved for their hard work and effort. She said

Erasmus Plus reflects the emphasis on International Learning, which is one of the pillars of the school philosophy at Goetheschule. She particularly thanked Mr. Boergen, Ms. Heup and Ms. Lacroix for their dedication and determination to bring this exciting project about and to ensure its successful conclusion.

Her speech was followed by a performance of the 3rd movement of Ulli Haucke's trumpet concerto. Afterwards senior students made a short presentation about Erasmus with emphasis on what he stands for, namely: knowledge, international understanding, global thinking, compassion, tolerance, cooperation and peace.



Shostakovich's Waltz No.2 from his Jazz Suite concluded the orchestral part of the celebration. Ms. Lacroix then went on to report that the conference had resulted in a successful new peace treaty based on a genuine interest and desire to promote true peace and prosperity in Europe, unlike the Versailles Treaty which was based on feelings of resentment and revenge. She expressed her gratitude and pride to everyone involved and wished much luck to Denmark, which will be hosting the next stage of this Erasmus Plus project in September under the theme of Literature.



Mr. Boergen then addressed the audience with an interesting PowerPoint presentation showing some "behind-the-scenes" moments of the conference, such as the "Flash-mob" dance, ice-skating at "Essen on Ice" in Kennedy Platz, meeting the Mayor in the Town Hall, and light-hearted moments occurring during the debates. He also thanked everyone involved and expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming stages of the project in the different host nations.



Finally, a performance with full choir and orchestra of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" which has become the European National Anthem closed the programme. Everyone joined in, thus reflecting the spirit of bonding, friendship and cooperation among all nations involved. Then everyone adjourned for a final group photograph before returning to "Headquarters" for a relaxed and highly amusing conclusion to the conference.

During this week many new bonds were established and all delegates are returning home with warm memories and new friendships to cherish. Everyone is looking forward to their next meeting in Denmark.

Alexandra Link
Year 8



The Peace Conference is over...



REAR VIEW.

—Orr in the Chicago Tribune.

Image Quotation:

“Rear View” by Carey Orr in the *Chicago Tribune*, August 30, 1919, reprinted in Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson, Alliances and The League of Nations*.

URL:

<http://de.scribd.com/doc/90350587/Woodrow-Wilson-Alliances-And-the-League-of-Nations#scribd>

... but the Erasmus Plus project will continue. Students will return home and work on podcasts and posters about **“Transforming the Map of Europe during and after WWI”**. Some of these student-made materials for future history classes may reflect on the actual outcome of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 in comparison to the students' own peace negotiations during their role play in Essen more than 100 years after the outbreak of World War I. Others might cover different topics, such as the political background of decision making in the post-war era. For all who are still on the lookout for good ideas here is Vincent's example of a caricature, which may inspire you to choose unusual forms of presenting historical contexts.

The caricature “The Rear View” from the *Chicago Tribune* dated ca. 1919 shows a conductor behind a score conducting five persons. If you look closer, you can see that these persons are famous politicians. On their backs, you can read their nationalities. All, except the USA representative, carry pistols in their pockets, each one labelled with their personal agendas. The music score is titled: “Everlasting peace”. This caricature wishes to show how every country at the Versailles Conference has hidden agendas on its mind but “sings” the “song of peace” anyway. Only the USA is naïve enough to believe them and to come unarmed.

By Vincent Wittich, Year 9

Tschüss & Goodbye to You All!



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