

Press Release: First Mobility Transnational Activities

Transnational Educational Activity of the Erasmus + KA2 project by the 5th General Lyceum of Veria.

"Sustainability for Democracy, Democracy for Sustainability": Democracy and Environment in Institutions

The First Transnational Educational Activity of the Erasmus + KA2 Project - School Education No.2018-1-PT01-KA229-047365_4 was completed on Saturday, January 19, 2019. The activity was prepared and carried out by the 5th General Lyceum of Veria, and in particular by the pedagogical group of the project "Sustainability for Democracy, Democracy for Sustainability". The title of this activity, which was the first mobility of the above programme, was: "Democracy and Environment in Institutions".

The groups of the European schools from Estonia, Portugal and Finland arrived in our country on Sunday, January 13, at the Airport of Macedonia, and they were welcomed in our town by parents and students in the afternoon of the same day. Each group consisted of seven (7) students and two (2) teachers.

On Monday morning the official reception of the groups took place at the 5th General Lyceum of Veria and the guests had the opportunity to have a first contact with the Greek educational system during their tour in the school premises and by attending courses. Then, the first acquaintance of the four school groups took place in the school library through the students' presentations of their school, their city and their country.

After 12.00pm the hosts and the guests set out to get to know the town of Veria, they were welcomed by the municipal authorities and informed about the multicultural nature of Veria and the history of the municipal mansion, which is a typical example of sustainability. The visits to the Folklore Museum of Vlachs and to the Synagogue followed, and later the European school groups went on to visit the old Cathedral, the Apostle Paul's Tribune and the Mendesse Mosque, which now houses Apostle Paul's Cultural Center, the Byzantine Museum and, finally, the Christian Quarter of Kyriotissa. The locations were deliberately chosen to demonstrate, on the one hand, the harmonious coexistence of different religions and different ethnic groups for centuries, which is a victory for democracy and a proof of respect for diversity, and, on the other hand, the notion of sustainability since these buildings come from the distant past and with the appropriate restoration and change of use they are still used in the 21st century.

On Tuesday, January 15th, after a Greek language lesson for the guest students and teachers, all the project participants went to Thessaloniki, where, after a visit to the most important cultural sights, they visited "OIKOPOLIS - a parallel "city" for ecology and social solidarity ". There, they were informed by the person in charge of the voluntary organization "ANTIGONI" about the contemporary social problems and the citizens' organizations fighting them, and through experiential activities and workshops they were involved in the issue of sustainability.

On Wednesday the European school groups – after a lesson on human rights and the need to protect them – presented by means of ICT the work on the project content that they had produced before coming to Greece. Each school explored how democracy works and the environment is protected both at the level of their school community and the local

institutions, and on a national and European level, as well. After each presentation there was a discussion between students and teachers so that they find common elements and differences, in addition to identifying the positive elements and weaknesses in the way institutions function. The programme of the day was completed early in the afternoon with a guided tour at the Royal Tombs of Aigai in Vergina.

On Thursday, January 17th, the day was dedicated to Naoussa. There, the participants had the opportunity to come into contact with the three main pillars of sustainability: a) Economy, by visiting Vaeni winery, b) Society and Culture, with a guided tour at the cultural association of "Genitsaroi and Boules", where they were informed about the relevant custom and the production of sesame oil, as the specific cultural association is hosted at the premises of an old sesame mill, and c) the Environment, by visiting the Center of Education for Sustainability of Naoussa and carrying out an educational programme in the area of the environmental park of St. Nicholas. In the afternoon of the same day the students worked in groups of mixed nationalities to collect and record the material they would be working on the next day.

On Friday, the participants worked again in groups of mixed nationalities. The students, after their teachers' initial guidance, began to gather and combine the activities and their experiences during past few days and to record the results and their conclusions. The digital material that they produced in the school's computer lab was afterwards presented by each group in the school library. Meanwhile, a conference of the teachers involved in the programme was held so that they would discuss the current work and prepare the next mobility of the project which will be held in Finland from 5 to 11 May 2019. In addition, both the teachers and the students involved in this project did the online evaluation of the first transnational activity. Finally, later in the afternoon of the same day, a farewell meal was held with the participation of all the students and teachers of the project.

The departure day of the foreign guests, on Saturday, January 19th, was very moving and emotional. Parting and departure were made even more difficult as hosts and guests felt the special bond that had been created between them during the previous days, and so everybody made promises of close communication and prompt meeting in the near future again.

The experiences of this activity, which took place in the town of Veria last week, proved that thanks to Erasmus +, IKY and the National Agencies of the other European countries, another transnational educational activity has fully achieved its goals!

The participant students were: Kostas Tsilis, Antonis Vasiliadis, Vicky Tzouvaras, Lia Kapalika, Melina Metaxa, Despina Tzima, Giorgos Lokmanidis, Katerina Della, Elena Theodorou, Sophia Panidou, Nikos Tsiflidis, Maria Tsouflidou, Leonidas Koukouravas, Panagiotis Piperidis, Katerina Patopoulou, Vicky Moissidou, Katerina Feizatidou, Anna Tzirou, Emilia Kirtsiou, Giannis Psarras and Olympia Papafetimiou. The pedagogical team consists of the following teachers: Chara Axouristou, Efi Liakopoulou, Elena Giannaki, Katerina Totska, Stamatis Chrisis and Tasos Moschopoulos.

The group of students from **Portugal** were: Alexandra do Nascimento Leite, Carolina Morais de Oliveira Vitor, Ines Rana Capelas, Jessica Duarte Carrasqueira, Maria Mendes Rodriguez, Rafael Baptista Brilha Oliveira, Marta Ramalho Fernandez, and the accompanying teachers were Ana Maria da Silva Abreu Marques Dias (Project Coordinator) and Maria Guilhermina Vilaça Delgado dos Anjos Galego

The group of students from **Estonia** were: Andreas Idavain, Carmen Pajuste, Jaak Antonov, Johanna Marie Mäeväli, Kaspar Parve, Mariella Soom, Viktoria Borissov, and the accompanying teachers were Piia Palge-Lepik and Kai Peterson.

The group of students from **Finland** were: Rebecka Asplund, Miina Jousmaki, Matilda Eriksson, Emil Zittra, Alva Sandelin, Daniel Berg, Hannes Hiekkänen and the accompanying teachers were Jeanette Kecklund and Mikaela Hansen.