**Experience , hard work and helpful colleagues - project based learning of the Finnish coordinator :)**

The Active European Citizenship project really was not at all what we expected it to be. Although we all had experiences from before from European projects, we never had taken part in any project that was so versatile, so thorough, so time consuming , so challenging, and so ambitious. Although the very many extra hours we put in it got everyone in really tight spots trying to manage deadlines in the otherwise also hectic school work , the project work also delivered a lot of high quality student and teacher work. The  project gave us insights into the work of other European countries at times when you really do the utmost, work hard and aim high.Due to this particular project, top students also got some challenges and the teachers involved learnt hands-on experience on working with different school cultures, management and deadlines.

For our part, the Riga memorandum experience especially, and the Cordoba, the Zagreb and our own mobility in Sibbo not to be forgotten,resounded  the goals of our curriculum ie to teach our children to become independent learners in integrated topics such as social sciences, maths, drama and debating, meeting and presentation skills in real life. It was an eyeopener and reminder to us about how getting your voice heard in society requires exactly those last mentioned skills. You have to be able to get your points across, not only rely on the fact that everyone will read through different expert statements, but instead learn that to be able to influence your society, you have to raise your voice, be able to communicate, debate , defend your points and  change your mind; learn about social facts and knowledge about Europe 2020 goals, the drama in English, the parliamentary-like work experience, all of this important for the future Europeans.

The students involved started from being somewhat shy and careful into being more confident at expressing themselves, communicating and getting their ideas and proposals across to audiences of both varying language skills as well as varying knowledge in the topics. Actually it was a lesson for some of them that eg  debating skills really are useful, there are countries where belonging to the European union and having all the freedom to do it, still was a celebrated and appreciated, that drama is a universal way of getting important issues across, that writing manuscripts and talking live and editing when podcasting is not just a piece of cake, but actually requires a lot of work .

Not to forget all the cultural knowledge they got and gave being guests or hosting guests as regards food culture, spare time activities, schoolwork (joining lessons in other schools), family life in general. Valuable personal experience and gained insights to weigh the world against ; a world which is  filled with extreme movements, juxtapositioning, fake news and disinformation. Thus perhaps hopefully being able to make more informed decisions based on knowledge rather than hearsay or agitation.

It’s been a rough road, but gave us more than we ever hoped for. We are thankful for have been given the chance to be part of this ambitious work!