**With Emperor Friedrich II. in search of**

**the common European identity**

Subsidies of 31,000 euros for Adolf-Schmitthenner-Gymnasium for “Erasmus+”-project – Cooperation with two Italian schools – Special praise for request

by Berthold Jürriens - with friendly permission of the Rhein Neckar Zeitung

*traslated by Leon Stoll*

**NECKARBISCHOFSHEIM.** (bju) You can really note the big euphoria as teachers Maria Pia Panunzio and Margitta Bönisch from the Adolf-Schmitthenner-Gymnasium (ASG) present their two-years project whose title first sounds like a presentation: “Emperor Friedrich II. von Hohenstaufen – a multicultural bridge between the 13th and 21st century”.

But it’s exactly this topic with its extensive contents that “shall improve the students’ awareness that the cultural heritage of Europe is an instrument of solidarity and common identity” has completely convinced the commission to awardsubsidies.

Sub-projects with the title “Mathematics and Magic in Friedrich’s buildings” or “The cultural integration policy of Friedrich II.” underline the educational goal. In the following two years the school will get 31,000 euros provided by the European Union and will be allowed to be decorated with a sign saying: “Strategical school partnership 2018 -2020”.

“For the first time, two teachers havehad the courage to fill out the extensive EU requests”, the principal Harald Frommknecht and his deputy Andrea Mutter report. Not just the commitment itself pleases, but also that fact that the “paperwork” got such a positive evaluation, 92 out of 100 possible points, so that the commission wants to use extracts as reference. “We would have never expected this”, says Panunzio, who has found possible partner schools very fast. Because this is one of the conditions to join the “Erasmus” project. Panunzio explains that these European schools are meant to work on a certain topic from different perspectives and inspire young people for Europe and enable intercultural meetings. It is not only about meeting and getting to know each other but also about profiting from the exchange of different experiences. “The sustainable work of Friedrich II., who is often called “the first European” because of his multilingualism and his religious and cultural openness, can be felt very much in his homeland Italy, where the king of Sicily is even more important than here, the teachers explain. The ASG has fast got in contact with the Sicilian school “Liceo Classico Umberto I” in Palermo and the educational institution “IISS Majorana-Laterza” Putigano, in the region of Apulia. They have found geographic reference to the imperator of the German-Italian kingdom. The ASG is acting as the coordinating school and is going to fly to Putignano for a first meeting in October 2018 and again in April 2019. In December 2019, Italian students will be welcomed in Neckarbischofsheim and mayor Tanja Grether wants to participate giving a reception. “This is a fantastic story for our school”, says Grether. It’s a project which is crossing borders, schools and subjects and will concern the whole school, even though the main focus is put on form 10. “These students have to fulfill certain criteria like commitment, reliability and language competence”. Online surveys, exhibitions and regular reports on the school’s website are going to be carried out by students, teachers and parents. Supported by a special website on the internet, all participants of all schools are going to keep in touch in order to develop projects or collect documents.

Even if the actual work is yet to start, “the ASG is looking forward to the project and is very proud of being part of the chosen few”, say the school management and the teachers.