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PALERMO SPEECH

Hello everyone and a big thanks to both the Erasmus+ Italian team, especially to Rita, Roberta, Lucia, Antonella, and the students, for all their hard work in preparing for us a wonderful stay in Palermo this week .

On the 30th November 2016, one year will have passed since we first met in Achim, Germany. Since then, we, as students and teachers, have been learning a lot about our three main project topics: the teaching-learning process, energy, recycling and energy efficiency, and entrepreneurial and business spirit. I remember that during our meeting in Achim, the Climate Change Conference was taking place in Paris, at the same time. During the conference, it was agreed that countries should take further measures to reduce CO2 emissions. We had one Finnish student playing the role of a member of the International Trash Police very well ! Some changes have been taking place:

-The Paris agreement was passed and came into action on the 4 November 2016.

-Pope Francis issued his encyclical ‘Laudato Si' (Praise be to You) in June 2015 on environment and climate change, which has the significant subtitle “One Care For Our Common Home”.

-France has become the first country to ban plastic plates and cutlery. After a big discussion on the pros and cons and seeing that the measure could infringe European law, the ban was then postponed until 2020.

-People can be fined in some towns and cities for not recycling.

-In the future everything could be recycled. It might sound somewhat scatological, but recycling urine, “peecycling”, is already a reality; it can be used as fertiliser, and for energy and drinking water and is currently used by US astronauts in space.

As I said in my welcome speech in Achim: United we stand! Our joint endeavours will ensure greater strength, the more we learn and know from each other, the more we can improve and love each other. In that sense, I would like to be able to count on British students and teachers in the next European Educational programmes. Although they may be leaving the European Union, both British and European politicians must now rise to the occasion and help to support this project. (We aren’t out yet!)

All your evaluation and feedback hasn’t fallen on deaf ears. They have been read by teachers and we have taken them into consideration, so we try to include more variety in the way we deliver information: we leave out long, boring talks and, instead, include more activities with international groups as well as outdoor activities.

Finally, I would like to finish off with my favourite motto, taken from a book title by the American author and professor of special education, Leo Buscaglia: Enjoy the stay in Palermo “Living, Loving and Learning”.

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