

## SUMMARY OF THE MEETING IN SOPOT - BULGARIA

FROM 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL TO 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2011.

### **Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.**

Arrival at Sofia airport. Transport from the the airport to Karlovo. Arrival at SOU "Ivan Vazov", Sopot and meeting with the students' families.

Accommodation at "Shterev" Hotel, Karlovo.

### **Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.**

09:00 Welcome to SOU "Ivan Vazov", Sopot.

We were welcomed by the Headmistress Ms Radostina and two student girls, dressed in beautiful traditional costumes, who showed hospitality according to the traditional Bulgarian custom, offering us a bread called *pogacha* and spicy salt. We took a small piece of bread, dip into the salt and ate it.

In the school a group of girls danced typical dances with baskets filled with roses.

09:30 Tour of the school.

10:30 Work session:

There were some interviews for the local TV before the work session, and Iliya - the Bulgarian school coordinator- explained the programme of the meeting and commented some important events happened in Sopot, pointing out that it is the birth place of the famous Bulgarian poet Ivan Vazov. After this, the schools started to present the new activities done since the last meeting in Büy k kmece, Turkey.

**The Spanish school** presented some posters done to celebrate the Comenius Week and a Power Point to keep the very good memories we have of the meeting in Büy k kmece. As coordinator school of the project Beyond Words, commented the work to be done until the meeting in Salamanca, Spain, in June.

**The Greek school** presented a Power Point to show the celebration of the Open Day at school, and the participation of the Comenius team in the European Teenage Book Exhibition. Liana, the Greek school coordinator also explained the Educational Drama Activity the students had performed about 'FRIENDSHIP': reflections and suggestions about the topic (friendship is like a mirror...), meaning of friendship (love, support, trust...). A really interesting teaching unit about the value of friendship. The last activity presented was a video clip about 'solidarity' called 'Qui est au bout du fil?', a competition in French related to the relationship between Greek students and Dutch students of the School RSG SLINGERBOS / LEVANT. The song the students prepared about solidarity was really original.

**The Turkish colleagues**, Safiye and Funda, presented a very well done Power Point about the topic of tolerance, showing symbols and places of peaceful coexistence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in Turkey.

**The Italian colleague**, Massimo, had prepared a superb video to present a new teaching unit: Awareness of Beauty. The images to show beauty through the golden triangle had been cleverly selected to understand the concept.

**Riita, the Finnish colleague** explained the last teaching unit her school had prepared: The Golden Age of Finnish Art.

This is an activity about values (hope, love, stream of life... including ecological values related to Nature).

The teaching unit included students' paintings. It was amazing to watch how the students interpreted or imitated the meaning of classic Finnish artworks communicating values with their own paintings.

**The Romanian school coordinator**, Polixenia, presented a new teaching unit 'Volunteering and its Art'. This activity included a Power Point to show volunteering in the field of art. The pictures showing Romanian work of arts promoting this values are very communicative.

**The coordinator of the host school**, Iliya, presented the last teaching unit they have prepared: 'PATRIOTISM, love and devotion to the country through humanism, respect, gratitude and democracy.

This was a very interesting and educational activity in order to not confuse patriotism and nationalism, and to show a quick review of the Bulgarian history. The Bulgarian Comenius team had also prepared a teaching unit about traditions: 'Calendars and Holidays'.

In the evening, after the work sessions, we visited the poet Ivan Vazov's house and other interesting places in Sopot.

### **Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.**

At 8:00 we were on the bus to Veliko Tarnovo, the Medieval capital of Bulgaria. In the way to Veliko we visited the monumental church of Nativity in the town of Shipka and Visit "Etara", an ethnographic complex near the city of Gabrovo.

We crossed the region called '**The Valley of Roses**', one of the biggest producers of rose oil in the world. According to the information of our guide teacher, Krasimira, The valley is famous for its rose-growing industry which has been cultivated there for centuries, and which produces 85% of the world's rose oil.

Around 13:00 we were visiting the Tsarevets fortress in Veliko Tarnovo (XII-XIII c.). This is a historic town located 250 km from Sofia and along the Yantra River; the city was founded by the Thracians and during the heyday of the Bulgarian Empire in the Middle Ages was the capital of the country.

Thanks to Neliyan, Iliya, Aneliya and Krasimira for being our guides during this wonderful cultural trip to the heart of Bulgaria.

### ***Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.***

A day in the Central Balkan National Park going to the top of the mountain – “Dobrila” chalet, using the “Shambala” chair lift from Sopot.

At 9:30 teachers and students were taking the chair lift to the top of the mountain.

After a pleasant walk in the National Park, we were motivated to enjoy a typical Bulgarian lunch at ‘Dobrila’ chalet. Everything was delicious: salads, roast lamb... and desserts.

Thanks to Rodostina, Iliya, Krasimira, Neliyan and Boddan (the sport teacher at school in charge of our physical security) for programming this awesome adventure of going up to the top of the mountain by the chair lift: it was the first time in my life and I dared to do it!

20:00 Time to have dinner at “Loven Park” restaurant in Karlovo.

The traditional Bulgarian things to eat were delicious, and music and dances created so nice atmosphere that made everybody happy.

### ***Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>***

According to the scheduled, we visited the town of Plovdiv. **Plovdiv** is the second-largest city in Bulgaria with a population of 331,796. Walking around the Old Town we could appreciate well preserved historical buildings and places. I loved to visit the Ancient Theatre (II c. AD.)

The Turkish, Italian and Spanish team said goodbye here to the group. It was time to come back home keeping a lot of very good memories for ever. Thanks and congratulations to the Bulgarian team for preparing this wonderful meeting in their homeland.

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