

NEWSLETTER 2

Natural Wonders in Europe - a study of our National Parks and Nature Reserves

Dear colleagues and students,

We are meeting you with the second newsletter of our project. You will find details and opinions about the videoconferences and observes of the Spain Meeting of students and teachers from each country.

Our students made the videoconference meeting with

Latvian students. An event like this happened in our school for the first time. The excitement of our students could be seen in their eyes easily. And I am sure this is true for the other partner schools.

As a philosopher said: "Works can not be achieved made without excitement."

And Spain..I can tell you a lot about visit to Spain: Immaculately and regularly school, smiling managers and teachers, and a program organized with precision. Everything was great: National Parks, fantastic city Almagro and Toledo which smells history...We have smelt the history there. We wandered through the dusty leaves almost like a history book.

And of course new friends .. The memories will never be forgotten.We returned home after spending five days in Spain but I think our hearts left there...

Şelâhaddin Özanoğlu





A delegation from our school, consisting of two teachers and two students from the seventh grade, visited Spain Valdepeñas city during the period 11th to 16th of February 2014 year within the framework of the international project Comenius "Natural Wonders in Europe - a study of our National Parks and Nature Reserves". The program of Spain visit was very interesting and rich. We attended college San Augustin on the first day. It is a private school with a religious slant. The school was founded in the 40s of XX century by the mother Clara, and the whole town Valdepeñas helped to build it. 300 students starting from 5 years and up to 12 years are studying in the college. Children have the same subjects as in our school, but they have also lessons of religion.

We visited two national parks "Tablas De Damiel" and "Parque Natural Despenaperros". National Park "Tablas De Damiel" is a „water park“. The main feature of it is that the two rivers have created a system of lakes, and water in one river is fresh, and in the other - salty. The deepest point of the lakes - 1 meter. The lakes are not dry up in hot summer time because the bottom of them is from stones, and they retain moisture well.

National Park "Parque Natural Despenaperros" is located in the mountain region, and such place was very unusual for us. While observing the nature of the park, we walked 8 km and climbed high enough to experience the power, beauty and freedom of the place. Our trip was safe because there were special paths, and this place is visited by locals quite often. The Nature in Spain differs from Nature in Latvia. For example, pines are much lower and cones are 10 times bigger than in Latvia. The soil is very rocky and red or yellow. Olive trees and vineyards are mostly in the fields.

Since Spain is a warm country (average summer temperature is +30-40 degrees), there were many solar panels (up to 30 pieces in one place) in many places on the fields. Wind generators were installed on the hills, they were always rotating, so there was wind permanently.

We visited the city of Toledo. It is the oldest city and the first capital of Spain. It was mentioned as a city for the first time in 193 BC. The city has beautiful, unusual for us architecture. Houses are built of bright yellow, red, pink brick and are decorated with small balconies and iron bars on the windows. We visited national library, examined architectural masterpieces (mosque, synagogue), that were preserved from very ancient times. Old Town is located on a high hill, since originally it was built as a fortress, so we had the opportunity to look at modern Toledo from „bird's-eye" high.

The main significance of the international Comenius project is that it helps students from different countries, different cultures to communicate and to find common interests. All children lived in families with local children, it is the main point of the project. We could see how they felt in an unusual for them situation listening their stories every day and observing how they were saying goodbye to each other. The whole families (fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters) accompanied our children when they were departing. Children were crying and hugging each other. Parents had also tears in

their eyes and smiles on their faces. Looking at it, we hoped that it was not their last meeting. It was a unforgettable trip and very useful work.



CYPRUS STUDENTS MEMORIES FROM SPAIN MOBILITY!!



We were all so nervous since we didn't know what was waiting for us there...I personally was afraid...that the parents wouldn't like me or I wouldn't be good enough for them! When we got off the train we had a big surprise the girls with their families were waiting for us holding banners in their hands shouting and smiling at us! I was so relieved and at the same time excited to meet my host in person! She was so nice..... my host's father took my suitcase and we then went to their house, where her mother and her sister were waiting for us with some snacks!!! The family was so lovely that made me relax and stop being nervous!!! They gave me a small tour round the house...and then showed me to my bed where I immediately slept as I was very tired!!!



Today we woke up very early, had a quick breakfast and then went to the hotel where we waited for our teacher to go on our trip! We visited Spain's smallest national park! There we saw many different types of birds such as ducks which were swimming in the big lakes of the park! There we were told many interesting things about the national park such as what animals live there and what type of plants grow there! After walking round the national park we went to the watermill where we saw how it works, it was very interesting! Afterword we visited the water museum where we learnt many different things about water such as how it was created, how important it is for living creatures and how water forms into lakes! After that we went to a small village where we had dinner....and then left for the hotel! We went again to the churreria with Jimena and her friend Rosa and relaxed! It was a very tiring day so we went early home and slept quickly!

....I am so sad that I have to leave as it was very nice and I had a great time everyone was wonderful...an the days passed so quickly that I didn't notice it!!! I wish i could stay longer in Spain..!

Emily Tsangaride

Today, Alba and I, woke up at about 8.30 a.m. got dressed, had breakfast and very quickly walked to the school. There we met the students from all the countries. After, our host girls and their teachers guided us at their school. The nuns were very good with us. At about 11:30 we went on foot to a sport center 10 minutes away. First there, I played basketball with my friend Stavri, Covadonga, Alba, Raul, Alexander and some other boys. Then, I've played tennis (which is my favorite sport). We had a really good time there!! At 2:00 o'clock, we left the sport center and Stavri, Covadonga, Alba, and I went to Alba's house to change clothes for lunch at a restaurant. In the afternoon, we went shopping again and near the plaza we saw Andres, Manolo and we all had churros with chocolate at a cafe. My day was wonderful!



Michaela Panagi

Took the bus to Despenaperros Natural Park. Firstly, we visited Despenaperros' Information Office where the Head employee talked us about the flora and the fauna of the park. Moreover, he showed us a video and then some photos for the animals and the plants that exist in the park. There was also a room where you get in and you can listen to the noises of those animals and smell those flowers. At first I was a little scared because it was dark there but I really liked the way it was formed. After, we walked through the Natural Park for about 7 km and more. The view was spectacular and everyone enjoy it! We saw waterfalls, animals such as deer, birds etc. When we finally returned at Despenaperros' Information Office, we took the bus and visited San Agustin School's country house where we had lunch all together.

The Cyprus' team visited one class of the primary school where we showed a video about Paphos and Mr Petros (one of the teacher that came with us) offered to the students Loukoumia Yeroskipou which is a traditional Cypriot sweet! They also made us some questions about our town and showed us the drawing with the Cyprus' flag that they had made before. The children were very excited so do we! After a while, all the students, who take part in the Comenius, gathered together and then we went at the sports center on foot. I was in the same team with Covadonga, Michaela and Alba...we played basketball (we lost -.-), Tennis, and Squash which is a racket sport played by two (singles) or four players (doubles) in a four-walled court with a small, hollow rubber ball. Meanwhile, other children played Hokey (on the grass), baseball and football! It was a great fun!!!

Stavri Stylianou



When we came to Valdepenas, we were very excited and nervous to meet our host families. But already the first night we felt very welcome and comfortable in our new "home". The visit to the school was very interesting, and different from our own school in Denmark. We liked very much how the nuns ran the school. Our presentation of our country, town, and school went very well. The spanish student asked many and very good questions.

The parks that we went to were exciting and beautiful and we had a blast. We also learned a lot about Spain, the spanish culture, and nature. We had such a funny time with all the comenius students. We went bowling, shopping, going to restaurants and generally just had a really good time with everybody. It was an amazing trip, that we will never forget!

**Best regards from Anne, Sofia, and Louise
Aalborg, Denmark**





In my opinion project Comenius is the best adventure in my life. I love people from Spain! They are very sociable and hospitable. I got to know a lot of people from abroad who were also very friendly. In my opinion the trip to Toledo was the best, because it was warm and the city is so beautiful.

Also, Madrid is a wonderful city, but unfortunately the weather was bad. I think that everybody who likes adventure should go to a Comenius trip.

Oliwia

I was in Spain for nearly a week. I liked the trip a lot.

We stayed in houses of Spanish students, so we lived with them and their families and we learned how Spanish people live.

We visited some national parks. It was nice.

The best part of the stay was free time. We could spend time with Spanish students and integrate with them.

I enjoyed staying in my Spanish host's house. That was a great chance to experience lifestyle of other person.

Sometimes I didn't like the organisation of some trips, but it wasn't so bad. I would recommend this kind of trip to everybody.

Maksymilian

The trip to Spain was wonderful. I like the most National Parks. They are really beautiful and have excellent landscapes. The atmosphere between students was cool too.

The food there was good but I prefer Polish food. All attractions which were prepared for us were great and very funny. There was the first time I had played tennis and I can say that I like it. I liked everything in Spain. I would recommend this trip to all students.

Patrycja

We thank all Spanish people who organized such a wonderful trip for us. We will never forget you. Now we are looking forward to meeting some of you in Poland.



Our videoconference with Ireland was fun. We talked to them twice and there is still one conference left. We talked about our schools, the subjects we learn, our food, our vacations and of course the weather. In our last conference we are going to talk about traditions and our surroundings. We really liked to do this.

All the best from, 8th SÓP and 8th GJS Iceland.





SPAIN MEETING

It was a huge responsibility to host all countries involved in this marvelous Project. We received 25 students and 23 teachers from nine nationalities. Because of the fact that we are a small school, many families and all teachers, from Infant Education to Secondary Education helped us to prepare this event.

This is a brief summary about 2nd meeting.

TUESDAY 11TH

We picked up the groups in Madrid. Some of them went for a walk in Madrid while we were picking the rest of partners up. At night, students were received by the host families and a welcome dinner was celebrated at the hotel.

WEDNESDAY 12TH

Students and teachers went to our school. They were shown all classrooms and their countries and schools were introduced to our students. After that presentations, students went to a sport area in order to celebrate 1st COMENIUS GAMES. About 125 students played and enjoyed all together.

Art Projects were shown by the teachers and we were learning about etwinning in a very interesting conference, prepared by Petros.

THURSDAY 13TH

We travelled to our closer National park, Las Tablas de Daimiel. There, we were separated into two groups. First Group visited Water Museum in Daimiel's city and the other group visited the National Park with a guide. Three kilometres walking through the Park where we could observe birds, ducks and we learnt many things about the Park. This is a very special National Park because it is a wetland in the middle of a dry area.

When all groups finished the visit, we went to a close village named Almagro, where we had lunch and we saw the typical square. In the afternoon, teachers visited a winery: Félix Solís. There, we spent time visiting the industrial zone where the wine is bottled and we could taste different kind of wine.



FRIDAY 14TH

We travelled to Toledo, the city of the three cultures, Jews, Muslims and Christians. It is a wonderful city where you can smell the culture and the history in each street. We visited the Regional Library. It is located in an old military headquarter and views are amazing. After that, we went to visit the Cristo de la Luz Mosque. A small mosque built in 999 by Muslims and then was converted into a church. Finally, some of us visited the Santa Cruz Museum, and old hospital where there are many pictures and sculptures.

Teachers and students enjoyed free time in Toledo.

At night, some teachers enjoyed "Tapas" night in Valdepeñas.

SATURDAY 15TH

We arrived to Despeñaperros Natural Park at 10pm and we visited the Information Office before starting the guided route. It was a very long route, around 10km, through the Park. Our guide explained us everything about the Park.

After the long walk, we went to San Agustín School country house and we had lunch all together.

At night, Gala Night was celebrated in an old winery restored four months ago. All countries introduced their National Parks and then, students, teachers and host families could enjoy eating and dancing.

IT WAS GREAT!!





Our visit to Spain

When we all arrived in Spain we were very excited because some of us had never been to Spain or in another country without our parents.

When we arrived at the airport the Spanish teachers picked us up and we took a bus to Valdepenas where we met our host families who were all very nice and gave us a warm welcome.

The trip to Madrid was very impressive. We saw a lot of interesting things in the Spanish capital. At school I loved the basketball games with the nuns. The first National Park was very beautiful although it was raining. And the bowling was so funny. I really could practise my English a lot.

Jana S.

I liked the sport event where we were all doing sport in teams with students from different countries. Toledo was so beautiful and the library was very impressive. The hiking tour in the second national park was great. The view from the mountain was amazing and the waterfall was really cool.

The gala night was great because we were all dancing. I had so much fun seeing my Comenius friends back again.

Lea L.

I liked the library in Toledo and that we could experience the city together with our friends. Madrid was beautiful although it was raining a bit. The bowling and pizza evening was so funny. I really laughed a lot and talked to students from many different European countries.

Lena E.

It was great that my family was so nice and friendly. I really felt at home in Spain. We did great trips to two national parks and I could communicate well with all the students from other countries. We have sung a lot of English pop songs in the bus together and we have found a lot of new friends.

Lisa B.





I liked the visit to Spain, I made very good friends. The teachers and students of all countries were very nice.

What I liked more was meeting the girls, visiting other cities and the farewell party. In the farewell party we danced and talk a lot. I didn't like the part where I had to walk 8km because I was very tired on this day.

Visiting Valdepeñas was a wonderful experience.
Gracias a Celia y a su familia por haberme recibido tan bien en su casa.

Mariana Passos

During the visit to Spain I liked everything, because it was an amazing week. On the first day I went to the airport of Faro at 4:30 in the morning, it was the day of goodbyes to our parents. We arrived in the airport of Lisbon and we had to catch another flight to Madrid. In the afternoon we went for a walk in Madrid and after all the countries had arrived we took a bus to Valdepeñas where our Spanish families were waiting for us.



While we were in Spain we visited many places and saw a lot of things. I liked everything very much. The family I stayed with was very nice and they took very good care of me.

I made a lot of new friends. This was a wonderful experience because we had the chance of meeting people from so many different countries. I liked the party on the last day so much. I wish we could have a meeting in Portugal so that I could host someone in my house.

Thanks for everything. Kisses to the Solis family and especially to Maria.

Gracias por me recibir tan bien y besos para todos.

Nicole Fernandes

I loved meeting new people from other countries because we were all from so different cultures; I also loved travelling by plane.

I liked the Natural Park Tablas de Daimiel because it was a good experience but I didn't like the Park Despeñaperros because we had to walk for eight kilometres. I loved the school's country house because it's very pretty and welcoming.

The farewell party was great, but what I enjoyed the most was making new friends.

Gracias a Jímena y a su familia por haberme recibido tan bien.

Inês Saraiva





I thought the idea of Video Conferencing with other children at my age was great. It was interesting learning about other schools and how they spent their time at school.

What they thought was a normal school day for them, we thought was very different but really nice! At the same time I even felt a bit jealous hearing about some of the schools as they were allowed to wear their own clothes to school and use their phones at lunch time. I still enjoyed everything about the conference.

The teachers and their students were very nice and friendly. We talked to Cyprus and Portugal together, Iceland three times and we will soon be talking to France. I am really excited. Overall, I think this project was very clever and quite fun. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

By Jonathan, Aoife and Ellisa. Rang 6.



Video Conferencing

Our class was joined with a school in Iceland for the first sessions of Video Conferencing. In total we had 3 video conversations with this school. The main theme being discussed was school life.

What I thought of the Video Conferencing: I thought that the Video Conferencing was very good. It was very easy to understand them.

It was a learning experience as well, we learned about everything from school opening and closing times, lunch breaks and what they do when it is raining.

I wish we could have spent more time talking but unfortunately we couldn't.

They were very kind and I would say that everybody enjoyed it.

Ben Rang 5.

It was sometimes a little difficult to understand them, sometimes because of their accent and technical issues.

It was very interesting finding out about their school life

It was very well organised which helped with the conversation.

We learned a lot of facts and at the same time they were learning about our school life.

Molly Rang 5





We Left Our Hearts In Spain

