

Dissemination of the sixth project meeting, held in Limanowa, Poland, November 24-29



Let's First Understand our National Heritage in Order to Define and Build our European Identity

Comenius project meeting

During the last week of November, we had our sixth Comenius project meeting in Limanowa, Poland. I have participated in one previous meeting, which took place in Trysil, Norway, so it was very interesting to see some of the people whom I already knew and also to see what is different from the meeting we had in Norway. I was together with my classmate Aleksei Kraft and with teachers Julia Ossipenko and Igor Zathejev and of course our project coordinator teacher RaineLindepuu.

The main goal of our Comenius project "Let's First Understand our National Heritage in order to Define and Build our European Identity", is to learn about our own national traditions and customs and then introduce them to other partners. There are eight schools in our project from different European countries – Latvia, Turkey, Spain, Romania, Greece, Norway, Poland and Estonia.

We arrived in Poland on 24th November at a place called Limanowa, which is a small town in Polish terms – only 15 000 inhabitants. Me and Aleksei had to live in families for the rest of the stay in Poland and we liked that very much. Living in a family is the best way of talking in foreign language and understanding what the family life in different country looks like. At first it is a bit difficult to start talking but after few days it becomes quite normal.

On the second day we all met at school – Zespół Szkół Samorządowych nr 1 w Limanowej - it is huge compared to our own little country school. After school headmaster's welcoming speech we started with our project work. Back home we had to prepare a presentation about questionnaire. In this questionnaire we had questions to our older students and their parents. We wanted to find out about the ethics, health and personal fulfilment of our students and their parents. This questionnaire was answered and later on we had to present the results as a power point presentation. We had been preparing to perform this presentation, so it went well and was very smooth. Every school had to do the same. What we learned was that most of the opinions were the same both among students and their parents.



In the afternoon we had another project work which was more complicated than the first one. Back home we had to prepare the answers to the questions about the traditions in our country. Now in Limanowa, we had to make a video where students from different countries answered the same question and it was all filmed in the form of an interview. One of us asked a question and others answered. It wasn't very easy because of the shooting but we were prepared and it didn't take as long as we were afraid of. We finished shooting our video and later on few of us had to put all this together in one video. This evening we had a party at school where we got to know all the students who had come to Poland. We played games and danced together.

Third day started very early because we head towards Krakow, which is former capital of Poland. Krakow is one of the most beautiful cities I have seen. It has very interesting history and fascinating buildings. We had very interesting tour around the city. We visited the most famous places in the city – kings' castle, cathedral and underground museum. While visiting souvenir shops we noticed a lot of souvenirs having a dragon on them. We asked about it and it appears that there is a legend about the dragon living in the caves on the hills and later on this city – Krakow – was built on the same hill. Hopefully this dragon is either long dead or it is probably just a myth. But this is one of the goals of our project – to find out the myths and legends of our project partners. So, this legend of the dragon was one of the essential things.



Fourth day was difficult because we visited one of the darkest places on Earth – Auschwitz. It is very hard to accept that people are capable of committing those things that happened there. If you enter this place you can even feel the horror and death which occurred there. People should learn from history and try to live in peace. I had seen this place previously in movies and documentaries but in real it was even more horrible. We saw things taken from people, their hair and gold teeth and those shoes of little children were the most horrible ever. At the same time it gave us a lot of first hand information and now we know exactly how it was. We just hope something like this would never happen again.



The second part of the fourth day we visited salt mines at Wielicka. Mines are a big part of the region's history and they show how the economy and life advanced and changed in this area. We descended down to 135 metres and saw different caves with different kind of salt. A lot of work has been done in those salty caves to show people how the mine operated a hundred years ago and how it is done nowadays. There were a lot of salt statues everywhere and they even have their own chapel underground. All in all it was very interesting.

Last project day was at school. We started off with something completely different because it was the day of English language and we were all invited to the city hall. There were students and teachers from all the schools in Limanowa. First we had a karaoke competition where our comenius partners were also invited to take part. Our teacher Raine was brave enough to participate and she also got a prize for the good performance. Later on children read poems in Polish which they had translated from English. We finished the morning session with all the comenius partners gathering together in stage and singing „We are the champions“. And this is how we felt – we are the champions. We are taking part in something extraordinary which is much more important than usual boring school days. In the afternoon we had the evaluation part of the project work, teachers had a discussion over next meeting and students had the last opportunity to do something together. So we went to the shooting range down in the school's cellar and had a good time. Aleksei was very good in shooting and I wasn't that bad myself.



Altogether this was a very different meeting from what we had in Norway but one thing was the same – we all got much smarter about the countries participating in our project and about Poland. We made some good friends, participated in interesting project work and practised a lot of English.

Dissemination made by Nikita Piljavets, student of Lohusuu School and participant of the Comenius project meeting in Limanowa, Poland

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