

Meeting in Turkey

21st April – 25th April 2015

Tuesday, 21st April

All participants arrived in Turkey and the coordinator of the Turkish team Saadet Baykul Bektaş, the headmaster Necip Kiraz and the English teachers Yelda Öztürk and Güvenç Dede were waiting for us at the airport or in the railway station in Istanbul. Everyone stayed in Grand Hotel Avcilar in Istanbul.

Wednesday, 22nd April

We took part in a program organized during Tourism Week Celebration in Avcilar Baris Manco Cultural Centre. At first there was a moment of silence and we listened to the Turkish National Anthem. Then Necip Kiraz, the headmaster of Avcilar Firüzköy Vocational and Technical High School had his opening speech, followed by Hulusi Dogan, Avcilar District Governor. We were impressed by the gift ceremony for the partners coming from six countries, which was more touching than usually.

The actual show consisted in folk dances from different Turkish regions; a musical based on "Romeo and Juliet", a theatre scene, presentation of Turkey and the closing. At the end of the show, we all danced a traditional Turkish dance.

We went to school (Avcilar Firüzköy Vocational and Technical High School) to have lunch. The meals had been cooked and were served by the students themselves and consisted in traditional Turkish food.

After the lunch, we had a session of discussion, where we had an exchange of presents at first. Then every partner had their presentation about wedding traditions in each country, in the following order:

- Poland was first, the coordinator Monika Toll exposed a cultural presentation about Polish wedding traditions, which was also uploaded on website, and then she described the activities on the third day of the sixth COMENIUS meeting;

- Estonia was the second team;

- Besides the presentation on weddings, Latvia also showed an article published about the Polish meeting and also had a presentation on Easter celebration and Easter decorations;

- Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria showed that there are many similarities between their wedding traditions;

- Turkey had had their wedding presentation in Poland, so they described different celebrations from Eastern Turkey, showing similarities between those and European traditional customs, like decorating eggs on Easter. The English teacher Güvenç Dede also presented a material comparing old and new wedding ceremonies in Turkey.

The first day went on with visiting the Turkish high school, the labs, the classrooms and the headmaster's office.

There was a concert of the high school band, coordinated by the Art teacher, which took place in the open air. The band played rock songs, both international and Turkish.

The special part of the evening was the Henna night. Students played a ritual performed in the day of two young people's marriage, with a special dance and specific food. Everybody received henna powder.

At the end of the evening we had dinner at Avcılar Firüzköy Social Centre and exchanged presents with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, which was a great honour.

Thursday, 23rd April

This second day in Turkey was a special one, precisely their National Sovereignty and Children's Day. We visited many interesting touristic places, such as Istanbul Archaeology Museum, Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sofia, The Blue Mosque and The Grand Bazaar.

In the evening, we had an intercontinental crossing by Marmaray Railway Transportation and on the spot we got to Asia, where we had a delicious dinner.

Friday, 24th April

The day started with a final session of discussions, about the details of the report writing with the project coordinators and English teachers.

The first things to be discussed were the unfulfilled activities. More precisely, the activities from 102 to 112, including 112, had been performed before Turkey.

First of all, the coordinator Emilia Iordanova put into discussion the activity no. 67, about the local evaluation in schools, which had been done using questionnaires. The results were sent to put them on the website and to summarize them. We had to prove that we had done the activity by taking photos and sending one photo from each team to Signe, to put them on the website.

The activity no. 102 was writing a scenario about a common celebration, which was spring celebration. Each partner had to write his own scenario summarizing all the information, then send it to Signe to put it on the website. Then Güvenç Dede summarized all the scenarios. At the meeting, he presented a PowerPoint material, in which he took some information from each country and compared them, then summarized them and put it on the website.

Concerning the activity no. 112, Emilia said they had decided to write an article about the scenario and publish in the local press. Latvia did the same thing.

The activity no. 111, making an animation of the scenario, was fulfilled in Turkey, where all the partners presented their animations, which they had done before the meeting.

Concerning the activity no. 113, at the working meeting in Turkey there was a concert celebrating Europe, which was part of the open air performance, the activity no. 120.

The activity no. 114, that is publishing the results on the website, required eight activities and sixteen products sent to Signe, including the link for the videos and PowerPoint materials.

As to activity no. 115, each partner will decide how to inform people, using the COMENIUS corners, until the end of May or the beginning of June. The final school exhibition, meaning the activity no. 119, will also use COMENIUS corners.

All partners discussed about the activity no. 118, the final report, which should include outcomes, products and extra-products (F.3.5), one hundred and twenty activities on the whole. There are five e-books, calendars, puzzle games, CDs, a book with the essays and the brochures.

Partners should ask agencies if the products should be uploaded in both languages, English and the native language of each partner. The products will be: five e-books, calendar, puzzle game, chronics, CDs. The extra-activities could be: making the extra-products, producing the hand-made products, such as knitting, cooking etc.

After these final discussions, all partners visited Dolmabahçe Palace and went to modern shopping.

In the evening, there was the official dinner, a beautiful Turkish night. Besides the traditional food, all partners enjoyed a belly dance and also the Sama. The Sama represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to perfection. Turning towards the truth, the follower grows through love, deserts his ego, finds the truth and arrives at perfection. He then returns from this spiritual journey as a man who has reached maturity and a greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to the whole of creation. Rumi has said in reference to Sama', "For them it is the Sama' of this world and the other. Even more for the circle of dancers within the Sama' who turn and have in their midst, their own Ka'aba." This relates Sama' to the pilgrimage to Mecca, in that both are intended to bring all who are involved closer to God.

Saturday, 25th April

It was the day of the departure. According to the schedule each group left different times.