



Shared identity: how to build a stronger Europe beyond prejudice

Exchange in Greece (Crete, November 2021)

Participants of this exchange were welcomed by two students dressed in traditional Cretan costumes along with Cretan treats, while in the welcoming area there was a huge banner "welcome" with the national colors of all participant countries, which was created by the Cretan students. The students danced a dance of each country and served the sweets of each country accordingly, while they closed with Greek dances and Greek sweets. Cretan students had studied about each country's culture and had made posters showing the most famous characteristics of the guests' heritage. They had made each country's sweets by themselves with the help of their parents and had painted the national flags of each guest-country and a big welcoming poster with these flags. Afterwards, sports events in the football field took place followed by the performance of ancient Greek games that have survived up to today. After the sport events, a rich meal with local specialties decorated with aromatic herbs of Crete was offered by the students' parents. During the following two days a visit was made to the Archaeological Site of Knossos and the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, as well as to the Museum of the Archaeological Site of Eleftherna combined with a guided tour. Both students and teachers learnt a lot about Cretan History and the Minoan Civilization. A short visit to the historic Arkadi monastery took place as well. Near the monastery all of the groups had the chance to cherish the Cretan nature in the gorge of Saint Antonios. The final stop was in the traditional village Margarites, where students and teachers participated in a pottery workshop and made their own clay object using their imagination. On Thursday at school all students divided in mixed groups made presentations on the values that helped them cope with the quarantine covid period and stated the merit of each value for their own culture. They also chose and pointed out wishes for Europe derived from the 6 core values formulated in the virtual mobility. On the same day, students and teachers, divided into groups, worked on a cooking project. They prepared Cretan salad and tzatziki. In the afternoon of the same day, all groups enjoyed a walk in the city of Chania. On the last day, a guided tour of the most important monuments of the city took place. All groups got to know the local town history, the influence on architecture and monuments of the Venetian and Ottoman period. In the evening a farewell dinner in an traditional taverna was held with the exchange of gifts in order to seal our friendship and give promises for a future cooperation. The impact of the meeting in Crete was published and spread in the local newspapers, webpages, social media, school council, and was discussed with local authorities.