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PROJECT JOURNAL – AVEIRO, PORTUGAL
C4 – Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity
13.11.2023 – 17.11.2023

The Economic College „D. Cantemir” Suceava coordinates the Erasmus+ KA220 "Let's Go Green!" project, between January 2022 and December 2023, in partnership with European schools: Gymnasio L.T. Chalkis, Chalki, Greece, Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Francesco Ferrara Mazara del Vallo Italy, Ogólnokształcące im. Unii Lubelskiej w Lublinie Lublin, Poland, Neringos gimnazija Lithuania Neringa, Lithuania, AEVA – Associação para a Educação e Valorização da Região de Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal.

Between 13.11 – 17.11.2023, teachers and students from partner schools participated in the sixth mobility within the project, in Aveiro, Portugal, learning, training and teaching activity organized by AEVA – Associação para a Educação e Valorização da Região de Aveiro. The activities had as a central theme „Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity”. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 aims to help **recover Europe’s biodiversity by 2030**. This would bring benefits for people, the climate and the planet. The actions set out in the strategy include: extending protected land and sea areas in Europe, restoring degraded ecosystems by reducing the use and harmfulness of pesticides, increasing funding of actions and better monitoring of progress.



Students understood that biodiversity is declining at alarming rates. EU countries are committed to restoring nature and preserving its biological diversity. How? The main actions to be delivered by 2030 include:

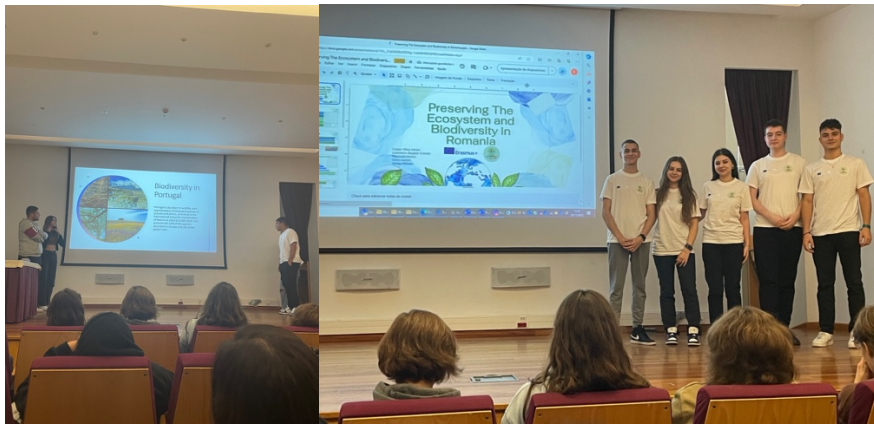
- the creation of protected areas covering **at least 30%** of the EU's land and sea area, extending the coverage of existing Natura 2000 areas
- the restoration of degraded ecosystems across the EU by 2030 through a series of specific commitments and measures, including the reduction in the use and risk of pesticides **by 50% by 2030** and the planting of **3 billion trees** across the EU
- the allocation of **€20 billion per year** to protect and promote biodiversity through EU funds and national and private funding
- the creation of an ambitious global biodiversity framework.

Students learned about Natura 2000 sites using Natura 2000 Viewer, key information on designated species and habitats, the importance of biodiversity and its conservation. During 5 days proposed activities were targeted on encourage information sharing, inspiration, and foster students understanding of the threat and the challenge of climate change and environmental degradation and on how to counter it, on arranging and caring for an eco-garden in schools can lead to reduced stress, anxiety and better school results for students.



On 13.11.2023 took place the official welcome at Portuguese school from Aveiro. Each partner school presented its team and, to get to know each other, students participated at icebreaking activities organised by Portuguese students.

Also, students from each country presented their countries and schools and examples of Ecosystems and biodiversity conservation used in partner countries. Introduction to Natura 2000 sites – using Natura 2000 Viewer.



Students attended an educational workshop having the theme „Debate Peddy Paper in Aveiro”.



They discovered natural landscapes in Aveiro (nature, cityparks and canals).

What they discovered? Aveiro is known as the Venice of Portugal, because, like the Italian city, it also has an estuary that runs in the centre of the city, where boats known as Moliceiros circulate, which cross the estuary during sightseeing tours. The boats are about 15 metres long and in addition to their peculiar shape, they are painted with caricatures that date back from the 19th century to the country's present times. In the past, Aveiro was the biggest salt-producing centre in Portugal. Salt in Aveiro is extracted by hand using wooden tools and the Marnoto, the man responsible for extracting salt.



To capture ecological aspects, students participated in a photo contest: “Our feelings for the environment”.

On Tuesday, 14.11.2023, students and teachers participated in an educational visit to Sever do Vouga and cultural visit to Sever do Vouga Museum. Cascata de Cabreia, beautiful waterfall, falls 800 meters above sea level in the Serra de Arestal. We visited a nice and well kept park around and silver mines explored by the Romans.



Students attended an educational Webquest: „Biodiversity and sustainability” and “Threats to Biodiversity” (how habitat loss, invasive species, disease, natural disasters and human impact threaten biodiversity). They understood the threat and the challenge of climate change and environmental degradation and on how to counter it. They promoted this aspect creating leaflets, making presentations and they composed a song about the importance of protecting the biodiversity.



On Wednesday, 15.11.2023, students and teachers participated in a thematic visit to Natural Reserve of Dunas de São Jacinto Leave Aveiro towards the beaches, Praia da Barra, Costa Nova beach, BioRia – Salreu. They discovered the unique landscape and nature of the beaches of Costa Nova and Barra, the São Jacinto Dunes Nature Reserve and the Salinas de Aveiro.



Costa Nova is a beach with conditions for surfing and windsurfing and there are typical houses painted with stripes in strong colors that give the whole surrounding area phenomenal color.



The Pateira de Frossos, a marshy area of former rice fields, is a complex agricultural mosaic and has an extremely diverse animal and flower community which is reflected in the large number of species of Passeriformes and small mammals that mainly use the hedges. The natural conditions allowed the establishment of diversified species, with a large colony of storks (*Ciconia ciconia*).

The path of Salreu is of circular nature, having its beginning and end next to the BioRia's Center of Environmental Interpretation. It is an 8 km route, which crosses areas of enormous scenic beauty, such as rice fields, marshes, reeds, cane fields salt flats, which border the Centro de Portugal city of Aveiro, forms a rich diversity of landscapes for both humans and wildlife.

Students understood that individuals have a vital part to play in protecting the biodiversity. Reducing consumption patterns can start at an individual level through conscious choices about the food we eat, products we buy and services we use.

Spending time in nature helped improve relationship with it and attach greater value to the habitats around. Educating students about wildlife and local ecosystems helped to make connection to

the natural world clearer and bring about long-term behavioural changes in future generations. To capture ecological aspects, students participated in a photo contest: “Our feelings for the environment”.

On Thursday, 16.11.2023, students and teachers participated in a thematic visit to University of Aveiro Campus. They attended a presentation about recycling, green energy symbolic shore cleaning. Also, students and teachers carried out recycling activities.



On Friday, 17.11.2023, students produced the fourth part of the Green Deal Toolkit: worked on interactive quizzes, using the latest technological resources/platforms, focusing on protection of biodiversity with hints and clues for the wrong answers and reliable sources for more information for each correct answer. Also, they played a Kahoot game.

Students attended a thematic visit to the salt pits of Aveiro and the Marinha da Troncalhada ecomuseum. Marinha da Troncalhada shows its visitors the artisanal salt production methods, explores the characteristic landscape, fauna and flora, as well as keeping alive the experiences and traditions linked to this secular activity.



In the afternoon, students and teachers attended a workshop How to make Ovos Moles (traditional sweets from Aveiro)? Ovos Moles are produced in Aveiro. The cream made with sugar syrup and egg yolks sweeten the palate of all who tasted this sweet wrapped in a thin wafer, sometimes dipped in sugar syrup for a more consistent texture. Ovos Moles de Aveiro was the first Portuguese product to receive a distinction from the European Union.





Working on the project results on international level participants improved communication in English language and vocabulary in environment related areas, IT, social and cultural skills. Also, they developed their critical thinking, teamwork spirit, responsibility for nature, sustainable attitudes, ecological and economic actions, in order to ensure comparable or better living conditions for present and future generations.





Outdoor education – educational visits (students participated in a variety of adventurous challenges), curiosity and fun during activities (posting InstaStories, photos on social media) increased the quality and quantity of the learning process. By participating in all activities and coming into contact with different cultures, students became receptive to European heritage, became more sensitive to the meaning of European culture, ecologically aware and willing to consciously protect the environment.

The activities carried out in school workshops and open discussions gave students the opportunity to show their artistic and creative potential, to participate in experiences that helped them learn not only scientific information, but also practical ways of action.

Participating in lessons using webquests, using Microsoft and web 2.0 tools and the Google game in an intercultural way stimulated the students' academic success, improved their English level and specific vocabulary related to the environment.

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