

Comenius Project

Report on visit to St. Cronan Boys School, Bray, Republic of Ireland, 9 – 14 / 3 / 2015

Participating Gozitan Schools: G. C. Sannat Primary School and Special Unit

G. C. Qala Primary School

The visit to St Cronan's Boys School, which is made up of around five hundred students, eighteen class teachers, eight support teachers and five special needs teachers, initiated on the 9th of March.

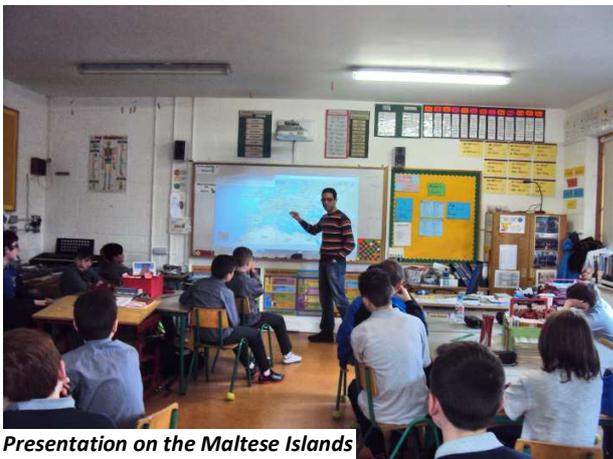
Our group, together with other colleagues from Austria and Holland, was welcomed by Ms. Maeuve Thierney who is the current head of school. After the usual introductions and formalities Ms. Thierney explained to us all that the school was at that moment holding an Irish week in preparation for St. Patrick's Day, which is celebrated in all Ireland on the 18th of March. This was followed by a brief explanation of why this saint is so much important to the Irish people. The group was then taken for a tour around the school. It was observed that the school was very well organized and that a high degree



Dancing Lessons

of team spirit reigns among all members of the school's staff. Apart from academic lessons, that usually fill a school day, it was noted that several classes were engaged in traditional dancing and singing lessons. It was observed that all students were highly motivated and took such lessons very seriously. Another particular observation was the fact that teachers were all the

time encouraging students to shift from English to Gaelic, which is the Irish native language. We were told that the mentioned folkloristic lessons and the speaking of Gaelic were as part of the Irish week mentioned earlier. Our first day at St. Cronan school continued with a visit to the school's staff room. This visit, apart from serving to the group to meet most of the school's teaching staff, offered the possibility to each one of us to engage with our Irish colleagues in interesting conversations about our respective countries and traditions. Later on in the day, our group did two separate presentations about the Maltese Islands. During these presentations the geographical



Presentation on the Maltese Islands

and historical aspects of our country were explained. The level of interest generated in the students was evident from the numerous number of questions they asked.

The following day a meeting with the project's coordinator, Mr. Anton Verwey and the members from the other participating countries was held. During this lengthy meeting, the progress registered so far in the 'Anti Xenophobia' project and the way forward were discussed in detail. This meeting was followed by the senior students guiding the group around the school to show us with pride how their work related to the project is celebrated around the school. Later the group was invited to the school's hall to attend a concert of traditional music and singing. This concert was held to celebrate the different, around thirty five, nationalities that attend the school. In this concert a multi-cultural orchestra made up of around sixty



Project Meeting

students and some Irish guest musicians entertained the present audience. The orchestra was under the baton of a Irish guest maestro who also composed a number of

traditional Irish ballads for the occasion. Among the guests of honour who attend this concert, was the 1970 Eurovision Song Contest winner Dana, who currently is also a MEP for the Republic of Ireland.

Our third day at St. Cronan School, was once again initiated with another meeting with the project's coordinator and our colleagues from the different participating countries. Since the project is arriving to its end the final report and its format were discussed. Following the meeting, our Dutch colleagues together with the male members forming our group, organized some traditional games to different age groups in one of the school's playing areas. It was noticed that the participating students could relate to some of the games presented because of obvious similarities. These games proved very fruitful to promote to a larger extent cooperation and fraternity among the different nationalities that attend the school. In the meantime the other two female members of the group were taken to visit Marino, which is a nearby special school. There they observed the teaching methods used and the initiatives taken for the benefit of those who attend the school. During the afternoon session the group attended the giving ceremony of the 'green flag' awarded to the school for its efforts to promote and sustain a clean environment. This event was also marked with the planting of a tree.

During our stay in Bray our Irish host organized for the whole group a number of interesting excursions which included mainly Ireland's capital city, Dublin, and parts of the enchanting Wicklow mountain region. These visits helped us all to further our understanding of the Irish history and culture, but mainly also to admire the natural beauty of the unique landscapes which the south of this republic is endowed with.



Lough Tay, Wicklow Mountain region

Our final treat by our hosts was a farewell dinner held at a posh local restaurant. This occasion served us, not only to enjoy the Irish cuisine, but also to appreciate some Irish traditional songs performed by a quartet of musicians from the school's staff.



Farewell dinner

Members of the Gozo College participating school:

***Gozo College Sannat Primary School
& Special Unit:***

Gozo College Qala Primary:

MARIO ZAMMIT

PAUL CAMILLERI

JOANNE SULTANA

JOSEPH GATT

NADIA CREMONA

17th March 2015

DATE