

THE TRAIN FOR EUROPE STORY



COMENIUS SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

„European CNC-Network – Train for EUROPE - RELOADED“

Dear Mr. President,
dear Zoran and Tatjana,
dear members of the great organisation team in Zagreb,
dear students and teachers,
dear Train Family.

As the responsible project coordinator of this COMENIUS school partnership “European CNC-Network – Train for EUROPE - RELOADED” it’s a great honour to meet you all here in Croatia and so I was asked, if I would like to give a historical view back to the most important milestones of our previous activities. It’s really difficult to talk about all the things that have happened in the last 8 years in only ten minutes, but I will try to do so.

Some of you are wondering now, but of course eight years is the exact period, because the year 2004 is to be named as the year of birth for that project idea. At that time, a German delegation from the BBS TGHS Bad Kreuznach went to our Belgian partner school St. Josef Instituut in Geel for a visit. It was there, when the desire and the basic idea for a close cooperation in the field of CNC technology was first put into words.

In the year 2005 then, our first attempt in establishing a COMENIUS school partnership was in vain. Especially finding appropriate and interested partner schools was much harder than expected and we therefore decided to intensify the search for participants.

Those efforts then finally succeeded and we were able to welcome interested partners from fourteen different vocational schools at my school in Germany in November 2006. All those fourteen participants in the preparatory visit showed a lot of enthusiasm for the idea and the vision of developing a common product in the framework of the „European CNC-Network“. After intensive discussions prior to that decision, the guests had discussed the different possibilities and options of such a common product and through a democratic voting process the final project idea of a „Train for EUROPE“ was then elected by the majority of the participants.

In a cooperation between trainees from at the end 24 schools out of almost all European countries the pupils constructed a “Train for Europe” between 2007 and 2009 within an unforgettable project adventure. The wagons were designed to represent the countries they came from. The locomotive on the other hand was a joint project, built by all the countries taking part, and its function was to pull the “Train for EUROPE” reliably along a 6-metre wide rail circuit.

And this is exactly what makes Europe so special. The locomotive stands for European commonalities, the wagons symbolise particular features of European countries and regions. The fact that the wagons are all hooked together shows that the countries are united – despite all the differences.

The trainees in the various schools throughout Europe summed up all their imagination when they were designing the carriages. A Swiss school loaded a holey Swiss cheese onto their wagon, the Netherlands placed Frau Antje on board of their carriage. The school in Barcelona had the spires of the Sagrada Familia church towering from their wagon, a French school sent the Eiffel Tower on tour. Belgium had the Manneken Pis on board and Germany decorated its wagon with a VW Beetle. And the Croatian wagon delivered clear and fresh water (or maybe Slivovitz?) to all European countries.

Before the finished train could be proudly presented in the European Parliament in Brussels in April 2009, the Comenius partner schools organised meetings in France, Italy, Spain, Germany and of course in Belgium.

The new "Train for EUROPE - RELOADED" (which is starting now in Croatia) is meant to be a follow-up of our successful COMENIUS School Partnership "European CNC-Network - Train for EUROPE", which was by the way also the winning project of the EUROPEAN CHARLEMAGNE YOUTH PRIZE 2010. This very famous Prize is awarded to young Europeans who, in the sense of the European idea, realise joint projects. We will never forget the laudation of Mr. Jerzy Buzek, the President of the European Parliament. He described the added value of the winning project "Train for EUROPE" as follows: "The partnership testifies exactly the essence of the European idea: acting together, overcoming the limits of boundaries, the discovery of diversity and its potential".

The main goal of the new partnership will be again to improve a long lasting and sustainable development of a „European CNC-Network“. Essential features of this new partnership have already been determined by the resolution we made during our preparatory meeting in Hungary in December 2009.

But the new project adventure "Train for EUROPE - RELOADED" is certainly not just simply a copy of the forerunning school partnership. As the framework of the project and demands on participants have consciously been changed and adopted, the planned school partnership will have a completely different structure and new organisation. Moreover, new impulses are expected because some partners left the project and new ones have joined.

The wagons will consist of standardized undercarriages and specific upper parts connected by a common clicking system. The individual upper parts will have to be designed under a common motto, which also has to be defined at the first meeting here in Croatia. We have thought about depicting a famous technical invention of each country. For example, the British wagon could carry a telephone (also produced by CNC-technology), because the Englishman Graham Bell is supposed to be the inventor.

This time the new partnership will also include electro-technical challenges. Therefore a "European Electronic Map" shall be developed. The "European Electronic Map" is a map meant to display the geographical outlines of the different European countries and is manufactured as a large puzzle on the basis of CNC-technology. Each wagon will be equipped with electronic devices in order to communicate with the "European Electronic Map" and will be able to switch on a flash light for example.

The partners are convinced that this partnership is perfectly suited to work out another successful project supported by the "European CNC-Network". The result of our efforts symbolizes the successful cooperation of the different European educational institutes. We are confident that with this project we have found again an excellent example that will represent and enhance the "European spirit".

Thanks to everybody's commitment in this kind of projects which made those meetings possible and unforgettable! Thanks again to the great organisation team here in Croatia. And thanks a lot, Mr. President, for your interest in this COMENIUS school partnership.

Let's run the „Train for EUROPE – RELOADED!

THANKS!

Heinz Wildgrube
CNC-Network Coordinator