



FutureMinds: Cultivating Innovative Leaders in STEAM and Active Citizenship

Project n° 2024-2-BE01-KA210-SCH-000286437

Activity Template

Our roots, our European cultural heritage: a visit of the historical centers of Namur and Brussels

School: INDSC Beauraing (Belgium)

Teacher Name and surname: GEONET Valérie and DOMKEN Dominique

Activity objectives:

Cultural and Historical Understanding

- To help pupils discover and understand the historical development of Belgian cities through the exploration of the historic centers of Namur and Brussels.
- To identify key monuments, urban spaces, and symbols that illustrate the political, economic, and cultural history of Belgium and Europe.
- To raise awareness of the role of Brussels as the capital of Belgium and as an important center of European institutions.

European and Intercultural Awareness

- To foster a sense of European citizenship by bringing together pupils from Belgium, Finland, and Italy in a shared educational experience.
- To encourage respect for cultural diversity by comparing everyday life, traditions, and historical perspectives from different European countries.
- To develop openness, curiosity, and mutual understanding through intercultural exchange and collaboration.

Social and Civic Education

- To help pupils understand how cities function as social, political, and cultural spaces.

- To explore concepts such as democracy, citizenship, and heritage preservation through visits to civic and historical sites.
- To encourage responsible behavior in public spaces and respect for cultural heritage.

General framework: The visit to the historic centers of Namur and Brussels is not only a cultural activity but a **core citizenship-learning experience**, fully aligned with Erasmus+ objectives. It supports the programme's mission to: *"promote common values, civic engagement, inclusion, and active participation in democratic life among young Europeans."*

Cross-curricular subjects involved: History, History of art, Geography, English

Material needed to develop the activity: good shoes and motivation

Timing: 1 X 2 hours and 2 X 2 hours

Groups: 2 X 20 pupils aged 12 to 14, with a mix of nationalities in each group.

Procedure to develop the activity:

- 1) A guided tour in English of the historical center of Namur, a town that is the capital city of one of the 3 Regions of Belgium, Wallonia. This town has been inhabited since the prehistorical times, thanks to its ideal location at the confluent of 2 main rivers. It is an opportunity to discover its architectural, historical and cultural gems as well as its past and current urban planning. Furthermore, Namur is now the capital city of a federal Region of Belgium: this visit is also a good opportunity to discover the intricate institutions of the Belgian State. This takes 2 hours and involves around 3 km of walking, starting from the train station to the meeting point of the Sambre and the Meuse rivers.
- 2) A guided tour in English with a professional guide of the citadel of Namur, a highlight and strategic place from the Modern Times. It is an opportunity to develop with the pupils the history of the Spanish and then French conquests of Namur. It takes around 2 hours and 3 km walking.
- 3) A guided tour of the city center of Brussels, in English and with a professional guide. It starts with the cathedral and includes the medieval Town Hall and its surroundings, the Manneken Piss and small medieval streets but also new shared space work, Art deco station and contemporary features.

Competences and skills to be acquired:

Language and Communication Skills

- To improve pupils' communication skills in English as a common language for interaction among international groups.

- To encourage pupils to express observations, ask questions, and share opinions orally and in writing in an authentic context.
- To develop active listening and cooperation skills while working in mixed-nationality groups.

Observation, Critical Thinking, and Learning Autonomy

- To develop pupils' observation skills by analyzing architectural elements, urban layouts, and historical details.
- To encourage critical thinking by making connections between past and present, local and European history.
- To promote learning autonomy through inquiry-based activities such as guided walks, questionnaires, or group challenges.

Personal and Social Development

- To strengthen pupils' self-confidence and independence in an outdoor and unfamiliar learning environment.
- To develop teamwork and social skills through collaborative tasks and shared experiences.
- To create positive memories linked to learning, travel, and international cooperation.

Pictures:



**Pitfalls and strengths:**

The strength of this procedure:

- A professional guide knows the most striking locations and provides accurate, engaging explanations, making history and citizenship concepts more concrete and motivating.
- Pupils benefit from structured storytelling and on-site context, supporting understanding of Brussels as a civic and European capital.

The pitfalls of this procedure:

- The guided pace and content may be less adapted to all learning styles or attention spans.
- Cost and language constraints may limit accessibility or interaction for all pupils.



Erasmus+

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Activity Template

Learning European citizenship from the visit of the European Parliament

School: INDSC – Beauraing (Belgium)

Teacher Name and surname: GEONET Valérie and DOMKEN Dominique

Activity objectives:

- Develop active European citizenship by understanding the role of the European Parliament in EU democratic decision-making.
- Strengthen civic and social competences through direct exposure to EU institutions and participatory democracy.
- Promote EU values (democracy, human rights, inclusion, solidarity) in line with Erasmus+ priorities.
- Enhance intercultural competence by contextualising the visit within a transnational Erasmus+ exchange.

- Foster critical thinking about European policies and their impact on young people's daily lives.

General framework:

Living in Belgium gives us easy access to the European Parliament in Brussels, a key place in European history and democracy. As part of our Erasmus+ exchange, visiting this institution made sense, as it helped pupils understand how European cooperation has developed, from the origins of the EEC to today's mobility programmes for students. This visit offered a concrete opportunity to discover how a major European institution works and to better understand European citizenship. It also fitted perfectly with the theme of our exchange, by linking rights, responsibilities and participation at European level.

In addition, having previously been welcomed by the mayor of Beauraing at the town hall, pupils were able to compare local and European institutions, and to reflect on their role as citizens at both local and international levels.

Cross-curricular subjects involved: Social studies, History, Philosophy

Material needed to develop the activity: A schoolbus or an access to public transport

Timing: around 100 minutes for the visit + travel time to and from Brussels.

It is necessary to book the visit at least 1 month in advance and transfer the info of the teachers and pupils passport.

Groups: A group of 38 people (6 teachers and 32 students).

Procedure to develop the activity:

Through the European Union Parliament website, book a visit of the European Parliament in Brussels at least one month in advance and if possible, also book a tour of the democracy museum of the Parliament.

You can ask a Member of Parliament from your country to come and talk to you if they are available, or ask for a specific topic to be discussed with a staff member of the Parliament (like green policies, for example). The guide explained to us very thoroughly

the work of the Parliament, the way it worked on a daily basis and the legislative process leading to the formation of the Parliament.

NB: if possible, the same group of students and teachers could also visit the local townhall and meet the mayor to discuss the problems of the district and the way local authorities manage their territory.

Competences and skills to be acquired:

- Citizenship: understanding how democratic decisions are made at European level.
- Critical thinking: learning to question, compare viewpoints and reflect on political choices.
- Communication skills: listening, asking questions and expressing opinions.
- Intercultural competence: respecting diversity and feeling part of a shared European community.
- Soft skills: cooperating, debating and learning with students from other countries.
- Learning motivation: connecting school knowledge with real-life institutions and issues.

Pictures:





Pitfalls and strengths:

The strengths:

- strengthens civic knowledge and motivation through direct contact with an EU institution (non-formal learning).
- helps building a European citizenship by making EU democracy tangible, supporting Erasmus+ priorities on participation and active citizenship.
- gives intercultural value: shared visit within an exchange reinforces mutual understanding and peer learning among European students.

The pitfalls:

- institutional content may be complex for 12–15-year-olds without pedagogical preparation.

- a lecture-style visit can limit learner engagement if not interactive. That's how the visit to the museum can be an interesting added value.