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## **Erasmus+ KA2 „Unique National and European Symbols of our Culture and Originality” (U.N.E.S.C.O.)**

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**KA2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices  
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“Dimitrie Cantemir” Economic College Suceava coordinates, between September 2020 - August 2023, the Erasmus + KA229 project entitled „**Unique National and European Symbols of our Culture and Originality**” (U.N.E.S.C.O.).

The partner schools come from European countries with a rich UNESCO heritage: Turističko Ugostiteljska Skola (Tourism and catering school), Split, Croatia, Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Francesco Ferrara Mazara del Vallo, Italy, Io Geniko Lykeio Artemidos Artemis, Greece, Cemberlitas Anadolu Lisesi Istanbul, Turkey, Instituto de Enseñanza Secundaria Los Cardones Granadilla de Abona, Spain.

Between March 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> 2022, teachers and students from partner schools participated in the second mobility within the project, in Istanbul, Turkey, mobility organized by Cemberlitas Anadolu Lisesi. The central theme of the activities was “Intangible U.N.E.S.C.O. elements in need of urgent safeguarding”, and aimed at deepening the information related to the intangible cultural heritage, which is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity, focusing on the traditions that each people keeps alive.

We chose this topic for learning in Turkey in order to encourage mutual respect for another culture, for a different way of life. Turkey is a country where most of the heritage elements have been preserved, being later transformed into tourist attractions. Cultural heritage does not only refer to

monuments and artefacts; it actually goes way beyond with customs, rituals, social practices, the knowledge and skills transmitted through master-apprentice relations – things that we “inherit from our ancestors and pass on to our descendants,” as UNESCO defines. Turkey is among the top five countries with the most intangible heritage values inscribed on UNESCO’s list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. With plenty of its oral traditions, local knowledge, and traditional skills having made it into the list, Turkey has rich heritage due to its long history.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> 2022, the official opening of the project meeting took place, and the students and teachers presented and illustrated representative elements of the intangible heritage from their countries: Romania - the “martisor” tradition, as a symbolic object used to celebrate the coming of spring; Italy - Sicilian puppet theater; Spain - whistle language used in La Gomera; Croatia - multipart singing tradition of the southern Croatian regions of Dalmatia, Klapa; Greece - Rebetiko, musical and cultural expression directly related to song and dance; Turkey - rituals and ceremonies used to celebrate spring and whistle language.





Then, the students and teachers participated in an educational workshop "EBRU - Turkish art of marbling", where they had the chance to experiment with this technique.

***What is EBRU - an element on the list of intangible cultural heritage of Turkey?***

Ebru, also known as paper marbling, is the Turkish tradition of painting on water. Ebru painting is a distinctive genre of aqueous art used to produce mesmerizing works. This special form of art has been listed as a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2014. Ebru is the traditional Turkish art of creating colourful patterns by sprinkling and brushing colour pigments onto a pan of oily water and then transferring the patterns to paper. First, the artist mixes water with pigment and kitre, a natural gum, to produce a dye. The dye is then added to the surface of the size, a cellulose solution, and an awl is used to manipulate the colours into designs and patterns.





The first forms of Ebru emerged in the 13th century, in Central Asia and spread throughout Anatolia. During the Ottoman period, Turkish calligraphers and artists created new forms and perfected techniques. It is a way of promoting Turkish history, culture and traditions.

On Monday afternoon, students and teachers discussed in another workshop the intangible elements of UNESCO's cultural heritage that need to be saved by future generations and attended a demonstration - Turkish coffee making and tasting. Turkish coffee combines special preparation and brewing techniques with a rich communal traditional culture. The freshly roasted beans are ground to a fine powder; then the ground coffee, cold water and sugar are added to a coffee pot and brewed slowly on a stove to produce the desired foam. The tradition itself is a symbol of hospitality, friendship, refinement and entertainment that permeates all walks of life. Turkish coffee is regarded as part of Turkish cultural heritage: it is celebrated in literature and songs, and is an indispensable part of ceremonial occasions.



On Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, the students participated in the webquest activity “Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding”, where they found out why the intangible cultural heritage is so important, they discovered information related to the elements of the intangible cultural heritage of the 6 partner countries and strategies for their perpetuation. While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. In multinational teams, students analysed good practice examples and came up with measures aimed at valorising and safeguarding the elements of intangible heritage from each partner country.



Furthermore, the students and teachers observed and then practiced the whistle language, in a workshop organized in the school. Inscribed in 2017 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, **whistled language** is a method of communication that uses whistling to simulate and articulate words. The practitioners are mainly agricultural communities who spend most of their lives outdoors. The communities concerned consider this practice to be a key reflection of their cultural identity, which reinforces interpersonal communication and solidarity.



Although the community is aware of the importance of this practice, technological developments and socioeconomic changes have led to a decline in the number of practitioners and areas where it is spoken. One of the key threats to the practice is the use of mobile phones. The new generation's interest in whistled language has diminished considerably and there is a risk that the element will be gradually torn from its natural environment, becoming an artificial practice. In spite of such



threats, the communities have been actively promoting this linguistic practice both nationally and internationally to ensure its sustainability, and whistled language is still transmitted from generation to generation in the context of parent-child relations through both formal and informal methods.

On Tuesday afternoon we visited Miniaturk, one of the largest outdoor miniature parks in the world, with a total area of over 60,000 square meters and 62 miniatures in Istanbul alone. It was a unique opportunity to get to know and learn the history and culture of the civilizations that have left their mark on the Anatolian space and beyond.



On Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, students and teachers took a guided tour (educational tour) of the historical areas of Istanbul that have unique monuments of Byzantine and Ottoman civilizations: Topkapı Palace, Hagia Irene, the Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia Mosque. The students experienced elements of cultural heritage and captured evidence (images, personal notes) and then posted them on Instagram: #erasmusplusunesco.





### *What did we learn?*

İstanbul is represented on the UNESCO World Heritage List by four main areas: Sultanahmet Archaeological Park (including Hippodrome of Constantine, Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, Little Hagia Sophia and Topkapı Palace), Süleymaniye Conservation Area, Zeyrek Conservation Area and Land Walls Conservation Area.

First built by Mehmet the Conqueror in the 15th century, the glorious **Topkapı Palace** beside the Bosphorus was where the sultans of the Ottoman Empire lived and ruled from. The vast complex is a dazzling display of Islamic art, with opulent courtyards lined with intricate hand-painted tilework, linking a warren of sumptuously decorated rooms, all bounded by battlemented walls and towers. Of the many highlights here, the most popular are the Harem complex (where the sultan's many concubines and children would spend their days); the Second Court, where we walked through the vast palace kitchens and stood in awe at the dazzling interior of the Imperial Council Chamber; and the Third Court, which contained the sultan's private rooms. The Third Court also displays an impressive collection of relics of the Prophet Muhammad in the Sacred Safekeeping Room and is home to the Imperial Treasury, where we were greeted with a cache of glittering gold objects and precious gems that made your eyes water.

The **Hagia Irene** located in the outer courtyard of Topkapı Palace is the oldest church of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine). It was also the second largest church in Istanbul after Hagia Sophia. Hagia Irene, originally means “sacred peace” (Hagia Eirene), has a special meaning as the first place where Turkish museology was born.

The ancient **Hippodrome** was begun by Septimius Severus in CE 203 and completed by Constantine the Great in CE 330. This was the center of Byzantine public life and the scene of splendid games and chariot races but also factional conflicts. We admired the three ancient monuments: a 20-meter high Egyptian obelisk (from Heliopolis); the Serpent Column brought here from Delphi by

Constantine; and a stone obelisk that originally was clad in gold-covered bronze plating until they were stolen by the soldiers of the 4th Crusade in 1204.

The **Hagia Sophia** was the emperor Justinian's swaggering statement to the world of the wealth and technical ability of his empire. Tradition maintained that the area surrounding the emperor's throne within the church was the official center of the world. Through its conversion to a mosque, after the Ottoman armies conquered Constantinople, to its further conversion into a museum in the 20th century and its reconversion back into a working mosque in 2020, the Hagia Sophia has remained one of Istanbul's most cherished landmarks.

Sultan Ahmet I's grand architectural gift to his capital was the beautiful **Blue Mosque**. Built between 1609 and 1616, the mosque caused a furore throughout the Muslim world when it was finished, as it had six minarets (the same number as the Great Mosque of Mecca). A seventh minaret was eventually gifted to Mecca to stem the dissent. The mosque gets its nickname from its interior decoration of tens of thousands of Iznik tiles. The entire spatial and color effect of the interior makes the mosque one of the finest achievements of Ottoman architecture.

The outstanding universal value of Istanbul resides in its unique integration of architectural masterpieces that reflect the meeting of Europe and Asia over many centuries, and in its incomparable skyline formed by the creative genius of Byzantine and Ottoman architects.

On Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, the students designed questions for the online application that will be completed at the last meeting within the project and produced the second section of the game. One teacher and one student from each school selected the questions to be integrated into the game (30 questions). To promote UNESCO's intangible heritage, students presented the experience they gained by visiting historical monuments and creating digital stories using Microsoft Sway.

The teachers discussed the organization of the next meetings, financial details, necessary documents, etc. The project coordinator gave a presentation of the activities carried out so far, the responsibilities of each school involved, emphasizing the program of activities for each mobility and the online application. The evening ended with the awarding of certificates of participation in a festive atmosphere, where students and teachers exchanged impressions and tasted traditional dishes and desserts of Turkish cuisine.

The meeting was a real opportunity for professional, cultural training, exchange of experience and practice of language and computer skills for the participating students and teachers. Due to the activities of the project, the students had the opportunity to learn more about their own country and the culture of other countries, about the different lifestyles in both formal and non-formal learning environments, being active protagonists of the teaching and learning process.



Outdoor education - educational visits (students took part in a variety of adventurous challenges to discover Unesco heritage in Turkey), 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 have become receptive to the European heritage, have become more sensitive to the meaning of European culture, culturally aware and willing to consciously protect European heritage.



The activities carried out in the school workshops and the open discussions offered the students the opportunity to manifest their artistic and creative potential, to participate in experiences that helped them to learn not only scientific information, but also values, traditions.

Participating in webquests, using Microsoft and Web 2.0 tools and Google Play in an intercultural way stimulated students' academic success, improved their English language skills and specific vocabulary related to natural and cultural heritage.

Project coordinator,  
Florentina Sfichi

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