

BOUNDARIES II



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

ÅLAND 2010



We made this newspaper



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From 6th to 13th of August 30 young people from Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Åland gathered on Prästö/Vårdö, at the Åland Islands, to discuss issues of boundaries and identity.

During the six-day exchange, participants took part in workshops, excursions, cultural evenings and other social activities. The purpose was for young people from different countries and cultures to get a chance to meet and discuss important issues.

The exchange, directed at young people aged 16-19, was financed by the EU's Youth in Action programme. 'Boundaries II' is the follow-up of a youth exchange on the same topic that was held in Ysselsteyn in the Netherlands in 2009. The exchange aims to give young people an opportunity to come together across borders to discuss personal, cultural and national boundaries and borders and how they can cause severe conflict but also serve as a meeting place. Organisers hope that in the summer of 2011, a third exchange with the same theme can be held in either Bulgaria, Greece or Turkey.

The core theme of the exchange of 2010 has been 'boundaries', and the emphasis has been on three sub-themes, namely 'identity', 'peaceful conflict-management' and 'tolerance'. The issue of how boundaries can serve as a meeting place between cultures and identities, and how they can also be a source of conflict has been highlighted in the example of the Åland Islands. The wish of the Ålanders to re-unite with the 'mother country' of Sweden in the beginning of the 20th century had the potential to cause severe international conflict, but today the islands rather serve as a meeting place between cultures and languages. Ålandic identity (or identities) can also illustrate how identity can be influenced from both east and west, and may shift over time and vary in different situations. Tolerance has been shown to be an essential quality if identities and boundaries are to result in celebrations of diversity rather than hostility and conflict.

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Life at camp - out of the comfort zone

Being in camp is a great opportunity to meet new people, to get outside of the familiar comfort zone and to see many differences from the home country.

Even though it is holidays for the camp participants, life here begins early. Too early for most of them compared with usual summer vacation day. Youth, regardless of the origin country, likes to get up late on holiday, usually between 9 and 12 in the morning. The camp breakfast starts at 8 a.m., so no wonder that only the most diligent participants arrive to the breakfast on time.

George, the 17 year old participant from Greece, hardly gets up for breakfast. One time he managed to miss it completely. George is used to getting up between 11-12 a.m. and goes to bed about 2 am on holidays, so I can understand him.

Camp participants said that they have enough free time in camp. They have fewer ways to spend it compared with home because of the remote camp location. However they still enjoy spare time very much. The main ingredient of the quality leisure time here is the same as at home – friends. Camp is the perfect place to make new friends, even

though there are cultural differences between them and for some participants the language barrier makes it difficult to express themselves properly. A 20 year old girl from Turkey Nurbanu has come to camp for the first time and she is so happy to be in the camp that she decided to write her memories in a diary. She did not do this before coming to camp.

Anja, 17, a girl from Holland, said that she is used to spending time with friends in the youth center. They watch



movies, play games and just do whatever they want there. I find it quite similar to the youth house where the camp events happen.

Turkish, Greek and Bulgarian youngsters are used to completely different weather conditions. It is very

hot in their countries compared to Åland Islands' sea air. Now it is over 30 degrees there, while in the mean time here everybody can enjoy only brief sunshine and about 15-20 degrees. Nevertheless, interviewed participants said they accommodated quite easily. According to the participants the camp is the best place

to start new friendships. Nurbanu commented that she especially enjoyed the company of smiling Bulgarian girls who live in the same cabin. The girls found some common words in their different languages.

All the participants were introduced with the rules of the camp and the schedule of various activities. Perhaps it is more effortless to be on time for Hollanders. According to Anja, Hollanders are very punctual and to be late 15 minutes in Holland is a big

deal. A different situation is in Greece, where George says, people are not used to being exactly on time. This could be because the habit to not strictly obey the rules.

Much of the camp activities are organized indoors. Although interviewed participants like more physical activities rather than mental, they agree that staying indoors and communicating with people is amazing. People who live in the southern European countries, such as Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria are used to enjoying the beach. During the camp they didn't have many such opportunities because of the weather.

Marie, an almost 17 year old Bulgarian girl, wondered at car drivers who were very polite and stopped immediately when they saw a pedestrian trying to cross the street. She added that it is very clean in Åland and the roads are in a very good condition.

The beauty of nature was noticed by George, who lives in the big city, which consists mostly of buildings. To sum all this up, the differences found in the camp although it sometimes creates inconveniences but more often enrich participants' lives with absolutely new experiences.

Remigijus Kilas

JOKE: It's midnight and it's snowing. And a guy has to pass through the cemetery to get into his house but he is scared. While he is walking in the cemetery he listen to "tik-tak", "tik-tak"... He approaches to the spot where the sound is coming from and suddenly he sees another guy hitting a

grave with his nails.

- What are you doing there?-he says frightened.
- This stupid man wrote wrong my name.

By Maria Fuchedjieva (Bulgaria)

Schools - similarities and differences

Within the European Union basic education is compulsory and public schools should be available for everyone. However, there are a lot of differences between the countries in the European Union. As an example, we have compared the schools in Turkey and Finland.

Ahmet Kiray, 33, is a science educator in the public university Hacettepe University in Ankara. We asked him a few questions about the schools in Turkey.

Ahmet told us that in Turkey you start school at the age of seven. In the end of middle school, at the age of fifteen, you have to pass an exam to enter a high school, the next level. If you get good grades you can go to a nice high school where the pros are many, for example the teachers are very professional. It is also easier to get a job if you have an exam from one of those high schools.

There are both public and private high schools. The private schools are too expensive for normal families. The



same goes for universities. The private universities charge about 10 000 dollars per year, while the public ones charge 200-300 per year. However, you need better marks to enter a public university than to enter a private one. Susann Simolin, 36, is working at the Peace institute on Åland. We asked her a few questions about the schools in Finland.

In contrast to Turkey, there are very few private schools in Finland. Most people go to public schools, which are free for everyone. Until the 9th grade the literature is free as well.

You start school at the age of seven, just like in Turkey, and at the age of twelve you continue with studies at a high school without having to pass any exams. At the age of 15, the students are able to choose whether they want to quit school, go to a vocational school or to a theoretical upper secondary school. The competition for entering

the theoretical upper secondary school is not very tough. To complete your studies you have to pass exams that require a lot of preparation.

When you have passed the exams in the end of the upper secondary school there are big celebrations all over the country. The white hat is typical for the Northern countries and comes originally from the University of Uppsala in Sweden.

The universities in Finland are free as well. There are a few specialised universities on Åland but most of the students go to Sweden or Finland to get a higher education.

**Gizem Kadioglu, Turkey
and Marie Johansson, Finland.**



What were your expectations of Boundaries before going?



Laura Gooren (NL)

A little bit the same as it is now, because I heard a lot from Anouk. I thought we didn't have to get up so early... I also didn't

expect that we had to walk so much, because I thought the camp and the YC were at the same place. It's very strange that here isn't any supermarket or something in the area, I didn't think it wouldn't be so far away... I expected the food will be a little bit the same as in Holland, but it is very different!



Emre Demirdag (TU)

I didn't know exactly what I must expect of Boundaries II. But I hoped it would be a lot of fun there and I

would meet nice people! I hoped I'd learn a lot about the other countries and cultures. For example to learn all the similar and different things between them. I expected that I was going to see different places and see a whole new country!



Anja Romme (NL)

I was looking forward to do it, because I was going to see everyone again from the last year! I heard there will be a lot of new people,

so I was also very interested to meet them... I also thought that the meals were a little bit the same as in Holland, but here we got warm food by our lunch. I think the meals in my country are nicer!



Spare time, music, clothes

Free time In this article five different countries present how they spend their free time. Their representatives are young and energetic people. In Åland many people do sports. They have very good volleyball-players and a very successful soccer team, called IFK Mariehamn. Most of the people in Mariehamn also like to do party and hanging out with their friends.

The Bulgarians are very amusing people. They spend their free time in best way for them. The favorite activity for many people is hiking mountains. In winter people go to skiing and in summer they spend time in many beautiful places on the Black sea, where they can sunbath.

No matter how hard they have to work, Greek people always find some free time during the day. Teenagers have more options, they like listening to music, surf the Net (this is really common in Greece during the end of the year), watching a movie, etc. When they don't have school, they usually go to clubs or cafés, where they can stay all the night. Adult people, that usually have less free time because of their jobs, may also go to cafés or bars, or watch a movie etc. Of course, Greek people have a favorite pastime, backgammon, which is extremely often played, especially in summer.

In Holland people who go to school have in their free time a job to get some money. Almost everybody do some sports there. Football game is also very spread in Holland. Youngsters go out in the evening to drink beer/alcohol, to dance and get new contact. Many girls spend money go shopping in their free time.

And Turkish people read books, listen to music in their free time. And also they go on a picnic, go shopping, surf on Internet, some of them like fishing and play football.

Food: Greek people love food! That's why their cuisine includes so many different dishes. Meat is the number one ingredient for almost every food. Greeks also have many salads and oily foods, like pears, bean soup etc. Feta cheese, a kind of white cheese, is pure Greek product and Greeks use it in many recipes. In addition, they eat a lot of fish, combined with rice, spaghetti, vegetables, or even by itself. These are the basic stuff that Greek people use in their food and combined with each other, it can result to great recipes.

Turkish food: We have so many different tastes. So we have a rich kitchen. Especially the east of the Turkey, there are so many interesting and delicious meals such as guvec, cig kofte, adana kebab, urfa kebab, baklava and the all kinds of kebabs are famous in the east. Manti is the most delicious meal in the Kayseri city. Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, is famous to yogurt soup.

Ålandic food : On Åland we eat a lot . We eat five meals a day and two of those are hot meals.

We my to eat healthy we eat last of for exlample and vegetables. But of course we eat some junk like snacks, maybe too much, sometimes. We have o few specialties on Åland, for example black bread and alandic pancake

Bulgarian food : Bulgaria has very delicious meals. Yoghurt from Bulgaria. Miks is known thwy have many differnet traditional customs and typical food. The Bulgarian production of wine and rakia are very good. And everybody likes them.

Dutch food : Typical netherlands food is cheese as everybody knows it. At breakfast we eat bread with something sweet, at lunch we use to eat meat and cheese, and bread with something on it like baked eggs. At dinner we eat fuest the soup, after that, meat with potatoes and vegetables. And dessert. Milk products are very much used in the Netherlands's cook.

"On Åland we eat a lot"

Written by: Dimitra Ouzouni, Greece, Gülsah Tolukan, Turkey, Jaklin Georgieva, Bulgaria and Josefine Ginlund, Finland



and food in our countries

Clothes: There are many different dressing styles among different countries. In Greece, there are many different ways of dressing up. Apart from the variety of traditional costumes, that are no longer worn in daily life, Greek people dress in many modern ways. They are casual and comfy in their daily life but they like very much to “pamper” themselves when they go out. It can find many styles, from rock to more sophisticated. There are no clothes that can be considered “forbidden”, everyone is free to wear any clothes they want.

People in Bulgaria try to look well and dress well. In the past, old people wore traditional Bulgarian clothes. In Turkey, they also have traditional clothes, but they wear their traditional dances. The day before someone’s wedding day is important for them and they call it “henna night”. The woman who’s married wears traditional clothes.

When Turkish people go to their jobs, men wear suits and women wear formal clothes. In their daily life, they wear jeans, sweaters, skirts etc.

In the whole world people have different styles, but in the Netherlands, they have all the styles together, but the soft version of each one, with no extreme things. Weird but true, many Dutch people walk on wooden shoes. There are no many people who have a piercing or any tattoos.

Last but not least, the Åland Islands, where almost everyone has a piercing somewhere. Most people have one or more piercings in their ears, but many girls are also pierced in their navels or somewhere else. Young people wear often modern clothes. They get their inspiration from Sweden, where they also buy most of their clothes. However, not many people dare to wear different clothes than the majority, because Åland Islands is such a small place.

People in Bulgaria try to look well and dress well

Music: Music is pretty much the same in every country, with several differences among different nations and cultures. Greece has a great variety of singers and song types. The most popular in Greece is a kind of dancing music, a bit like belly dancing that is called “Tsifteteli”. Greek people love listening to love songs, mostly by Greek artists. Rock, rap and hip hop music are also very popular, whereas few people listen to metal or thrash songs. In addition, English songs are also listened to by Greek people. Dancing and love songs have the first places in Greeks’ preferences. On the Balkans, the music generally is very dynamic. In Bulgaria the voice of the Bulgarian singer Valya Balkanska was sent in Cosmos Space. The folklore music is known with its dances-horo and ruchenica. You’d think that in the Netherlands they listen Dutch music but they actually don’t !! Most of the Dutch people don’t like Dutch music. Dutch music is listened at wedding and crazy parties. On Åland Islands, most people listen to the same music than the western world. As they speak Swedish, they also listen to a lot of Swedish bands and artists, but as they live in Finland, they know pretty much about Finnish music too. Typical Finnish music is hardrock and metal, for example H.I.M and Apulanta. There are several rock festivals in Finland and on Åland two music festivals are arranged every year. The music band culture is strong on Åland. There are many small bands and a lot of people play an instrument or sing in their free time. Finally, in Turkey, they have so many kinds of music like pop, rock, folk songs and Turkish public music. In 2003, their singer, Sertab Erener, won the Eurovision contest. She is one of the most well-known pop singers in Turkey. There are so many singers and composers in their country, the best of whom are Sezen Aksu and Nazan Onkel.



Stereotypes



- about others and oneself

You may have stereotypes about others - but in fact you might have as many about yourself! We asked some of the participants at the camp about what stereotypes they think are connected with other countries and with their own.

Bulgaria

Other peoples opinions:

- 1- Turkish people lived there (Turkish)
- 2- Holiday country (Holland)
- 3- Roses and kind people (Greece)
- 4- Nice nails (Finland)

Bulgarian people say “We drink rakia every day.”. However, other European people think differently.



Greece

Other peoples opinions:

- 1- Islands (Turkish)
- 2- Ouzo (Bulgaria)
- 3- Horse of Troje (Holland)
- 4- Sun (Finland)

Greek people say:

“We are cool and happy, we don't give too much attention to detail.” However people from another countries in Europe think differently, for them their characteristics are island, ouzo, troje and sun.

Finland

Other people opinions:

- 1- Cold (Turkish)
- 2- Cold, much food (Holland)
- 3- Cold and blonde people (Greece)
- 4- Island (Bulgaria)

Finnish people say “We drink vodka in the sauna and are very reserved”. This is our cultural characteristic. However, other people from Europe think differently than Finnish people. They use the word “cold” for people from this country.

Turkey

Other peoples opinions :

- 1- Antalya and Baklava (Bulgaria)
- 2- Nice food and nargile (Greece)
- 3- Turkish sweet, tea and nargile (Holland)
- 4- Nice beaches (Finland)

Turkish people say:

“We eat very much bread and don't like rules”. You see above that European people have very different opinions than Turkish people themselves.

Holland

Other peoples opinions:

- 1- Orange (Turkish)
- 2- Drug and football (Bulgaria)
- 3- Amsterdam (Greece)
- 4- Wooden shoes (Finland)

Dutch people say:

“We smoke weed and walk on wooden shoes”. You see above that Bulgarian and Finnish people have the same thought about Holland like the Holland people. But Greek and Turkish people think something else.



The differences and transparencies

Last week I had a chance to participate in the Emmaus work camp where a dozen different people from distant places have come for one purpose - to do many practical things in the Emmaus shop and its outside area plus prepare for the yearly fashion show.

No, I won't tell you about how we were sorting and packing the clothes, painting the bathrooms, cutting the grass or making anchors for the candles which should have been lit on the Hiroshima night, no. That was quite a fun too, though. The most interesting thing was to watch how those youngsters from different cultures and milieus were making connections with each other. First of all, I have to mention their origins: France, Ukraine, Lithuania, Slovakia, Finland, Italy, England and even Lebanon. As a superstitious person who doesn't really admit this quality as a part of myself, I was expecting that it would be difficult to find something in common with the others, that some of us would be less smart or social than others and to be honest, I had still had those clichés when I met them for the first time. Step by step I noticed that everyone was so special that I must get rid of my first improper impressions. A couple from France usually was calm and not too chatty but they had very subtle and nice manners when communicating



with others so that you could feel at home. Another French girl, was always helpful, hard-working and we had some deep conversations about everything and nothing. The last French guy looked very charming with his long black curly hair and scary piercings and he was very cozy too. Cozy, this is the word. The boy from Slovakia happened to have studied philosophy, so I found him pretty deep and intelligent. Maybe because he is a perfect listener or maybe because he knew the song My name is Luca, who knows. A bit above I've mentioned that we were youngsters who had gathered at one place - and I didn't lie. Even though the Italian man was 60, he looked incredibly young! The man was mostly wearing teenage-like colorful clothes, jumping around and always having a bath in the sea despite the weather. He couldn't speak English as fluently as he wanted but he mostly was in high spirits and enthusiastic. It was really funny that he couldn't bicycle (as well as the Lebanese girl) so that was also an issue for all of us because we had to consider it every time we wanted to go somewhere. I think that was useful since this problem worked like a connecting tool - we were made to be more concerned about each other. The girl or rather the young woman from Lebanon was the person who enlightened us about such a distant culture as the Islamic one and introduced us to the delicious Lebanese cuisine which is quite different from

Step by step I noticed that everyone was so special that I must get rid of my first improper impressions.

ours. In addition her way of treating people was also very kind and subtle - I even felt as if there was something I could learn from her! One of the Ukrainian girls could barely say a word in English but she was not ashamed at all: she appeared to be as outgoing person as her friend who had really good skills

in English. Usually we were talking a funny mix of English-Russian-Ukrainian which gave us much laughter. We were also having fun while looking for similar words in as many languages as we knew and that unified us even more. The Englishman was interesting to explore too: he told us that as a child he was a naughty boy who didn't care about anything but now, after many challenges, he works as a volunteer at Emmaus 6 days per week! Even though the young man looks like a tough and reserved person he can't help laughing together with all of us or even telling openly his life story. Even though everyone came from different places nobody looked like he or she would be left outside. No, and even more - as globally-minded and empathic people who came for a non-profit purpose, they were always giving each other priceless experiences that are to be kept deeply in our hearts. I should say it is not so often that I meet a dozen people from different backgrounds who actually think very similarly and who are so open-minded, tolerant and socially active.

Lukrecija Bielskyte, Finland



Womens' situation in our countries

I wanted to know about women's identity and what possibilities they have in different countries.

I asked Monique van den Boomen (16) from Holland, Gizem Kadioglu (21) from Turkey, Maria Sotiraki (17) from Greece, and Marie Johansson (17) from Finland to know what the situation is for women in their countries.

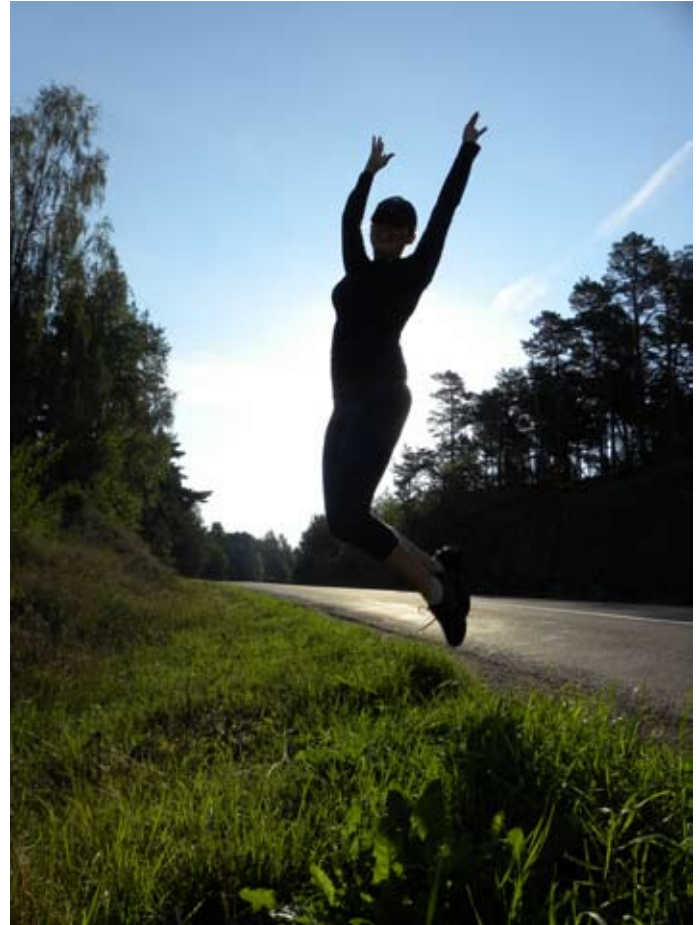
It is possible that people prefer to not say the truth because it's sad, in this camp, people from different countries say only the best about every country to show they are modern, but is that true? For example everybody says that women have power but is it real? Girls from five different countries explain about the opportunities that women have in their countries.

I asked girls from Turkey, Holland, Greece and Finland if they have a male or female president now. Only Finland has a female president. In my country, Bulgaria, we have never had a female president, nor has Greece. I think women wouldn't support a woman as a candidate for the Bulgarian presidency because they would think that she did something to obtain the position.

What about female politicians? In Holland, they have a queen and a female minister of culture; in Greece they have a female mayor of Athens; in Turkey they have a female minister of education; and in Finland fifty percent of the Parliament are women. In Bulgaria there are female politicians but they are less than half.

I asked them if women can take an important position in their countries. Everybody said man and woman can do the same things, even though a Greek girl said in her country there are a lot of women in important positions, but she had to admit there are only 30% in the parliament so, that is not a lot, like she said. I think it's not easy for a woman to reach the positions as a man. When I watch news on tv I don't see a lot of women, and when somebody talks about politics they talk about only male politicians.

In my country, people say that if a woman has a high position it is because she gave money or slept with someone, or she received help from another man (brother, father, friend or husband). There are other countries where the same thing has happened. A Greek girl said if a woman has a power it is because she slept with someone. It's gossip, but everybody

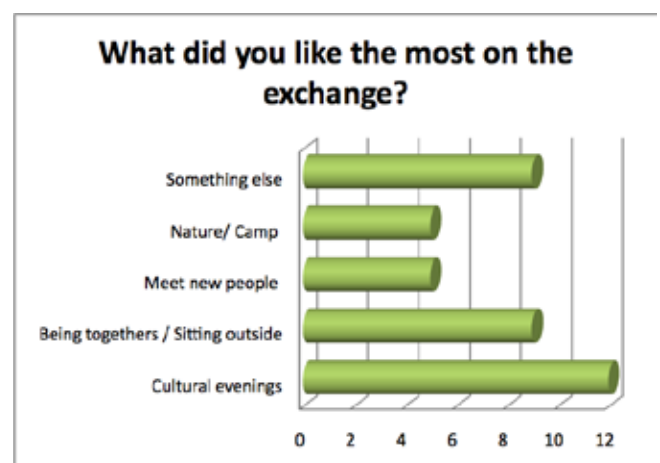
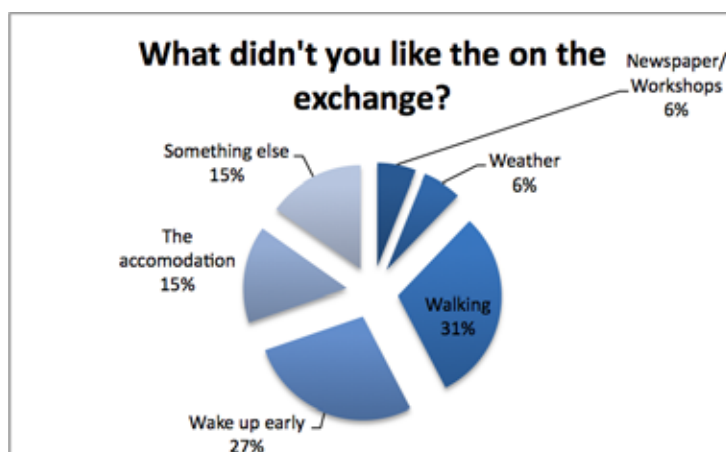


says it. However, in other countries it is different. In Holland and in Turkey they don't hear comments like that. And in Finland the stereotype is the opposite. They say positive things, like she is a stronger woman or something like that.

Finally, I asked them what they want for equality in the future. They want men and women to be able to be on the same level. The Greek girl said they have the same opportunities but in fact now they don't have it exactly like men. Everybody agreed that women should have more opportunities for getting higher positions because women can be as good workers as men can be.

Kristiana Angelova (16) from Bulgaria

Survey with the participants of the camp / by Thanos & Iris





Ezgi Çavus (TU)

What did you think about Greece before this camp?

- Not much. I didn't know much about any country, but I knew about the dance

in Greece, because it's almost the same as in Turkey.

What country do you find interesting now, after you know more about it?

- Bulgaria, because they have so many things in common with Turkey.



Laura Gooren (NL)

Before you came here, what did you think about Bulgaria?

- I know there are bad roads there. And you pay after

eating in a restaurant, which is strange for me.

What country do you find interesting now?

- Greece. They are nice people.



Athanasios Toulis (GR)

What did you know about Holland before you came here?

- I went there last year, so I knew the

music and the people. And it's a very free country. You can buy alcohol and some drugs legally when you are 16.

What country do you find interesting now after knowing more about all of them?

- Åland is most interesting. I would like to explore more about Åland.



Panagiotis Petropoulos (GR)

What did you know about Bulgaria before you came to this camp?

- I have been there, so I know there are many beautiful parks there with a lot of trees. And there are also beautiful ladies.

Can you tell me what you know about Holland?

- It's a beautiful country, drugs are legal. The people who live there have got blond hair.



Lucrecja Bielskyte (LT)

What did you think about Holland before you came here?

- It is a very liberal country. Everybody can do

what they want to do.

What do you think about Greece and the Greek people?

- They are very late, and I think that there is nothing wrong about that. And they are also very loud, so at first I thought that they were immature, but I guess that it is just the way the Greek culture is. And I also know they like to party.

What do you think about the Turkish people?

- Before I came here I thought that they were very tricky, and wanted to trick us on everything. I thought they seemed dumb, but now I have met them and I understand that they can be smart and understanding, they are not tricky as I thought.



am here.

Marie Johansson (FI)

What did you think about Holland before you came here?

- I have been there before; the culture is very similar to Finland. The laws are very liberal. The camp there was very fun.

What country do you find interesting?

- Bulgaria seems interesting because I don't know much about it. Greece and Turkey also seem very interesting and like fun holiday places.



Anja Romme (NL)

What did you know about Åland before you came here?

- There were many islands here, you can't drink alcohol here because of the laws, a lot of nature, and not many people here.

What country seems interesting?

- Turkey seems like a great country for holiday with beaches and sun and so on.



Maria Sotiraki (GR)

What country do you like?

- I love Netherlands: the lifestyle, the people. It's a beautiful country. I have been there and I would like to go there again.



Kristiana Angelova (BU)

What had you heard about Holland before you came here?

- There are legal drugs to take, and a lot of people use them. There are a lot of parties.

What do you think about Åland?

- I think the school system is great, there are great opportunities.

By Ellen Linde (FI)

What do you think about...?

Nikolaev Lyubomir (BU)

What did you know or had heard about Holland before you came to this camp?

- It's a beautiful country, interesting people. Amsterdam is an interesting city. It's

famous for its nightlife and canals.

What were your expectations about Åland?

- I searched on the internet to know more about Åland, I were expecting peaceful environment, beautiful nature. Did you find Åland the way you had expected it to be?

-Yes, I did. It's very peaceful here; the nature is quiet and reserved. The sea and the trees are unique. It's very interesting and I like it, I don't regret that I

Sports in different countries

Everyone likes to do sports more or less. But in every country people also have different favorite sports. Football is the most played sport in almost every country, so we left that choice to Åland and asked other countries to go for another (second) choice.

Except Football, in Holland they like to play speed skating a lot.

In Turkey they in addition enjoy playing athletics. Bulgarian people love volleyball, whereas in Greece they prefer basketball to all others.

Everybody should do at least any exercise or practice a sport to stay fit and healthy.

By Panagiotis Petropoulos from Greece

Self government of Åland

Åland is an autonomous part of Finland. Åland can make its own laws in many areas. This is why Åland has got its own parliament and its own government, We asked Lars Ingmar Johansson, former secretary general of the Åland parliament about the political situation on Åland.

-Mr. Johansson, how long have you been a general secretary?

-I've been a General Secretary for over twenty five years. I've retired in 2008. The general secretary is elected by the Parliament for an unlimited period of time – until he decides to retire or to do something else.

-Do you belong to any political party?

-No, I don't. Being a general secretary is a civil, not a political assignment.

-What are the most important political parties in Åland?

-There are six parties represented in the Parliament. First of all we have the liberals. In the 2007 elections they won ten seats in the Parliament (33 %) . Together with their coalition partners The Central Party (which won nine seats) they have a solid majority. They are both center-right parties.

-What about the opposition?

-The opposition is both on the left and on the right. On the left are the social democrats with 3 seats and on the right are the conservatives (also 3 seats) and the Independent (or Independence not sure , Susan please check this – Georgi) party.

-Independent? That sounds a little bit like a separatist movement.

-No , not really. Separatism isn't popular at all here on Åland. There is one representative in the Parliament who is a separatist, but if you walk ask the people around the islands almost all of them will have negative opinion on separatism.

-Are the political parties here on Åland somehow related to the parties in Finland?

-Well , they are based on the same ideology as their counterparts in Finland. For example the Central Party in Åland stands behind the same ideas as the Central party in Finland and the Conservatives in Åland have the same ideas as the Conservatives in Finland and not only Finland but conservatives

all over the world, but there's no other connection between them. However the social-democrats cooperate with all Nordic social-democratic parties.

-How many people are involved in Ålandic political life?

-In the last elections 67% of the people exercised their right to vote, other than that people are not that actively involved in politics. However there is quite an interest in political life from the public. That's why all of the Parliaments work gets covered by the local media. There are two daily newspapers, a radio and a TV station which provide coverage of Ålandic political life.

-Is being a general secretary a prestigious job?

-No, not at all (laughing).

-Is being a member of Parliament a full-time job?

-Not exactly. The parliament has session periods through out the year. During the other time the MPs are free to do whatever they want. Most of them have another source of income because the salary of a member of Parliament is approximately two-thirds of a normal salary.

-What is, in your mind, the most important decision the Ålandic Parliament made while you were General Secretary?

-That is , without a doubt, the decision to join the European Union. That was done after a referendum, in fact two referendums in 1994. The first of them was about whether Finland should join the Union, and the second was about whether Åland should join. Because there was an option that Åland would stay out of the EU, unlike the rest of Finland. The public, however, approved the membership and the Parliament passed a vote corresponding with the results of the referendum.

- How hard was it to negotiate a tax exception on duty-free trade for Åland?

-Very hard. Åland economy is dependent

on duty-free trading on the ferries so it was critical for us to negotiate that exception. The negotiations were long and difficult but in the end the Finnish government and the Union agreed upon our terms and currently there is an exception to European tax laws in effect for the Åland Islands.

-Has the Finnish government ever tried to interfere with Ålandic domestic issues?

-I shouldn't say so. If you take a look at the autonomy act you will see that there are two lists. The first one consists from thirty to forty areas that are in the jurisdiction of the Åland Parliament and the Finnish Government has no word on them. The other one consists of another thirty to forty areas, like foreign politics for example, which are managed by the Finnish government. There was never any pressure on the Åland Parliament when it comes to the first list.

-Earlier today you mentioned that the president has a right of veto on the decisions of the Parliament, has she ever used that right?

-Actually it happens every once in a while, maybe one or two times a year. But only when the Parliament has exceeded its powers. It's a juridical matter, not a political one. The right of veto has never been used in order to apply political pressure on the Åland Parliament.

By: Georgi Demirev, Bulgaria





The political systems in our countries

BULGARIA

Modern-day Bulgaria was created in 1878. At first it was a monarchy but in 1944 the communists established a totalitarian regime. Communism was abolished in 1989. Currently Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy. Every 4 years there are elections and people over 18 years old can vote for parliament. There are 240 members in the Parliament. The government is headed by a prime minister. Bulgaria's prime minister's name is Boiko Borisov. Presidential elections are held every five years. Currently Georgi Parvanov is the president of Bulgaria.

TURKEY

Turkey is managed by democracy since 1919. Every 4 years the elections are held and everyone over 18 is allowed to vote. There are 15 parties represented in the council of in total 450 members. The council elects the president. Currently Abdullah Gül is the president of Turkey.

ÅLAND

Åland is an autonomous region. Åland's economy is regulated by the parliament of Finland. But Åland also has its own parliament. Every 4 years elections are held. The parliament has 30 members and the 2 leading parties in parliament are the central democrats and the liberals.

GREECE

Greece is again a presidential democracy since 1974. Every four years elections are held. There are 5 parties and 300 members in the parliament. The parliament elects the president. Currently George Papandreou is the prime minister.

HOLLAND

Holland is a kingdom. The queen (there were no male successors available) doesn't have too much political influence. Democracy exists since long. People over 18 are allowed to vote 3 times. For municipal, provincial and national government. Normally

there are elections every four years. After the most important (national) elections the party who wins the elections chooses the prime minister. He/she forms his/her cabinet of ministers from a coalition of various parties (there are some ten different political parties participating in the elections) in order to have a majority in the second chamber (parliament). Ministers are in charge of the various departments (inner affairs, foreign affairs, economics, finance etc.) There are 150 representatives assembled in the second chamber. Their task is to check on the cabinet of ministers; whether their decisions are wise and acceptable. Holland just had national elections, a new cabinet has not been formed yet. The actual prime minister is named Jan Peter Balkenende. He may soon be replaced by the leader of the winning party, Mark Rutte.

by: **Ezgi Çavus from Turkey**

How is life on Åland?

Interview with Susann Simolin about her lifestyle on Åland.

1. How long do you live in Mariehamn?

I was born in Mariehamn. Till I was 19, I lived there. Then, because I wanted to see the world, I went to France to be an uppar for one year and then to Sweden because I wanted better educating opportunities and go to the University. I worked there until I became 32, when I returned back to Åland.

2. Are there many advantages of living on Åland Islands?

Peace and quiet actually. Also it is a safe place for kids. My parents live pretty close, so it's easy for them to look after the children. It's close to the nature. We feel protected in a way here because the islands provide us with a safe environment. However, I don't feel separated from the world. I have contact with a lot of people because of my work.

3. How do you spend your free time?

I don't have much free time, since I have little children, but when I find some, I try to study for a Master's degree. Also, I like exercising in the nature, running in the forest like an elk (laughs).

4. Do you feel confused about your identity?

I think it's nice to have more than one identity. However, I feel mostly like an Ålander, but also a little bit Swedish because I have lived there for 12 years. I have connections with both Sweden and Finland. I feel Nordic too, but also European.

5. Do you have traditions in your culture on Åland that are different than the Swedish and the Finnish ones?

There aren't many differences, but the biggest one compared to mainland Finland is the language. We also have different traditions such as the Mid-Summer Pole that is very common in Åland. They have them also in Sweden, but they look different.

6. How do you feel about the point that Åland is neutralised and demilitarised?

I didn't think much about it when I was young, I only knew Åland were called the Islands of Peace. Now that I've started working at the Peace Institute, I have learned more about it because I studied more about the history of Åland.

7. Do you think you would have more opportunities if you had lived in Sweden or in Finland?

I went to Sweden because there were more opportunities to study journalism in my own language. Åland is very small,



so in general there are fewer opportunities to find a job that you like. But I have been lucky, I do not think I would have found as good a job in Sweden as the one I have got now.

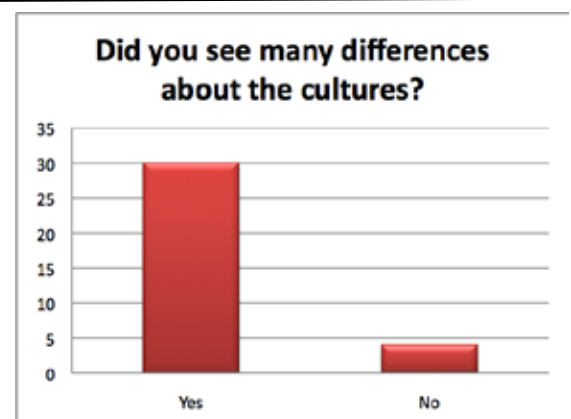
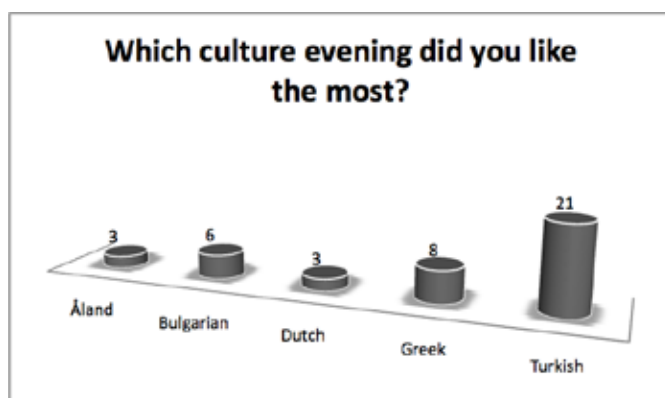
8. Do you feel yourself the same as the season?

I definitely do. I have much more energy in spring, I think it is because of the sun. In winter there is so little daylight and that's a bit depressing.

9. Is life harder here because of the higher prices?

I don't really know, it is hard to compare. I do not think I had a better economic situation in Sweden, at least. I do not spend that much, either. We have our house and children, we don't need more than that. We don't spend much money for things we don't really need. I am satisfied with life here, because I have everything I need and I have a high living standard.

Results from survey with the participants of the camp



What did you think about the Greek cultural evening?



Anja Romme (NL)

I think it was a really nice intercultural evening! The food was good, but that kind of candy in that water tasted very much like mosquito spray. So that tasted very strange... But the other food we get was good, I think! Also the dances were very nice!



Tayfun Ercan (TU)

I thought maybe the meals would be bad, but the meals were nice and delicious! I liked them... I knew that they were going to show a dance from their country, so I was very excited! I liked the dances, and I had fun when I was dancing. Summary, the Greek night was nicer than I hoped!



Laura Gooren (NL)

I didn't really like the food that we've eaten there, the sauce tasted very strange! I think that candy in that water was very weird! I've never seen that before! But that's such a nice thing of the intercultural evenings, you taste and learn about food you've never seen before. I think the dances they did were very nice and funny!

RECIPIE FROM TURKEY ÇİÇEK KÖFTE (for 4 persons)

Çiçek Köfte is very famous and is used to cook it especially in the Turkey's east. If you want to prepare Çiçek Köfte you have to be a strong person because you have to knead during half hour or one hour. Generally, in our country man knead it. You can drink water with Çiçek Köfte.

Other famous meal is Güveç. If you have a clay pot, your meal be very good. Güveç is rich meal. Because you need to have many ingredients to prepare it. If you want to cook that meals, I hope you will like them.

INGREDIENTS

2 glass of thin bulgur

- 1 tb red pepper
- 2 onion
- 1 tb tomato sauce
- 1 tb pepper sauce
- 2 tomatos
- 1 tb black pepper
- 1 tb cumin
- 1 mayonnaise
- Green onion
- Peppermint
- Lemon's water

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE?

All ingredients are done and chopped. Put them in the bowl and mix them. Knead it until it becomes soft. And then serve it cold

By Nurbanu Bahadir from Turkey

Have you discovered any differences or similarities between the nationalities/cultures represented at this camp?

Tayfun Ercan (TU)

Normally Greek and Bulgarian languages are very different from Turkish. But when they were talking we understood many words in Turkish. But we could not understand any word in Dutch or Swedish. Those languages are very different. I discovered it. And some figures of Bulgarian dance are similar to our dance. It's nice to recognize the others. We're glad for that.

Monique van den Boomen & Anja Romme (NL)

We hug and kiss less. We have got less old traditions, live, wearing clothes and dances etc. Language is really different. We have sometimes similar words with Finland but that's it. People from Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey all have brown hair and darker skin, and people from Finland and Holland

have white skin and many of them blond or red hair. Finnish people eat twice a day warm food, we eat twice bread.

Jaklin Georgieva (BU)

All of us have different opinions but I think we have to be friends without any differences. Every country has its own costume. But we are here together and those differences matter.

George Skordas (GR)

I have noticed differences in the way that we see and understand (for example obeying the rules.) but we all are similar in the way we entertain ourselves.

Susann Simolin (FI)

It's difficult to say what depends on culture and what is individual. It's very easy to resort to stereotypes, and I do not want to do that. A similarity is there are nice and friendly people from all countries.

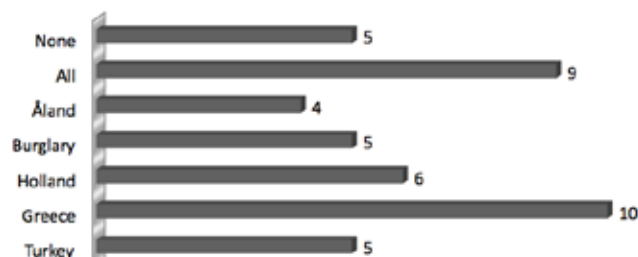
By Emre Demirdag (20) from Turkey

If you're allowed, do we see you next year?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe



Which country do you keep in contact with?



Good & Bad things about the camp



+ Good +

- Daily swimming with some of the participants.
- The food in Åland actually is not like the food we had last year at Ysselsteyn. It's much better.
- There are many courts at the camp, so campers can have lot of fun by playing volleyball or football.
- At the camp it is quiet, the participants find peace there.
- Each night we have a nice and organized cultural evening, I especially liked the Greek one.
- At the camp the campers have the opportunity to go to sauna. We can lose calories every day.
- Every day the campers have to walk a lot to go to their destination. We can get better bodies.
- We are becoming more intellectual by talking with people from other countries. We can exchange opinions and learn more about cultures. It's a nice experience.

- Bad -

- Too quiet. Sometimes it's a bit boring.
- No internet.
- No mobile signal.
- Not much sleeping.
- We have to walk a lot. That's why we are every day too tired.
- Not many toilets and showers.
- Small cabins and far away from the toilets.
- No vehicles- they are necessary.
- Without vehicles we can't see other sights. Just the forest of our camp.
- We can't have free drinks and food from the shop near the camp.
- We have no privacy.

Athanasios Toullos, Greece

ALCOHOL IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

1-Does your family allow you to drink alcohol in your country?

Greece: Yes, but not too much

Finland: Actually not but don't tell them

Bulgaria: Yes, they do

Netherlands: Yes, they do

Turkey: Yes, but some families don't allow it

2-Does your religion allow you to drink alcohol in your country?

Greece: Only wine

Finland: They have strict rules

Bulgaria: I think so

Netherlands: Yes it does

Turkey: No, it doesn't

3-Do you drink alcohol only on special days?

Greece: No, we don't

Finland: Yes, we do

Bulgaria: No, we don't

Netherlands: we drink alcohol special days and on the weekends

Turkey: Turkish people drink alcohol generally on special days

4-How much cost a bottle of beer in the clubs in your country?

Greece: 5€

Finland: 5€

Bulgaria: 1.50 €

Netherlands: 1.80€

Turkey: 1.25€

5-What kind of punishment you receive if the police catches you drinking alcohol under age?

Greece: We pay money

Finland: You have to pay money

Bulgaria: we go to the police station and pay money

Netherlands: First you get a caution but a second time you are going to an organization called Halt

Turkey: Police call her/his family, maybe they pay some money

6-What's the permit age to drink alcohol in your country?

Greece: 18

Finland: 18

Netherlands: 16

Turkey: 18

Bulgaria: 18

By Maria Sotiraki from Greece and Monique van de Boomen from Netherlands

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