EU TUNE PROJECT, A CONTRIBUTION TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THE DIGITAL STORYTELLING

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EU TUNE project is a transnational contest for secondary school students that will produce their digital stories through the Digital Storytelling language. EU TUNE aims at creating a community of secondary schools students from EU Member States, candidate and potential candidate partner countries in the Adriatic area. The aim of the project is to make young people "talk" about themselves through the digital storytelling language, in order to prevent the growing up of preconceptions and stereotypes. Moreover EU TUNE aims at fostering an inter-institutional dialogue among academics and representatives of Regional, Governmental and European institutions related to enlargement towards candidate and potential candidate partner countries.

Financed by European Commission – DG Enlargement in the framework of PRINCE 2010-EU 27 Programme, the EU TUNE project aims at creating a community of secondary schools students from EU Member States, candidate and potential candidate partner countries composing the Adriatic Euroregion: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro. The proposal focuses on the Adriatic region in order to strengthen the relationships among neighbour States and to increase the mutual awareness of next generation through the promotion of a digital language and a web-based communication system.

The project aims at making young students talk about their everyday life, the cultural and natural heritage of their country, hopes and expectations issuing from the forthcoming European enlargement, preconceptions and stereotypes related to their country and how to face them.
EU TUNE project addresses the specific objective, set by the European Commission, of showing the contemporary reality of candidate and potential candidates countries and illustrating their potential as possible future EU members. Besides, EU TUNE represents an important contribution to promote tolerance and

understanding through intercultural dialogue and people-to-people encounters between citizens of the EU and of candidate countries and potential candidates.

The purpose of the project is to create a virtual community where young people could introduce themselves and know more about other students from Member and non-Member States, where they could learn about cultural and social characteristics of other countries and contribute to improve an intercultural dialogue on shared issues such as music, art, nature, travel experiences and on distinctive aspects of their culture such as national traditions or history.
The aim of the project is to make young people "talk" through the digital storytelling language, in order to prevent the growing up of preconceptions and stereotypes or to delete the existing ones. The Digital Storytelling in a narrative technics that facilitates people to tell their own 'true story' in a compelling and emotionally engaging form.

Moreover EU TUNE aims at stimulating an informed public debate in the EU about the benefits and challenges of the future EU enlargements and fostering an inter-institutional dialogue among academics and representatives of Regional, Governmental and European institutions related to enlargement towards candidate and potential candidate partner countries by organizing thematic workshop. EU TUNE foresees the organizations of thematic workshops approaching several topics related to the enlargement such as its state of art, its implications on the European policies and the its impact towards the expectations of next generations.

EU TUNE (www.eutune.eu) is a one-year project that started in January 2012. The project is coordinated by University of Rome "Guglielmo Marconi" based in Rome and its multi-actor partnership is composed by the Italian institution Regione Molise and Associação de Professores de Sintra (Portugal). Several actors are involved in the project as associated partners: Istria Region (Croatia), Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Office of Youth - Ministry of Education and Sport (Montenegro) and Education Directorate in Shkoder (Albania). Associated partners are all from countries that compose the Adriatic Euroregion.

The Adriatic Euroregion was founded on June 30, 2006 in Pula (Istria, Croatia) and it represents a model of co-operation that includes trans-national and inter-regional co-operation between regions of the Adriatic coastline. The Adriatic Euroregion is the institutional framework for jointly defining and solving important issues in the Adriatic area. It consists of 23 members - Regional and local governments from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. The aims of the AE are the following:

- Forming an area of peace, stability and co-operation;
- Protection of the cultural heritage;
- Protection of the environment;
- Sustainable economic development in particular of tourism, fishery and agriculture;
- Solution of transport and other infrastructure issues.

Figure 1: Adriatic Euroregion

The first phase of the project

Secondary school teachers have been called, during a first meeting held in Novigrad, Croatia in April 2012, to attend the Workshop session about Digital Storytelling. The Workshop, named "Toward the European enlargement" and organised by University "Guglielmo Marconi", approached the state of the art of the enlargement process and its current development: pre-accession, negotiations towards accession. During the first day, a special session, dedicated only to secondary school teachers, approached the Digital Storytelling as a common language able to promote an inter-cultural dialogue, especially among young people.

Digital storytelling

The "Digital storytelling" is a powerful and effective learning tool for both teachers and students in stimulating creativity and critical thinking through the combination of the ancient art of telling stories with different digital tools.

A digital story is a short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds. The "short narrated films" definition of Digital Storytelling comes from a production workshop by Dana Atchley at the American Film Institute in 1993 that was adapted and refined by Joe Lambert in the mid-1990s into a method of training promoted by the San Francisco Bay Area-based Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS). Over the last fifteen years Digital Storytelling has been applied to many different contexts and has encountered a wide range of possibilities. Storytelling integrates image, sound, text, and moving image and it foresees the creation of a 2-3 minute film using a recorded text and a selection of moving or still images edited in a computer software video editing programs.

The core of the project was a transnational contest that involved more than 300 secondary school students from nearly 50 schools from Italy, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro.

After the training session for teachers, a 6 lessons course about Digital Storytelling has been uploaded into the project website to

allow students to go deep inside the new methodology with the support of their teachers and of project's staff.

Students had 2 months to produce their stories, approaching 3 different themes that were established in the submission of project proposal:

1) YES, THAT'S ME: Students have to tell, through their own voice, about themselves, their everyday life, the cultural or natural heritage of their country explaining why it could represent a cultural enrichment for the European Union.
2) EUROPEAN HIGH HOPES: Young students talk about their hopes and expectations issuing from the forthcoming European status and enlargement.
3) STEREOTYPES: Secondary school students will tell about the preconceptions and stereotypes associated to their country and explain how to challenge, prevent or eliminate them.

The EU TUNE labs

Students are called to address the issue of Europe and its enlargement through short films that tell their country, opportunities, difficulties and challenges in the integration process and the ideas of young people about the possibilities of overcoming prejudices affecting their territory.

Since the beginning of the school year the students of secondary schools have begun to work, with the support of their teachers, to their films. DST is a highly innovative technique, that kids could apply to present their point of view on Europe and it created new relationships of exchange between students from EU member states, candidate countries and potential candidates.

During the period of the EU TUNE Labs, secondary school students of each involved school produced their digital stories (individually, by group or by class) related to the three topics. During this period students' activity has been monitored and supported by technicians and researchers of the project's partners through discussions in the Facebook group of the project. Support forum was an essential point that helped young people to solve most of their problems related both to technical and methodological issues. Technical

discussions helped students in the technical production of stories (advices related to software, length of the videos, DST techniques, etc.); methodological discussions supported and helped students to make their digital stories comply with the features of the project; thematic discussions help the students reflect on the three topics of the digital stories. The sharing of experiences and advices among students have been fostered and promoted in order to increase and improve the dialogue among people from different countries.

In order to participate to the contest, students had to respect each person and community, its values and principles, for example. They had always to express an attitude of tolerance and sensitivity towards the others and do not use verbal violence or any kind of aggressive rivalry, rejecting all forms of racism, xenophobia and sexual or gender discrimination, without making statements or commentaries about religious and political convictions.

Final meeting and awards

Besides the contest, the EU TUNE project aimed at stimulating an informed public debate in the EU about the benefits and challenges of the future EU enlargement. Consistently with the project's purpose of fostering an inter-institutional dialogue among countries forming the Adriatic Euroregion, the organisation of three thematic workshops has been foreseen.

The first International Workshop "TOWARD THE EUROPEAN ENLARGEMENT" was held in Novigrad, Croatia, a candidate country, whose Istrian Region held the chairmanship of the Adriatic Euroregion, in April the 12th and 13th 2012 organised by Università degli Studi "Guglielmo Marconi", in cooperation with Unione Italiana. During the first day, a special session, dedicated only to secondary school teachers, approached the Digital Storytelling as a common language able to promote an inter-cultural dialogue, especially among young people. Ms. Darcy Alexandra, Center for Digital Storytelling (USA), attended the session together with representatives from selected schools from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Italy, Portugal and Austria. During the second day, more than 50 persons discussed about the state of the art of the enlargement process and its current development: pre-accession,

negotiations towards accession. Regione Istria representative made a brief presentation of the Adriatic Euroregion.

The second international workshop "The process of EU enlargement to the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea countries and the elaboration of a macro-regional strategy" was held in Brussels at the Molise Region Liaison Office and organized by Regione Molise. An interesting and profitable debate about Enlargement future scenario, highlighting economic and social implications in the Adriatic basin, arose thanks to a wide participation and the presence of several experts in EU enlargement affairs among European officers, representatives of Governmental and Regional authorities and academics. The second international workshop approached two main topics:

- The Adriatic–Ionian Macroregion Strategy
- The economic and social implications of the process of EU enlargement.

The final conference "A LARGER EUROPE FOR NEXT GENERATIONS: Hopes and expectations of young people towards the European enlargement" will be held in Rome in order to show project's results. This workshop will approach the relationship between young people and European Union, their impression, thoughts, feelings about the forthcoming enlargement, expectation, study experiences, interests towards the enlargement and Europe at-large. During the final workshop, best digital stories will be awarded and students who produced selected videos will be invited. The event will be held in December the 14th at the University Marconi in Rome. During the meeting, academics, experts, students and teachers will discuss the relationship between young people and Europe.

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