**Our trip to Komotini in Greece (17th-22nd February 2013)**

The focus of our current international Comenius-meetings is the fight against racism and violence at European schools (see Comenius 2012-2014). Before we travelled to Komotini, all the participating representatives of the different European countries had prepared presentations on traditional costumes and games as well as performances of folklore dances. Besides, the pupils had also rehearsed a song against racial discrimination. Thus the coordinators of the project wanted to ensure that the pupils deepen their cultural knowledge of the different European cultures, abolish ethnic stereotypes and prejudices and make a stand against racial discrimination. These in advance prepared presentations and performances were displayed in the mornings of our Comenius-trip in the auditorium of our host school, the Music School of Komotini. In the afternoons we had the chance to learn even more about Greek history and culture: We visited the local museum of archeology as well as the local museum of ethnology, were guided around the ancient theatre of Filippi and strolled around the “old city” of Xanthi. In the evenings our pupils spent time in their host families, enjoyed home-cooked Greek food and got to know their hosts a little better.

Back in Germany we asked ourselves and our pupils the following questions: Did we achieve our objectives? Did our pupils gain cultural knowledge of other cultures and diminish stereotypes and prejudices? According to our pupils, they were especially nervous what their Greek hosts might think of them. However, since their hosts and everybody else was very friendly, our pupils felt comfortable in this internationally mixed group. Knowing and interacting with pupils from the other countries made it more interesting for our pupils to watch the presentations and performances of the other groups. Our pupils also noticed similarities in the costumes, games and folklore dances between themselves and the different countries. When they found differences they were either impressed or open-minded. For example, they praised the colourful, richly varnished costumes of the Turkish and showed interest in the Bulgarian tradition of making female costumes individual by embroidering them. What our pupils highlighted most were the new friendships they gained as well as the experience that they speak English well enough to communicate successfully with the other partners. They are looking forward to welcome our partners in Germany in June and hope to see some of their new friends again!