

Save our European Natural Heritage from Invasive Alien Species Attack
The project

What is an invasive species? Can't we all be friends?

An invasive species is an alien species that has an invasive behaviour on the land it was introduced. They are just like an alien that has come from another galaxy and wants to rule our world.

These species were planted on countries different from their native fields and although they were called non-native species at first, over the years, they can gain an invasive behaviour, mostly because of their really fast expansion, an expansion that disturbs the native species in that area and in extreme situations these invasive species can kill the ones around (even other alien species with or without invasive behavior).

There are already some methods that are being adopted to try to stop them but not all of them are really effective and some of these plants love to live in our country; therefore, they don't want to leave, so when we use some of these methods on them, they feel like we're just tickling them.

Logo competition

The logo competition was the first activity we did while connecting with our foreign friends.



Everyone looked carefully at all the logos and then voted by choosing the best one. There were really good logos provided by each country but the winner was the one which inspires the most the ERASMUS+ spirit.

It was an amazing way to start a week full of adventures.

Photo competition

Photo competition was a competition that was organized by the Erasmus program in which participants submitted the best photo they got related to invasive species.

The student who won this contest was Christian Prothon whose prize was an art book by Banksy.

Countries involved (partners)

Portugal (Póvoa de Varzim)
www.colegiodeamorim.com/



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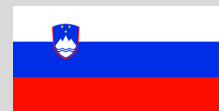
Belgium (Gembloux)
<http://www.ith-gembloux.be/>



Sweden (Kungsbacka)
[http://
www.aranasygmnasiet.kungsb
acka.se/Vara-utbildningar/](http://www.aranasygmnasiet.kungsb
acka.se/Vara-utbildningar/)



Slovenia
<http://www.bc-naklo.si/>



Pampas grass

Pampas grass, also known as Cortaderia Selloana, has been severely affecting Vila do Conde and Póvoa de Varzim.

The plant was introduced in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand as an ornamental grass.

The flowers are produced in a dense white panicle 20–40 cm (8–16 in) long on a 2–3 m (6 ft 7 in–9 ft 10 in) tall stem.

Pampas grass is an attractive ornamental grass that is popular in many landscapes.

They are extremely easy to grow; however, it is important to know what you are getting into before planting pampas grass around your home .

In order to call Erasmus+ students attention to this invasive species, we went for an adventure, looking for the pampas grass, we ripped out the invasive plant and we saw its structure. We learned that the pampas grass is an invasive plant that is all over Portugal.



Florida Turtles

The Florida turtles are a really popular species in Portugal. They are being bought everywhere, as it is one of the most sold kind of turtles all around the world.

Because of that, people buy them without knowing much about them, for example how big this species can get with time.

The owners might throw them away due to not having possibilities to hold their presence as pets. But throwing them away, although it is an easy way to solve the problem, is actually really bad for the biodiversity in Portugal.

These turtles are really good in the process of adaptation, winning the run for survival with the native turtle species in Portugal like the turtoise.



Acacia pilling

This activity consists in eliminating the invasive species (acacias) in Valongo`s forest.

We removed one of the tree´s layers, so it slowly dries and afterwards dies. In this way the native species will not be dominant in the forest again. This was the activity which we liked the most because we learned a lot from it!



Regional protected landscape – Vila do Conde seacoast and Mindelo Ornithological Reserve Pedestrian walk through the dunes

The bus trip to Mindelo was fun and energetic. We got off next to a café by the beach. There was a slight breeze, but nothing that would stop us from a nice long walk through the gangways.

As we were walking, our guide would continuously inform us about the dunes, their importance and how we should always strive for their protection.

Along with two municipal workers, we had the chance of ripping off big portions of “chorões”, an invasive plant that spreads vastly on sand surfaces. Though they grow pretty flowers, they resemble great danger to the remaining flora.

We turned our backs to the sea and made our way into the shore. The contrast was immense. The sand was replaced by dirt. We were now in a forest. Following the trail, we arrived at an observatory tower. And yes, everybody climbed.

The end led us back to the urban area and we retrieved to the meeting point. There, a little surprise awaited us. After some group photos and a bit of chatting, our guide and the workers gave everyone a small bag containing a leaflet and a “bilro” miniature. These are used in local traditional weaving.

We thanked our guide and the workers and said our goodbyes to Mindelo.



Serralves - Adapting to habitat: journey through the curious world of plants

In the same day we went to Valongo's forest, we visited Serralves to search for different types of exotic and native trees. We formed small groups of six people and took some notes about them.

We enjoyed it because we could see that there are lots of invasive species in such small areas.



Sea life Porto

SEA LIFE Porto is a publicly accessible aquarium built and operated by the Merlin Entertainments group.

It is located in the Park of the City of Porto, next to the Plaza de Gonçalves Zarco and occupies an area of about 2400 square meters, hosting about 3000 sea creatures, belonging to more than one hundred different species, in 31 aquariums.

On display are sharks (blacktip, zebra and seal), rays, seahorses, octopus and specimens of tropical fish (clown fish, balloon fish and lionfish), as well as indigenous species of the Douro river such as barbs, trouts, carps and minnows, some of which are considered invasive as they reproduce themselves very quickly.



The largest of the aquariums - the "Kingdom of the Neptune" - has an underwater tunnel (the only one in the country) that visitors can traverse.

Guimarães

Such infamous country as Portugal requires an equally grandiose birth crib. In our case, Guimarães! While touring around Portugal, visiting Guimarães is mandatory, specially for an Erasmus Program. Beginning the trip with a Peddy-Paper allowed the students to walk through ancient streets and contemplate the sculptures and busts sprinkled throughout the city which are still standing to this day. Taken this amusement as finished, we headed to the small, yet exceptional and superb, castle. Taking everything into account, none of this would had been the same if we weren't served a rice cake and the most common juice... Freasky.



Bye friends and bye lack of knowledge about invasive species

Now it's all over. Everyone is back home but their mug of knowledge about this topic isn't empty anymore. Now everyone knows what an invasive species is, the reason why they are called invasive and how bad they can be. Now we know why they should be all grounded and how ingenious the people who introduced them on their non-native countries were.

It was an amazing educational journey.

The foreign students haven't learned about this topic only, they had the opportunity of learning and experience a new culture, of learning some new words in other languages and of making friends. But Portuguese students had the same chance of learning more about their country and about what they can do to protect it as well. It was an educational ride where students and teachers have learned and had a lot of fun.

Learning and teaching can be awesome, especially on the field surrounded by your friends.



All the texts were made by the Portuguese students involved in the project.



WHERE? Sweden

WHEN? 05-11 May 2019

MAIN THEME? Sea and Coast

WHO? Six students and two teachers from each country