

The 21st Junior Eco-Expert Project entitled ” **Ecologically Aware People — a Hope for the Future**” was organised between 3rd and 6th June 2019 in Cieszyn. 90 students with teachers from the five partner schools took part in it. The students were divided into five international groups. For the first two days the students participated in workshops and field trips related to the topic their group dealt with. They collected data which they later discussed and analysed to make presentations of their group work.

Group 1 - Protection of biodiversity in the mountainous region. The students learnt about the problem of dying spruce monocultures and about the influence of climate changes on the condition of the forests. They visited the Wyrchzadeczka Carpathian Gene Bank in Jaworzynka, learnt about acquiring the seeds of the Istebna spruce and the reintroduction of the endangered capercaillie. They also visited the Regional Centre for Ecological Education in Ustroń, learning about planning afforestation in the endangered regions.

Group 2 - Mineral resources and impact of their exploitation on the region. The group visited a limestone quarry in Leszna Górna and learn about its influence on the environment. They also visited a memorial room of an Auschwitz sub-camp in Goleiszów.

By the man-made lake in Goleiszów they learnt about the properties of the unique Cieszyn oil shale and admired the biodiversity around the lake.

Group 3 - Sustainable exploitation and use of brine. The group visited the commune office and the graduation tower in Dębowiec and learnt about the influence of a brine well on the development of the community. During a visit to a pump room, a brine swimming pool and a graduation tower in a spa in Ustroń the students learnt about brine exploitation and its recycling to its natural deposits. Later they also swam in the pools.

Group 4 - Protection of water. The students visited company Emi, which provides complete solutions for industrial waste water treatment. During a visit to a fire station in Cieszyn they gained information on the influence of climate change on water levels. The group went on a field trip to the source of the Olza River, learnt about the dependence between the forest and water, collected samples to compare with the samples from the Olza in Cieszyn. At the ski resort ”Złoty Groń” they were informed about the use of water from the Olza for snowmaking.

Group 5 - Ecological methods of animal keeping. The students gained knowledge on using environmentally friendly animal keeping methods as an alternative to intensive animal farming during a visit to a family company using ecological methods of processing sheep products in Istebna. They

also visited the “Little Beehive Farm” in Dzięgielów, where they learnt about beekeeping and the impact of climate change and of pesticides on bee populations.

On the 5th June the students took part in the **School Picnic and Sports Day**, which gave the project's participants a chance not only to integrate with each other, but also with other pupils of the school. During the **Closing Ceremony**, on 6th June, the participants of the project presented the results of their group work in the form of presentations. Each school also showed cultural programmes promoting their region and country.

The head teachers of the partner schools and representatives of the local authorities and educational institutions from Cieszyn and the partner towns were invited to the ceremony.

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