



# NewsEurideas



## September 2011 Issue

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## Education - an investment in the future

We live in a world that is changing at an ever faster pace. We have unlimited access to any kind of information, we are globalised and mobility is boundless. All of this is based on technological progress and economic growth. If we want to keep up with the fast pace of the world we have to be a knowledgeable society and encourage a high level of education among all citizens – school children, university students and professionals, both young and old. Information itself doesn't make people smart – knowledge is required to be able to find, evaluate and use information and that can only be gained through good education.

In this newsletter, our objective is to provide some information about the educational policies and goals of the EU. Furthermore, you can learn about Photonics Explorer, an educational programme developed to pique secondary school students' interest in science.

Eurideas was in charge of translating this interesting educational material into 6 languages. You can now read the first-hand experience of one of the translators with the project.

*'Eurideas News' is a newsletter issued by Eurideas Linguistic Services. Being a translation agency specialised in EU related topics, our aim is to talk about EU projects and organisations, countries, regions, politics and culture. If you would like to contribute to one of our next newsletters with an article, please do not hesitate to contact us. For inquiries, please contact us at:*

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## Education in the European Union

A high level of education among the European citizens is the basis for development and is crucial to the EU's role in the world economy. Education determines our future. Within the EU every member state decides on its own educational system, however they set common goals and share successful methods. In order to encourage education among its citizens, the EU offers different programmes for lifelong learning.

The most important ones are Leonardo da Vinci for vocational training, which provides placements for young workers and trainers in enterprises outside their own country, Erasmus, for student mobility and university cooperation, and Erasmus Mundus which allows post-graduate students and academics from all over the world to obtain a Masters within the framework of study programmes, offered by at least three European universities. Grundtvig funds adult education programmes, particularly trans-national partnerships, networks, and mobility. Comenius funds cooperation between schools and their teachers.

Together, these programmes account for the biggest share (€7.1 billion) of the current EU fund for education. For the period of 2014 - 2020 the European Commission plans to increase the budget of the education sector by 71% (to €15.2 billion). Prospectively, this enormous aggrandisement will be accompanied by the centralisation of the different programmes into a single one, in order to simplify organisation and administration. Since Erasmus is the most famous educational EU programme, and is well-known throughout the world, all programmes might be pooled and named Erasmus or New Erasmus.

But it is not just the educational EU programmes which are to receive a boost - education, training and lifelong learning also play a key role in the EU 2020 strategy. The goals of this strategy are: reducing school drop-out rates below 10% and increasing the number of 30-40 year olds who have completed third level education to at least 40% by 2020.

Education was already part of the Lisbon strategy (prior to EU 2020), however it was not a main target, and the objectives largely failed. Making it one of the main targets of EU 2020, shows that policy makers see the importance and the influence education has on economic growth and sustainability.

For more information please visit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education>

<http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020>



## Interview with...

### Robert Fischer member of the Photonics Explorer Team

Eurideas interviewed Robert Fischer, manager and material developer of the *Photonics Explorer Programme*, a project funded under the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for research and development. The project is coordinated by the Brussels Photonics Team (<http://www.b-phot.org>) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium, where a group of more than 50 scientists conduct research into fundamental and applied optics and micro-photonics.

#### What is the *Photonics Explorer Programme* about?

Photonics is the scientific field that deals with using the power of light. The objective of the *Photonics Explorer Programme* is to equip science teachers at Europe's secondary schools with up-to-date educational material on photonics free of charge. It provides an intra-curricular educational kit which contains a class-set of components for hands-on experiments together with an inquiry-based didactic framework such as worksheets, multimedia materials, background information for teachers. The *Photonics Explorer* seeks to really engage, excite and educate students about the fascinating field of photonics. More than 30 educators from 10 countries volunteer to ensure the high educational value of the material and its easy integration into regular teaching.

#### What is the purpose of the *Photonics Explorer*?

While society becomes increasingly dependent on science and technology, too few young people are interested in a career in science and in shaping our technological future. There is a growing need for skilled professionals in the field of photonics. Many companies would like to employ new staff but cannot find the right people – too few students are currently graduating in photonics subjects. *Photonics Explorer* is designed to stimulate young people's interest by making science fun while giving them a clear understanding of physical concepts.



#### Who are the members of the team?

The project is coordinated by the VUB which provides expert knowledge of Photonics, while the Leibniz Institute for Science and Mathematics Education (IPN, Germany) is in charge of the didactic detail and evaluation. Photonics Explorer is funded by the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the EU and the material is almost entirely provided by the sponsoring companies.

#### How will schools and teachers be involved?

The official release of the programme is planned in 2012, although about 70 teachers are currently testing the Photonics Explorer in seven European countries. Next year, we will provide 3000 kits to teachers in Europe free of charge.

#### So far, the kit is only available in seven languages (Bulgarian, Dutch, English, French, German, Polish and Spanish). Why did you select these languages?

With these languages we can reach more than 60% of all secondary school students of the 27 EU member states. However, teachers have already asked for translations into additional languages.

For more information please visit <http://www.photonicsexplorer.eu/>

## Translating educational material A translator shares her experiences

Maria San Raimundo Vega is a professional English – Spanish translator. She is one of the linguists who translated educational documents for the *Photonics Explorer* project. On this account, we asked Maria about her experiences of working with educational material.



### **What do you find interesting in your job?**

I think it is fascinating and rewarding to be able to transfer meanings into different languages, allowing people to communicate and interact without languages being an obstacle. Translating can also pose some interesting challenges: language-based humour, puns, cultural elements hidden in texts, etc.

### **What is your experience with translating educational materials? Is it easier or more difficult to translate than texts targeting adults and professionals?**

I have translated several manuals and different materials for online training platforms connected to EU-funded projects (Leonardo da Vinci, Interreg and Equal programmes). Some of these texts were intended for adults, others targeted younger students. In my opinion, it is all about finding the right register for the target audience, using a language that not only conveys the meaning of the source text accurately but does so in an appealing and attractive way. This can be difficult in the sense that technical terms will often be used, but this needs to be done in a way that does not discourage young students, specially those that are not naturally inclined to science.

### **When you were a high school student, did you find physics education interesting? Do you think that a programme, such as the Photonics Explorer would have made it more interesting?**

I must admit I was not exactly a science lover... I always preferred literature, philosophy and languages, but looking back I regret I did not try a bit harder with science and maths, since these are important for anyone's life and professional future. I am sure programmes such as the Photonics Explorer would have made these subjects far more interesting indeed.

In my opinion combining theory with practical exercises, experiments and games is a very smart and practical approach to a subject that may not necessary attract all students from the very beginning.

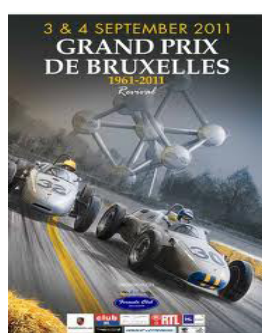
### **Do you have any similar experience to this project? Have you worked on similar projects before?**

A few years ago I worked on several translation projects that dealt with educational material on landscape and heritage interpretation, rural development, renewable energies or organic farming among other subjects. They also focused on a tangible and practical approach to learning, with plenty of exercises and practical examples.

### **Do you have any recommendations to the writers of educational materials in general?**

In my opinion, the most important element that needs to be taken into account when tackling educational material is the fact that the way the message is conveyed is as important as the very message, and that the target audience must be born in mind at all times. Unfortunately in the past, educational material was often dull and dense and the needs and characteristics of the students were largely ignored. Expressing ideas accurately is essential, but communication will not be fully achieved if the text is not adapted to the intended readers and the right register is not used. In the case of young students, I would mention two key elements - concepts should be introduced one by one, so that not too much new information is taken on in a single paragraph and, on the other hand, such information should be wrapped up in appealing, straight forward language.

# AGENDA



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**1 ▶ September 3 - 4, 2011 Grand Prix De Bruxelles.** The Brussels Grand Prix was first held on 9 April 1961, 3 and 4 of September 2011 will commemorate the 50th anniversary of that event in the shadow of the Atomium. The public will be able to see in action the 100 most admired racing cars of all the time. <http://www.brusselsgrandprix.com/>

**2 ▶ September 2-4, 2011 Belgian Beer Weekend.** The Belgian Brewers' association and the City of Brussels, welcome you to this celebration of the Belgian beers at Grand Place. Many small, medium and large Belgian breweries participate to present you their best selections of beers. <http://www.weekenddelabiere.be/>

**3 ▶ September 17, 2011 MusikOmetro.** Concerts below the ground, cheap as a metro fare. Brussels metro stations will be transformed into concert halls- no stage, no lights, no electricity, just live and direct music. <http://www.musikometro.be/>

**4 ▶ September 10, 2011 Balloon's Day Parade.** Brussels will be putting on the first Balloon's Day Parade in Europe. Giant comic-, animal- and object- shaped balloons accompanied by marching bands and folklore groups will cross the city from Place des Palais to De Brouckère. <http://www.balloonsdayparade.be/>

**5 ▶ September 6 - 16, 2011 Marni Jazz Festival.** Set in the Théâtre Marni, Marni Jazz is a series of concerts of very different genres such as jazz, Celtic or "contemporary" music by both established Belgian artists and newcomers. This year, Marni Jazz pays tribute to the accordion. <http://www.theatremarni.com/>

**6 ▶ September 10, 2011, Gecko Festival.** A free one-day event in the green surroundings of the Abbey of Forest. Thirty Belgian and international artists in all disciplines will play music first, but also theatrical performances, exhibitions, various performances, screenings, and many more surprises. <http://www.geckofestival.be>