UNITED STATES OF EUROPE: FRATERNITY, UNITY, LIBERTY (USEFUL)

Our project aims at improving students' results, which can only be fully successful if they become autonomous, information avid youngsters. They should realize that their education, both through school work and life experiences, greatly improves the chances of a better life for them and the communities they live in.

By enabling our students to get **to know the foundations of the EU, its guidelines, strengths and weaknesses**, we shall be contributing to more conscious youngsters, empowering them as knowledge provides enlightening and the power of choosing. Simultaneously, autonomous learning will also **promote digital literacy grounded on more innovative, open and inclusive learning/teaching activities.** One must not lose the focal point, i.e., our youngsters are 21st century students who need to be capable of learning by themselves much more than being the mere recipients of information.

Our project should be funded because by doing research, learning, discussing results, improving critical thinking and their reasoning ability amongst others, our students will be able to perform much better, become more confident adults, more aware of their problems and of those around them and more capable of fighting to promote the changes they see fit. This learning process also **improves their ability to perform collaborative work, to lead a team or to be led, still being able of issuing their opinions, making suggestions and help build a better and fairer world.** Since we'd like each student/teacher activity to focus on a specific area of EU's priorities and the analysis of the specific conditions of each country as far as each of them are concerned, building some kind of e-portfolios will become a data base, a depository of contents which will be like a heritage passed on to one another, reaching the largest number of community members.

By the end they should have enlarged their knowledge, built on their competences, acquired new skills and enabled others, to continue their research directing to new areas and finally to debate specific issues of each country. Solutions should be suggested as well in Model United Nations with teachers being little more than guiders, facilitators of learning opportunities.

Dealing with new technologies per se will help attain another objective: students and teachers should become digital citizens, an essential competence in every field of life. We should not forget the importance of **communicating in English** and the impact it can have in our students' future.

We are six secondary **schools from six countries, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, Portugal, Poland and Romania,** most of which have already worked together. We know each other well and together we have considerable knowledge in Comenius and Erasmus+ projects. We also share a sincere interest in helping our students become both active EU citizens and digital citizens.

Students who participate are aged 15-18 and are interested in social participation, collaboration and digital literacy. About 90 students will be involved in the transnational learning/teaching/training activities and around 400 will work in the scope of the project.

About 30 teachers from various subjects - English, History, Economy, Cultural Science, Biology, Philosophy, Geography - will work in this project. We are European Projects Coordinators and eTwinning users.

Students are going to do research work to find out the information they need about the different subtopics they shall deal with under the main subject. They'll have to present that information to others, having decided beforehand how to do it, making it as varied as possible. They'll use some web tools, developing their digital competences using tools such us Prezi, PowerPoint, Amaze, Google+, Office 365 (Class Notebook, Sway, OneDrive, SharePoint), work with digital storytelling, Infographics, cartoons, using Powtoon, for example to produce new outcomes together: videos, posters, flyers, billboards, digital stories, magazines and newspapers. As for work methodology, the focal point will always be on promoting youngsters' autonomy, curiosity, critical thinking and collaborative work. As for teachers, they should definitely become masters in the art of being facilitators, being driven rather than steering the wheel of the learning process. The most **relevant outcomes** of this project will be the **USE Trivial Pursuit game**, **web quests**, **a financial newspaper**, **films**, **humanitarian campaigns**, **a USE Parliament session** with the bills written and approved by the parliamentarian students and the **"USEFUL Wall of Democracy"**.

This project will have a strong impact on students and schools' communities as it'll promote innovative practices in education by supporting personalized learning approaches, collaborative learning, team work and critical thinking, strategic use of Information and ICT, open and flexible learning, virtual mobility, peer feedback and communication in a foreign language both in written and spoken forms.