

Valence – Final Essay Contest: Winner Essay

Europe is a part of Eurasia, one of the different continents in our planet. It's easy to differentiate Asia about Europe, because we see two different cultures.

In Europe, despite differences, we have a same culture. Our languages have a common ancestor, the Latin. We have a similar genetic issue all around Europe, and a common history. Three wars on the last century divide Europe: Two World Wars and the Cold War. The continent was divided in two parts, communist block and occidental block. Even if there are different points of view about European identity, European Union to create unity was founded in 1992.

To be European was the fact to belong to a same culture and history. However, are we all Europeans?

A project like Comenius allows young people of various nationalities to meet, to communicate, to have fun together, and to discover of new cultures. And it is thanks to English that we were able to know each other and to create links. We can deepen our knowledge concerning this language. So we all became aware that we are all European citizens and by working together, we prepared the future of our continent. We are the future of Europe.

The notion of European citizenship appeared, for the first time, in the treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Even if we are all young people and we still have no right to vote, we have a common point: We have all the same rights and we are under the protection of Europe. The European citizen can circulate, study, work and settle down in the other member states of the Union, and fortunately because we make lots of travel all more enriching some than the others.

Being European means acquiring an intellectual and cultural enrichment; means having the way opened towards new horizons. It is to travel, to work everywhere in Europe without visa.

We are all European adolescents but we have lots of differences! Our way of living and thinking is very different but this is what makes our unity, our complementarities.

French adolescents like discovering new languages; travelling and visiting new countries and they are passionate about history but they are lazy.

English people like German love theatre and music; they are fascinated by their activities but sometimes they're exuberant.

Italians are always smiling and welcoming, they have an incredible ability to communicate with others but they're very talkative. Norwegians are sensitive and charming people, they're very nice people but a little bit shy.

But it is these differences which make our strength. And this awareness changed us, made us grow. As teenagers and in search of our identity, we were able to understand that to be European it is not only a duty but also a right. Finally, to be European means to look at life differently: it is «to be united in diversity»!

To conclude, despite differences we have a lot of common points.

European culture was unique, and we cannot separate this culture on different countries.

For example, Art movement like humanism take stage all around Europe with Thomas More, Rabelais, Erasmus, Petrarcha. Different wars in Europe have taken place in different parts of Europe. In the past, we were all enemies, today, thanks to the European Union, we know and like others with their differences, and we can be friends.

As a consequence, the European Union is the pillar of peace and friendship in Europe, and if you consider you belong to this heritage, you are European.