

Dear teachers and students,

First of all, I would like to apologize for my poor English usage. However, I will make the effort to use the language that joins us in this experience reading these words.

My name is Manuel Vega and as Headteacher of IES Lopez-Neyra, I have the honour to welcome you to the fourth Congress of the Multilateral Comenius School Partnership here in Córdoba. This time the schools visiting us are :

- "Dronninglund Gymnasium" from Dronninglund (Denmark)
- "St. James School "from Exeter (UK),
- "Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens-Oberschule- Gymnasium" in Berlin (Germany)
- "Tamási Áron Gimnázium" from Budapest (Hungary).

We give you all our warmest welcome and we hope that during these days you are going to spend with us, you may be able to witness the hospitality of our country and our people.

Andalusia has historically been a land of passage for other people, but mostly it has been the meeting place between the indigenous people of these lands, starting with Tartessios over 3000 (Three thousand) years ago, people for commercial purposes, such as Phoenicians and Greeks, and others less peaceful. The ancient Romans, the Visigoths and later the Arab civilization, have passed through these lands, causing a cultural mix, in which the Andalusian native elements have always predominated leading to a people with an immense cultural wealth and an open and hospitable nature.

All this rich history is what enables our land of Andalusia to have a historical, artistic and cultural heritage difficult to match, and a city like ours, the capital of Andalusia in Roman times and later capital of Al-Andalus at the time of Arab domination, to have today the second largest historic quarter in Europe, World Heritage since 1994.

The most important building and symbol of the city, the mosque and present cathedral, was also declared World Heritage Site in 1984, and more recently "La Fiesta de los Patios Cordobeses" was also designated Intangible Cultural Heritage by Unesco in December 2012.

The title of our Multilateral Comenius School Partnership: "Yes, you can! -how To Become a responsible and active European citizen" clearly responds to the challenge of the Europe of the twenty first century: a Europe of nations held by the pillars of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which are the fundamental values enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty 2007 (two thousand and seven).

Being European citizens implies to be responsible and active in the struggle to make these values come true. This challenge is even greater for those who have the responsibility to educate the younger generations.

We believe that to achieve these young people to become responsible and active European citizens, we have to provide them with opportunities to get involved responsibly in the search for solutions to everyday problems,



Due to this, we specially care for the participation of our students in different projects that promote these values such as eco-schools, participation in democratic decision-making through student assemblies, the plan of equality between men and women, activities for solidarity and the awareness of the interdependence that must be taken between different countries and their people.

I would like to end my words wishing all participants in this conference that these days will mean an unforgettable experience of intercultural coexistence, mutual recognition and appreciation of the cultural traits that define each of us. On behalf of the educational community of IES López-Neyra, I wish you enjoy our heritage, our cuisine and our hospitality.

Welcome to IES López-Neyra, Welcome to Córdoba!

Thanks for your patience.

