

Leeuwarden, 8th of October 2021



First live international project weeks of Water a big success!

"We are going to make water sexy again!"

From September 27th to October 8th the first international project weeks of Water took place in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. The project weeks were an event for students and teachers from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, and the Netherlands. The international students worked together with Dutch VET students of MBO Life Sciences in Leeuwarden to learn about water ecology, water pollution, testing water quality, water treatment, legislation and regulations.

"I've never done water testing before."

Students participating in the water weeks had many excursions and were happy to be a part of the project. The partner schools had sent emails to their students inviting them to participate in this Erasmus+ project. Ramon Psaila, a student from Malta, said he joined because "it was a good opportunity to have an experience, learn new things and meet new people." He explained that he is learning new ways to apply what he has learned from school and he hopes it will all be useful someday in his future career.

Another student from Malta, Alexandra Vaglarova, claimed "the program was very interesting." She said "I loved Kameleon Island. The boats reminded me of Malta." She expressed that she really enjoyed the practical sessions in the lab and the excursions. "I've never done water testing. So far it has been very interesting." Matyas Fiala, from the Czech Republic said "It's amazing and excellent. I'm in the Netherlands with my friends. It isn't just about learning, it's about building relationships and making new friends with the other students."

"This is so awesome for me as a teacher."

Dirk Draaisma, a lecturer from Friesland College in Leeuwarden, has enjoyed working with the visiting students. "The level of the students is quite high. I tell them something once and they do it." This week he taught the students how to make a logic programmer that controls a wastewater treatment system. He explained that people from the lab don't usually know programming, but this system is quite easy to control. In this way we can "close the gap between technique and laboratory."

Asking Martin Chejn, the teacher leading the group of students from the Czech Republic, about his thoughts on the Water Weeks, he replied, "I think this is so awesome for me as a teacher, and for the students also. They want to learn new things, like how to solve problems. We have done so much work here." Martin and his students were happy to practice their English during the project weeks. They also learned about Dutch culture and visited diverse locations; Amsterdam and the National Park Schiermonnikoog. "If I compare Czech people and Dutch people, it is so different." Overall Martin was very pleased with this experience and hopes for more opportunities to have exchanges between international schools.

Birth of new ideas for future Erasmus projects and exchanges

So, why did some of these schools participate in the PoVE Water Weeks? Ivars Pekains, from RTU Latvia, explained “We have a couple of Erasmus+ projects, and this is a good opportunity for students to get practice abroad and to meet students from other countries.” He talked about how these experiences can help birth new ideas for future Erasmus projects and exchanges. He already has started making a plan to send Latvian students to Malta. The main goals of these projects, from Ivars point of view, is that “students should be satisfied, get new skills, practical knowledge, and hopefully make new friends.” With this project in particular, it is important to meet in person and to do practical applications in the lab and field. “You can’t do practical parts in Zoom.” Ivars final remark about the project weeks was “I’m very satisfied that students have new opportunities.”

European project Erasmus+

The project week in Leeuwarden is hosted by the Center for Innovative Craftsmanship Water (CIV Water) and is part of the European project “Platform of Vocational Excellence Water” PoVE Water. It is the first of several exchanges between the partner countries. Sanne Ligthart, communication advisor, tells. “The project weeks were a success. We notice that the students were having a wonderful time learning about water. This is the first international project week in many to come. We hope to accomplice with this project that students and teachers look beyond the land border to learn about water technology on VET-level. With this project we hope teachers of different countries get to know each other, so international internships can be arranged for their students. Every country deals with different water their issues. An international experience is therefore priceless for a further career in water.”

CIV Waters, regional cooperation partners Friesland College, Vitens, Learning Hub Friesland and We are Katapult, accompanied the international PoVE Water consortium at the annual Wetsus congress. Besides getting acquainted to the Water innovation ecosystem in which CIV Water operates, partners discussed future opportunities that will insure this successful platform of Vocational Excellence to evolve and grow.

PoVE Water

PoVE Water is a transnational project that draws on existing and emerging vocational competences and skills needed in the water sector, translating them into an approach of vocational excellence. The project kicked off in January 2020 in Brussels. PoVE Water unites VET institutions, the water industry, research centers, (semi-) governmental institutions, and water sector representatives from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. All project partners share a common interest in developing the full potential of VET institutions to play a proactive role in support of growth, competitiveness, and innovation of the water sector.

www.povewater.eu

CIV Water

The Center for Innovative Craftsmanship Water focusses on educating employees and scholars on a vocational level (VET) in the field of water. CIV works together with educational institutes, like MBO

Life Sciences, Friesland College and Aeres, as well as with mostly semi-governmental organizations such as Watterskip Fryslan. Additionally, CIV works on an international level.

www.civwater.nl

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Picture 1: Students project group working in laboratory Waterapplicatiecentrum WAC in Leeuwarden
Photographer: Ivars Pēkainis

Picture 2: Students working at Kameleon island in Terherne, building their own water purifier and conducting tests

Photographer: Ivars Pēkainis



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