



# Newsletter Issue 6 December 2015

So we're at the end of another year. 2015 has flown by. Over the past year we have been very busy, especially with local schools. Next year is already proving to be another busy year, not only in schools but with the run up to the referendum on EU membership it looks set to be an eventful year. Anyone wanting any information on the EU such as how it works, how it affects the UK, how the UK is represented and how the UK has an input into the decisions made and more please get in touch. The information we provide is factual as we are impartial.

## Coming Up:

We are continuing to hold workshops in Darland High School for Year 7 on an introduction to the EU. We are also providing workshops to Year 9s on language learning, looking at the benefits an additional language can bring. In St Josephs we will be with Year 10s again looking at the EU, what it is, its history and how it affects us.

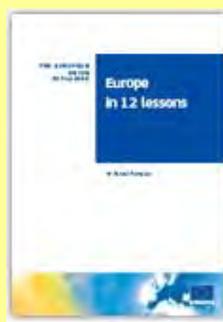
Later in the year we will once again be attending the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod with a stand full of information. It's always very busy there and we get asked lots of different questions including funding for students, finding a job in another country, moving to another country and also topical questions which last year was about the Greek economic crisis. We'll be making an appearance at other events throughout the year with our information stand so look out for us!

## Useful publications – for free copies please contact us.



### How the European Union Works

Written in clear English this provides good information on all the institutions of the EU and how they work in order to make decisions. Also shows how EU member countries have a say.



### Europe in 12 Lessons

Answering questions such as: What does the EU do? Why and how was it set up? How does it work? What has it already achieved, and what new challenges does it face today?

**Primary and Secondary Schools** – we have a list of publications which are suitable for these age groups, contact us for a copy. All publications are free and can be provided in bulk. There is also a new interactive booklet Draw and Play which will be available around March / April next year.

### Our Planet, Our Future



Magazine style publication about climate change. Includes a section on science and interviews with students, as well as information on what's happening across Europe to cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to our changing climate.



### Ten Priorities for Europe

Outlines each of the priority areas such as jobs and growth, democratic change, digital single market, fairer internal market and more.

## European Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Our annual Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange is drawing to a close, though this is probably the most exciting part of it! Schools involved always tell us that the children and teachers get really excited when the parcels start to arrive and rush to open them up to see what decoration is in it and where it has come from. Parcels always contain information about how Christmas is celebrated in that country. Sometimes this is in the form of a booklet, a presentation or a video.

The time that goes into making the decorations is greatly appreciated as it can take a lot of planning to prepare them, make them and the information pack and then to send them out. The enthusiasm of the teachers and the children is fantastic and makes the project a joy to be involved in.

Our tree with decorations on it from 30 partner schools across the EU will be on display in Wrexham Library from early December. We will also display the information packs received so that you find out about traditions and celebrations in other countries.

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange and has been the biggest yet. Started by Europe Direct Llangollen in 2006 it has grown each year. This year there are 279 participating schools from 55 regions in 18 countries. Wrexham has 9 schools involved this year.

For more information on the project please contact us.



You can see more decorations on our advent calendar which is on our twitter and facebook pages.

@europedirectwxm  
Facebook.com/europe  
directwrexham



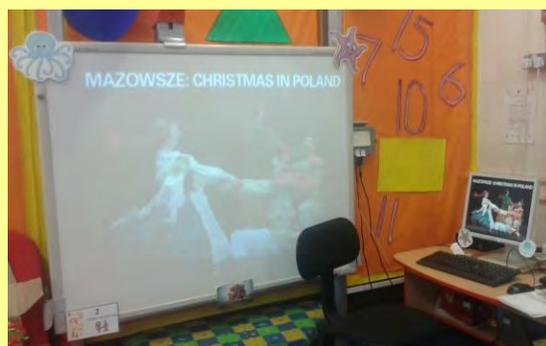
## How is Christmas Celebrated in other countries? – Workshops

Alongside the Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange we have also been delivering workshops in Primary schools about Christmas in other countries.

This has been a really exciting and lovely time getting to talk to children from nursery classes up to Year 6 about how other countries celebrate Christmas. Each workshop focused on a country chosen by the school. Quite a lot of the time the schools chose their countries based on nationalities of children in their class or nationalities of one of their parents.

We have looked at: Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland, The Netherlands and Romania. In each workshop we presented information on traditions, stories from that country, food that they eat, who brings their presents and when. Then the children made a decoration associated with that country, this ranged from decorating candles, to making lanterns, stars, plates and clogs.

Below you will find some pictures from the workshops of the decorations the children made.



## Christmas Traditions from other EU countries

There are many similarities between countries as to how Christmas is celebrated but also some slight differences in who brings the presents, how they are brought and when they are brought.

Cyprus has a small creature called the Kalikantzari. They are mischievous and prey upon people only during the 12 days of Christmas from 25th December to 6<sup>th</sup> January.

In Greece they used to decorate boats rather than trees.

On 6 December 15 EU countries celebrate Saint Nicholas who arrives on a donkey. Countries celebrating Saint Nicholas are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.



In Italy On the eve of January 6<sup>th</sup> the Good Witch, La Befana, comes on her broomstick. She rewards good children with sweets and bad children with charcoal or bags of ashes.

In the Netherlands presents are brought by Sinterklaas who arrives on a steamboat on the canal in Amsterdam the last Saturday in November. On 5th December, children put their shoes next to the fireplace and fill them with hay and carrots for Sinterklaas' horse. The next day, the shoes are filled with presents.

In Poland, they leave an empty place at the table as a sign of their unity with their deceased families. It is also a sign of their willingness to welcome a lonely person at their meal.

Children in Slovenia can receive Christmas presents from four different sources: Saint Nicholas on 6<sup>th</sup> December, Santa Claus or Baby Jesus arrive on Christmas Eve or Day and Father Frost on New Year.

In Romania the Christmas tree represents the source of life. The fir tree is supposed to be the biggest the family can find.

In Spain they eat the Roscón de Reyes, a traditional cake-style pastry, the night before, or morning of 'Reyes' (King's Day) to celebrate the Epiphany.

The tradition of bringing a tree into the home was started in Germany as was the advent calendar In the mid-19th century German Protestants made chalk marks on doors or lit candles to count the days leading up to Christmas.

In Finland on Christmas Eve the Declaration of Peace is read which encourages people to behave peacefully and respectfully. The reading of the declaration is broadcast on Television and Radio.



# 2015 - The European Year for Development

We introduced The European Year for Development in our previous Newsletters. We talked about how each month has a key theme.

December: Human Rights and Governance

Democracy and human rights are the European Union's guiding principles and they are promoted in our international cooperation. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human rights are the cornerstone of inclusive, vibrant societies in which governments work in the people's interest and to which all are free to contribute. Conversely, when governance fails and human rights are violated, it's the poorest and most vulnerable who suffer most. So overcoming the obstacles that perpetuate human rights violations – combatting discrimination, ensuring the rule of law and building fair and inclusive institutions – is crucial if we are to uphold human dignity, combat poverty, champion equality and prevent conflict.

Source:

<https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en?month=12#theme-of-the-month>

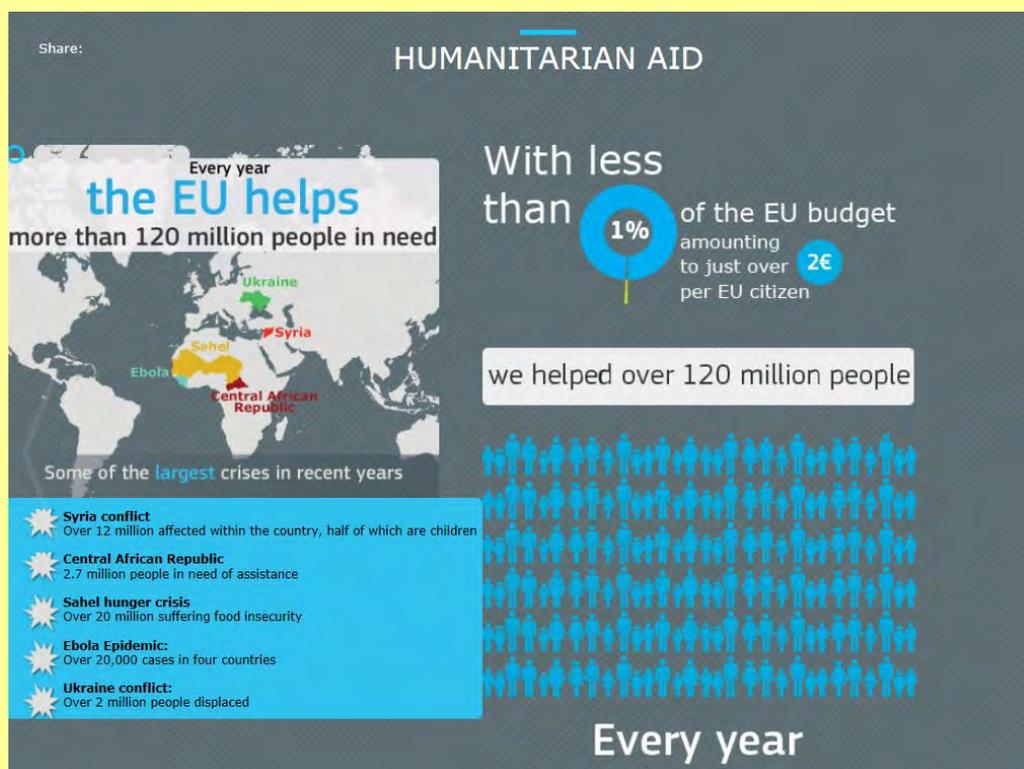


Now the European Year for Development is coming to a close it doesn't mean that development activities stop. You can find out more with these short booklets. Pick up a copy at our centre or get in touch and we can email you a copy or send one in the post.

- From A to Z - EU's humanitarian aid and civil protection across the globe
- Humanitarian aid at a glance



More booklets are available, please ask for details.



**From all at Europe Direct Wrexham we wish you a  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**



Joyeux Noël      Glædelig Jul  
 Fröhliche Weihnachten      God Jul  
 Feliz Navidad      Vrolijk Kerstfeest  
 Roomsaid Joulu Puhi      Iloista Joulua  
 Buon Natale      Καλά Χριστούγεννα  
 Kellemes Karácsonyi Ünnepeket      Sretan Božić  
 Nollaig Shona Duit      Veselé Vánoce  
 Vesel Bozic      Veselé Vianoce  
 Craciun Fericit      Feliz Natal  
 Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia  
 Il-Milied It-Tajjeb      Linksmu Kaledu  
 Priecigus Ziemassvetkus      щастлива Коледа  
 Nadolig Llawen

*Merry Christmas!*



## What is Europe Direct?

Europe Direct Wrexham is an information service about Europe and the European Union. We provide a vast amount of FREE literature for all ages on all kind of subjects from the environment, European Parliament, opportunities for young people in Europe, travelling in Europe and languages.

We also provide packs for teachers to aid them in delivering topics on Europe and the European Union as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC).

We offer free material to create colourful wall displays about Europe such as maps, flag bunting and posters.

Aside from the publications we also deliver FREE workshops in schools on subjects such as history of the EU, what it does, how laws are made, the importance of learning modern foreign languages, business and trade and the environment.

Workshops consist of various activities which you can mix and match from such as presentations, quizzes, map games, design your MEP and European bag design to form a lesson.

As well as workshops we can assist in organising European weeks, European assemblies, fun days and MEP visits as part of curriculum days.

The aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed about the EU, to provide information on what we do, programmes that may benefit you and more.

### Workshop Examples:

European Fairies (Ages 3 - 11, 1 hour session)

'Europe and the European Union and how it works.' (Ages 11-18, 1 hour session)

Design a European Cotton Bag (Ages 7-14, 1 Hour session)

European Postcards (Ages 8-11, 1 hour session)

Design Your Own Politician (Ages 11-16, 30 minute session)

Design your own European Citizen (Ages 11-16, 30 minute session)

Design an EU flag (Ages 8-11, 30 minute session)

If you are interested in having Europe Direct Wrexham come and do presentations at your school, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on the details below:

**Europe Direct  
Wrexham**

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