

Documentation

# SUMMER CAMP

Weimar Triangle "Plus" 2022

*est*

EUROPÄISCHE SCHULE  
TEMPLIN



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# THE 2022 SUMMER CAMP

The idea of an international Summer Camp for young people was developed from the European School Templin (*est*) initiative, which is managed by the foundation Stiftung Gebäudeensemble Joachimsthalsches Gymnasium Templin and supported by the association Förderverein Joachimsthalsches Gymnasium Templin e.V. The aim of this initiative is to establish a European boarding school in Templin in the state of Brandenburg. A place where future generations of Europeans can live and learn together. They will experience and come to accept Europe, its values and its diversity as something very normal.

The Summer Camp is intended to allow the European spirit to come to the location of the future *est* before the school opens.

The *est* is a new project designed from the outset to promote European unity. Its primary aim to bring together 450 young people from all over Europe in a new boarding school, and to let them grow together in a shared sense of European identity. In this way we will strengthen Europe from below. These young people who will grow up here together with others from other nations and cultures will be our ambassadors for a future united and confident Europe.



In 2018 and 2019 two successful German-Polish Summer Camps already took place. In 2022, to mark the 30th anniversary of the Weimar Triangle dialogue format, this youth exchange programme was opened up for young people from France. Because of the war in Ukraine we also extended our original concept and invited youth from Ukraine.

Under the patronage of First Lady Elke Büdenbender, 48 youths from Germany, Poland, France and Ukraine set off on their journey from Drawno in Polish Eastern Pomerania to Templin in the Uckermark, on foot, by bicycle, and by canoe.

Multinational teams of twelve participants aged 14 to 17 worked together to master the smaller and greater challenges that they encountered on their two-week trip through the “wilderness.” They were accompanied by experienced outdoor trainers from Outward Bound, an outdoor education provider that accompanied the young adventurers during the Summer Camp. The shared language for their adventure was English. The project was rounded off by a big summer party in the grounds of the future *est* in Templin, open to the public and attended by patron Elke Büdenbender.

The young people were to develop a sense of community, in particular after all the restrictions of the pandemic, and to increase their own awareness of togetherness. The personal aims of the participants were to gain greater experience of intercultural exchange (understanding between different nations, tolerance, openness), shared humanity, developing a team spirit, taking on responsibility, becoming more aware of democracy, enhancing a sense for sustainability, and gaining in self-confidence. With this project we wish to support the young people in developing their own personalities.

We also wish to improve this project by means of comprehensive evaluation, and to enhance the young participants’ experience every year.

The Summer Camp is a firm part of the annual programme of the foundation on our path towards *est*.

*Stiftung Gebäudeensemble Joachimsthalsches Gymnasium Templin*



# WELCOME



Hello Everybody! Privit! Witam! Bonjour! Willkommen in Templin, liebe Summer Campler, dear Summer Campers ... liebe, sehr verehrte Frau Büdenbender, lieber Franz-Christoph Michel, lieber Alexander Köppen, liebe Vertreter der Rotary Clubs!

What an adventurous time. Fourteen days of rafting, biking, hiking together, battling unified Pomeranian mosquitos, putting up the tent almost every night at a new location with no shower – instead taking a dive in the lake, of course, and the virus was also there, and – beneath several blisters – you unfortunately brought back a broken collarbone. Now you've made it – you've created a great community in these 14 days – and you're looking happy.

I am also very happy to welcome our First Lady. Mrs. Büdenbender is the patron of the Summer Camp, and we are grateful for her support and her visit today.

– liebe, sehr verehrte Frau Büdenbender – wir freuen uns riesig, dass Sie die Schirmherrschaft für das Summercamp übernommen haben und dass Sie heute dabei sind, um gemeinsam mit den Jugendlichen den Abschluss des Summercamps zu feiern.

Weimar Triangle Plus: the idea of this camp was to bring together young people from Poland, France, Ukraine and Germany – a bunch of young people from all over Europe exposed to the wilderness of Pomerania und the Uckermark.

So how did we find those adventurous young people? How did we track you all down?

This was made possible thanks to our cooperation partners in Poland, France and here in Germany. Thank you Rotary Koszalin and Rotary Stettin and thank you Rotary Prenzlau and Rotary Uckermünde, Pasewalk, Stettiner Haff. Notre partenaires de cooperation de coté Francais c'est la Maison de Heidelberg à Montpellier. Merci, dziękuję und vielen Dank pour votre networking and making this adventure happen.

A very special welcome to Christine Mangold, Ingo Stapperfenne and the team supervisors from Outward Bound – the expert for outdoor adventures and our partner here – this is already our third camp together and though your organization is what we in a German call an experienced “old hare” (ein “alter Hase”) – I suspect there can never be a routine, when going on a trip into nature with 48 young people you have never met before. You must be extremely relieved to have reached the final destination of the tour, Templin.





The camp could not take place the last two years, because of the virus – so we are tremendously happy that this year we could do it again. It is no surprise that Corona took part in this adventure – and you braved it successfully.

*(To the young people)*

You may wonder why the Summer Camp? Why does your expedition end here among these old buildings in Templin? The answer is because you are not only the pioneers of this year's Summer Camp but also the pioneers of a further adventure.

An adventure which hopefully will become real right here. You have just shared an experience united with people from different nationalities, something that is no longer so self-evident.

We are about to open a new school here which is designed to unite young people from all over Europe for a few years of their life. What we want to create is nothing less than a small Europe. The European School of Templin will open here. A place where young Europeans like you will come together, live together, learn together. Before that's going to happen, we have to repair and modernise the historical school complex that you see here and we have to transform it into a modern campus. So this summer camp is practically something like a trailblazer for the European School Templin, the *est*.



The Summer Camp is sponsored by the European Cultural Foundation, the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, the state of Brandenburg, the Sanddorf foundation, and the Stiftung des Tönissteiner Kreises. Last but not least I want to thank everybody who took part in making the Summer Camp happen – all threads run together here in Templin at Daniela Obkircher’s and Ella Schmidt’s desk – they have been preparing everything for you for many months – and I think, this is worth an extra round of applause!

And – once again – I’d like to note the achievement of Outward Bound. Bringing together young people, taking them into the woods and onto the rivers, letting them feel their bones and forget their mobile phones. You’re doing this with a lot of idealism and this is so inspiring. We are looking forward to further projects with you.

And now it is a great pleasure, that you are here with us and will speak to us, dear Ms Büdenbender, liebe Frau Büdenbender...

*Henrike Reemtsma  
Chair of the Board  
Stiftung Gebäudeensemble Joachimsthalsches Gymnasium Templin*



# WELCOME BY THE PATRON

“Let us look round us in the world of today and see whether we are really justified in claiming for pacifism progressive development and positive results. A terrible war, unprecedented in the world’s history, recently raged in the Far East.”

Sehr geehrte Frau Reemtsma, Sehr geehrte Mitglieder im Vorstand, dear participants of the Summer Camp, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Those words are not my words. They are taken from the Nobel lecture in April 1906 held by Bertha von Suttner who received the Nobel Peace Prize 1905.

The war and the consequences she spoke of was the Russo-Japanese War during the years of 1904 and 1905. And she continued to describe the situation in all of Europe at the beginning of the last century: “Meanwhile, in Central and Western Europe which narrowly escaped war, we have distrust, threats, saber rattling, press baiting, feverish naval buildup, and rearming everywhere. [...] Fortresses are being erected, submarines built, whole areas mined, airships tested for use in war; and all this with such zeal – as if to attack one’s neighbor were the most inevitable and important function of a state.”

As we know today, more than 100 years after Bertha von Suttner held this speech, all of Europe was hit very brutally by two wars that brought destruction, pain and also showed the evil, manhood is able to commit once borders of civility are exceeded. Sadly, Bertha von Suttner was right: there is nothing good at the end of rearmament campaigns.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Looking into the audience, I would say most of us were born after the horrors of the Second World War. Over a period of 70 years we experienced that a peaceful living together is possible in Europe – although the civil war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s showed /that peace can be fragile.

Especially we Germans are very grateful, that our neighbors reached out to us - the same neighbors whom we have brought suffering and destruction. We are thankful for the bonds of friendship, big and small, over the border to our neighboring countries and all over Europe. How happy would that have made Bertha von Suttner and all her co-pacifists and dreamers of a united Europe a hundred years ago!

Dear participants of the Summer Camp, It must sound rather surreal to you, when you hear me quoting those words on the inevitability of attacking neighboring states. Those of you who came from Poland, France and Germany to spend two weeks together in the beautiful landscape between Drawno in Poland and Templin in Germany do not know borders when driving to summer holidays by car or train, no passport controls.

You not only talk about the European spirit, but you live it in your everyday life. You reach out, learn foreign languages and this camp probably will not be the only exchange you take part in. This is great and it is the basis for a peaceful living together in Europe.

Sadly, these days not everyone in Europe can enjoy peaceful coexistence: we have young people here today, who were struck by the unthinkable. The lives and dreams of the young people from Ukraine, I met and talked to just before the closing ceremony started, who also joined the Summer Camp, were all of a sudden interrupted, changed, even destroyed on February 24th. We are so very happy to have you here! You certainly have friends here and during the last two weeks experienced that European solidarity is not just an abstract term. The people of Poland, France, Germany and all the other countries are with you.

Dear guests, I was so impressed when the Summer Camp participants gave me some impressions of their two weeks adventure trip through the nature in the German-Polish border region. Out there, they not only managed to get from the start to the finish – no, 48 more or less strangers became friends! We all are very proud of you. And young people like you give us hope for a good and better future. Before I come to an end, let me thank the Foundation „Joachimsthal'sches Gymnasium Templin“ who initiated and organized the Summer Camp. And let me also thank all the supporters.





The site we are on right now, will be the campus of a wonderful project: the European School Templin. It will be a meeting and gathering place for young people from all over Europe, who can learn together and also have fun together and make Cross-European friendships that can last a lifetime and – what is the most important – friendships that will tear down borders existing in our heads rather than on paper. When the people of Europe and in the whole world stand together, it becomes much harder to drive a wedge between nations. So let's emphasize our friendships rather than let anyone tear us apart!



And where would it be better to begin than with our youth? You are our future. The friendships you form across nations today are the foundation of a peaceful living tomorrow. Thank you for your attention and time and have a wonderful afternoon!

[Check against delivery]

*Elke Büdenbender*  
*Patron of the Summer Camp 2022*

# WELCOME BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TOWN OF TEMPLIN

Dear Ms Büdenbender, dear Ms Reemtsma, dear guests,  
and first and foremost: dear next generation from France, Poland, Ukraine and Germany,

Welcoming speeches are terribly boring. The bad news: this is exactly what I am supposed to do on behalf of the city of Templin. The good news: I'll be very brief.

On behalf of the citizens of Templin, I welcome you all here in Templin.

Your Summer Camp, your expedition by canoe, bicycle and on foot ends here. You started in Poland and have been on your way to Templin for two weeks.

Once you've reached beautiful Templin, you don't need to travel any further.

Templin is the nicest place in Germany. So now enjoy your party.

Joint activities like this Summer Camp are extremely important. Forty years ago, the states in western Europe did not become a union through their signatures under laws and contracts, but through enthusiastic contacts between the people who live in these countries, especially the young people.

An intensive exchange through travel, shared experiences, cultural exchange, friendships, and love stories were the basis of a sense of togetherness. This goes far beyond EU regulations.

That didn't work out with the United Kingdom. Most German, French, Dutch, and other youngsters found the English music scene and the English youngsters cool. But not vice versa. The English found their lost colonies much more exciting than continental Europe. The contact was not maintained. The result is Brexit.

The Iron Curtain fell 33 years ago. Eastern Europe joined the EU. Since then we have talked far too much about the problems of the now very large EU and far too little about how exciting and great the people are who now belong to our Union, and, dear Ukrainians, who will hopefully soon belong to the Union.

There was and still is by far not enough exchange between young people from eastern and western Europe, especially friendships between young people, as we had 40 years ago in western Europe.





It is not if the Euro fails that Europe will fail, but if the friendship between Europe's youth fails, then Europe will fail.

You have done something about this with your camp. You have done something for the future of Europe.

And therefore it is also extremely important that a European school will be established here in Templin in these buildings. That students from eastern and western Europe, from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine etc. will come together with students from France, Spain, Germany etc. to learn together, have parties together, to build friendships and learn to respect and love each other.

Dear Ms Büdenbender, please keep your caring hand over this major project of a European School Templin.

Dear Ms Reemtsma, please keep going on with this wonderful project.

We need this.

Templin needs this school.

Europe needs this community for peace and friendship.

*Franz-Christoph Michel*  
*Chair of the Templin Town Council*

# POLNISH AND GERMAN PARTNERS: ROTARY CLUB

In 2017, the president of the Prenzlau Rotary Club at the time, Matthias von Oppen, “discovered” the activities that were taking place on and around the site of the Joachimthalsches Gymnasium in Templin. We asked Dr. Ferdinand von Saint André, who was then the managing director of the new foundation for the establishment of a European school in Templin, to report about the aims and work of the foundation at one of our meetings. Soon after that, we were able to visit and see the site of the school itself. Our club was very happy to support this project within the scope of our own work. There were many ideas, from small building works to organising an international Summer Camp, to spreading the word about the school.

Our club liked the idea of the Summer Camp, and our president made this project his own. It was fortuitous that the Outward Bound organisation had for many years operated a branch in Kröchlendorff, and with their help the Summer Camps in the form of an outdoor trip began to take shape.

Our task was to recruit the young people. It was very helpful that our Club has for many years had good relations with the Koszalin Rotary Club on the Polish Baltic Sea coast. With the help of this club, Polish youth could be recruited. In 2018 we then organised the first Summer Camp. Further Rotary Clubs from Stettin, Pasewalk / Ueckermünde and Schwedt joined the project. Animated by the success of this endeavour, we organised the next Summer Camp for 2019.

Unfortunately, our preparations for 2020 and 2021 were in vain, as the Corona pandemic meant that these events could not take place.

In spring 2021 we together started afresh. We selected the motto Weimar Triangle, so that 48 young people from Poland, France and Germany were to participate in the next camp.

When the Ukraine crisis began, we provided 12 places for young Ukrainians, and the other nations also received 12 places each.

We supported the preparation of this project, for example with translations into Polish and French, and with logistics and recruitment.

For us, the 2022 Summer Camp was a great success.

*Pedro Jankowski, RC Koszalin*  
*Hellmuth Picht, RC Prenzlau*





# FRENCH PARTNER: MAISON DE HEIDELBERG

What else was happening in Brandenburg apart from swept-empty avenues, gaping boredom, people fleeing the countryside, and seasoned gherkins? Rainald Grebe's hymn to this federal state in the east of the republic has become deeply etched in collective memory and yet plays, to be honest, a very insignificant role in the promotion of Germany by a German cultural institute such as Maison de Heidelberg in the French city of Montpellier. The French dream of the metropolis of Berlin – bien sûr! In 2020, during the first breather from Corona (and once again during the slack pickled gherkin season), something special happened, as we presented a touring exhibition from the German embassy in Paris, about . . . Brandenburg. In early 2022 we then received a request from Templin – the home town of Angela Merkel and of a flying spaghetti monster (thanks to the exhibition we were now in the know). The former Gebäudeensemble Joachimsthalsches Gymnasium Templin, which the French will never be able to pronounce, is to be transformed in the Templin European School. The renovation marathon that this entails notwithstanding, the foundation, which is also the owner of the school buildings, already has a few surprises in store that may prepare the Uckermark for what is to come and invite a European spirit to move in right away. One of these surprises is the Summer Camp. The year's theme of the Weimar Triangle meant that a French partner was needed in addition to one from neighbouring Poland. We were very quickly convinced by this project and agreed to recruit French youth from mainly rural districts in our region of Occitanie. Would we be able to tempt the teens out of their comfort zones? Against all our expectations, we received three times more applications than there were places available. This was quite an overwhelming experience, we could sense the desire for adventure after two years full of restrictions. When then Ukrainian youth turned the Weimar Triangle into a European rectangle, this led to a really exciting group dynamic. One Sunday morning at a really unusually early hour, all twelve French youths did in fact turn up at the airport with their families. Voyage, voyage . . . Brandenburg here we come. The feedback has been unanimous, that in spite of the physical hardships and the language barriers on the 200 kilometres between Drawno National Park and the destination in Templin in the Uckermark the magic of Europe has really come alight. Merci beaucoup, that we were able to make a small contribution to this.

*Nadine Gruner*

*Director of Maison de Heidelberg in Montpellier*



# OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

## PARTNER: OUTWARD BOUND

Outward Bound offers groups and individuals powerful learning experiences – outdoors, in Germany and in more than 30 countries all over the world. We focus on educational objectives and develop personal abilities with programmes that have the potential to change lives, build teams and transform schools. Our excellently equipped centres – here Schloss Kröchlendorff in the Uckermark – are the starting point for a process focusing on adventurous activities in remote wilderness settings.

With the *est* Expedition we got the exceptional chance to lead students from four nations in a wilderness setting between Poland and Germany. All of them were new to outdoor education as well as to the cultural learning challenge in a European context with four different languages and English as the camp language. Our expedition modules were:

- Mountain Trekking
- Canoeing & Kayaking
- Hiking & Biking
- Bivouac and Campcraft

Safety in the outdoors is our fundamental priority. We are grateful and proud that there were no bad injuries during the 14 days. Careful planning and coordination by our trained, professional staff minimised the risk without diminishing the excitement of the active, adventurous challenge.

Nevertheless, it was Covid that also touched our course in a way that put an enormous challenge on staff, logistics and students.

Knowing that we were not able to send the participants who tested positive back to France it was clear we would have to handle this situation carefully on our own. I separated these students into a fifth group that travelled via bus, and we were able to bring them back to their teams one by one once they were negative again. This way all students were able to stay and finish after 14 days and only five out of 48 got sick.

Overall, our CEO Christine Mangold, all the wonderful instructors working for the *est* Expedition, and I were extremely committed to make this programme a great success. Everybody felt honoured to work for every single student and as well for the outstanding opportunity to live and create a small piece of a Europe that we wish to live in. We were impressed to see how easy the students adapted to the idea of being equal among equals. A wonderful metaphor for a Europe that needs to be made again and again.



*Ingo Stapperfenne*  
*Summer Camp Project Leader at Outward Bound*

# TOUR REPORT

The starting point of the camp was Kröchlendorff castle, where the equipment needed for the expedition was packed. On the first day, the participants were divided into groups of 12, in which there were no more than four people from one country, and there were group interactions, outdoor activities, a barbecue and an official kick-off with *est* and Outward Bound Germany representatives. The activities that were carried out aimed at getting to know participants' names, and some common features and the interests uniting the group. Everyone was also able to define the coming challenges they felt confident about and also those where they were apprehensive. After the first day of events, the participants spent their last night indoors, in the castle rooms. As to Covid prevention, before taking part, everyone was required to present a negative antigen test result and during the camp both participants and trainers were regularly tested.





On the second day everyone was taken by bus to Drawno in Poland, to Stanica Wodna. Cake and dinner waited there, and then groups set up their tents. There was also the opportunity to go out into the water for the first time, to practice steering kayaks and capsizing. The next day was on the river, where the conditions were more demanding than on the lake with natural obstacles like trees and stones.



In many groups there were a few participants who had never kayaked or could not swim. For them, the canoe section turned out to be a very big challenge. On the route, there were many changes in canoeing pairs, so that people who were less able could go with more experienced persons. Despite the language barriers (some of the participants spoke English poorly) many showed great patience and tried to learn and help.



In the evening all the groups met at the Barnimie II forest campsite. The rest of the luggage was delivered by bus, and each team prepared their first meal together outdoors. Surprisingly, there were no problems with the division of duties, some people said right away that they like cooking and would be happy to do so. The rest helped to peel and cut the vegetables and after eating to do the washing-up.



The river Drawa is not very difficult, but there are many trees in it that require constant control of the canoe. On the second day on the river, the teams went through the distance much more efficiently and the moods were better. People in pairs knew each other better and gained practice. The reward for the effort was another pleasant forest camping site with bonfires, a jetty and a volleyball court. After the night there, participants hiked back to Barnimie for one more night in Drawski National Park.

Until then, all the talking between the educators and participants in groups were in English. In the evening in Barnimie, meetings in national groups were held. Participants could exchange experiences and insights in their native language, with native trainers. These were valuable meetings because some of the participants got to know their colleagues and trainers better, said what bothered them and what they liked. During the first days, there was a visible division into nationalities, the participants stuck together, although each day they spent more and more time together with people from other countries. Comparing the situation at the beginning and the end of the camp, there was a huge change. The interpersonal bonds that arose during the hard and pleasant moments of the expedition were independent of nationality or even knowledge of English.





The next stage of the expedition was the most demanding in terms of distance. The groups had a few days to reach the border with Germany by bikes, and then cycle to the lake in Angermünde. Some participants cycled more than 40 km in one go for the first time in their lives, but the motivation and support in the group was so high that despite the tears and some moments of crisis the team moved closer to the goal every day. It was also a challenge to get to the place where the tents were to be erected. The group even cycled at night, in the light of headlamps, because they were very motivated.

Once the German border was crossed, it was possible to travel last 30 km from Schwedt to Angermünde by train. A few people decided to take a train, because they were feeling very tired already. The other participants were very keen on achieving their goal, so they decided to ride their bikes to the destination. Everyone met at the station in Angermünde, in the atmosphere of happiness and they rode the last 5 km together.





The next days in Angermünde were a total change of rhythm. The pace of the day was not that fast anymore and the schedule wasn't that tight. At the lakeside beach everyone could rest and cool down after the exciting days of the expedition. This was also a time for reflection, discussion and the exchange of impressions between groups. After two days there, there was still the last section to Templin, and some groups decided to travel by public transport, and some by bikes.

Priorities changed as the groups got to Templin. After the physical challenges like biking, there was now the challenge of preparing the team presentations for the closing ceremony. Groups gathered in a tent, they were talking for two hours, and after that they decided to make a team speech, and a short movie. Each group prepared something different, like a dance or a performance. There was a bit of stress before the show, because many important people came, such as the First Lady of Germany, city officials, *est* and Outward Bound representatives.

In the groups with the trainers, there were also smaller summaries of expedition, which were very emotional. The group said that the relationships and friendships they made have a chance to continue and maybe they will meet again someday.



On Sunday, participants left at different times, so people said goodbye to each other as they left. The camp site was already empty before noon.

In conclusion, the camp was a source of many new experiences for teens. It helped them to feel more confident using English, showed participants how overcoming difficulties together connects people and that knowing a foreign language perfectly is not necessary to make friends from another country.

*Martyna Krzywicka*  
*Team leader at Outward Bound*



# QUOTES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

“In your mind you might think Poland is like this or like that and when you meet the people, it can be the same or it can be totally different but it’s really interesting to just talk and see what you have in common.”

“I’ve never slept in a tent before, that was new to me. It was cool”

“The trip was like a climax. It got better and better every day. I found many friends, we are really close now and we’ll stay in contact.”

“We Polish people spent a lot of time with the Ukrainian people. We compared our languages. We have many similar words, some are even the same but some are really different. I didn’t know that before.”

“My motivation was to meet people from other countries. I’m not really a sporty person and that’s also why I wanted to come here, to push my limits.”

“You can see Europe as one big country but there are many cultures in it.”

“I’ve learned to be more patient and to be more attentive, so that everyone gets to our final destination.”

“When I had Covid in the camp, I learned to bounce back from the sad situation. My team was very supportive, that was nice to see. I never felt left alone.”



# FINAL PARTY

Our patron Elke Büdenbender came to the future location of *est* in Templin before the official start of the closing ceremony at 2 pm. She wanted to have time to talk to the young people from Germany, Poland, France and Ukraine about their journey from Drawno to Templin. The participants illustrated their reports with a small exhibition that documented their trip, and also provided an overview of the different places of origin of these 48 young people.



During the ceremony in the school's historical gymnasium Elke Büdenbender spoke about the very serious situation in Europe as a result of Russia's war of aggression, and she mentioned how this has fundamentally changed the lives of the young Ukrainians. Very much in line with the *est* vision, Ms Büdenbender then emphasised the power of friendships across borders: **"You are our future. The friendships you form across nations today are the foundation of peaceful living together tomorrow."**

Henrike Reemtsma, head of the foundation board and the event's host, and Franz-Christoph Michel, chair of the Templin city council, also held welcome addresses and congratulated the young people on their successful expedition. Mr Michel warned: **'It is not if the Euro fails that Europe will fail, but if the friendship between Europe's youth fails then Europe will fail.'**

Christine Mangold, managing director of the outdoor education provider Outward Bound, stressed the importance of European unity, before the young people then held their own small final presentations.

There was singing, dancing, a best-of-trip video was shown, and some of the youth spoke about their personal experiences. The best thing of all was that new friendships had been struck across language and cultural borders. The audience in the full gym was visibly touched and showed this with enthusiastic applause.

After an hour the ceremony was over, and everyone went outside, where the young people invited people to speed dating. In four three-minute rounds guests were able to talk with the participants about their trip, their ideas about Europe, and their personal aims and wishes.



Food and drink were provided, accompanied by guitar and piano. As high point was a performance of Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall* by Pauline from Templin and Maksimilian from Poland, loudly singing "We don't need no education" together with all the young people in the audience.

Without any "education" in the classical sense, during these two weeks the young people learned a lot about themselves, and about a simple and reduced life in nature, and the power of working together.

We say thank you to all the participants, supporters, and supervisors, and we are looking forward to next year.

*Stine Peisl, Daniela Obkircher*  
*Stiftung Gebäudeensemble Joachimsthal'sches Gymnasium Templin*









# EVALUATION

## 1. General

This year's Summer Camp, "Weimar Triangle PLUS," took place from 10 to 23 July 2022 between Drawno (Poland) and Templin. 48 youths from four countries – Germany, France, Poland, and Ukraine – set off on an expedition with the expert assistance of a team of outdoor educationalists, in which in 14 days they would travel 180 kilometres only on foot, by bicycle, or by canoe. The express aim of the Summer Camp was to enable young people from rural areas in the participating countries to enter upon an adventure during which they would very practically experience European cooperation, would strengthen their sense of responsibility and democracy, and would get to know themselves and their own competences better (see press release of 21 March 2022, available at <http://www.est.eu>).

7 young people from Germany, 6 from France, 6 from Ukraine, and one from Poland filled out the Camp evaluation sheet, which used the online tool i-eval in full. The survey consisted of a general part (scaled from 1 = "I was not at all satisfied" to 10 = "I was completely satisfied"), a specific part (scaled from 1 = "does not apply" to 7 = "totally applies"), and a qualitative part with open questions. Like the Summer Camp itself, the survey was conducted in English, meaning that misunderstandings may have been possible, as none of the participants was able to answer in their native language. For the results, answers to the questions were presented in percentages of agreement, displaying all the answers in relation to the median value of the scale (see link below).

The scales *sense of responsibility*, *ecological awareness*, *physical fitness & resilience*, and *self-confidence* were tested with a second questionnaire that was provided by Outward Bound and filled in by 10 participants. Here the young people were asked to indicate the extent to which certain statements concerning their personalities were true before and after the Summer Camp, using an 8-point Likert scale. Using the standard Cohens d effect size on the basis of average values, it was possible to ascertain the influence of the Summer Camp on certain aspects of the youths' personalities. An effect size of  $d > 0.5$  is seen to be significant here, and from  $d > 0.8$  the effect of the intervention (here the Summer Camp) is seen to be strong.

## 2. Summary of Results

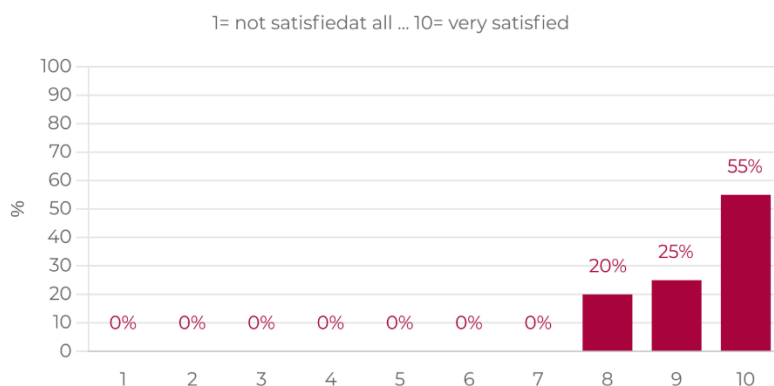
The participating youths were between 14 and 17 years old (Ø 15.2 years) and for a large majority of them the Summer Camp was their first ever experience of international youth exchange. This immediately left a deep and mainly positive impression. On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied) the participants evaluated the total impression of the camp with an average of 9.4. The programme, the atmosphere in the camp, and the team group leaders were evaluated very positively too, with values between 8.9 and 9.6. The young people were very satisfied with the accommodation, the food, and the organisation, although these were, as expected of a nature camp, by no means luxurious.

### **B088** Overall opinion:

Average (M): 9,35

Standard deviation (SD): 0,81

Valid cases (N): 20



The individual written feedback from participants shows that most of them made deep friendships in these two weeks, and that they have grown thanks to experiences that lay outside their comfort zones. Asked what they liked the most, many participants emphasised the social togetherness in the group, which they compared with that in a family or a group of good friends. It is also evident that the national groups disbanded over time and were replaced by a new unity between all the participants. At the same time, one Ukrainian participant also appreciated the protected space that the camp provided for an exchange in their own mother tongue with other Ukrainian youths, finally after four long months outside Ukraine due to refugee status. In all, the evaluation gives the impression that belonging to a specific nationality is not highly significant for the youths, and that they spent a lot of time in mixed groups, such as at mealtimes.



### 3. Evaluation of the Aims of the Organisers

#### 3.1 Intercultural Exchange: Understanding between Nations, Tolerance, Diversity

Although the Summer Camp did not include any classical teaching and learning on the countries from which the participating youth came, and the trip itself only involved two of these countries, the young people indicated that they had learned a lot about each other's home countries (85%), and that they would like to know more about them (89%). Generally, nearly all of the participants (95%) agreed with the statement that the Summer Camp had led to them being more interested in other cultures and countries.

Thanks to the Summer Camp being based on a trip in which 48 participants were divided into four groups of 12 from all the participating countries, and that they sometimes took different routes, the mixing of the different national groups was enhanced. This is also reflected in the survey of the young people, as the majority of participants (60%) found that the national groups mixed well with each other. A further indication as to the inclusive and multilateral approach of the young people towards the other nationalities is the fact that they mainly communicated with each other in English during their free time as well, although none of the participants spoke English as their native language. The Summer Camp also had a positive effect on the sense of European identity of the young people: 93% of respondents indicated that their interest in Europe had increased thanks to the Camp, and 79% felt more deeply connected to Europe after the Summer Camp.

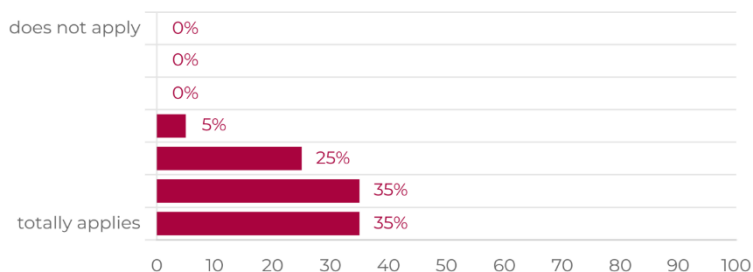
**T316** Because of this exchange I now have more interest in getting to know other countries and cultures.:

Average (M): 6,00

Standard deviation (SD): 0,92

Valid cases (N): 20

Because of this exchange I now have more interest in getting to know other countries and cultures.



The data from Outward Bound also show that the theme of communication had by far the largest effect size ( $d=1.18$ ), and thus developed the most as a result of the Summer Camp. 80% of respondents evaluated the item “I communicate well with people” higher than before the Summer Camp.

### 3.2 Humanity, Team Development

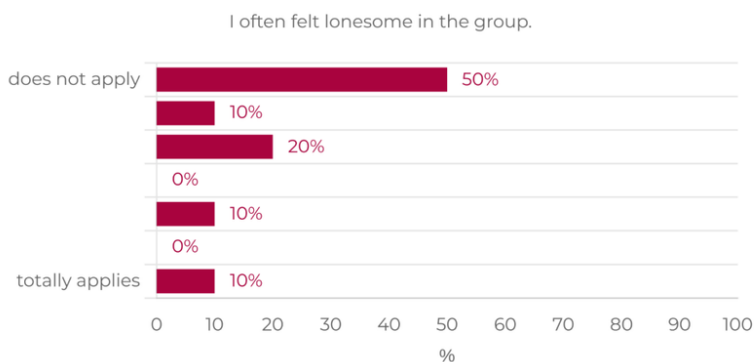
A further guiding principle of the Summer Camp was to enhance the team skills of the young people. This aim was more than just met, as the data from the evaluation show that there was nearly no participant who felt alone or were seen to be “outsiders,” and that there was a very open culture of communication when it came to conflicts. 100% of the respondents agreed with the statement that conflicts, when they arose, were resolved in the team. This good atmosphere and mutual support can be identified in many other items in the survey and are also due to the positive team management of the outdoor educationalists of Outward Bound, who managed to establish personal relations with the participants and to use numerous activities to strengthen the group’s team spirit. That the participants established a well-developed team identity can be seen in the fact that all the respondents would gladly take part in another international exchange programme with the same people.

**T212** I often felt lonesome in the group.:

Average (M): 2,50

Standard deviation (SD): 2,01

Valid cases (N): 20

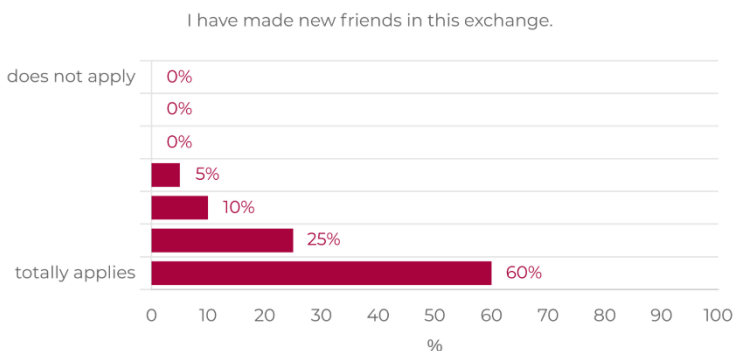


**T206** I have made new friends in this exchange.:

Average (M): 6,40

Standard deviation (SD): 0,88

Valid cases (N): 20



### 3.3 Sense of Responsibility

In order to test the influence of the Summer Camp on participants' sense of responsibility, the scales *Compassion for Others* and *Social Competence* were taken from the Outward Bound questionnaire, and these displayed the highest results with a value of 0.62 (*Compassion for Others*) and 0.60 (*Social Competence*), alongside the category of *Ecological Awareness* (0.67). This is seen, for example, in the high frequency of agreement with statements such as "I am able to help others when they need it without wanting anything in return." Other statements on the willingness to help and a sense of responsibility, such as "When others are suffering, I put my needs second," were rated highly by the youths taking part in the camp, which can be taken as a sign of the lasting impressions made by the experience of the Summer Camp.

### 3.4 Promoting Democracy

A key feature of the Summer Camp is its implicit contribution to democracy, which it achieved by giving young people the possibility to come into contact and share across borders with other young Europeans. This chance was widely used, as seen in 3.1 above. The implementation of the camp was also based on democratic principles and was perceived as such by respondents. 100% agreed with the statement that the different participants and national groups all had the same rights, and although the camp programme was defined in advance, 70% said that they had the opportunity to shape it actively. The participants also had the impression that it was possible to speak openly with each other in the group (85%).

### 3.5 Digital Detox

During the Summer Camp the use of smart phones was restricted for the young people, and there was just one time slot in the evenings where they were permitted to use their phones. They were very grateful for this external support for digital detox: 92% of participants noted that this rule was good for them, and 87% assume that the sense of community in the group was strengthened by the absence of smartphones.

### 3.6 Ecological Awareness

One of the largest changes that the young people noticed about themselves as a result of the Summer Camp is the fact that they think more about the environment during their everyday lives than they had before (effect size  $d=0.85$  = large impact).



A total of 68% of the respondents thus evaluated their own awareness of ecological contexts as significantly higher after the Summer Camp than before, which is reflected in the fact that after the Summer Camp it is more important for them to spend time outdoors in nature and that they feel more closely connected to nature.

### **3.7 Physical Fitness and Resilience**

While there are no clear data on the promotion of the participants' physical fitness, the data from Outward Bound indicate an increase in "resilience" of 0.6 points on average on the Likert scale in a before and after comparison. The young people note that they can better deal with stress situations after the Summer Camp and can more easily manage serious situations. As the effect size in terms of resilience is only at 0.39, however, no significant conclusions about the effects of the Summer Camp on the resilience of the youth can be drawn.

### **3.8 Self-confidence**

In terms of the young people's self-confidence, the picture is similar to that for resilience. In all, it is possible to note an increase in self-confidence, which is expressed, for example, in the statement "I believe I can do it" that had a slightly higher average value after the Summer Camp than before it. But here too the effect size of 0.31 is not significant.

## **4. Ideas for the Next Summer Camp**

In all the feedback from participants in the Summer Camp indicated very high levels of satisfaction in terms of all the evaluated items and particularly in terms of the overall impression. The aims that the organisers pursued with the Summer Camp were fully achieved and in sum the feedback confirms that the concept and planning were highly successful and sustainable for the future. The participants suggested just some small organisational improvements, concerning mainly the concrete local implementation of the programme. Some of the young people, for example, wished for the opportunity to eat more healthily during the Camp and to have better access to sanitary facilities. Because of the basic idea of an outdoor nature Summer Camp, the latter will be difficult to implement in future, but clearer advance communication about the available hygiene facilities could be helpful.

There was also a wish to have more contact to other "travelling groups" during the Camp. For next year it might be possible to consider ways to bring the entire group together.

But it should be noted that this project promoted the mixing of the national groups, and that this is harder to achieve in a larger group than in smaller groups. Another way of taking up the participants' wishes in this respect would be to organise a longer pre- or post-trip meeting with all the groups.

## 5. Access to the Data

The results of the individual items are publicly available here:

[https://i-eval.eu/en/dashboard/results-1-1/questionnairecompact/11944?  
cHash=212d45c786d0d5c673ac62ee8b2a4b1e](https://i-eval.eu/en/dashboard/results-1-1/questionnairecompact/11944?cHash=212d45c786d0d5c673ac62ee8b2a4b1e) (last accessed 30 August 2022).

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**Design**  
BRAND PULSES, Berlin

**Title image**  
Outward Bound

**Photos**  
Trip: Outward Bound  
Final party: Tom Schweers

Templin, November 2022

We warmly thank all partners, sponsors and supporters of the 2022 Summer Camp!

## Organised by:

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