



COMENIUS PROJECT BREAKING STEREOTYPES

INITIAL SURVEY

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Thanks to:

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All the teachers and students who took part on the survey throughout Europe.

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1. Participant high-schools

Coordinator: Mrs. Ave Teder

Tallinna tehnikagümnaasium

Sõpruse pst.187

13415 tallinn

Estonia

Coordinator : Mr. Mariusz Klimczak

Zespół szkół ponadgimnazjalnych nr 2 w brzesku

Ul. Piastowska 2

32-800

Brzesko

Poland

Coordinator: Mrs. Elena Scuteri

Istituto di istruzione superiore "g. Malafarina"

Via trento e trieste

88068 soverato

Italy

Coordinator: Mrs. Irene Tiago

Agrupamento vertical gonçalo mendes da maia escola e. B. 2/3 da maia

Avenida luís de camões

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Portugal

Coordinator: Mrs. Krisztina Botosné Mészáros

Prohászka Ottokár Orsolyita Közoktatási Központ

2-4 újkapu street

Győr

Hungary

Coordinator: Mr. Eduardo Riol

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08907 L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

Spain

2. Methodological notes

The survey was carried out in November 2011 at all participant high-schools. Portugal partners designed a Moodle platform to ease the process of answers collection.

It was agreed to gather answers from a minimum of 10% of the population of each high-school in order to give a fair representation of answers.

Given that it was the first time that most of the schools had carried out such a survey led to some problems. For example, some students in Spain didn't save answers correctly so they just lost them.

Quantitative survey

The first part of the survey refers to basic social classification of our students, such as age, sex, personal beliefs, nationality and country of birth.

The second part includes different questions about the other countries, concerning:

- Geographical situation
- General knowledge of the countries
- Political knowledge of the country
- Cultural knowledge of the country
- Food
- Contemporary culture

Qualitative survey

Some qualitative answers were included in the survey, in order to complement quantitative questions. Most of the study is based on the self-assuming knowledge of the student. This may be very subjective and even false. Students may want to show they know more than they really do, or they simply may cheat, so asking them directly about some political and cultural questions and expecting an open answer and not a number was considered to be a way of showing if they were telling the truth.

On the other way, we looked for an easy way to find out about "stereotypes" or, in other words, the image they had of another country's traditions and culture. An intuitive way to find this out was asking students about the first three words that came to their minds when asked about a country. We weren't disappointed at all.

Difficulties

The first time to do something is never the easiest, so we encountered some problems when carrying out the survey.

Whereas Estonia, Hungary and Portugal did produce more or less some 100 full questionnaires, Spain only got 47. Many of the students did not record the answers properly. Polish students had a similar problem, while Italians answered much more the first part of the study than the second.

Estonian results got lost, but teachers from this country had kept the rounded statistics, so even if they are not exact, they can be used for the purpose of the survey.

Given these differences, the essay below uses percentages instead of total number of answers, with only some exceptions. We assume that, despite the mistakes, the answers of our students are quite representative of their total population.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight that ages of students are different for each school, given our different education systems, so this factor must be obviously taken into account when considering most of the answers.

Finally, in order to make the reading easier, the set of answers of the students from the different countries have been often summarized with the only name of the country.

3. The survey

SOCIOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

3.1 Overview

These are some basic sociological considerations about students who took part in the survey.

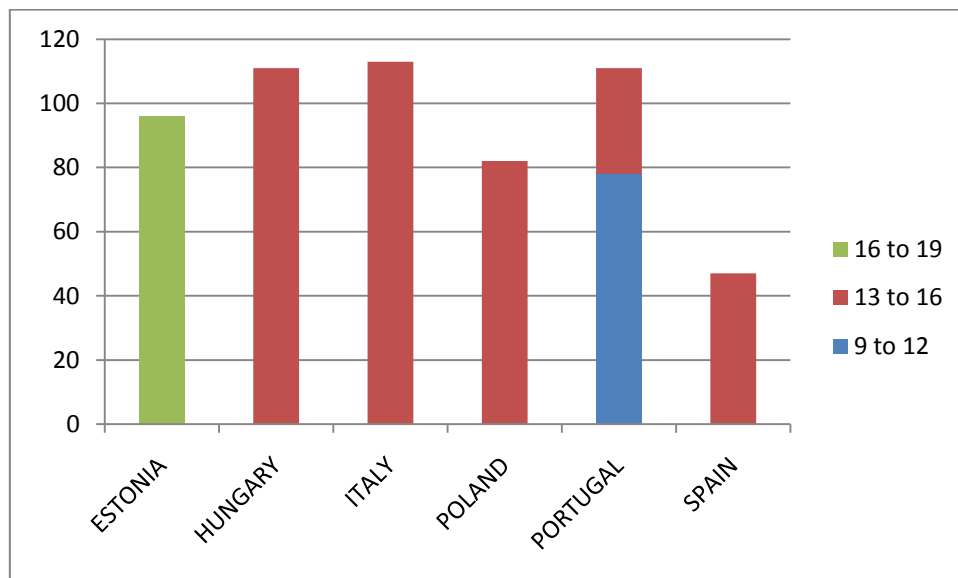
Population

ESTONIA	n = 96
HUNGARY	n = 111
ITALY	n = 113 (first part) n=31 (second part)
POLAND	n = 82
PORTUGAL	n = 111
SPAIN	n = 47

Age

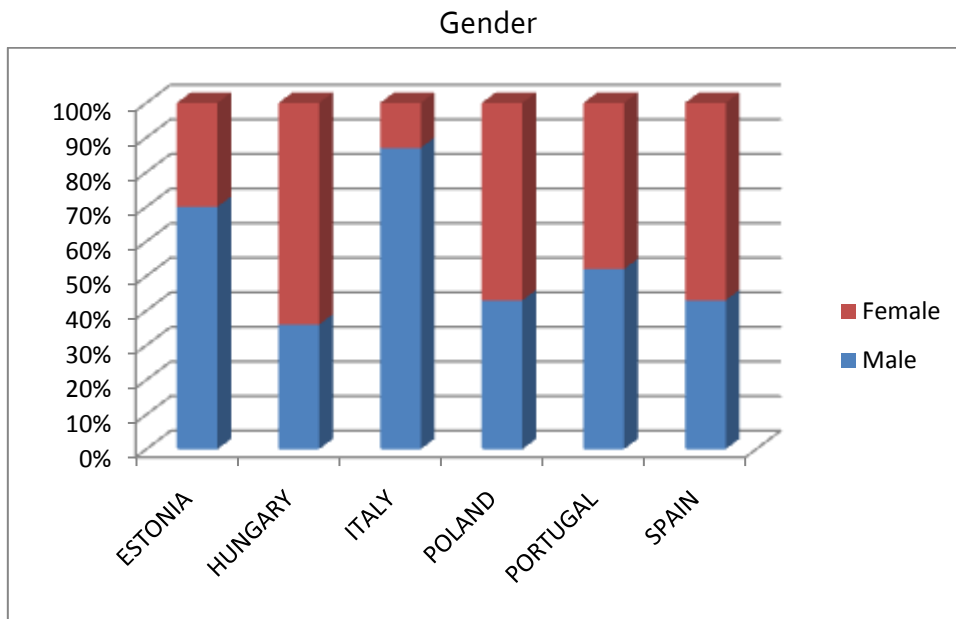
Ages are different for each school, given our different education systems, so this factor must be obviously taken into account when considering most of the answers. Students from Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain who joined the survey are between 13 and 16 years old, so they can be considered to be on a similar stage of learning. The Portuguese case is different given that 69% of students are between 9 and 12 years old. Estonian students are on the opposite side, being the most mature of all, 100% between 16 and 19 years old. We can understand then that Estonians do better for most of the questions. Nevertheless, Portuguese students spot some questions better than others.

Age



Gender

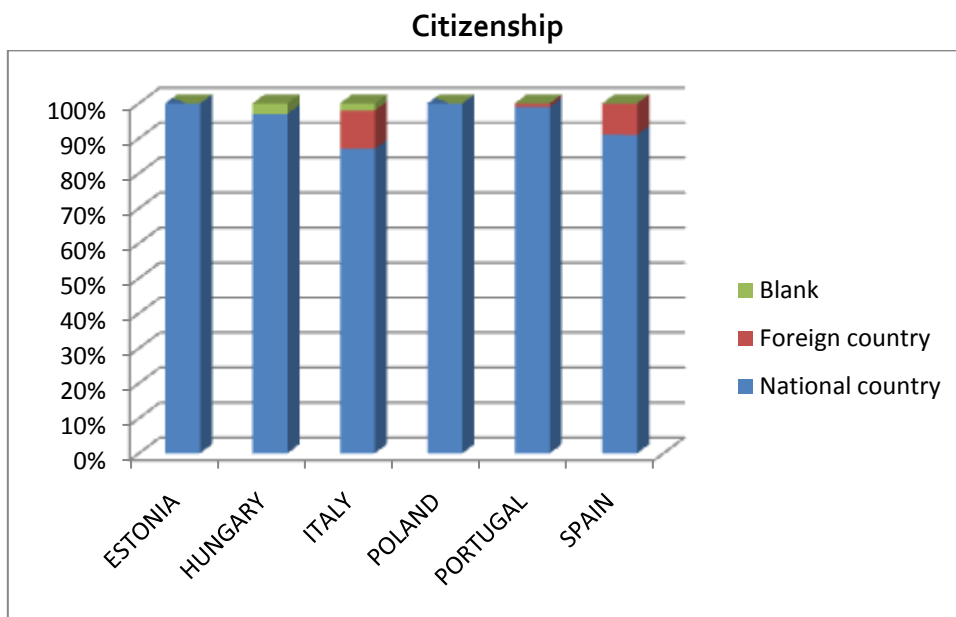
There is a majority of feminine respondents in every country, with the only exception of Estonia and Italy where masculine respondents are dominant.



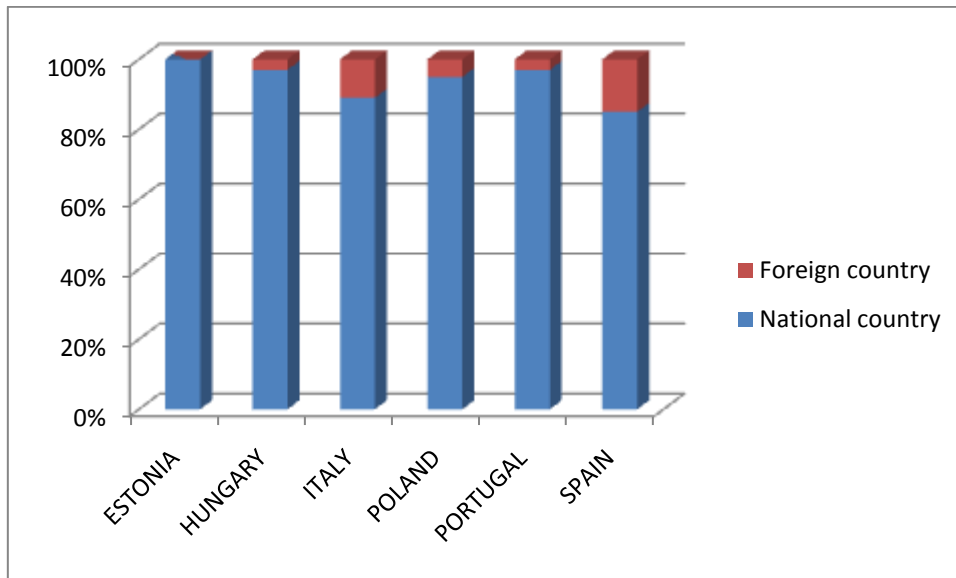
Citizenship / Country of birth

If we understand that nationality of students shows their precedence and therefore, if they are migrants, we can guess the high school's foreign students percentage.

The two graphics below show that both Italian and Spanish high-schools have some 10% of foreign students. These two countries received strong fluxes of migrants in the last decade, unlike the others.



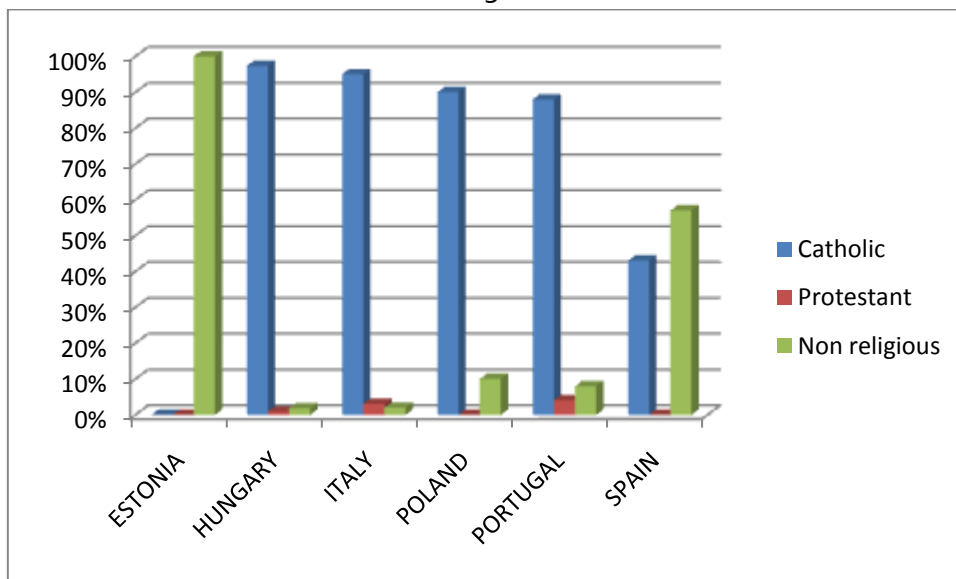
Country of birth



Religion

Students of Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal declare themselves mostly Catholics whereas 57% of Spanish and 100% of Estonian say that they are non-religious. There's a very little minority of protestants in Hungary, Italy and Portugal.

Religion



3.2 Knowledge of languages

The vehicular language of our project, **English**, is also the most spoken foreign language by students. More than 90% of pupils in every country can communicate in this language with the only exception of Poland, where less than 65% of youngsters say that they know the language.

Second spoken language strongly depends on the regional area and the neighbouring powerful countries or languages. This fact explains the learning of German in Poland and Hungary.

Another explicative factor is that of the language family. It's easy to see a relationship among the second most spoken language in Portugal, Spain and Italy, and the learning of Latin languages in all cases (French and Spanish).

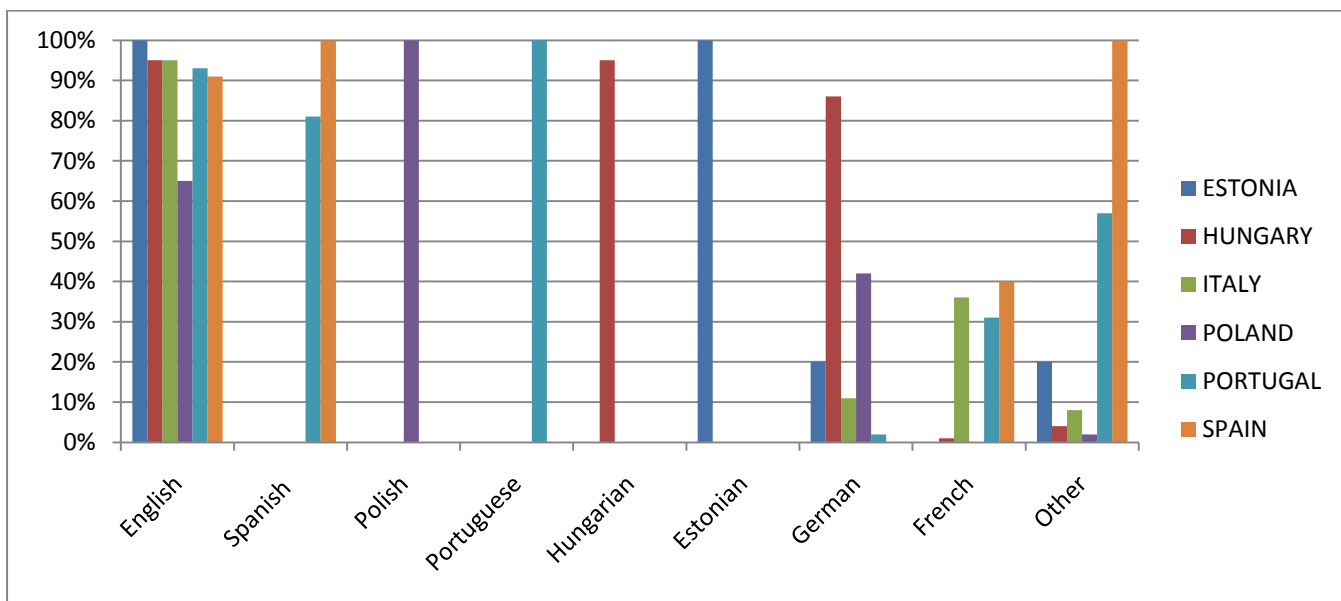
SPANISH: 81% of Portuguese students speak this language

GERMAN: 86% of Hungarian students, 42% of Polish students and 20% of Estonian students speak this language

FRENCH: 40% of Spanish students, 36% of Italian students and 31% of Portuguese students say that they speak this language.

Finally, some other spoken languages include Russian (20% of Estonian students) and Catalan (100% of Spanish students; Catalan language is the official language of Catalonia, together with Spanish). Some students' families in Portugal come from abroad and so, pupils speak Chinese, Ukrainian and Chinese.

Knowledge of languages



3.3 Knowledge of the other Comenius countries.

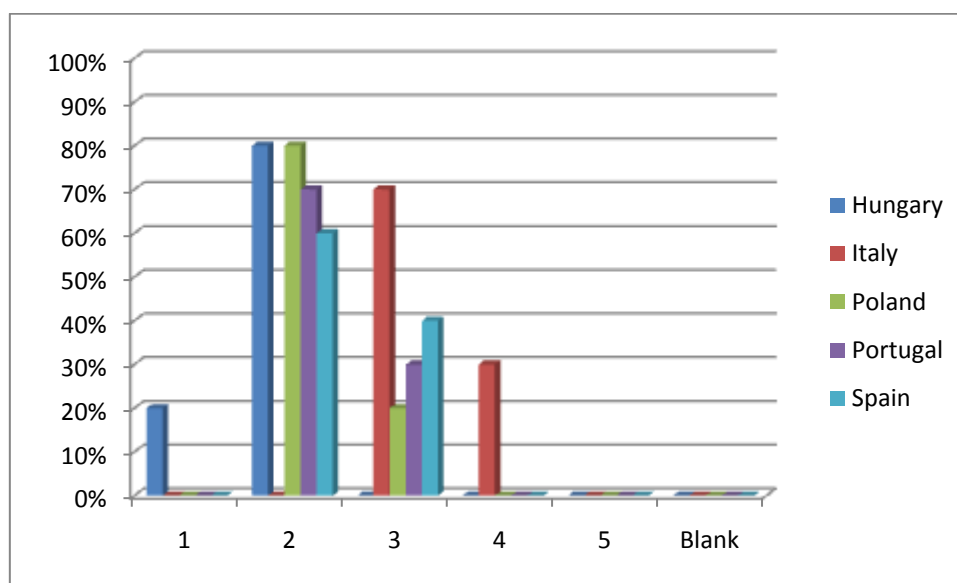
In this question, students were asked to self-evaluate their general knowledge about the other countries in a scale from 1= nothing to 5= a lot. Blank answers were accounted as “nothing”.

Estonia is the least well known country for all students from the other countries and Italy the most known. Spain and Portugal are in second place. The students from the three Southern countries show a better knowledge among them. Patterns for students from Northern countries are more difficult to gather.

ESTONIA

Estonian students declare that they have a low-medium knowledge of every country, with the only exception of Italy, that appears to be more popular with them. Hungary would be the least well known country. There are no students who say that they know any country very well and no blank answers either.

Estonian students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries

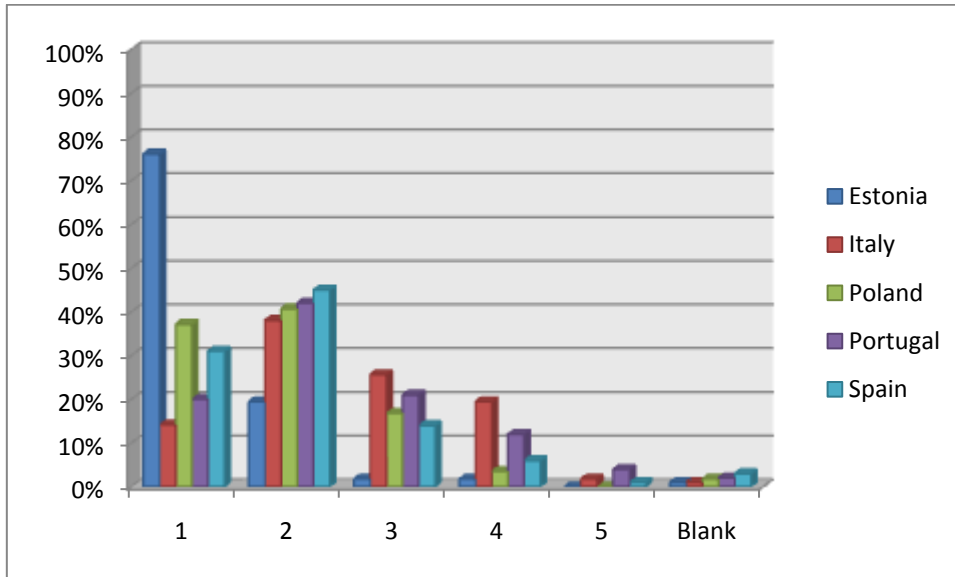


HUNGARY

For Hungarian students, the prevailing answer in this question was 2 (around 40%), that is “little knowledge” of all countries. Estonia was the least known country (77% said to know nothing).

Only Italy and Portugal got a better result with 26% and 24% of students who declared that they have a medium knowledge of these Mediterranean countries.

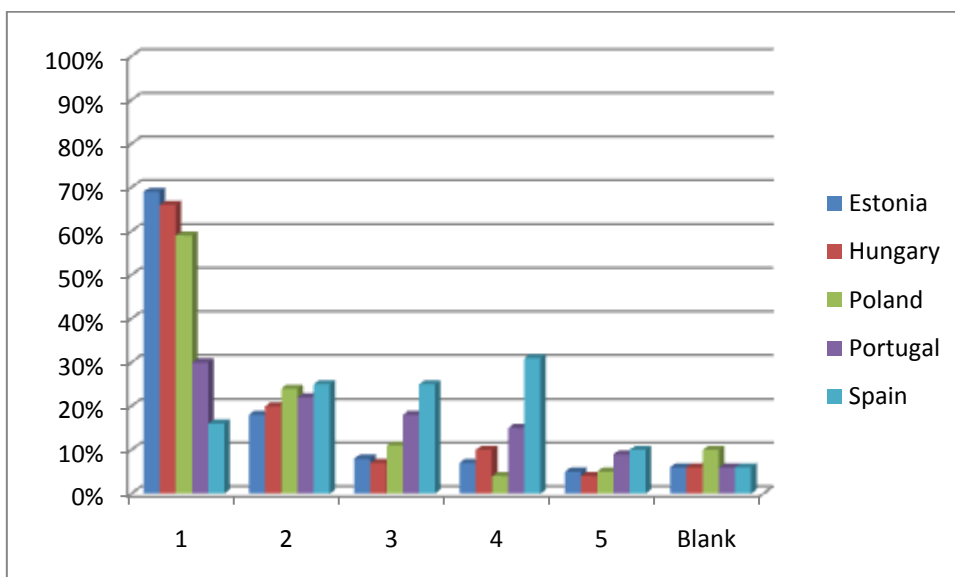
Hungarian students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries



ITALY

For Italian students, the most well known country is Spain. 56% of students say that they have a medium or quite advanced knowledge of the country. Portugal ranks second, with more spread results. However, Poland, Hungary and Estonia are increasingly unfamiliar to them.

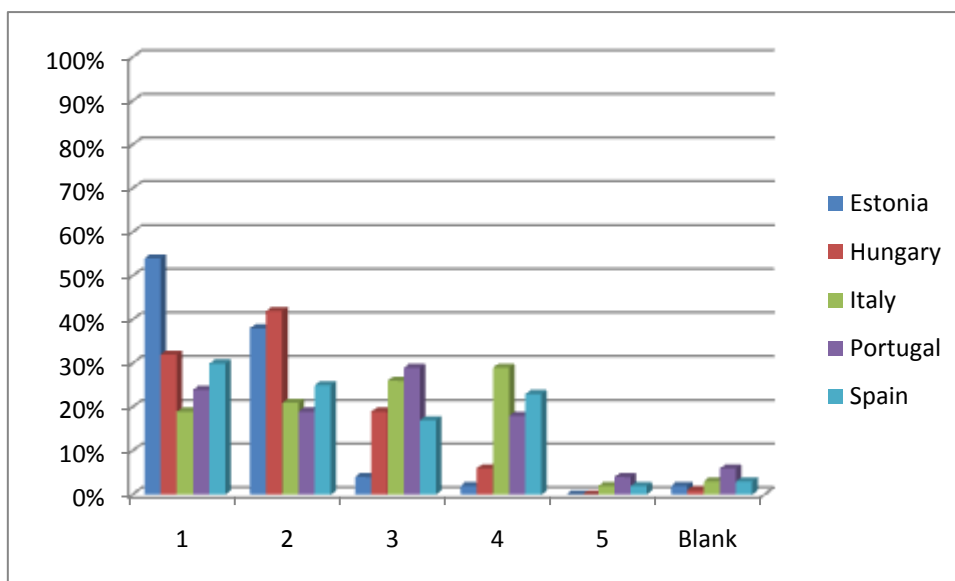
Italian students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries



POLAND

A remarkably 94% of Polish students declared that they know nothing about Estonia nor 75% did about Hungary, even being a neighbouring country. However, 55% said that they have a medium or quite advanced knowledge of Italy. The answers are mixed for Portugal and Spain, having significant groups of students answering values 1 to 4, although Portugal gets better results.

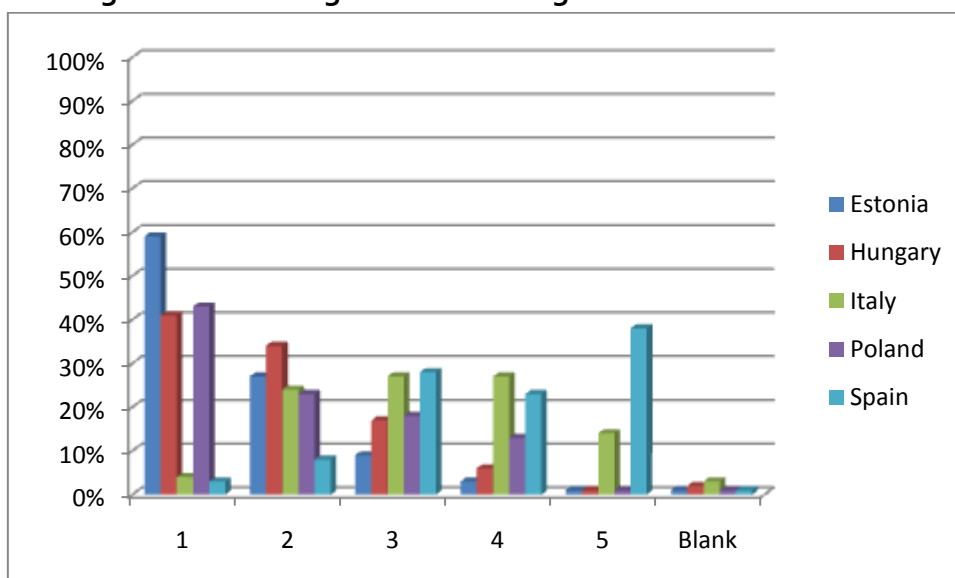
Polish students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries



PORTUGAL

According to the results, they know Spain best. 63% of them say that they have a quite or very advanced knowledge of their neighbouring country. Italy is also considerably popular with them. They also show more knowledge about the other countries than the students of the other high-schools, together with the Estonians.

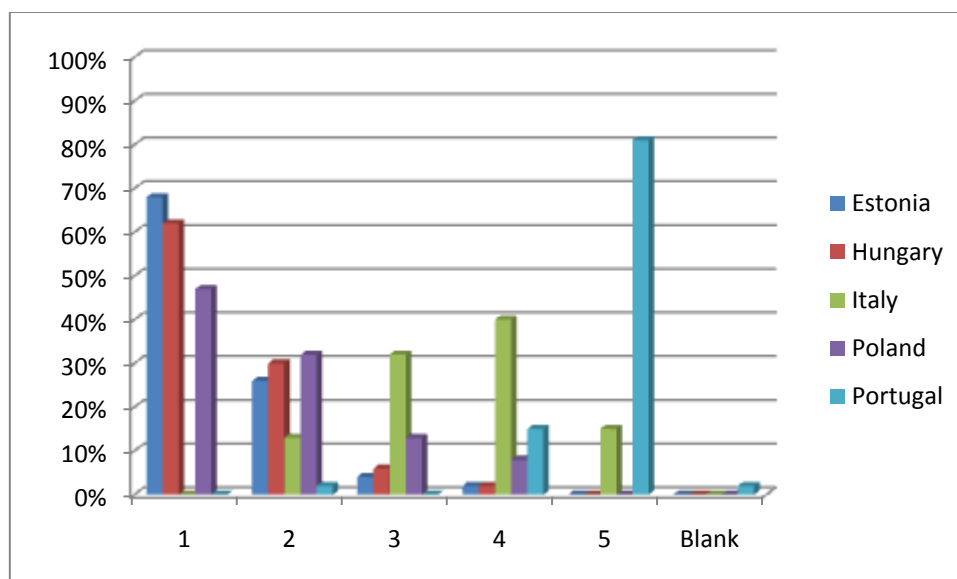
Portuguese students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries



SPAIN

An overwhelming majority of Spanish students declare that they know nothing or little about Estonia (95%) and Hungary (92%). Poland gets 79% of similar responses. However, it seems that they know more about the neighbouring countries and so 55% of students claim to know quite a lot or a lot about Italy. The distribution of answers for Portugal appears to be exaggerated. A 96% of Spanish students say that they know quite a lot or a lot about Portugal.

Spanish students' general knowledge of the Comenius countries



GEOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS

Some basic questions were formulated to find out the students' geographical perception of the other Comenius countries.

3.4 Location of countries in the geographical areas of Europe

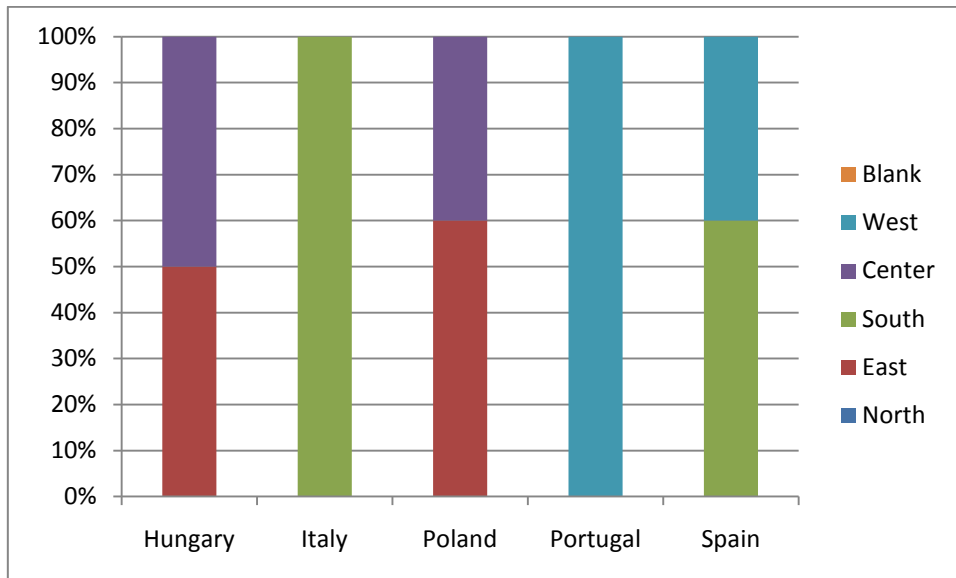
Students had to locate the participant Comenius countries in the different geographical areas of Europe. They had to choose different answers: North, East, South, West and Centre. The result is extremely interesting, as it shows the different perceptions of what Europe is and it effectively breaks some self-assumed stereotypes that nationals possess about their own countries.

ESTONIA

Estonian students produce some interesting patterns of answers. For example, they mostly see Poland as an Eastern country of Europe (60%). Half of students think the same of Hungary. They also see Portugal as an absolute Western European country, whereas the opinion for the same Spain is divided between 60% of answers for Southern and 40% for Western.

As in other countries, Italy is clearly regarded as a Southern country. Blank answers were 0% of total.

Estonian students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



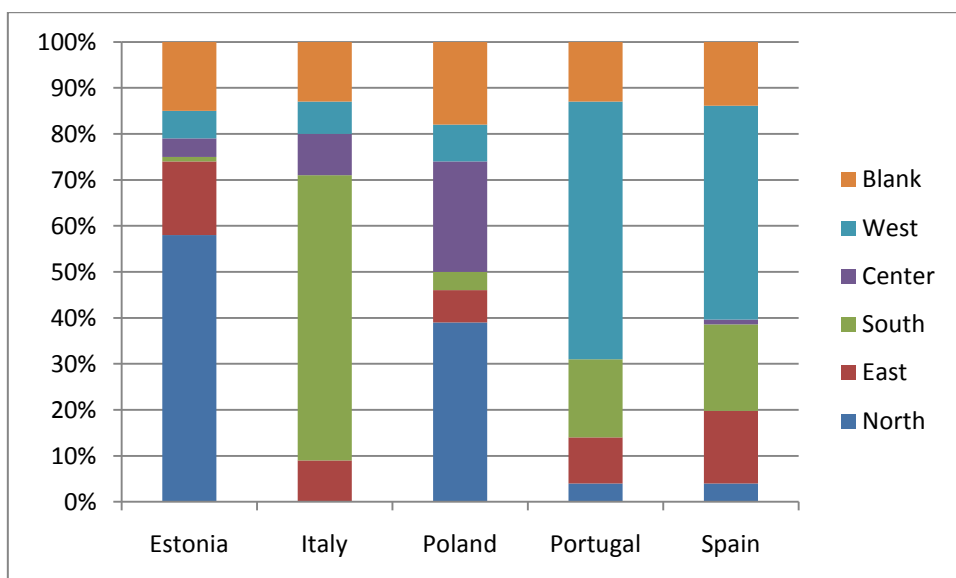
HUNGARY

Hungarian students assume the Nordic situation of Estonia (58%) and only 16% think of an Eastern location. For 39% of them, Poland is located in Northern Europe and for 24% in Central Europe.

Half of them assume that Spain and Portugal are Western countries of Europe (47% and 56% respectively), rather than Southern, and less than 19% in both cases think of the latter. This fact contrasts with the assumed image of Spaniards as a southern country in Europe.

The Southern position is clearly reserved for Italy (62%). Blank answers supposed approximately 15% of total.

Hungarian students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



ITALY

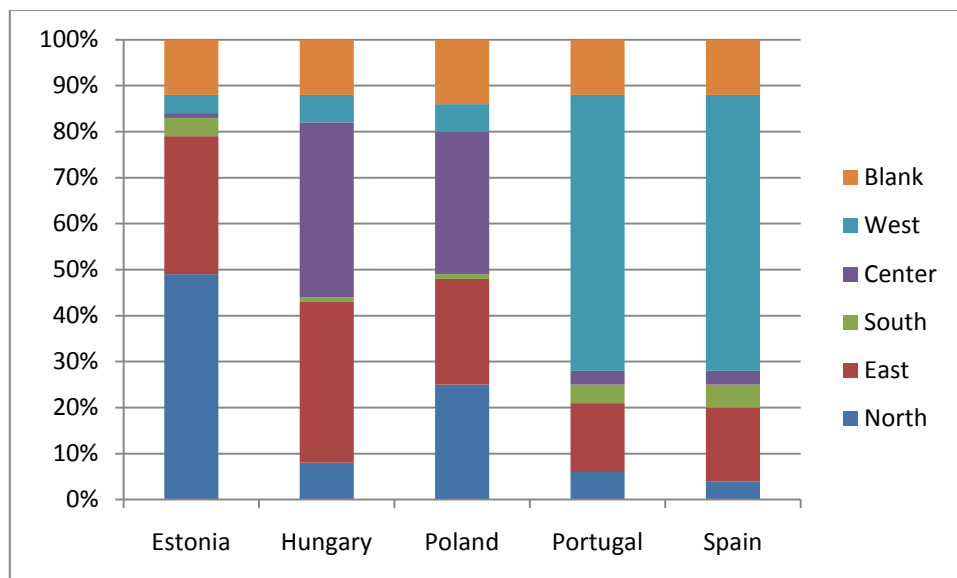
Italians think of Estonia as a Northern country of Europe, but a significant 30% relate it to East, as 34% of Spanish students do.

The same happens with Hungary. Even if a slighter majority of students think of Central Europe, more than 1 in 3 students see it as being an Eastern country. Poland gets very spread answers (35% for Central, 25% for Northern and 23% for Eastern Europe).

Portugal and Spain are overwhelmingly seen as Western countries.

Blank answers supposed approximately 12% of total.

Italian students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



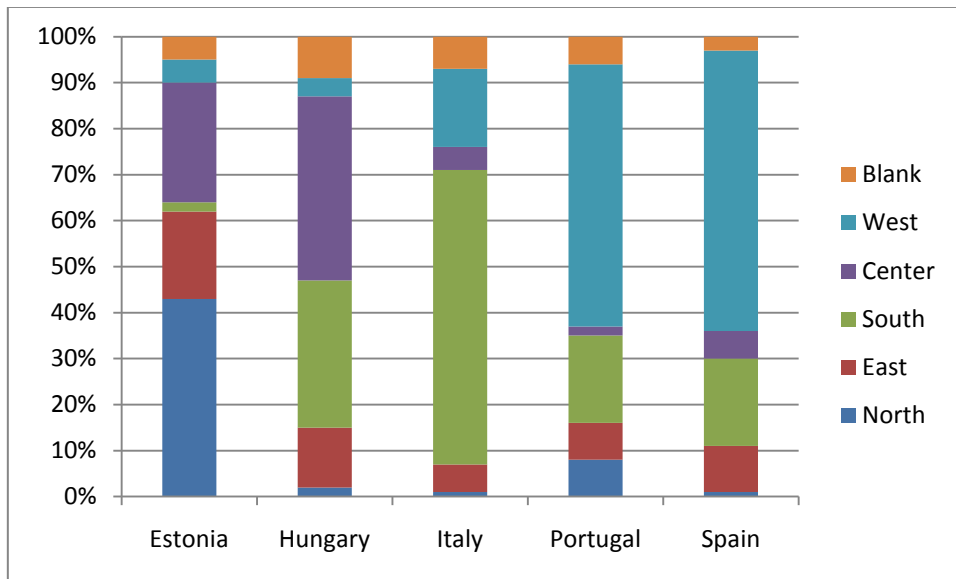
POLAND

Polish students give some of the most remarkable and interesting answers in this part of the survey. Even if nearly half of students think that Estonia lies in Northern Europe, significant 26% think the country is located in Central Europe, an interesting perception. 40% of them think that Hungary is situated in Central Europe, but 32% think it's in South. Even if Hungary is a Southern country compared to Poland, their perception sounds funny here.

The pattern of answers for Italy, Portugal and Spain is quite similar to that of the Eastern and Northern Comenius countries, and so, they mostly think that the first is a Southern country (64%) and the two latter are Western countries (57% and 61% respectively).

Blank answers were around 5% of total.

Polish students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



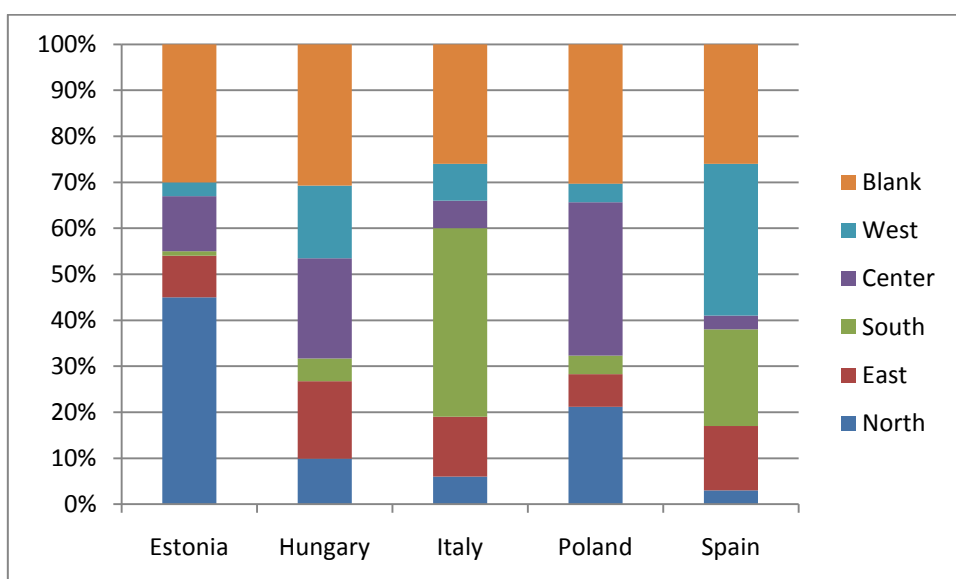
PORTUGAL

Portuguese students demonstrated some difficulty in locating the other Comenius countries, given that they produced some 30% of blank answers.

Hungary is the most geographically unknown country for them. 31% of students could not locate it. The pattern of distribution of answers is quite similar to the other countries, but for Spain. Unlike their neighbours, they mostly think of Spain as a Western country, whereas Spaniards see themselves and Portugal as Southern countries.

It's also noteworthy the divided vision of Hungary as a Central and Eastern country (22% and 17% respectively).

Portuguese students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



SPAIN

53% of Spanish students locate Portugal in the South of Europe and 40% in Western Europe. The same happens to Italy. 77% of students locate the country in Southern Europe.

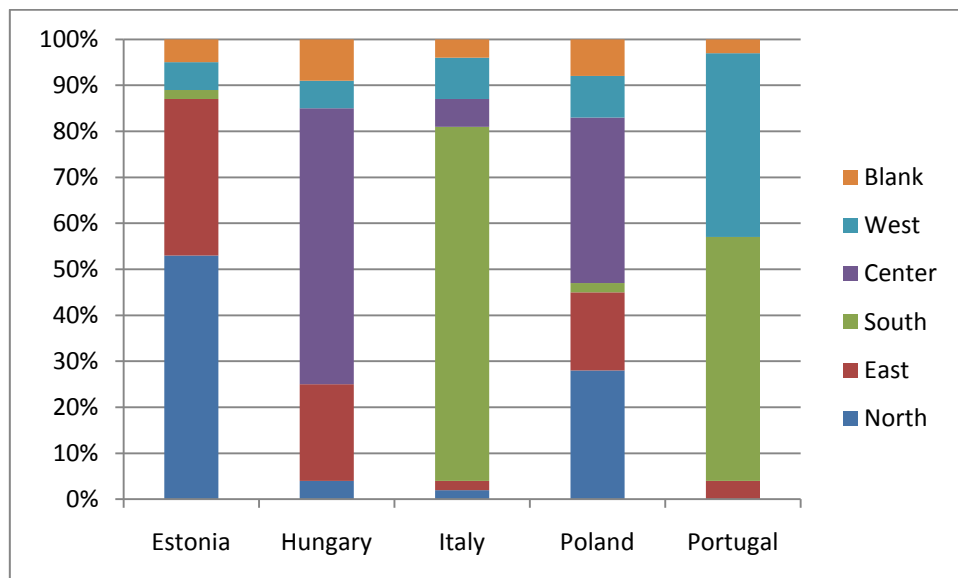
Even if Hungary may be considered to be geographically in the centre of the continent (and so 60% of students locate the country there), but a significant 21% spot the country in Eastern Europe.

Considerations about Poland are more confusing. 36% of students think Poland is in Eastern Europe, 28% in Northern Europe and 17% in Eastern Europe.

Finally, 54% of Spanish students assume the Nordic situation of Estonia, but a significant 30% of them relate the country to East.

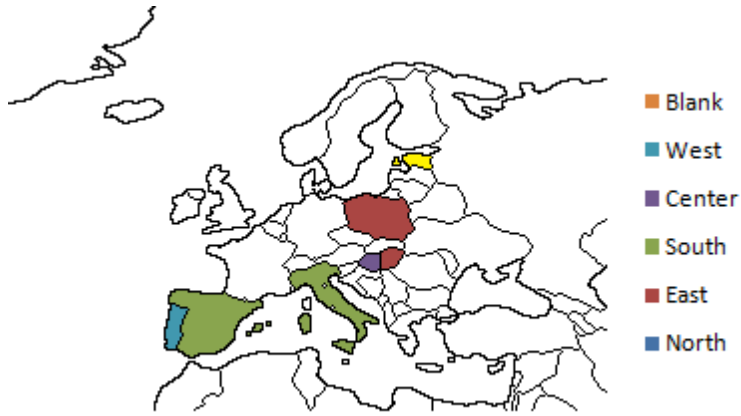
Blank answers were around 5% of total.

Spanish students' location of the Comenius countries in Europe



Prevailing location of countries

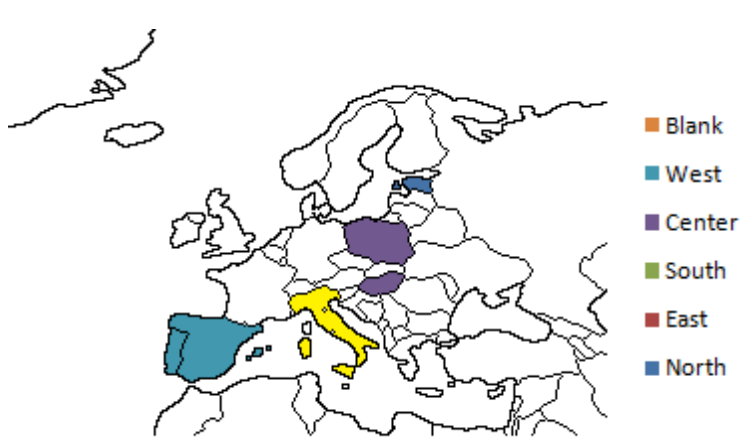
Estonia



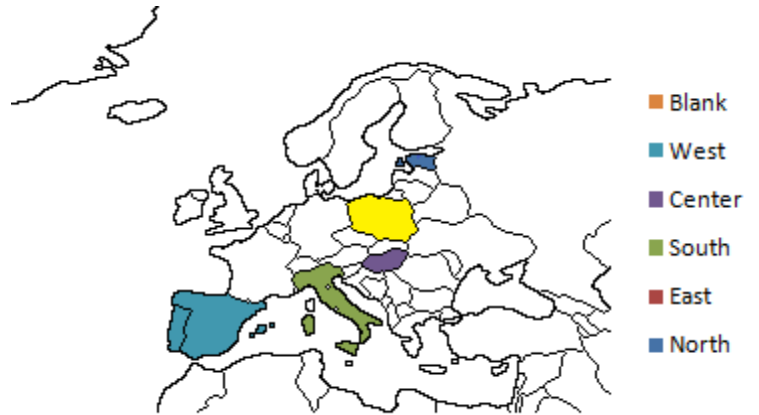
Hungary



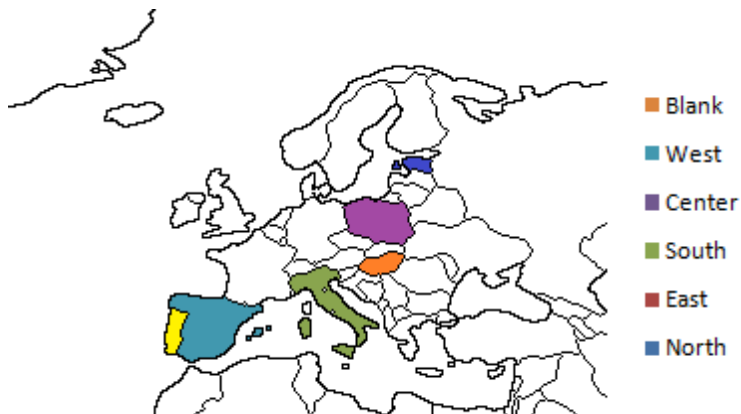
Italy



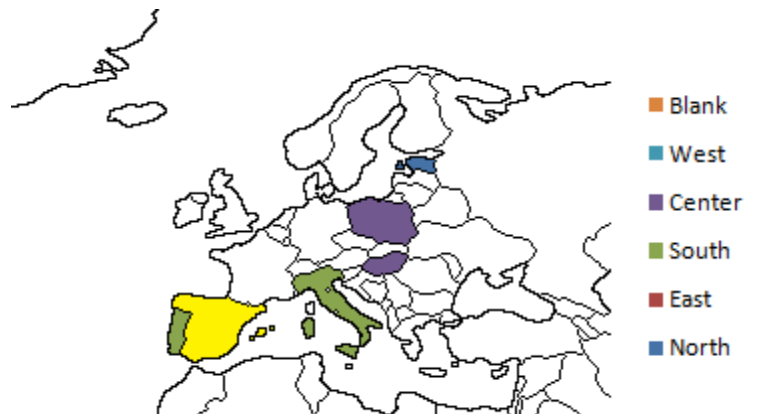
Poland



Portugal



Spain



3.5 Capital city

When asked for the capital cities of the Comenius countries, students do fairly well. Some common mistakes appear though: Riga or Vilnius for Estonia, Barcelona for Spain, Madrid for Portugal or Bucharest for Hungary.

ESTONIA

Estonian students get the best results on this question. 100% of them correctly identify the capital city of all Comenius countries.

HUNGARY

Hungarian students do fairly well in this question. More than 80% can name the capital city of every Comenius country correctly. They do best with Rome (92%) and worst with Lisbon and Warsaw (82%).

ITALY

Approximately 80% of Italian students correctly identify the capital cities of the Comenius countries. They do their best for Hungary (83% of right answers) and worst for Spain (24% of wrong answers).

POLAND

Polish students show quite good knowledge of the capital cities of the Comenius countries, but for Tallinn, Estonia. Half of them cannot identify it. 25% couldn't name Lisbon either.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese students get the worst results when identifying the capital cities of the Comenius countries. They correctly identify the Mediterranean cities of Madrid and Rome (more than 80%), but half of them don't know anything about the capital cities of Hungary, Estonia and Poland.

SPAIN

Spanish students show a good knowledge of all capital cities of the Comenius countries, with an excellent result for Rome and Lisbon (98% of right answers) and a less good result for Budapest (24% of wrong answers).

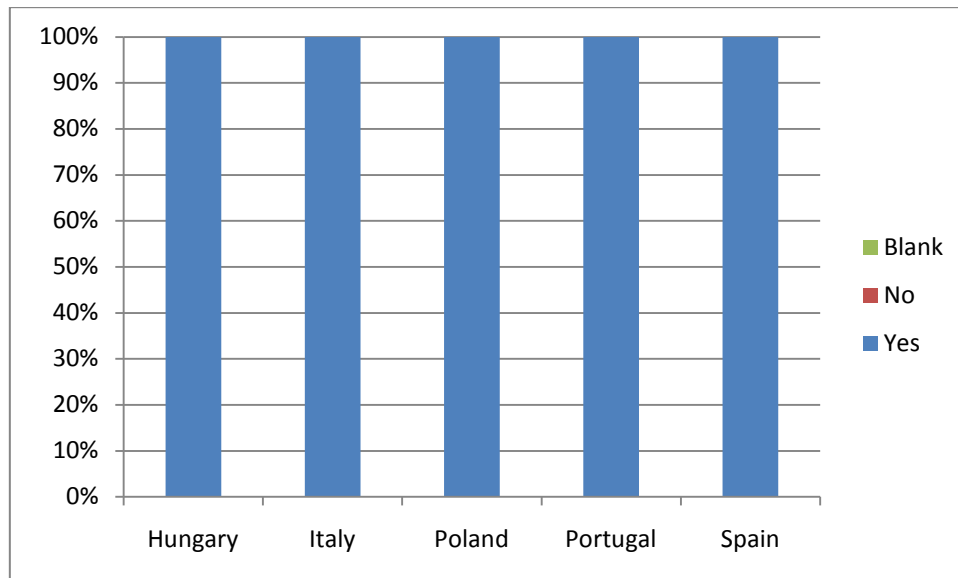
3.6 European Union membership

All the Comenius participant countries do belong to the European Union. Do our students know this? Judging by the results, they mostly do. Both Estonians and Spanish students got the best results. On the opposite side, Hungarian and Polish students had some more doubts, especially when thinking of Estonia. Southern students seem to be more aware than northern.

ESTONIA

Estonian students perfectly identify the membership of all Comenius countries in EU. Their older age surely explains this fact.

Estonian students' perception of EU member countries

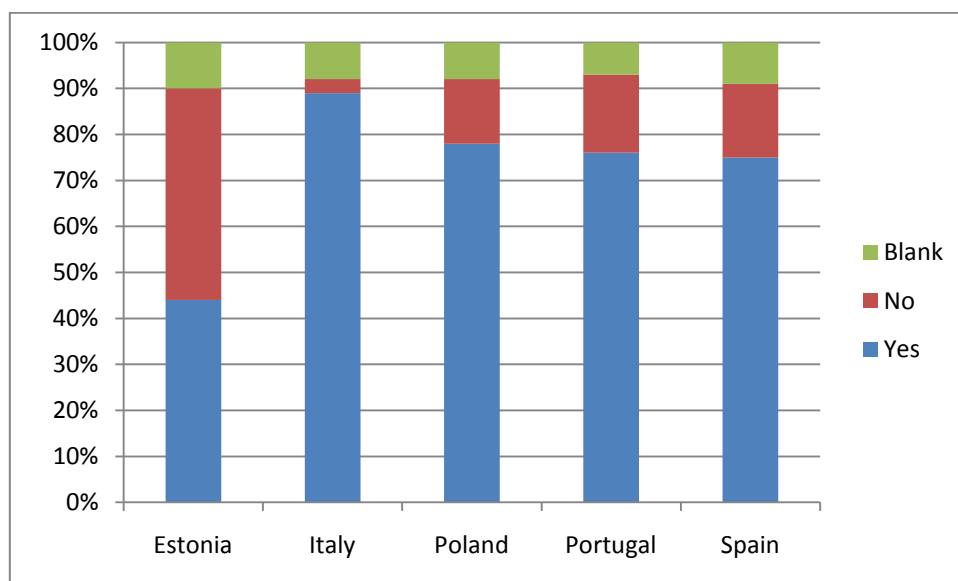


HUNGARY

Hungarians seem to know that Italy belongs to EU (89%). The percentage is slightly less when thinking of Portugal, Spain and Poland (between a 75% and a 78%).

It's noteworthy though, that only 44% of them know that Estonia is an EU member.

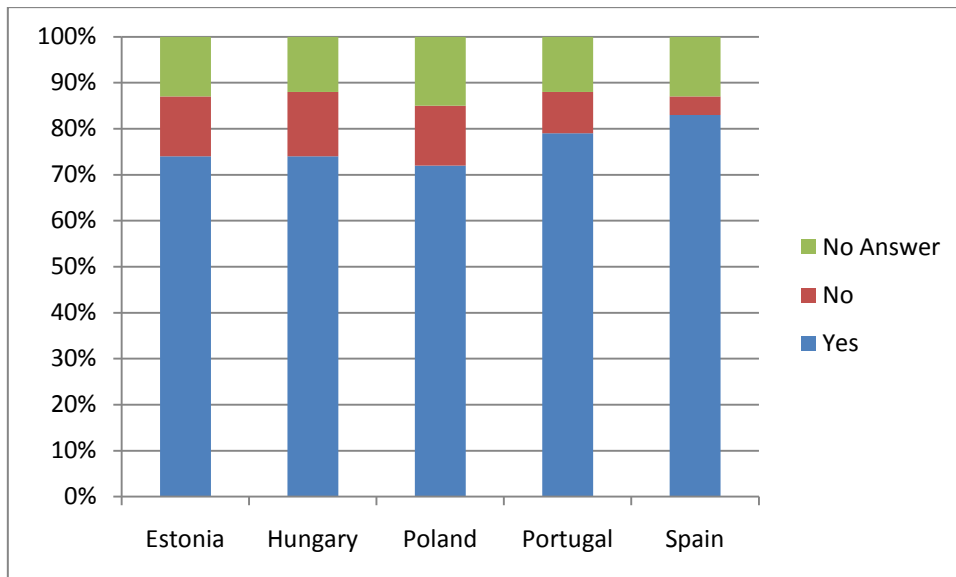
Hungarian students' perception of EU member countries



ITALY

Italian students do fairly well in this question. Around 80% of them know that the closest countries, Spain and Portugal, are EU member countries. The percentage is lower for Estonia, Hungary and Poland, with some 72% of right answers.

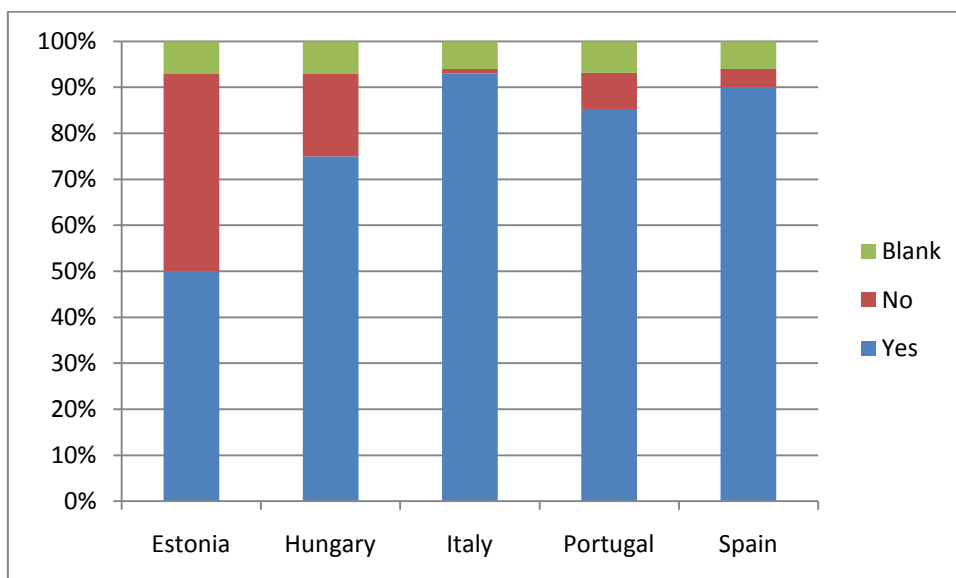
Italian students' perception of EU member countries



POLAND

Polish students correctly identify Italy, Spain and Portugal as EU members, with more than 87% right answers. Nevertheless, the percentage is lower for Hungary (75%) and noteworthy for Estonia: only 50% of students know that the country belongs to EU.

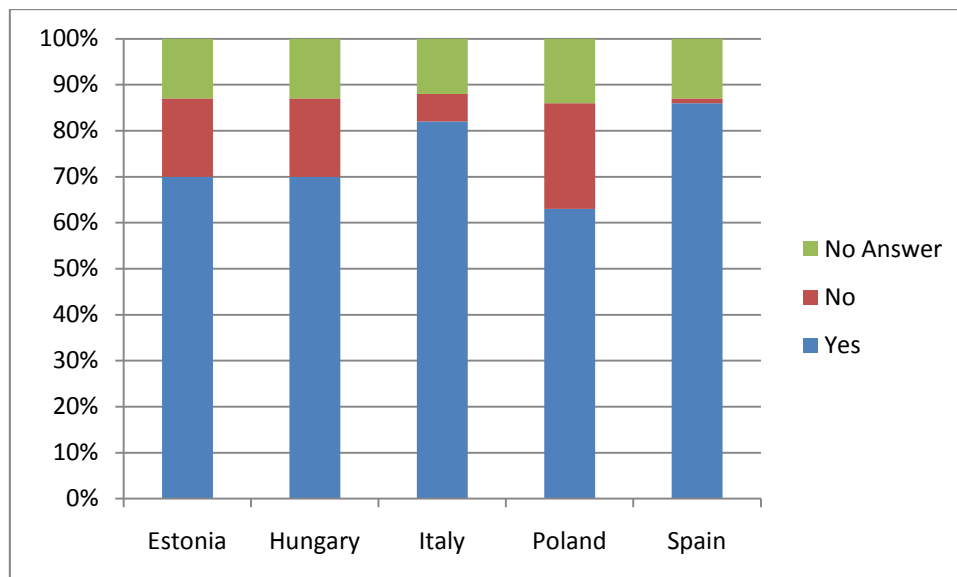
Polish students' perception of EU member countries



PORTUGAL

Portuguese students identify very well Spain and Italy memberships in EU, with more than 80% of right answers. The percentage is lower for Estonia and Hungary (some 70% of right answers) and especially Poland. Only 63% could spot it within EU.

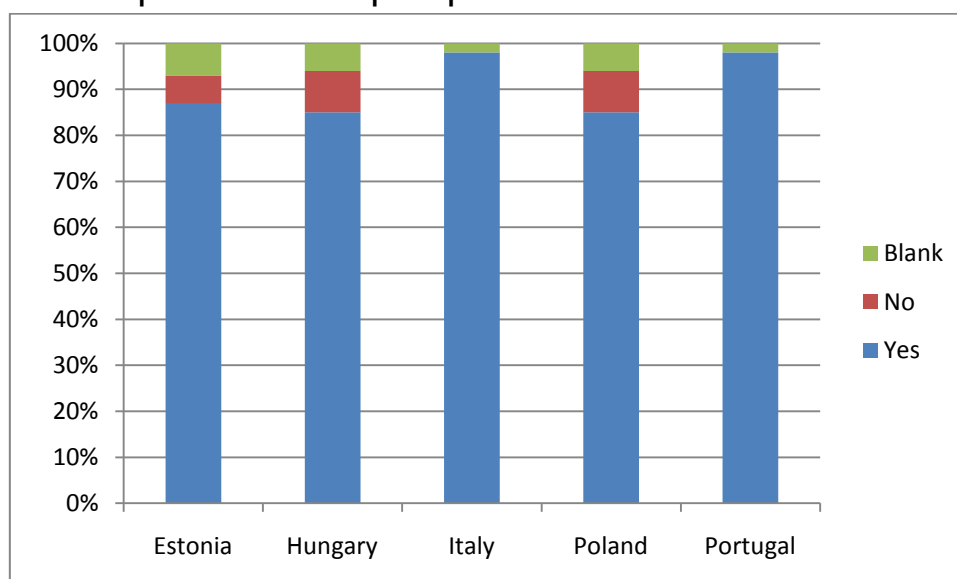
Portuguese students' perception of EU member countries



SPAIN

Spanish students show a very good knowledge of the membership of Comenius partner countries in the EU. Again, they know most about their neighbours, Portugal and Italy (98% of right answers). Meanwhile, Poland, Estonia and Hungary are recognized as members in the EU by never less than 85% of students.

Spanish students' perception of EU member countries



QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS I

3.7 Trending Topics

This qualitative question was aimed at finding out more about the image students have of other Comenius countries. They were asked to say the first three words they associate with Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

The graphics have been created following the absolute number of answers for each item. Only the words with more than 4 citations have been included.

This is a summary of the answers:

- First of all, there is a great ignorance about the other countries. Most of the students of every country just gave a single answer or none at all, especially in the case of Estonia, Hungary and Poland. However, they showed a little more knowledge of Spain and Italy, which received the highest number of quotations.
- Most of them gave answers related to geographical or meteorological facts, such as "cold" in the case of Estonia and Poland, or "hot" and "beach" for Portugal and "hot" and "Costa del Sol" for Spain. "Danube" is a cliché for Hungary, as "fields" is for Poland.
- The capital cities of each country were frequently quoted.
- The cliché monuments of Barcelona (Sagrada Familia) or Rome (Coliseum) are also quite known.
- Some well-known sports such as football were very well represented in the trending topics. Teams such as "Real Madrid", "Sporting de Lisboa" or "FC Barcelona" showed to be relatively popular among students. Poland 2011 "championship" was also mentioned. The same happened to a world famous football player, the Portuguese "Ronaldo".
- Food references were also often mentioned. In fact "pizza" and "pasta" are the winner trending topics by far. "Paprika" for Hungary, "paella" for Spain or "apples" for Poland were relatively popular among students.
- Some famous notables such as Woyjtyla were named for Poland.
- Spain is still most known for "bull fighting", even if the *corrida* has been banned in two autonomous communities.
- Estonia seemed to be the least known country. Quotations for this country often referred to "cold weather", "north" and "fish".

These are the trending topics of **ESTONIA** about:

HUNGARY

Budapest Wide fields

Paprika **Danube** (

ITALY

Pizza Wine

Pasta Ferrari

Football Rome

POLAND

Trucks ,Fields

(Sausage Apples Soccer

Football Championship

PORTUGAL

Ronaldo

Beaches

Lisbon Football

SPAIN

Bull fighting

Flamenco

Mountains

Costa de Sol

These are the trending topics of **HUNGARY** about:

ESTONIA

Tallinn

Baltic sea

North

cold

ITALY

Coliseum

Venice

Football

Pizza

Beach **Rome** Pasta

POLAND

Skiing

Religion

Warsaw

Wojtyla

Krakow

Friends of Hungary

PORTUGAL

Ronaldo

Madeira

Beach

Sunshine **Football**

Porto

Lisbon

SPAIN

Real Madrid **Football** Beach

Barcelona Madrid David Villa

Bull fighting sunshine

These are the trending topics of **ITALY** about:

ESTONIA



HUNGARY



POLAND



PORTUGAL



SPAIN



These are the trending topics of **PORTUGAL** about:

ESTONIA



HUNGARY



ITALY

Rome Art Fashion Pizza

Pasta Pisa tower Pope

POLAND

Red White Warsaw Big

Snow Nice Cold

SPAIN

Paella Bull fighting Siesta

Madrid Omelette R. Madrid Barcelona

These are the trending topics of **SPAIN** about:

ESTONIA



HUNGARY



ITALY



POLAND



PORTUGAL

Ronaldo Sea

Lisbon Cod

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS II

The following questions were meant to find out both general and specific answers from students when asked about their knowledge of political, cultural and gastronomic facts about the other countries. Given that the quantitative answers are based on a self-assuming perception, students were asked to give two examples for each question.

The most outstanding conclusion is the little or no knowledge that students from all countries have about these issues. Answers were extremely limited and many pupils did not answer the questions. Nevertheless, some of their responses show both problems that are nowadays affecting Europe, such as the economical crisis or clichés about the countries that were already observed in the trending topics question.

3.8 Knowledge of the political situation

ESTONIA

Quantitative question

Estonian students show little or no knowledge of the political situation in all the other Comenius countries, especially in the case of Hungary (100% of “very little” answers). The less unknown country is Italy. 40% of students declare that they have a medium knowledge of this country.

Qualitative question

There are no statistics for this question, but teachers from Estonia reported us the most named responses for each country. The current economical situation in Europe seems to be quite popular with them.

HUNGARY: Financial Crisis

ITALY: Financial Crisis

POLAND: Plane Catastrophe (President was killed)

PORTUGAL: Financial Crisis

SPAIN: Financial Crisis

HUNGARY

Quantitative question

Hungarian students show little or no knowledge of the political situation in all the other Comenius countries. More than 92% say that they know very little about Portugal, Estonia and Poland. Spain gets 86% of the same. They claim to have a little better knowledge of the political situation in Italy (77% of values 1 and 2, and a 14% of value 3).

Qualitative question

According to the results of the quantitative question, Hungarian students give very little references when asked about politics in the other Comenius countries. Among students who do answer, Italy

and Spain are a little more popular. Crisis is a quite frequent term. The most known political personality is Berlusconi.

As a funny aspect, some Hungarian students think Portugal is a monarchy.

ESTONIA: Republic (3)

ITALY: Berlusconi (22) And Fascism (7).

POLAND: Donald Tusk (4) And Republic (3)

PORTUGAL: Crisis (3) And Monarchy (8)

SPAIN: Crisis (14) And Zapatero (4)

ITALY

Quantitative question

Italian students show little or no knowledge of the political situation in all the other Comenius countries. The most unknown country for them is Estonia (86% of very little or little knowledge), followed by Hungary, Poland and Portugal (78%, 76% and 72% of values 1 and 2).

The only more popular country for them is Spain. 22% of students say that they have a medium knowledge of the country in front of 60% who claim not to know it.

Qualitative question

Italian students show little and very general knowledge of politics in the neighbouring countries. There are many blank answers.

ESTONIA: Republic (13)

HUNGARY: Republic (13) And Ex-Communist (1)

POLAND: Republic (13)

PORTUGAL: Republic (13)

SPAIN: Monarchy (13)

POLAND

Quantitative question

Similarly, Polish students know little or nothing about the political situation in the other countries. Patterns are quite similar for Estonia and Hungary (97% and 92% of values 1 and 2). Minority of students know a little more about Portugal and Spain and 18% of students declare that they have a medium knowledge of the situation in Italy, in front of 69% who claim to know little or nothing.

Qualitative question

There were no answers.

PORTUGAL

Quantitative question

For Portuguese students, the Northern Comenius countries are pretty unknown, especially Estonia and Hungary (89% of values 1 and 2). Even Italy sounds far to them (71% of similar answers). Only the neighbouring country is more familiar. Even if answers are very spread among quintiles, noteworthy 34% of them say that they have a medium or quite an advanced knowledge of the country.

Portuguese students produced more blank answers than any other country, with some 15%.

Qualitative question

When asked about two political current questions of the other Comenius countries, Portuguese students show little or no knowledge in every case.

Among the few answers, the two more frequent ones are:

ESTONIA: Parliamentary (5) and Democracy (3)

HUNGARY: Democracy (3) and Republic (2)

ITALY: Berlusconi (18) and Crisis (7)

POLAND: Republic (3) and Crisis (2)

SPAIN: Crisis (8) and King (7)

SPAIN

Quantitative question

The vicinity appears to be determinant in the knowledge of the political situation of the Comenius partners. 87% of Spanish students say that they know quite a lot or a lot about Portugal.

The percentage drops considerably when considering Italy. Only 45% of students claim to know quite a lot or a lot about the Italian political situation.

When considering the further countries, Spanish students show little or no knowledge. 81% of guys say that they know nothing about Estonia, 79% about Hungary and 70% about Poland.

Qualitative question

As with students in other countries, those in Spain are able to list few words in relation to the political situation in the other Comenius countries. The only exception is Italy. The former Prime Minister is quite well known to them.

ESTONIA: Republic (3)

HUNGARY: No remarkable answers

ITALY: Berlusconi's demission (13) and Mario Monti (7)

POLAND: No remarkable answers.

PORTUGAL: Crisis (8)

3.9 Knowledge of food

ESTONIA

Quantitative question

Estonian students claim to have a little or medium knowledge of the food in the other countries. Italian food is the most popular with them (100% of students say that they know it quite well), followed by Spanish, Hungarian and Polish food (70%, 50% and 40% of medium knowledge). Portuguese food is quite unfamiliar to them and so, 100% of them say that they know it little or very little.

Qualitative question

There are no statistics for this question, but teachers from Estonia reported us the most named responses for each country.

HUNGARY: Spicy and Potato

ITALY: Pasta and Pizza

POLAND: Sausage of Krakow and Potato

PORTUGAL: Grape and Fruit

SPAIN: Grape and Oranges

HUNGARY

Quantitative question

90% and 82% of Hungarian student think they know little or nothing about Estonian and Portuguese food respectively. 76% say the same about Poland and 61% about Spain. However, they claim to know much more about Italian food, given that 57% claim to know quite a lot or a lot about Italian food.

Qualitative question

When asked about two different kinds of food in the other Comenius countries, Hungarian students show a little more knowledge than the others, especially for Italy, with an overwhelming number of answers. Nevertheless, they seem to be a bit confused about the national dishes of the Mediterranean countries, as they name Pasta for Spain, or Cheese for Portugal. The Pierogi, a typical food from Poland is known for them, unlike the rest of the countries.

ESTONIA: Fish (9) and Tomato (8).

ITALY: Pasta (90) and Pizza (81)

POLAND: Pierogi (13) and Trout (5)

PORTUGAL: Porto Wine (20) and Cheese (10)

SPAIN: Paella (19) and Pasta (10)

ITALY

Quantitative question

Nearly all Italian students say that they know very little or little about the food in most Comenius countries (minimum percentage of 93% for Estonia and Poland and maximum of 96% for Hungary and Portugal). Spanish food does it slightly better, with 83% of the same response.

Qualitative question

When asked about two different kinds of food in the other Comenius countries, Italian students scarcely answer. Only Portugal, Spain and Hungary get more than 10 citations for any single item.

ESTONIA: Potatoes (9) and Black Bread (6).

HUNGARY: Goulash (14) and Paprika (10)

POLAND: Beer (9) and Pork (3)

PORTUGAL: Porto Wine (10) and Portuguese Cream (4)

SPAIN: Paella (16) and Turrón (4)

POLAND

Quantitative question

There were no answers

Qualitative question

There were no answers.

PORTUGAL

Quantitative question

For Portuguese students, Mediterranean food, that of Spain and Italy is much more popular. In this way, 46% of pupils say that they know quite a lot or a lot about Italian food and 37% this equally of Spanish dishes.

On the contrary, Polish, Hungarian and Estonian food is mostly unknown to them (minimum of 81% of very little or little knowledge for Poland and maximum of 95% for Estonia).

Qualitative question

When asked about food, Portuguese students show very little knowledge of Estonian and Polish most famous dishes. Spain and Italy's food is more well-known and so, they receive many more citations, especially in the Italian case (69 citations for Pizza!).

ESTONIA: Fish (5)

HUNGARY: Goulash (10) and Paprika (6)

POLAND: No remarkable answers

ITALY: Pizza (69) and Pasta (52)

SPAIN: Paella(30) and Potatoes omelette (29)

SPAIN

Quantitative question

Spanish students recognize they know little or nothing about Estonian food (96%), Hungarian food (88%) and Polish food (64%). On the other hand, the food of the neighbouring countries is more familiar to them. 74% claim to know quite a lot or a lot about Italian food and 77% say the same about Portuguese food.

Qualitative question

Spanish students showed no or almost no knowledge of Estonian and Hungarian food. Portugal only got a very little higher number of responses whereas Italian food was relatively more popular with them.

ESTONIA: No remarkable answers

HUNGARY: No remarkable answers

POLAND: No remarkable answers

PORTUGAL: Cod (6) and Potatoes (4)

ITALY: Pasta (33) and Pasta (29)

3.10 Knowledge of culture

ESTONIA

Quantitative answers

Estonian students claimed to have very little or little knowledge of the Hungarian, the Polish and the Spanish culture (100%). On the other hand, 40% of them said that they have a medium knowledge of Italian culture and 30% of the Portuguese one.

Quantitative question

Estonian students produced very few answers, even for Italy and Portugal. They only produced one remarkable answer for these countries. As Spain does, Portugal seems to have "siesta" too.

HUNGARY: No remarkable answers

ITALY: Smart cars

POLAND: No remarkable answers

PORTUGAL: Siesta

SPAIN: Siesta

HUNGARY

Quantitative question

More than 80% of Hungarian students recognize they know little or nothing about contemporary culture in Estonia, Poland and Spain. The result is little better for Portugal (78%) and only Italy seems to be more familiar to them (even if 64% answer they know little or nothing, there's still 23% who claim to have a medium knowledge of the culture of this country).

Qualitative question

Hungarian students show very little knowledge of culture in the other Comenius countries. There are no answers for Estonia, and never more than 11 for the other nationalities. Soccer is thought to be a cultural fact in all the countries, though.

ESTONIA: No remarkable answers

ITALY: Carnival and Soccer

POLAND: Soccer and Dance

PORTUGAL: Soccer

SPAIN: Bull fighting and Soccer

ITALY

Quantitative question

Italian students show very little knowledge of culture in the other countries. A minimum of 87% of them claim to know little or very little about Estonia and Spain, and more than 93% about the other countries.

Qualitative question

There are no answers for this question. Italian students weren't able to identify two aspects of contemporary culture in the Comenius countries.

POLAND

Quantitative question

There were no answers for this question.

Qualitative question

There were no answers for this question.

PORTUGAL

Quantitative question

Portuguese students showed little or very little knowledge of the further countries, Estonia, Poland and Hungary. Between 91% and 97% of pupils said that they know very little or little of culture in

these countries. Spain and Italy ranked slightly better and so, the same perception dropped to 79% and 68% respectively.

Qualitative question

Portuguese students show extremely little knowledge of culture in the other countries, with between 85% and 99% of blank answers. Citations for any single cultural item are always under 10. There is only one answer for each item in the case of Estonia, Poland and Hungary, the further countries.

Both Italy and Spain receive some more cultural citations, but never more than 10 answers.

ESTONIA: Mati Karmin and Erki Nool

HUNGARY: Bela Bartok and Carlos Mardel

ITALY: Pisa Tower and Leonardo DaVinci

POLAND: Pope Wojtyla and Lech Walessa

SPAIN: Picasso and Flamenco

The most frequent answer is Picasso (8 citations)

SPAIN

Quantitative question

Between 80 and 90% of Spanish students say that they know little or nothing about culture in Estonia, Poland and Hungary. However, 33% have an average knowledge of Italy and 28% claim to know quite a lot or a lot about the culture in this country.

A remarkably 61% claim to know quite a lot or a lot about culture in Portugal.

Qualitative question

Spanish students did not give any remarkable answers to this question.

3.11 Social characters of the Comenius countries

In this question students were offered 14 social qualifying characteristics about societies, such as poor - rich, cold – warm or unromantic - romantic. They had to choose among 5 values, ranging 1 to 5, and to apply it to each country.

The aim was to find out if there are established clichés or fixed perceptions about the other Comenius societies. The result was noteworthy. There was a general lack of implication on answers. Most students from every represented country answered value 3 (neither disagree/nor agree) and about 20% of them did not answer (around 40% in the Portuguese case).

It possibly means that they simply have no information or any criteria to adopt a personal position about the character of the Comenius participant countries. Following this explanation, when the predominant value....

On the contrary, sometimes extreme values (those of values 1 and 2 or 4 and 5) stood out and so, we may consider them as social predominant values or clichés about the other societies. We have considered "strong tendencies" the fact that a significant percentage of answers is in these values (with more than 40% of answers).

This happens sometimes when students consider the Spanish, Italian and Portuguese societies.

Given the difficulties that students had to consider social characteristics of each country and the difficulties in grouping answers together, responses and characterizations must just be considered, in all cases, as an approach to the common shared values of each society about the others.

ESTONIA

Estonian students, older than the rest of Comenius school communities, show a higher implication on answers, producing the most detailed profiles of each society.

They consider Hungarians to be hard workers, warm and friendly people.

Italians are to Estonians lazy, happy, funny, educated, relaxed, interesting, friendly and romantic.

Polish people are quite hard workers, friendly, unromantic, trustful and poor.

Portuguese society is happy, warm, funny, interesting, relaxed, tolerant, romantic and rich.

Finally, Spaniards are quite lazy and aggressive, happy, quite warm, fun, relaxed, interesting, quite friendly, tolerant, quite rich, romantic and quite untrustworthy.

HUNGARY

Hungarian students consider all their neighbours to be average societies. We find a Gauss distribution in nearly all the possible characteristics.

There are some exceptions though. Hungarian students mostly think that Italians are happy, warm and romantic.

The same happens when talking about Portugal. They are considered to be happy, warm, pacific and educated

Finally, Hungarians think Spaniards are fun.

ITALY

Italian patterns of answers are quite similar to the others. Students show a typical Gauss distribution of answers for Estonia, Hungary and Poland, with no noteworthy results in any case.

But results for Portugal and Spain are quite weird. On one hand we have a quite clear Gauss distribution, but also an increasing number of extreme answers. In a five degrees scale (strongly agree, agree, not agree, disagree, strongly disagree), prevailing answers for more items are 1 and 3, as though answer 2 was not an option.

If we were to follow this explanation, Italians would highlight that Spaniards are happy, interesting and romantic, and Portuguese interesting, warm and romantic.

PORTUGAL

Portuguese students show the highest number of blank answers (between 25% and 45% of no responses for Hungary and Poland respectively).

If we only take into account the valid answers, Portuguese students consider that Estonians are mostly hard workers. Hungarians are considered to be hard workers, peaceful and intelligent. Poland society is pacific and cold. Italians are fun and romantic and Spaniards, romantic and happy.

POLAND

There were no answers

SPAIN

Spanish students show the typical Gauss distribution of answers we have seen for the other countries.

They do not produce any remarkable social character for Poland.

Estonian and Hungarian societies share the fact they are considered to be mostly cold. Moreover, Estonians are considered to be pretty hard workers for Spaniards.

Italians are lazy and tolerant, besides of being happy and romantic.

Portuguese people are intelligent, friendly and fun. They are also considered to be romantic and warm.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the aims of our “Breaking Stereotypes” Comenius Partnership was carrying out a huge survey in all participant high-schools to find out relevant information about two facts:

- The current knowledge of our students about their Comenius neighbours.
- The general sociological perception of the other societies, including clichés and stereotypes

Its purpose was that of allowing us to detect which aspects are more important to develop if we want our students to effectively “break the stereotypes” that exist when thinking of other countries in Europe and bring our societies together through common knowledge and cultural exchange.

Now that the survey has finished and the results have been gathered and analysed, there are some conclusions that may be drawn:

The survey has allowed us to discover many interesting facts about the knowledge of the Comenius participant countries.

- Geographical questions show that there is quite a good knowledge of the geographical facts of the Comenius countries. It would be good to work on some topics related to EU membership of our countries to assure a better understanding of what it means for our societies.
- Concerning the quantitative and qualitative questions, there is very little cultural and gastronomic knowledge of the other countries, especially the Northern ones (Estonia, Hungary and Poland). The Southern countries are more popular. Reasons for this have not been analysed in this text and are to be discussed in the following mobilities. For this reason, an extra effort should be made to improve the perception of the first three countries as active nations of the EU.
- The Trending Topics questions show us that knowledge of the other societies is very basic and related to physical and Mass Media facts. We must develop activities and exercises to generate more and deeper knowledge of our complex societies, in order to overcome prejudices and clichés.
- When considering political issues, perception becomes more economical. Even if there is a scarce knowledge of what is happening in each country, there is one word and this is “Crisis”. Maybe we should work on this issue to explain our students how it is affecting our lives and what we can do to overcome it.

- Cultural knowledge of the Comenius societies is extremely low, even if the students assume they know a little, what is likely otherwise. But when they are asked for two specific facts, most of them cannot answer.
- After the results, social characterization of the other countries is frequently based on vague clichés, coming from Mass Media or assumed historical perceptions. Once again, our rich societies deserve a better cultural and social knowledge by all, so we should work on this to change the perception of our students.

