

ERASMUS+ MAGAZINE

EUROPEAN DIARY OF UNDERSTANDING

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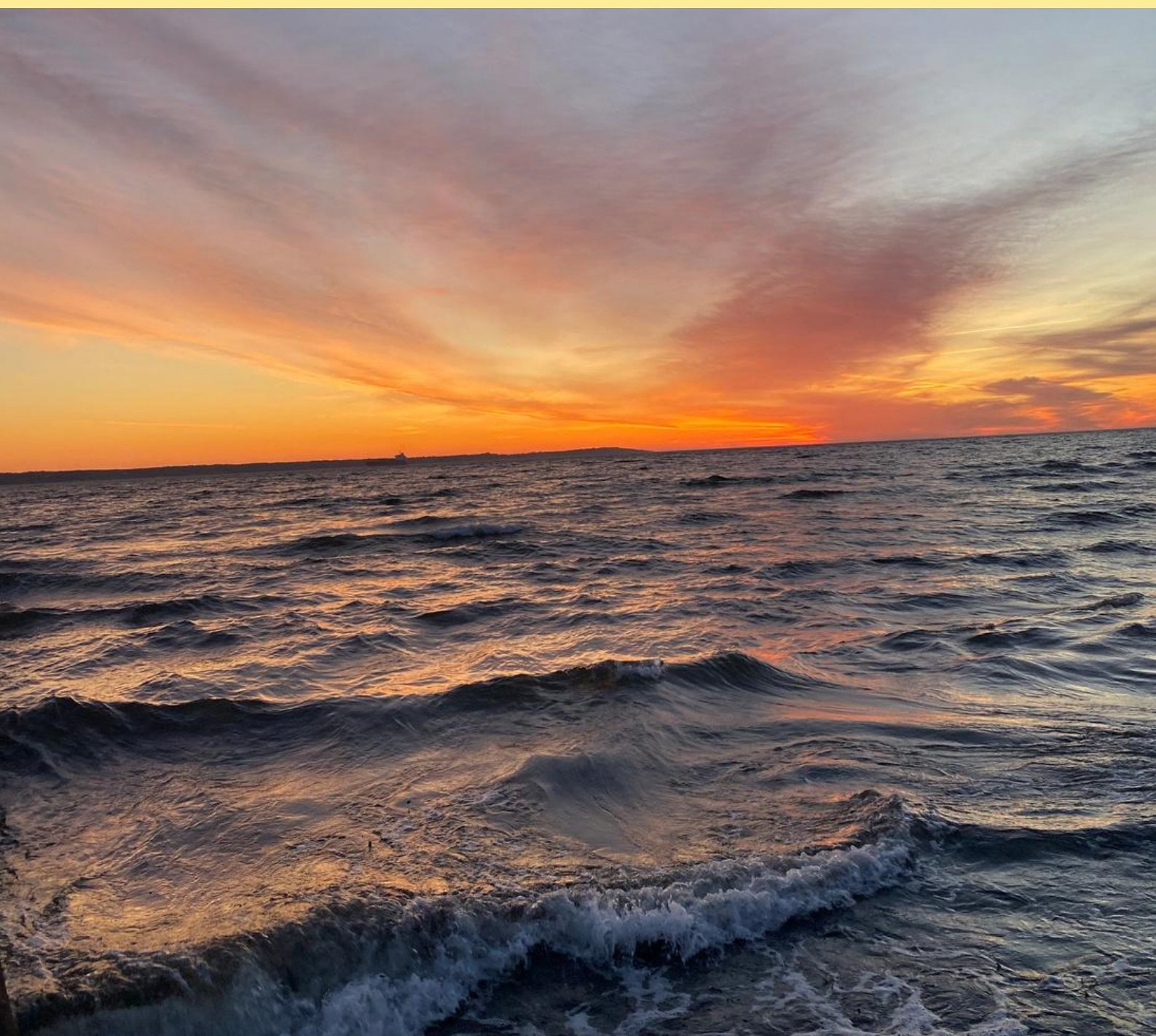


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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of the European Diary of Understanding. In a world that often feels divided by borders — both physical and mental — this issue is dedicated to a fundamental human journey: The Path from Conflict to Peace.

Conflict is something we all experience, whether in our personal lives, schools, communities, or between cultures. Yet, it is not the conflict itself that defines us, but how we respond to it. In this edition, we explore different perspectives on conflict and, more importantly, the ways people learn to overcome it.

You will find inspiring interviews with students and individuals who openly share their experiences and strategies for managing conflict. Their voices remind us that understanding begins with listening. We also bring you interesting facts and insights about various types of conflicts, helping to broaden your view of this complex topic.

As part of our cultural exploration, we take a closer look at cultural shocks in Sweden — those surprising and sometimes challenging moments that occur when different cultures meet. These experiences highlight the importance of openness, respect, and curiosity in building connections.

Finally, we invite you to relax and enjoy our crossword puzzle, where the final message captures the spirit of this issue: “We Love Sweden.”

We hope this edition encourages you to reflect, learn, and take steps — no matter how small — toward greater understanding and peace.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Team

**„PEACE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT, BUT
THE ABILITY TO HANDLE CONFLICT BY PEACEFUL
MEANS“ - RONALD REAGAN**



The quote “Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means” by Ronald Reagan highlights an important truth about human relationships and society. Peace does not mean that disagreements or problems disappear completely from our lives.

What truly matters is how we respond to these conflicts when they arise. Handling conflict peacefully requires patience, respect, and a willingness to listen to others. It encourages dialogue instead of violence and understanding instead of anger. Through peaceful communication, people can find solutions that benefit everyone involved.

Instead, it teaches us that conflict is natural and can even help people grow and learn. What truly matters is how we respond to these conflicts when they arise.

This idea is especially important in a diverse world where different cultures and opinions meet. By choosing peaceful methods, individuals and nations can build stronger and more trusting relationships. In this way, true peace is not the end of conflict, but the beginning of understanding and cooperation.

INTERESTING

Facts About SWEDEN

Sweden is a land defined by dramatic contrasts, offering 24 hours of daylight during **the summer midnight sun** and the chance to witness the northern lights in winter. This deep connection to nature is protected by *allemansrätten*, or the right of public access, which grants everyone the freedom to roam forests, hike, and pick wild lingonberries, a tart fruit that Swedes famously serve with everything from meatballs to pancakes.



The capital, Stockholm, houses **the “worlds longest art exhibition”** within its metro system, where 90 of its stations are decorated with vibrant mosaics and sculptures. In the far north, visitors can stay in the world-famous Icehotel, hand-sculpted annually from river ice, or visit Kiruna, a city currently undergoing the most radical urban relocation in history to allow for continued mining.



Sweden is also home to the **Sámi**, the indigenous people of the north who have maintained their ancient culture and reindeer herding traditions for thousands of years, and it maintains one of the oldest monarchies in the world, which has recently modernized through socially progressive traditions like royals marrying commoners.



Beyond culture, Sweden is at the forefront of **the green industrial revolution**, recovering energy from 99.3% of all household waste and developing sustainable technologies like fossil-free steel. This spirit of innovation is built on a legacy of safety, most notably the invention of the three-point seat belt, a gift to the world that has saved more than a million lives worldwide since its release in 1959.



Daily life is guided by cherished social concepts like **fika** — a deliberate social coffee break — and **lagom**, a philosophy meaning “not too little, not too much,” which emphasizes a perfect balance in all things.



The culinary landscape is equally unique, featuring food squeezed from tubes, such as **caviar** or **flavored cheeses**, and the notorious surströmming (fermented herring), which is traditionally opened outdoors due to its overwhelming aroma.



Globally, Sweden is a titan of influence, it is a **world leader in pop music**, with Swedish producers and songwriters behind a massive portion of international hits on the US Billboard charts.



INTERVIEW

with a student Omar

WE WERE PLEASED TO MAKE AN INTERVIEW WITH A STUDENT OMAR FROM JENSEN GYMNASIUM, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF A POLITICAL GROUP.

Q: What do foreigners usually misunderstand about Sweden?

A: Swedes are not very open. They don't usually talk to strangers, which is different from Slovakia where people are more friendly and communicative.

Q: What are some Swedish traditions or holidays?

A: Christmas is the biggest holiday. We open gifts in the evening, eat traditional food, and watch a special Donald Duck show at 3 PM. In the morning, we eat porridge with an almond, and whoever finds it is lucky. Easter is not very important, mostly just candy.

Q: How would you describe Swedish people?

A: They are quite closed and reserved. If someone behaves differently, people may judge them.

Q: What is a typical school day like?

A: We have early and late weeks. Some start at 8 and finish early, others start later and end around 4–5. After school, we study, hang out, or do sports.

Q: Is there something interesting that tourists should know?

A: This region used to belong to Denmark, and people here have a different accent. Other Swedes sometimes say we sound Danish.

Cultural Shock

Q: What were the biggest differences in Slovakia?

A: Slovak schools are more formal. Students must respect teachers more, while in Sweden we are more relaxed and even call teachers by first name.

Q: Any differences in behavior?

A: Slovaks stress more about being late, while Swedes are more relaxed.

Q: What do you miss from Slovakia?

A: How cheap everything is. Food and drinks are much more affordable than in Sweden.

Q: What does Slovakia do better?

A: School learning felt more structured, with books and traditional teaching methods.

Q: Did your opinion about Slovakia change?

A: Yes, I expected it to be less modern, but I liked the historical buildings and atmosphere.

Q: Could you live in Slovakia?

A: Maybe, but the formal system would be difficult.

Conflicts & Society

Q: How are conflicts between students solved?

A: Usually they are not formally solved, they just fade away.

Q: Do parents get involved?

A: Only in serious school-related problems, not everyday conflicts.

Q: What causes misunderstandings between cultures?

A: Different behavior. For example, raising your voice can feel aggressive in Sweden.

Global Issues

Q: What global issues concern you?

A: Tensions involving Russia and United States, and the war in Ukraine. Also mental health is a big issue.

Q: Do you discuss this in school?

A: Yes, especially in subjects like sociology.

Q: What is Sweden's role in global conflicts?

A: Sweden focuses on cooperation, especially with the European Union, and supports other countries rather than fighting directly.

Politics

Q: What are your political views?

A: I support freedom, safety, and lower taxes. I am part of the Moderate Party.

Q: Why did you get involved in politics?

A: I was frustrated with safety issues in Sweden and wanted to make a difference.

**ANOTHER INTERESTING INTERVIEW WAS WITH A STUDENT RONJA,
WHO IS ATTENDING JENSEN GYMNASIUM.**

Facts about Sweden

Q: What do foreigners misunderstand?

A: Swedes are quiet, don't talk to strangers, and life is expensive.

Q: Traditions and holidays?

A: Midsummer (dancing around a pole), Christmas (biggest), Easter (small).

Q: Favorite holiday?

A: Christmas – cozy, family time.

Q: Describe Swedish people.

A: Shy, quiet, don't discuss politics, less openly friendly than Slovaks.

Q: Typical school day?

A: Long commute, separated classes, less interaction between groups.

Q: After school activities?

A: Mostly studying or hanging out with friends.

Q: Interesting thing about Sweden?

A: Common to take short trips by boat to Denmark.

Cultural Shock

Q: Biggest differences?

A: Slovaks are more open and friendly; Swedish people are more reserved.

Q: Differences in school?

A: Sweden has closer, more informal teacher-student relationships.

Q: Surprising traditions in Slovakia?

A: Water pouring and whipping during Easter; keeping fish alive before eating.

Q: What do you miss from Slovakia?

A: People, atmosphere, positivity.

Q: What does Slovakia do better?

A: Friendliness and openness in communication.

Q: Could you live in Slovakia?

A: Yes, especially because of the aesthetic and historical environment.

Q: Did your opinion change?

A: Didn't have strong expectations, but left with a good impression.

Conflicts

Q: How are conflicts solved?

A: Mostly within friend groups; teachers only in serious cases.

Q: Causes of misunderstandings?

A: Cultural differences and lack of understanding between cultures.

Global Issues

Q: Biggest global concerns?

A: Russia–Ukraine war and USA-related tensions; affects economy and safety.

Q: Do you discuss it in school?

A: Yes, often through news and discussions.

Q: Role of teachers in politics?

A: They can have opinions but shouldn't influence students.

Q: Sweden's role in global conflicts?

A: Not very powerful, but should act morally and clearly show its stance.

CONFLICT → HARMONY

Find all 18 words hidden in 8 directions.
The letters that remain will spell a secret message.

H	N	O	I	S	N	E	T	E	R
E	E	M	P	A	T	H	Y	U	E
A	W	A	C	C	O	R	D	G	G
L	Y	N	O	M	R	A	H	O	N
I	D	L	R	U	E	L	O	L	A
N	E	I	E	C	N	A	L	A	B
G	T	S	S	V	V	I	E	I	H
T	A	T	O	P	I	S	T	D	S
R	I	E	L	W	U	G	E	Y	A
U	D	N	V	D	E	T	R	N	L
S	E	P	E	A	C	E	E	O	C
T	M	R	I	V	A	L	R	Y	F

CONFLICT	HARMONY	↔ BRIDGE
TENSION	PEACE	DIALOGUE
ANGER	UNITY	FORGIVE
DISPUTE	TRUST	MEDIATE
CLASH	ACCORD	LISTEN
RIVALRY	HARMONY	
HEALING	RESOLVE	
BALANCE	EMPATHY	

Secret message from remaining letters:

/

/



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