

## Biodiversity meets music

# Kissamos - Biodiversity between tradition and modernity



After a long time without physical exchange due to the pandemic, the joy about the possibility of direct exchange was obvious to all persons involved. The first meeting - apart from numerous virtual meetings of the coordinators - was characterised by the warm hospitality of our hosts, combined with pride in being able to present their school, their city and their country, and by the guests' gratitude, curiosity and anticipation of the shared experiences. Not only the pupils involved in the project arranged the welcome with music and dance, but also all other pupils of the school, the headmaster and representatives of the city offered a warm welcome.

### Group activities

- 1 Workshop introducing the herbal world of Crete and making an aloe vera cream
- 2 Participation in a live broadcast from a classroom to the CRETAquarium, Heraklion, 175 km away, with a virtual tour of the micro-ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea and their interconnections, presentation of human intervention and nature conservation
- 3 Presentation by students and teachers on traditional musical instruments (lute, violin, Cretan mandolin) at the cultural centre: various Cretan melodies, rhythms, dances and performers
- 4 Excursion to the slate mountains with extensive olive groves, to an over 1000 year old plane tree (natural monument), drive through the maquis (cushion-shaped shrubs) and the phrygana (woody plants that would never grow tree-like even if they were not growing)
- 5 Nature observations in the surroundings, botanical studies of typical and partly endemic plants
- 6 Visit to the bay of Elafonissi with its pink sandy beach of tiny, partly broken calcareous skeletons of foraminifers, which are considered climate-relevant due to their contribution to the global and marine C and N cycles and are damaged by ingredients from sunscreens
- 7 geological insights (stalagmite formations in a dripstone cave), Komolothi sand hills, bizarre clay formations that developed into a huge sand pit due to the uplift of West Crete from the seabed
- 8 Guided tour by the director of the Institute of Olive Trees and Subtropical Plants in Chania on the production of oil and the prevention of the introduction of the tree dieback disease (*Xylella fastidiosa*)
- 9 Guided tour of the Flora and Fauna Park of the Technical University of Crete (Chania), an important protected area for native plants and animals that develop without human intervention
- 10 Guided tours and insights into Cretan culture and history (the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Chrissoskalitissa, the Acropolis of Polyrrhenia, the Archaeological Museum of Kissamos)
- 11 Cultural exchange in the town hall and mutual presentation of the schools, the regions and the activities in the project so far (digital presentations, short films, typical dances to live music), exchange at the buffet with typical Greek pastries, prepared by teachers of the partner school and their family members.
- 12 Guided tour of Chania, led by a French teacher