



"My region, my Christmas"



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Published in December 2010
Edited by the EA group Secretariat,
Committee of the Regions



About our project

The first project of the EA group in the Committee of the Regions started in 2009, when members of the group decided to engage children in a learning process about Europe, the regions, traditions and, of course, to encourage them expressing themselves through art.

The project in 2009 had the topic of "My region, my market". To demonstrate the diversity of the European Union, we have chosen as drawing theme the "local markets" in the different regions.

This year, in 2010, we wanted to highlight the role of celebrations in our regions. In this reason we have chosen as topic of the drawing "My region, my Christmas".

The Christmas traditions in Europe have deep roots, and many of these celebrations have ancient practices, but there are even some which are found in mythology. Meals and feasts of the Christmas traditions of Europe come in various forms and often these traditions are related to fasting.

Children from eight member states of the European Union have participated in the drawing competition. The best three drawings from each primary school have been awarded and the collection of these drawings you are holding in your hand. Children explain also about the traditions in their homes, even they give us an introduction to the Christmas culinary practices.

The project has been of a huge success. We congratulate the children for their efforts and enthusiasm as well as coordinating teachers for the support shown in organizing the competition.

Dear Reader, this book will bring you to a Christmas journey around European regions where the excitement of children will charm you when reading the children's comments about their Christmas celebrations.

Enjoy the travelling, the fairytale European Christmas and admire the creativity of a new generation!



*Wishing you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*

Jerzy Zajęka
President of the EA group
Committee of the Regions

*With the participating
countries and schools*

Christmas in:

- Mechelen, Belgium
- Tudulinna, Estonia
- New Quay, Ireland
- Piniava and Šiaulai, Lithuania
- Pigza, Polkowice, Stary Wołów and Gdynia, Poland
- Vulcana de Sus, Romania
- Medzilaborce, Slovakia
- Busby, Musselburgh and Surrey, United Kingdom





Basic School De Puzzle,

Mechelen, Belgium



First prize:

Gracia **NTUMBA**

(8 years old)

„My family gets together each Christmas. We celebrate all night long, and mum spends a lot of time in the kitchen making nice food. Then Father Christmas comes and leaves presents! When mum comes back from the kitchen she sees the packages and we all shout „Merry Christmas!“





Second prize:
Gemima KAYINGA
 (8 years old)

„It's Christmas Eve and Father Christmas is riding on his sleigh with his reindeer. He peeks into all the houses and suddenly he sees an enormous Christmas tree in one of them.

The tree is beautifully decorated and there's a giant snowman right beside it. Father Christmas sneaks into the house and secretly puts six presents under the tree. Next morning nobody can believe their eyes, but then they have a big party with delicious food and drink and lots of presents from Father Christmas!" Merry Christmas everyone!



Third Prize:
Haroun AZNAG
 (8 years old)

„It's cold outside and the moon is shining. We've hung up lots of

decorations and have a pretty Christmas tree. We're just about to go and have some cake with Father Christmas! The cake is ready. „Ho, ho, ho!" cries Father Christmas. What a merry and fun day this is."

Basic school,

Tudulinna, Estonia



First prize:
Hugo TOSS
(9 years old)

"There are many Christmas traditions in Estonia. I have drawn a picture of a farm house. There is a Christmas Goat in the middle of the picture. Christmas Goats used to fool around and frighten children. From one of the windows you can see that people are gathering in front of the church, from the other

window that a person is going to sauna. It is very common to have sauna and go to church on Christmas Eve. People used to eat 9 to 12 times on Christmas Eve. For that a pig was killed and lots of food made. In my picture there are blood sausages, pig's head and cranberry jam on the table. Also bread was baked and beer drunk. There's a Christmas Crown and "kräss" in the ceiling. The Christmas Crown is made of straw. „Kräss" is a decoration made of potatoes and straws stuck into them. Straws are very commonly brought inside at Christmas time. People are playing a game called *Shoemaker's game*. The „shoemaker" is made of straw. Two players straddle on a stick with their backs touching. One of them tries to knock „the shoemaker" down, the other facing it tries to lead the stick aside. Unfortunately, nowadays these traditions are fading away and mostly only our grandparents follow them."





Second Prize:

Liljan **VESKE**
(7 years old)

"Christmas Goat doesn't visit my family, although I would like it to do that. Instead of a Christmas Goat we have other visitors – elves. When I'm a good child the elves bring me sweets. I never get to see them because they sneak into my room at night and put the sweets into my slipper that is on the window sill. My father always brings a Christmas tree into the house. Sometimes my mother helps him. I am the one who gets to decorate the tree. At Christmas time we eat blood sausages and sweet yeast bread (*kringle*)."



Third Prize:

Legandra **LUIGE**
(8 years old)

"At Christmas my father brings the Christmas tree from the forest. We decorate the tree all together. We also hang the Christmas socks so that the elves can bring sweets. There are presents waiting for us under the Christmas tree."



EUROOPA LIIT



Regioonide Komitee



St. Colman's national school,

New Quay, Éire - Ireland



First prize:

Siobhán O'DEA

(11 years old)

„My picture represents how much we welcome Mary and Joseph into our homes. Irish people light the candle on Christmas Eve to show that if Mary and Joseph were still looking for a place to stay they would be very welcome. Back then Mary and Joseph couldn't find a place to stay and no one would welcome them into a house or help them but today, they are very welcome.”





Second prize:
Ellie NOLAN
 (9 years old)

„At Christmas every year I go to the Flaggy Shore for the Christmas swim. This is what my picture is about. My uncle comes to our house for the swim. We always have a flask of steaming hot coffee! They have to run into the water because if they walk in it would be too cold and they would turn around and run back out again. It starts in the morning and then we go back to our house for dinner. Sometimes it rains which makes it even more nice to go home and eat. I might go this year.“

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



Third Prize:
Caoimhe CAMPBELL
 (11 years old)

„Every year in New Quay, the whole community gather together at Christmas, or a little before it, and that is what my picture is inspired by. Around December sixth, or so, all of the

community, that includes the old and young, come to the school for a “Santa Party”. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in their big red tractor. Family by family, the children go in to see Santa and tell him what they want for Christmas. Many people in the community bake food and pastries, and there is a disco to keep the children waiting entertained.“

Piniavos nursery school,

Piniava, Lithuania



First Prize:
Oskaras VELBASYS
(8 years old)

"It all starts with the advent of the period. It is four weeks before Christmas. During Advent, all is clean, conscience and we are waiting for a miracle - the birth of

Christ. Children write letters to Santa. Writing letters of things they would like to receive as gifts. The last week of the Advent people begin preparing for the Christmas Eve dinner: decorate the house, bake "kučiukas". 24th December – the evening of Christmas Eve, the family decorates the tree and eats "kučių" for dinner. The table is covered with a white tablecloth. On the table are twelve dishes without meat. We sit down and pray then the oldest member of the family divides the cake. After the dinner, all dishes are left on the table if ghosts visit during the night they should have some meal to taste. The next day is Christmas. We all go to church and we welcome the gifts we receive for the New Year."





Second Prize:

Greta **JARASUNAITE**
(9 years old)

"Holy Christmas is one of the most beautiful and largest festivals in Lithuania. Christmas traditions have adjusted the time period, but to this day remains the most important - the Nativity of Christ is a family holiday. The main festival stage - waiting. The most important holy day is Christmas Eve. On that day we decorate the Christmas tree, and prepare twelve "kučių" dinner dishes. All of them are vegetarian. Main dish is "kučiukas" (small pieces of white bread with poppy seeds) and we cannot have fun that evening, it was believed that on Christmas Eve family members of deceased souls arrived. Even today, there are a lot of different spells and prediction. Another fun on Christmas Day, Lithuanians, visit relatives and friends, and bring welcome gifts."



Third Prize:

Ema **ZOSTUAUTAITE**
(7 years old)

"Christmas is the most waited holiday for children. Children love Christmas because they get a lot of gifts. Children decorate Christmas trees, learn songs, and draw plays. All try to be friendlier, better, and do good works"

EUROPOS SAJUNGA



Regionų komitetas

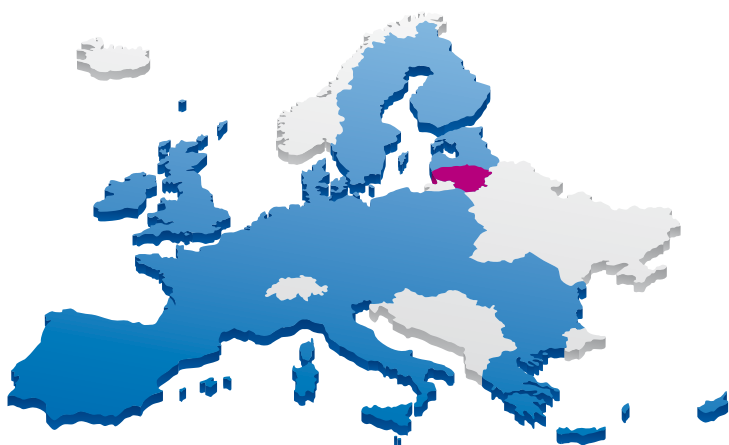
"Romuva" primary school,

Šiaulai, Lithuania



First Prize:
Aleksandras KOSTAREVAS
(8 years old)

"Christmas is my favourite holiday. When it comes all the family – Mum, Dad and Brother – decorate Christmas trees in all rooms, kitchen included. There is a lovely little tree there. When it snows, we go to the woods and decorate a tree for wild animals. Apples and vegetables are hung on branches. We want wild animals to enjoy Christmas, and those are our little presents. People also are given presents. Nobody seems to buy presents for little wild animals. That is why I love taking them some treat. So that nobody is forgotten at Christmas, a lovely holiday and time for miracles. You wake up in the morning and find a lot of presents under the Christmas tree."





Second Prize:
Viktorija POVILIONYTĖ
 (10 years old)

"Christmas is a miracle. Christmas is the nicest holiday of the year. It comes in winter when it is white and clean all around. We all go to the Mass in the Cathedral on Christmas Eve. After that sit at the table, say prayer to thank God for the happy year we have had, for health. Then we share a holy day supper. We decorate Christmas tree with various little toys and lamps. When I wake up on Christmas morning and see presents I am so happy."



Third Prize:
Smiltė ŠIUKŠTELYTĖ
 (7 years old)

"Every year we celebrate Christmas at Granny's. I have a lot of friends in the countryside. When there is a lot of snow, we make a snowman with my fathers help. The most interesting game is building a defence wall and playing "a war" (snowballing). Every

tower has its flag. When we get bored, we go sledge riding down the hill. My senior brother joins us in our games. When it starts getting dark, Daddy brings out our Kitty Berry, and Hamster Duty. When our pets get cold, daddy brushes the snow off and takes them back inside where they sleep on a special rug in the living room. In order to hurry me up Daddy calls out, "Look, Santa is coming!"

EUROPOS SAJUNGA



Regionų komitetas

3rd primary school,

Polkowice, Poland



First Prize:
Weronika LASKO

"In our town, Polkowice, Christmas is the time of forgiveness, reconciliation, warmth and safety. The most important

moment comes after Christmas Eve supper. We all wear warm clothes like we were leaving for a long journey and we go to the temple. Warm light shining from the church show us the way like the star directing shepherds to the stable. We all are gathered. A short moment of silent is waiting. It is like time stopped and everything was to start from the beginning. Only rare steps and murmurs break the silence. Maybe the animals are gathering around the church. It is like the whole world was praying."





Second Prize:
Ewelina **TOMCZYK**

"Do you remember about them on Christmas. Christmas is coming. Joyful time of expectation of presents, sweets and delicious meals. Festive mood, Christmas tree and colourful decorations. Happy children, smiling parents. There is a small house where a little boy lives. His mother works everyday and is always tired. His father comes home angry because he was fired from work. There will be no Christmas tree this year. He wants to get a plane and chocolate with peanuts. Do we remember about children who cannot afford Christmas? Lots of my parents' friends organize Christmas surprises – presents for girls and boys. When I grow up, I want to remember about them on Christmas, too."



Third Prize:
Aleksandra **WIERBICKA**

"This drawing shows the symbolic meaning of Christmas in Polkowice. Huge emanating angel carries a bright light to the ordinary town. Its brightness is a reflection of a kind heart, nobility and warmth. This drawing shows that our town is a community, which in

this special moment doesn't leave anyone sad and alone. Children from children's home, the poor and the solitudes forget their sad lives during the magic moments of Christmas. We all remember about estates far from the town centre so the mood of Christmas were visible like in the place where unusual angel brings generosity, a grace for all inhabitants."

UNIA EUROPEJSKA



Komitet Regionów



Wilhelminy Iwanowskiej,

Pigza, Poland



First Prize:
Jakub **SOBIECH**
(9 years)

„In my picture I tried to illustrate the typical Christmas traditions in Poland, which include the decoration of the Christmas tree and presents. What is more, people often leave one additional plate on the table for a stranger who may appear unexpectedly.”





UNIA EUROPEJSKA



Komitet Regionów



Second Prize:
Zuzana **CIEŚLIK**
(7 years)

„In my family we celebrate Christmas at home. We invite grandmothers and grandfathers. When the first star shines in the sky we sit together around the table. Then the children unwrap the presents from Santa Claus.”



Third Prize:
Julia **NOWICKA**
(9 years)

„A few days before Christmas I and my mum bake Christmas cookies. Then we

put them on a Christmas tree. We all wait for the „first star” and sit around the table to have Christmas dinner. Then we sing Christmas carols and my dad plays the piano. I really love this Christmas time.”



Kornel Makuszyński primary school

Stary Wołów, Poland



First Prize:
Maja Wasilewska
(8 years old)

„Christmas in my region is the best time of year because we see our family. Before Christmas Eve, my mum and I get the house ready and decorate the Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve, we

prepare the food for the Christmas Eve supper and decorate the table. I like helping my mum decorate the table most of all. My uncle and aunt and their family come and visit us at Christmas. When everything is ready, we wait for the first star to appear, and when it does, we begin our supper. I love this holiday the most.”





Second Prize:
Julia Zabłocka
 (8 years old)

„For me, Christmas in my region is my favourite time of year. It's lovely at this time and everyone is very kind to each other. Before Christmas Eve I help my parents tidy up and decorate the house and the Christmas tree. My mum, grandma and I prepare the food for the Christmas Eve supper together. After these preparations, on the evening of Christmas Eve, I look for the first star in the sky, and when it appears we begin our supper. It's really lovely and nice then.”



Third Prize:
Nicole Kiermacka
 (8 years old)

“I love Christmas time. On Christmas Eve we meet up with our family. We start getting ready for Christmas Eve

before Christmas. We decorate our house with Christmas decorations and lights. We choose the loveliest tree and give it pride of place in the living room. I love decorating the Christmas tree and finding Christmas presents under it.”

UNIA EUROPEJSKA

 Komitet Regionów

primary school № 18,

Gdynia, Poland



First Prize:

Maksymilian **BIALY**
(8 years old)

„The Christmas is a joyful time for Polish children. We are with the newborn Jesus Christ. We all sing Christmas Carols around the tree. The first day of Christmas we spend with our families and friends. This is a magic time.”





Second Prize:
Weronika DOBRY
 (8 years old)

“Christmas is a special day in Poland because we prepare special Christmas food. We eat meat-free, fasting dishes. Traditionally there should be 12 dishes (a symbol of the twelve Apostles). Mummy prepares carp, mushroom soup or borsch with ravioli, compote of dry fruit, dumplings, kutia, salads, poppy-seed and gingerbread cakes. We share a wafer with the whole family and wish each other all the best. We attend midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. It is believed that animals can speak in a human voice this night. No one should be alone on this special day.”



Third Prize:
Dorota KUBIS
 (8 years old)

„Christmas in Poland is a very special time for everybody. The day before the Christmas Eve the whole family decorates their Christmas tree. On Christmas Eve the whole family gathers together around the table. There are traditionally 12 dishes on

the Christmas table. The most popular are fish dishes and mushroom dishes. We eat poppy-seed and ginger-cake. People in Poland don't eat meat on that day.

In the afternoon, when the first star shines in the sky, all the people sit around the table and eat their dinner. After the dinner we eat sweets, drink tea and Father Christmas comes to Children.”

UNIA EUROPEJSKA



Komitet Regionów



"Vlad Țepeș" primary school,

Vulcana de Sus, Romania



First Prize:
Anabela-Ionela **PIOARU**
(12 years old)

"In our village, getting ready for Christmas is wonderful. The evening before the big celebration for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, children go carol-singing throughout the village, collecting nuts, biscuits and apples in their little bags. On Christmas Day, the villagers kill pigs in order to have meat all winter, used to make various types of sausage for the meal celebrating Christ's birth. The children go from house to house singing "Steaua" (the Star), a very old carol. Housewives prepare special dishes and go to church, after which all the members of the family sit at the heavily laden table. This is what we do at Christmas in our beautiful little town, Vulcana-Băi."





Second Prize:
Fernand-Adrian BURCĂ
 (12 years old)

"At Christmas in my village, we listen to carol-singers to make us merry for the coming year. On this wonderful day, we also kill a pig, and the village children push a little decorated plough. Suddenly, the "Bear" roars, and the "Nanny goat" comes through the gate. Later in the evening, a loud roar can be heard and when everyone goes out, two carol-singers ask "Are you ready for the bull-drum?" In the morning, I get up and go to the window – children are sledging or skiing. At Christmas, we go to church and come home after mass."



Third Prize:
Andreea-Lulia GHEORGHE
 (11 years old)

"Christmas in Vulcană-Băi is typically Romanian, with the smell of sponge cake, the jingling of bells, the shouts of children outside and the voices of carol-singers. Everything is in an uproar, our fathers and grandfathers kill the sacrificial pig, and in the kitchen our

mothers and grandmothers prepare Christmas dinner. Being good Christians, on Christmas morning we go to the village church to receive the Eucharist. The tree is already decorated and shines at the window and we wait for Father Christmas - if we have been good all year, learning our lessons and obeying our parents. For Romanians, Christmas is great!"

UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Comitetul Regiunilor



Komenskeho primary school,

Medzilaborce, Slovakia



First Prize:
Petra **HOLIČIKOVÁ**
(12 years old)

“Christmas in our region is the most beautiful feast of the year. Whole family gathers at the Christmas Eve dinner and we eat typical dish. Traditional mushroom soup called “mačanka” is the most delicious. After the Christmas dinner carol singers arrive and they let everybody know that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. They sing beautiful Ruthenian Christmas carols. Sometime they play musical instruments and they represent angels, shepherds and a devil who is also nice.”





Second Prize:

Petra **KAHANCOVÁ**

(12 years old)

"Before Christmas people in our region decorate Christmas trees. Children enjoy them very much, because they believe that after Christmas dinner on 24 December Father Christmas comes and brings some Christmas presents for them. They are under the Christmas tree and then people sing Christmas carols around the Christmas tree."



Third Prize:

Daniela **KRALIKOVÁ**

(11 years old)

"My piece of work is based on my own experiences and impressions from Christmas time, when whole family is sitting at the richly laid Christmas

dinner and after the prayer we enjoy our national Ruthenian dishes, such as traditional mushroom soup called „mačanka“, pirohy, traditional plum soup called „slivčanka“. We sing along Ruthenian carols together with carol singers and wish all the best to each other."

EURÓPSKA ÚNIA



Výbor regiónov

St Joseph's primary school's,

Busby, Scotland



First Prize:
Caterina **LUE**
(8 years old)

"In my drawing I wanted to show an angel in a tartan dress playing Christmas carols on the bagpipes. In the background I drew holly leaves and bells to represent Christmas, and a Scottish flag to represent Scotland! The Loch Ness Monster says Merry Christmas in Scots Gaelic. I chose to draw the Loch Ness Monster because everybody knows that it is a Scottish myth, and I am fascinated by it. There is only one thing that is better than Christmas, and that is a White Christmas, so I drew snowflakes all around!"





Second Prize:
 Connor **SIMPSON**
 (11 years old)

"Before Christmas people decorate their homes with a tree and send Christmas cards to their family and friends. On Christmas Eve children go to bed excited about waking up and opening their presents. Families go to Mass together either at midnight or on Christmas morning. The crib is beside the altar and the baby Jesus has been added to the nativity scene. Around lunchtime family and friends gather together and eat a lovely traditional Christmas dinner which is usually turkey with stuffing, roast potatoes, sausages and vegetables. This is followed by Christmas pudding, yum! We always hope that it is going to be a white Christmas



Third Prize:
 Orla **SWEENEY**
 (11 years old)

"In Scotland we celebrate Christmas by going to church on Christmas morning or going to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. On Christmas day most people would have a turkey dinner with their friends and family or go out for Christmas

dinner somewhere nice. People take part in carol singing at the churches and in public places and often enjoy some mince pies, shortbread and mulled wine afterwards. School pupils work hard to put on a Nativity play for the parents and at the churches they have a beautiful Nativity scene. We put wreaths on our doors and put up decorations in our homes and on our trees."

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Burgh primary school,
Musselburgh, United Kingdom



First Prize:
Bailey LESLEY

„This is the view I would see if I was cuddled up on the couch with my mum and dad on Christmas Eve. We've left cookies and milk out for Santa and a carrot for his reindeer. We are waiting for Santa to fill our stockings and put my little brother's present under the tree.”



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



Second Prize:
Aaran **BRYSON**

„My picture is a typical Scottish Christmas scene. The house is somewhere in the Highlands and you can see the mountains in the background. Someone has just come in from outside – you can see the plaid wrap hanging near the fire to dry.“



Third Prize:
Nicole **COLLINS**

„This picture shows Santa Claus arriving in Musselburgh. He is flying over Pinkie Pillars which are either side of the main road into Musselburgh. He is on his way to deliver presents to all the boys and girls.“

St Ann's Heath junior school,

Surrey, United Kingdom



First Prize:
Caity **FROST**
(10 years old)

„I drew a girl sleeping in bed thinking about Santa. I also drew some Christmas presents with some patterns on it and a church with a cross on the roof. I also drew a Christmas tree with a fire place. I drew these because Christmas for me is all about family and fun, that's why I drew what I drew.“





Second Prize:
Sarah **PHILLIPS**
(6 years old)

„I drew the word peace because in the war they stopped fighting for one day, Christmas day. I drew Jesus because we are celebrating his birth at Christmas. I also drew an angel to represent happiness. Christmas is a time for family and fun, that’s why I drew what I drew.“



Third Prize:
Jasmine **BETTS**
(6 years old)

„These subjects were all personal to me. I drew them because I really enjoy receiving presents but it’s also just as fun and rewarding when you see other

people’s faces when they receive a present from me. Christmas wouldn’t be Christmas without eating a traditional Christmas dinner and putting up the tree. After all that, there is nothing like sitting down and watching a film on TV with the family. That’s what Christmas means to me.“

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Exhibition of the best drawings
in the Committee of the Regions, Brussels





For more information,
contact: EA group Secretariat
ea-secretariat@cor.europa.eu





Responsible for editing

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

EA group Secretariat

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat, 101_1040 Bruxelles/Brussel _ BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Tel. +32 2/282 25 29_ Fax +32 2/282 23 30

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/>