

## Cooperation between Rennes 2 University and the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg Brings a Delegation of German Students to Rennes



Photo credit: Julien Nairaince

Within the framework of a twin cities cooperation, the creation of an online bilingual teaching course was recently created between the two universities. The program is headed by, from Rennes 2: Isabelle Ruiz, Head of International Relations of the German Department, and Pia Jesionowski, Lecturer in the German Department; as well as from the Friedrich Alexander University (FAU): Annette Keilhauer, Professor of Romance Studies, and Julien Nairaince, Teacher of French as a Foreign Language (FLE).

Discussions on how the course might be structured and co-organized began last year in September, when the program heads shared meetings and ideas which led to the creation of a bilingual civilization course with a strong digital component.

In October, students from both universities began a series of shared videoconferences. Franco-German pairs were formed, and interactive lectures were regularly held. This working method required students to be autonomous, open-minded and allowed them to gain new civilizational knowledge, as well as intercultural and linguistic skills. They were also able to improve their use of digital tools.

As part of the course, the French and German students chose to work on civilization topics, including Franco-German friendship, the educational system of each country, symbols and representations, and colonization and its vestiges. In connection with these four themes, a one-week study trip to Rennes was organized for the Erlangen students on March 14.

The visit included an escape game centered on the didactic activity of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) organized by Rennes 2, a conference on the cinema produced during the interwar period (at the Franco-German center of Rennes), a visit to the Jean Macé High School, an excursion to Nantes, an introduction to the Breton language, a reception at the town hall of Rennes and an outing to the Museum of Brittany in Rennes.

Next year, the universities are planning a trip in which a group of Rennes 2 students will travel to Erlangen.

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### A word from the Erlangen students :

#### Nico, French-English FLE student:

*"I wanted to visit France again, and to see Rennes in particular. I'm looking into doing a semester of study abroad, and with the twinning program between Erlangen and Rennes, I thought it was a good opportunity to see the overall environment here. From what I've seen so far, it's a very open city, with a lot of young people, very communicative..., and it's very motivating for me!*

*And there is also the project to bring the two nationalities closer together by doing cooperative projects in secondary education institutions. Part of this project is teaching German in French high schools, which I might try to participate in as a teacher one day. It's a project that is very similar to our goal for the week (and the semester): to maintain the ties between the two cities and nations."*

#### Anna-Léna, French-English FLE student:

*"This is my first visit to Brittany, although it's not my first visit to France. Since I would like to become a French-English teacher one day, it's very helpful to discover more about the different regions and cultures that make up all of France. And what makes it all the more interesting is the fact that we're visiting things that we've learned about during the shared course. In fact, it really is an extension of our class together. During our online sessions, my team worked on and did a comparative study on the two school systems and the teaching of French in Germany, and also German in France."*

#### Jonas, FLE (French-German) student:

*"For me, it was the first time that I participated in a course organized in close cooperation with another university. We studied civilization together: French civilization and German civilization. It was very formative and at the same time enjoyable. Since we met via video every week, friendships were made along the way. In my case, even though we have finished our teamwork and presentation, my team partner and I still see each other once a week to talk. Most of the time we do 15 minutes in French, then 15 minutes in German."*



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