

European Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange 2017



Information Booklet for Schools

Europe Direct Information Centre
Wrexham – Wales – UK

What is The European Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange?

This is a cultural exchange project where primary schools make Christmas Tree Decorations to send to other schools across Europe. Schools also produce an information pack about Christmas in their country which is also sent out to partner schools. Each school will have to make a maximum of 30 decorations and be able to send these out to their partners. Schools DO NOT have to find partner schools as details of your partners will be sent to you.

Aims of the exchange

The aim of this project is to educate young people in primary schools about other countries in the EU through a creative and fun activity. By making Christmas tree decorations and putting together information about the celebration of Christmas in their own region, pupils will discover more about their own culture and traditions. When they receive decorations and other materials from all across Europe, they will learn about Christmas in other countries and about many other aspects of each country such as language, geography, history and culture, as well as an understanding of what it means to be a citizen of Europe. The exchange also aims to encourage schools to work with other schools across the EU in the future and to maintain contact with their exchange partners.

Outcome

With the decorations that you receive, you should decorate a Christmas tree in a prominent area in the school or local community so that the end product is a 'European Christmas tree'.

In addition to the decorations, you will also receive an information pack from your partner schools. You can use these packs to learn about how Christmas is celebrated in other EU countries and to make a European Christmas display at school or organise a European Christmas event for parents, or the public.

At the end of the exchange you will receive a booklet with pictures of all the decorations made by the schools in the exchange. This is produced by Europe Direct Province de Luxembourg.

What you need to do

After reading this information pack, your school needs to decide if it can commit to this project. In particular you need to check if you can:

- Make up to 30 decorations and information packs
- Pay the postage to send decorations to approximately 30 exchange partners in other European countries.
- Keep to the strict timetable (below) This is very important!!

If Yes

- Register your interest in this project with your local Europe Direct Information Centre.

Your school can either involve one class or the whole school in this activity – it is entirely up to you.

When your Europe Direct Information Centre has informed you that you can take part in the project, you can start planning your decorations.

Planning your European Christmas – Frequently Asked Questions

What type of decoration?

You should make Christmas tree decorations that are symbolic of your region or country in some way. Decorations can be made from any materials, e.g. cardboard, plastic, wood, string, paper, paint, glue, etc. They can be any size, but remember that they will need to hang on a Christmas tree and that the bigger the decoration, the greater the postage cost!

It would be really helpful when making your decorations to **write on them which country** they are from. This is useful when displaying the decorations. It does NOT have to be in a prominent place, it can be hidden on the back of the decoration.

How many decorations do we need to send?

Please be prepared to make up to 30 decorations. Some schools send just one decoration to each school in their group whereas others may send more than 1 to each school. This is entirely up to each school. This is because some schools involve the whole school in the project and they will therefore have many decorations to post to their partners. Other schools only involve a few children or one therefore make just 1 decoration per partner. Both options are acceptable.

The standard/quality of decorations received is not the same from all partners, why is that?

The style and quality of decorations made by each school can be very diverse. This is because in some schools very young children make the decorations on their own. In other schools, teachers play more of a part in making the decorations, or older children who are more capable. Some schools use materials that are light to post (paper), where others have access to more expensive materials, or may receive help with postage costs, so they are able to post heavier decorations.

We believe that variety and creativity is the spirit of this project, and we do not want to dictate how decorations should be made, what materials should be used or what the standard should be, so please just create the best that you can with your particular group of children and in return expect to receive lots of different types of decorations/packages and you will not be disappointed!

What should the information packs contain?

In addition to the decorations, you will also need to send information on how Christmas is celebrated in your region and/or country. This information can be made into a booklet, an e-booklet, a CD-Rom or put on a USB stick, sent by email or an online file sharing website – and any other creative ideas are welcome!

(If you send a CD or something else fragile please make sure it is packaged carefully and write 'fragile' on the box, to prevent all your hard work getting broken in the post.)

What you could include in the information:

- ✓ Some general information about the region and country – e.g. where your school is located geographically, what language you speak, the climate, typical foods, something/someone the region is famous for, etc.
- ✓ What decorations your school made and why?
- ✓ How Christmas is celebrated in the region or country – children could write personal accounts of how they spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, or it could just be a general article on how Christmas is celebrated in their region.
- ✓ Christmas traditions and myths from the region.
- ✓ Christmas songs.
- ✓ Christmas recipes (so that other schools can re-create some of the foods that you make at Christmas!)
- ✓ 'Merry Christmas' in the pupil's own language!

You may also want to include Christmas drawings by the children, instructions on how to make the decorations the children have made and any other information you would like to share.

Can I send a link to our work on-line?

Yes, you may do this, as it keeps postage costs low and teachers can share the information on interactive whiteboards or pcs in the classroom with the children. In the past, CD Roms have been broken in the post, or teachers have had difficulties opening the documents saved to them, so a link to a google drive, drop box, or similar may be preferable.

Timetable

As soon as possible:

Inform your local Europe Direct Information Centre if you want to take part in the exchange. Give your full contact details, including postal address, phone number, e-mail address, and the contact name of the person who will be coordinating the project at your school. Deadline to register is 5th October. Only 10 places are available per region so be quick.

Once your EDIC has confirmed your place on the exchange you can start planning and making your decorations and information packs!

25th October - Around this date, your Europe Direct Information Centre will contact you to give you the names and addresses of the schools in your exchange group.

Friday 17th November - Final deadline to post your Christmas decorations and information packs!

Please remember to write your name and address on the package, so that it is clear which school has sent the package.

It is very important that you follow this deadline to ensure your partners receive their decorations before Christmas, as the postal service at this time of year can be very slow, particularly for large packages. When decorations do not arrive until after Christmas it is very disappointing for children in partner schools.

7th December - By this date your school(s) should have received all decorations and information packs so that children can open the packs, decorate their trees, and enjoy the project before the holiday.

15th December - Deadline to send photos to be included in the booklet

Additional Information

A Facebook group will be created which is a closed group so people have to request to join it. Teachers can join the group and add photos and information about their decorations, their school, Christmas traditions in their country and more. Schools do not have to post photos of children if they do not wish.

Booklet

EDIC Province de Luxembourg in Belgium make a booklet each year which features photos of the decorations made in the exchange. This booklet is then sent to each participating school after the project has finished.

Schools can send a maximum of 2 photos to be included in the booklet – one of the finished decoration and one of the children along with the the name of the school, city and country.

These are to be sent through WeTransfer. <https://wetransfer.com/> It is easy to use. Go to the website and simply add the files add the files you want to send, the email to send them to and your email plus a message. The email address to send the files to is :

v.bodson@province.luxembourg.be or europedirect@province.luxembourg.be

The deadline for sending photos is December 15th

Any further questions?

Contact your local Europe Direct Information Centre: