

## **PREMII SPECIALE – Categoria 11-14 ani**

### ***Hippie Land* de Boier Bianca - Liceul de Arte, Baia Mare**

Can you believe that Hippie Land was created out of flowers and grass? The welcoming greeting is “Flower Power”, not “hello” or “hi” as in other countries. Its size or riches count less than its people and landscape. My people, because I am the leader, would first tell you about Mount Everest. On its peaks there are cosy benches where you can take time reading legends about the mystical creatures roaming the leafy forests and the mysterious caves. It’s time I tell you about my people, the “hippies” - beautiful and kind. They know nothing about ugliness or hatred. Love and compassion are all that matters. Their main preoccupations are helping and protecting nature. In other countries people are stressed about jobs and chores. Our only job is that of not having one. Work means learning to live in harmony with nature. Children are kind and well-behaved because at school they learn friendship and understanding. Their homework is playing outside and there is only one thing that could destroy harmony - one “creepy and scary” building where the elders say you can meet an evil creature made of electrical parts and screens. They call it The Computer and it is capable of destroying childhood and innocence.

Even if you might call me a ‘dreamer’ this is my country and its national anthem is a song by John Lennon - “Imagine” because I want people to believe in their infinite capacity of creating and recreating the world around them.

### ***Utopia* de Budihala Denisa - Colegiul National Moise Nicoara Arad**

Wouldn’t life be wonderful if you could sleep until 12 o’clock, then have breakfast in one of your indoor gardens? Wouldn’t it be great to be able to watch Bon Jovi performing live in your private jet? Well, I am able to do all of the above. Fortunately, I have been chosen to be the leader of the new European country. I get to taste Jamie Oliver’s recipes, be the first who reads Paulo Coelho’s unreleased work and have Harry Potter as a bodyguard. Although I could own fifteen castles and a hundred limos, I prefer leaving my desires aside and concentrating on what other people need.

My companions and I travel from town to town, village to village every week. Jamie loves cooking for the sick children, Paulo is great at teaching people of all ages how to read and write and, of course, children absolutely love Harry! He is permanently their playing buddy. As about me, I love teaching songs to children and old people. Everybody loves “Twinkle, Twinkle...”

As a New Year’s resolution, we are going to build orphanages, asylums and hospitals in most of the villages. I am also planning on building a music academy for all the young talents.

At times, it gets depressing. Seeing all those sad, ill, unfortunated children it’s a bit hard to take in; but, at the end of the day, it is all worth it. After all, it’s called “Utopia”!

***Storyland*** de **Drogeanu Ioana Maria** - Liceul Teoretic Nicolae Iorga

We all remember the bedtime stories . Once upon a time...and they lived happily ever after. They've been gone missing because of those people who stopped dreaming. The only chance is to start believing again. Start imagining.

My ideal country would be a book and the cities would be stories. Storyland. You're stepping right now into my country where you'd be a character. Maybe you'd be Cinderella on her way to the ballroom or one of the 101 Dalmatians. The hills would be letters and the mountains, sentences. In books there is nobody who counts the time, so hours can be days and seconds, just another path to 'HappyEverAfterCastle'. I'll be a narrator, the crazy puppeteer who spins his characters through the letters and makes them jump in order not to get caught by the pages of the book. Pink Floyd would take the brick from the wall in order to break it and enter into my story. Architecture would be from different ages, from different books. In Snow White the theatre would be a slope and at the end, the audience will slide and actors will be offered snowflakes bouquets. I'll borrow the 12 Snowflakes, European fairy tales and Pink Floyd in order to make Storyland.

So, yes, it is all about borders. We see them, we want to cross them. Dare, be brave, and step into Storyland, into Happy-Endings, into Childhood, into Dreams, into the Unknown . Now it's time for your Story...

Once upon a time...

***Heaven on earth*** de **Nichifor Ana-Maria** - Scoala gimnaziala cu clasele I-VIII nr 3 Suceava

This country is unique in the world. This land was created by me and the angels, creatures with wings of lace. Here sky and earth give their hands, creating an intense harmony. A carpet strewn with rose petals welcomes you to the island tenderness, a small part of the magic land. This piece of paradise stole the romance of France, became the place of Cupid, named after the famous character that combines human souls . The music from Spain, played by the orchestra of birds resounds with echo and makes you feel better and more happy .

When you return to your native country, you can take a souvenir for your loved ones. The small shops, but chic greet you everywhere. Cute elves invites you in and they ask you to taste a hot tea flavored with cinnamon, according to tradition. The elegance and refinement of Vienna are defined in this wonderful landscape. You can buy love in jar or jewelry inlaid with precious stones made of rainbow rays, or an hourglass, which contains pure sand, overlaid with gold. You can give your loved ones magic crystal pieces that fulfill all their wishes or scrolls with happiness. You can also buy books of wisdom that answers all your questions. Here prices range from an innocent smile to a warm hug.

This country characterizes me , because I love the specificity and charm of the European countries mentioned above, that bring the paradise land to divine status.

***ESEU* de Politic Denisa Andreea - Scoala Gimnaziala "Sfantul Andrei", Slobozia**

Have you ever dreamt of living in a country, where you can be yourself without being judged, where you can follow your dreams, where you get to have something to say, where you really matter, and where you are always supported in making your wishes come true; a country full of happiness and hope, full of kind and hard-working people, appreciated for their qualities, not for their appearance? Well... Welcome to Unitaria!

Once upon a time, tired of a world full of mean people, I decided to go on a walk around the European Union and meet special people. They joined me following my dream: being the leader of a nation where the weakest teenagers become the strongest one. Likewise, they followed me to a gorgeous land, on an uninhabited Greek island where we settled. This is the way Unitaria was created.

Every morning, the waves are kindly hitting the beautiful beach covered by silky Greek sands while the sun, like a fireball, is caressing the clear sea. I use to admire this amazing landscape from Cambridge University, one of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the world. Guess who are our teachers? Well... our English teacher is Shakespeare, the greatest writer in the English language and, surprisingly, our Physics teacher is no one but Einstein, one of the most brilliant person this world has ever met. After school, we take a nice walk on the Champs-Élysées avenue, the most famous street in the world.

If you ever feel not belonging to your country, you'll always find your place in Unitaria, a country full of hope and faithfulness.

***My own kind of country* de Popa Vlad Mihai - Scoala nr 70, Branesti, Ilfov**

The country I want to create is named The Fair Country. This new, small country is the happiest one in the whole world. Anyone can come and live here, it doesn't matter if they are young or old, healthy or ill; the only condition is to be fair and kind.

I brought Robin Hood with me, the English hero who takes from the rich and gives to the poor, the one who defends us and our peace. The Ionic Sea, with its wonderful beaches, is the place where we live and the medieval citadel, the Hunyad castle from Hunedoara, is our home. Here, everyone laughs; we are friends who help each other. Most people are simple and know how to take care of themselves and to produce all they need.

I invented a law that kids love me for: classes aren't taught in buildings, school was moved on the beach. And you only spend 4 hours a day at school. During breaks, the little ones swim with the dolphins.

Robin Hood takes care of naughty kids. He teaches them to shoot with the bow, to ride a horse and to help old people. Lady Marian teaches the good children to paint the castle walls, to feed turtles and to play bowling with coconuts.

In our country cars and trains don't exist. People walk or ride a bike so that there is no pollution.

We are very happy in our country!

***A new country in the heart of Europe*** de **Sburlan Adina** - Scoala gimnaziala "Sfintii Voievozi", Bucuresti

"Now or never" I thought while entering the conference chamber in Schonbrunn Castle, the future House of Parliament for the Republic of Pieta . For the next few hours I was supposed to plead in front of a four-member European commission in order to obtain the independence of our new country.

After a convincing speech, I drew it to a close by thoroughly presenting the importance of our three national symbols. The purpose of our choosing the Schonbrunn Castle as a public institution was to focus the attention of our compatriots on the impressive history of Habsburg Empire which could be an example worth to be followed in the years to come.

A second icon would be Michelangelo Buonarroti, whose lifetime work of art involves extraordinary sculptures, paintings and even poems. The masterpiece he left behind is not only a window to the XVI-th century's culture, but also a mean that enables people to get closer to divinity, to the heavenly beauty his gifted hands managed to enclose in blocks of marble.

The third symbol representing our country would be Ludwig van Beethoven, who managed to fill humans' life with matchless sonatas, harnessing his passion for music against heavy odds.

After finishing my speech, the commission eventually recognized the country's independence, the whole nation cheering and throwing hats in the air while the sky was loud with Beethoven's symphonies. A new country had just been born in the welcoming heart of Europe.

***The United Kingdom of the Words*** de **Vasile Codrin** - Scoala nr 56 "Jose Marti", Bucuresti

Behold the great realm of Wordland. Amazing, isn't it? Now, let's make things clear. I am Sir Phelps III, rightful leader of the Unitary Constitutional Monarchic State of Wordland. Yes, I know the name sounds awful. The Prime minister of the state (which is... me) had no better idea of a name. This bureaucracy... it's killing me.

I live in the capital, called Bookville, where all the citizens have their houses made of books. And when they're bored, they take a small part of the roof, and start reading... You are asking Where is my house? House? It is called a PALACE.

I've got a big, fancy palace in the centre of the city. Yes, it is made of books. Don't be disappointed. It's made of limited edition hardback books. My bedroom is built of Shakespearian dramas. The main hall is built of volumes written by J.R.R. Tolkien (official royal engineer in house-building). I'm sure you know this people, Shakespeare and Tolkien. I once visited your tiny Europe, and I decided to take some things with me as a memory. I took dozens of editions of books and got them here. I also transported the Big Ben Tower. Awesome design, in my opinion. But it took my people half an year to get it here, through the mystic portal in Camelot.

Well, this is a summary of the description of Wordland. I will present you more of my beautiful country another day. Farewell, Europeans!

***ESEU* de Zhao Lei Andrei – CNB George Cosbuc, Bucuresti**

My new European country would be called Vendi .In my country there would be no pollution,the energy will be environmentally friendly and there would be more space for the animal habitats.My country would be politically neutral outside Europe and it would have an alliance with the EU countries in case of war or other natural disasters. The people will have a stronger voice because they will contribute with ideas and projects for the good of Vendi.

I would like my country to have a balanced climate and to have all the types of landforms so that people won't need to visit other countries in order to go to the beach or to go skiing.I would make sure that everybody is healthy,safe,living well and most importantly free.

I would choose the Eiffel Tower as an European icon to be part of my country because it is the most prominent icon of Europe and everybody would like it.I would take Saint Peter's Square so that people would celebrate their traditions ,big or small, there no matter where they come from. The last icon would be the Big Ben from England because England is an important country and I couldn't neglect it and Big Ben would add beauty to my country.

The most important aspect of my country is that there would be no corruption,pollution and that the population will be totally free in the terms of moral laws.

**MENTIUNI – Categoria 11-14 ani**

***ESEU* de Parvan Cristiana Gabriela - Scoala Gimnaziala „Mircea cel Batran", Turnu-Magurele**

There is no future without past. For me, the past represents the best thing that could happen to the world I dream of.

My dream country is the most beautiful country which comes from the European nation's culture, the most civilized and beautiful nation which left its heritage to all people of the earth. It is the country of natural landscapes you find in Grigorescu's masterpieces, where real country life is painted, bald mountains in deep stone silence, old forests, with rivers flowing throughout the country to calm down the thirst of men overcome by diligence when working the land, when working in a factory or writing a poem. His work shows that the human being was born a poet, singing his joy and longing, his sorrow and unhappiness, his hopes and love.

It is the country of troubled and sensitive characters from Shakespeare's creation through which every generation discovers a new message.

It is the country where Beethoven's music has given wings to our souls and it became an echo of time kneading. The Ninth Symphony remains an everlasting anthem that crosses the whole world like calls to trust, to the uninterrupted fight against evil.

I want to sleep and I want to dream my country. This country. To witness it and print its natural masterpieces in my brain and leave them as a legacy. I would be happy to be born in this country, which was, is and will be a God's blessed creation

### ***Imaginaria*** de **Marinache Maria** - Scoala Gimnaziala "Iancului"

I strongly believe in a world where you could make almost everything happen with the power of your mind. People would live in floating bubble-like houses which would favour day-dreaming. Just imagine! As soon as you closed your eyes, you could fly or simply teleport to the places you have always wanted to visit and actually existed in this country all the time.

First you could toss all your change into Fontana di Trevi, staying on its edge until your wishes come true. After that you could walk through the Palace of Versailles and get puzzled at the sight of every reflection of your body in the Hall of Mirrors and realise that you are staying in the very same place where your forefathers signed the peace treaty in 1919.

In addition, you could run away with the iconic Robin Hood and get lost in the Sherwood Forest, the one you used to dream about when you were a child. It may seem a surrealistic vision of a whole continent placed in one state. But *Imaginaria* has it all! Therefore, nothing there is ordinary because you have the chance to talk to your favourite artists by getting their talking portrait! None of the inhabitants of this odd but fantastic country are some of the most usual. Walking its streets can get you to see wizards, ghosts, witches riding their brooms and many other. I am a proud Imaginarian and I would be glad if you joined this country too!

### ***Euphrasia*** de **Goanta Valentina** - Scoala nr 307

Look, as a simple traveller that you are, and let the sparkling rays of the sun immerse you in the frenzy of my country, Euphrasia.

Somewhere beyond the unbounded green lays the remarkable Versailles Palace, appreciated for its outstanding architecture. The smell emanated by the colorful flowers of the Versailles Palace will invade your consciousness, leading you to a faraway place, where peace and serenity dominate. On your way to that place, you stop and listen. As the seconds pass, you hear Edith Piaf's "La vie en rose". She has a passion that truly transcends every limit, and that is why she belongs in Euphrasia. Here, nobody will contest one's talent, we live respecting each other, in an infinite harmony. We are all engaged here in the most important pursuit in history: the search of meaning. You wonder some more, thinking that something is still missing. You scour the unpredictable forest, going deeper, until the sight explodes in a million pieces of color while admiring Paul Cezanne's masterpieces.

You see, everyone is important in our country. We all have our abilities, and even if you haven't realized this yet, you are special. That's the most beautiful part of Euphrasia: finding yourself. But do you know where is this country located? It's in your heart. You just have to see the meaning in everything and stop worrying about details. Do this, and you'll see that in no time, the euphrasians will have you by their side.

***Saved by a smile*** de **Butnaru Stefania** - Scoala gimnaziala nr. 79

Another day in the awful traffic. Fortunately, the smile of a child woke up the sleepy world hidden in my soul.

When I arrived, I couldn't see anything but a white and infinite space. It was the perfect place for a mind hungry of creating. Everything was transforming as my brain welcomed more and more ideas, which were racing in creativity.

"Smiley Country" was full of life: mushroom-houses, mice-drawn carriages and a lot of mysterious windows. But something was missing. I needed some symbols of other countries to remind me of the past and help me not to get lost in nowhere, forgetting about my purpose. Again, my imagination decided to take the command, so I found myself sitting in an English bus. It stopped in the middle of an agora. I stepped out of the bus and entered the democracy's birth place, the base of my country policy. Plato was talking to the Pope about religion and divinity. Suddenly, a huge dove took me and the Pope through a light-window which brought us to Saint Peter Cathedral, where I had the "talk of my life" and where my eyes opened wide to the world itself. In the end, Bach started playing the organ, while I was admiring the fabulous Danube Delta.

Suddenly, there was a great horn. My land started quaking. I was attracted in a black window and thrown in the middle of the traffic, hoping for another smile, another revival of my mind.

***PAPER LAND*** de **Anghel Irina** - Liceul de Arta 'Hariclea Darclee, Braila

Welcome to my place, a brand new European country. You'll have the chance to explore my little piece of heaven.

On a green land, dotted with thick forests, you can see the white, strong line of the Alps. If you turn to the left, you'll see the greenish blue of the Mediterranean Sea. Zoom in, and there, on the shore, you'll spot a beautiful, colorful house, Casa Battló. This is where I live with my friends. Some of them may seem familiar to you....

We're having tea now; would you like to join us? There's a free seat next to Mr. Dorian Gray. You may think he hasn't got the best character, but you can always have a great conversation with him. Around the table you may recognize John Lennon and Paul McCartney, J.K. Rowling, Charles Dickens, Jane Eyre and Mr. Rochester or the Pevensie brothers. Roger Waters is late today, he's helping me destroy the wall surrounding my country. Everyone with a good heart and a healthy mind is welcome here, but the bureaucracy built a thick wall around it. However, I make the rules.

Tomorrow is a busy day. I'm taking the Zeppelin to build a Stairway to Heaven and I'm meeting Edvard Grieg (he's composing the national anthem). Also, I have finished my homework. Although I'm a leader, I'm a student too, at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

You see, I'm busy, but make yourself at home. You'll always find the best company here.

### **Premiul III – Categoria 11-14 ani**

***HODIMANIA*** de **Hodivoianu Alexandru** - CNB George Cosbuc

Oh, how I love the idea of being the ruler of a country, my country, HODIMANIA!  
My country would be on the territory of today's Spain, so the mild temperatures, the beautiful vegetation and its great location will be a magnet for everyone. The food will also be delicious: only pizza and pasta. No more soup, vegetables and grilled meat. Ice cream and chocolate cakes for all.  
I will be a king, so I need a palace to live in. I love the Versailles, so I will have a replica built in my country. My people will also need to relax, so I will also build a replica of Camp Nou, the most famous stadium in Europe.  
But the best thing is the lifestyle. School and work will stop on Thursday noon, after that it is FIESTA time. Parties in the street, dancing and laughing. Every Friday- Venetian Festival. I adore to see people dressed in wonderful costumes, romance and music everywhere. On Saturdays we'll have La Tomatina. We'll fight in the street with tons of tomatoes. It's great fun and we'll encourage the local producers as well. On Sundays it's time for Stuffstock, the greatest and most original rock concert in Europe. It will be held on the beach and all European musicians will be invited.  
Can you resist such temptations? No, I don't think so. I am sure citizenship will be very expensive. I am waiting for all of you to be my subjects. Long live the king!



## **Premiul II – Categoria 11-14 ani**

***ESEU*** de **Dumitru Elena Bianca** - Scoala gimnaziala nr 56

Esimveland is exclusively my creation, and people often call it an enchanted world. Esimveland is crossed by numerous rivers, braid into imprecise signs that look like ancient witnesses of the past. The high mountains add to the breath-taking scenery. The impressive flowery fields and mind-blowing wildlife and plants complete the beauty of this unique country.

I'm the queen of Esimveland, because monarchy is the ideal form of government. The royal residence is in the centre of my kingdom - the Louvre Museum with its famous paintings. But in my country, the Louvre is not simply a museum. At night, our statues and the people drawn on the canvas come to life! At first, it looks extremely strange to drink tea with the Mona Lisa in the flesh, but you get used to it.

My country has traditions and a culture that is often as amazing as that of the big states. People here are extraordinarily friendly, and they offer spaghetti to everybody they meet. They have an obsession for spaghetti, the best Italian dish, perhaps since it started to rain with this kind of food instead of water drops once a year. First a tradition, now a delight, all my people are masters in Flamenco, an exciting Spanish dance.

Because of my contribution, the name of this awesome country was changed into Esimveland: it is made up of the first letters of the names of the queen's family tree. Esimveland is an incredible maze of modern, traditional and funny facts.

## **Premiul I – Categoria 11-14 ani**

*ESEU* de **Malcica Maria** - Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu"

Dearest Oscar,

I have been given the unique opportunity not only to witness, but to manipulate as I please the birth of a European country whose leader will also be yours truly.

I have decided to name this emerging country Illyria, eponymous to Shakespeare's fictional land. The great bard deserves this homage at least, since he will not be the one writer I will import, given that the great change undertaken by the world these past 400 years would render it impossible, even for him, to adjust to the modernity I want Illyria to have.

Instead, the Illyrians will enjoy Paris as their state's cultural capital (not the administrative capital, as that role will be fulfilled by a city less overwhelming in charm, poetry and tokens of old revolutionary ideas).

I believe that the thing which sets this small continent apart is the fact that it is merely the surface, with its polite conduct and common sense, that brings a little homogeneity to a collection of peoples that, since ancient times, could not be more different. Therefore, to illustrate this cherishing of differences I have decided to bring to Illyria two truly exceptional people. The first is the amazing violinist David Garrett who will bring liveliness to the party and the second, provided he will accept, is you, Mr. Wilde. I am very anxious to bring you along to witness and leave your mark on the genesis of this state.

Yours,  
Maria.

## Premii Speciale – Categoria 15 – 20 ani

*Still under construction...* de **Vasilache Ana-Maria** - Colegiul National "Grigore Moisil"

"Dear Diary,

I've been trying to write an essay for a while but it is difficult to create with so much greed and misery surrounding me. You know, I must build a country from scratch..."And that moment it struck me. I knew my idea bared the bitter embrace of Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, but if such a solution could help me add color to my vision of the universe, it was certainly worth trying. "I will turn it into a living memorial of all atrocities ever committed! Stop grinning! Oh, I hate your Cheshire cat smile!

Everybody, including me, will have to be citizen of this nation. This way, we would learn from the blood-spattered past once and for all..." "Finally!" I exclaim ardently. I now only need to explain my idea to the diary, to myself... "What does my nation necessitate most urgently? A constitution!" "ANIMAL FARM" BY ORWELL!" I cry out while promulgating the Magna Carta of my realm. "Next, we must find a national hymn. Taking after the first file, let us declare "1984" (also by Orwell), the epic anthem of the country. The motivation behind these two choices, my dear friend, is this: the texts are both outrageously unimaginable and exceedingly applicable to any living society..." I now need to find a coat of arms. "PICASSO'S "GUERNICA"!" I exclaim as I write down my idea, followed by the note: "It contains the bitter feelings of the subjugated. It was prophetic when painted, anticipating the forthcoming war. This history must belong exclusively to the past, never again to the future.

A name for the country? "Dungeon"... The evil must be chained for eternity...

I'm done for now so I'll leave you to reflect about all these.

Bye,

Annabelle"

I grab some chocolate leftovers from my desk as I look over my diary. Organizing my idea and swallowing sugar has woken up my optimistic side. Suddenly an unusually written paragraph catches my eye.

"Dear friend,

Such evil no paper can bare!

Yours,

Diary"

...and the paper became white again. A new beginning...

***The Deepest Recesses of a Proactive Mind*** de **Stanciu Oana Mirela** - Liceul Teoretic "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Alexandria

The droplets of water clink at the contact with the window and concoct a sweet jingle, which steers my mind to abstract notions. The melodious tune works as stimuli to the fatigued and weary dexterity of my mind, acting like puny dynamos to get the jaded wits moving. The train of thought wanders aimlessly for a while, then climaxes when a startling idea commences to shape: a brand new European country, started from scratch. Wouldn't it be amazing?

The first and foremost problem of one country is, doubtlessly, the economical situation. Money has unfailingly been the bone of contention among peoples, and I would ardently wish for the country to be an august, esteemed one. A capable and competent enough bank to implement the policy of capital would be the Swiss Bank, which has managed to maintain Switzerland as a prosperous and flourishing country, with a relatively stable economy.

I would like the national food to consist of dishes from the Italian cuisine. Let the taste buds be pampered with the matchless taste of the crispy crust and the scrumptious topping of the ever popular pizza. Relish the creamy alfredo sauce that sticks best to fettuccini noodles and be delighted with the jumble of mouth-watering, succulent ingredients that is the classic lasagna.

An important aspect in a person's life is quality time wonderfully spent in a magical set like the famous, renowned Disneyland. The prospect of a highly desirable country would include such awe-inspiring places, marvelous characters and splendid settings which can induce a mental throwback to their visitors' mature minds, turning them to chaste kids once again, allowing them to reminisce their best times fondly. Because I am a hopeless optimist, I would presumably name the country Felicity.

This may be just a simplified product of my rich resourcefulness and my incessant verve, but I stick by my stand that imagination can rule the world. As Friedrich Schiller affirmed, "Keep true to the dreams of your youth".

***Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit*** de **Rosu Kriszta** - Liceul Teoretic "Székely Mikó", Sf. Gheorghe

Raindrops pattering on my Mary Poppins bowler hat, I amble along cobbled streets and musical notes from the past envelop me and whispered are the vows of those days to come into my ears. Shades and lights, a mosaic of past and present—Exeuropa.

This country is made of Europe: it's infused both with Achilles's shield and Dali's rhinoceros, with Hippocrates's oath and Einstein's theory of relativity. After all, from nothing comes nothing... but from Europe's great heritage, from a carefully prepared potion, its ingredients selected from centuries of wonder...!

My first stop is at the Acropolis of Athens—its stones worn away by Plato or the always inquiring Socrates, its walls witnessing democracy taking shape: its ruins—the foundations of European culture. Between the Doric columns of the Parthenon, the ancient gods and their myths are still alive, still valid... The essence of this eternal truth was worded by Thomas Mann: „The myth is the foundation of life; it is the timeless schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious.”

Then Leonardo da Vinci is darting past me—a brush behind his ears, a sketchbook in his hands... the Uomo Universale embodying everything the Italian Renaissance was: ravenously reaching out for beauty, craving nothing but harmony. Painting, carving stone, inventing, studying man and nature... The first person to dare dream about flying. We are headed in the same direction; towards another sanctuary, this time that of science. CERN, with its state-of-the-art technology, seems to be in stark contrast with my previous destination. Nevertheless, the aim of Greek mythology and today's scientist is identical: seeking answers, deciphering mystery after mystery. How they do this at CERN is by colliding particles, examining matter and discovering the Higgs-boson...

The Acropolis is the past, CERN, the future, while da Vinci, the timeless representative of humankind. That is what Exeuropa is about: about searching – through science or art—about the naked soul roaming those inner streets and the boulevards between the stars... About reaching out and never giving up.

## *My modern-age utopia*

### *A place where dreams are embodied inside the light of a new era of hope*

De **Mihai Cristian** - Colegiul National Mihai Eminescu Petrosani

A new place. A new beginning set aside from this world of misery, indifferent to the carelessness and the betrayal of our wretched leaders. We live in such a world, full of oblivious imperfection and haunting misery, that such words became proud emblems of insanity or vague infantile nonsense. But there are still people like me who keep such ignominious hope in their hearts. After all, what if it were all true? This kind of thoughts and philosophy keeps our hope alive. I would fancy a small country, where only the pure-souled people would live. Streets like the Champs-Elysees, houses like the 19th century villas of England and monuments like the towering "Mont-Saint-Michel" of Normandy. Such a fine establishment deserves a fine leader, an immortal god to lead us through both fire and sword and prosperity and happiness. There were many heroes in the broad history of Europe, but my heart copes with Richard Lionheart, the bravest and strongest hand to rule England.

King Richard deserves a true home, a sky-tall castle to live through time, survive storm and rain and defeat sieges and disasters. I can think of no better such wonder than the Bodiam Castle. An everlasting glory of the long-lost knights of Britain.

Maybe the greatest man in the history of Europe. The most open-minded creative genius ever to roam the Earth with human legs, although giving the impression to have been a demi-god. The man who literally built our future, from Renaissance buildings to tanks and air bombers. He put the bases of every study subject we blindly learn today in a time where people barely knew what a horse is. The demi-god of the Italian Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci. Farihaven is a dream that needs materializing into raw physical form, and who could do that better rather than Leonardo?

Ah, this dream haunts my mind like an everlasting ray of light penetrating through a sole void of darkness. This is my dream. This is my modern-age Utopia.

***Witnessing history*** de **Nemes Alexandra Floriana** - Colegiul National "Sfantul Sava"

I was surprised to get off the train at a tiny station, looking at men and women walking in all directions. I took my bag, fulfilled my gladness meter with hope and started a journey in this encouraging land.

After walking miles with nothing worth to be seen, disappointment, anger and fright started fighting for conquering my heart. While a calm breeze was softly playing with my hair, I thought of violins gently making harmonious sounds. Soon enough, Tchaikovsky appeared in front of me with an orchestra. Trees began to rise, growing in the rhythm of the music, leaves trembling at the touch of an angelic note. Meanwhile, people turned up to listen and let peace and kindness set in their hearts.

As I was gazing at the men and women gathering around, my always present consciousness made me aware of the clouded sky. While I was looking for shelter, I saw a lighted pub. On entering the rusty building, something caught my eyes. At a round-wooden table there was a grey-haired woman writing, Agatha Christie. I looked up to her as I was confident that rules were going to be obeyed, safety would reign in the country, establishing a natural equilibrium in society. Her novels would charm the citizens and could make them aware of possible dangers. While more thunders came to agree my thoughts, the door burst open and a slim red-haired man entered. He was carrying a weighty easel in one hand and a filthy bag in the other. After taking his place, Vincent van Gogh started painting on his linen. The storm stopped and even time seemed to take a glance at the piece of art that was being created. By simply looking at his paintings, someone would now know how to appreciate other's feelings, sensing despair and gentleness in one's eyes, coldness and warmth in one's words.

I finished the history lesson by showing the students some pictures and videos. They were fascinated and eagerly wanted to hear more about my experiences as one of the first citizens of Ellenia.

***EUKOS*** de **Mihaila Alex** - CN Ion Luca Caragiale Bucuresti

I'm having breakfast under the bright sun and looking at my grand-grandchildren playing happily in the yard of the Blenheim Palace. They are all citizens of the European United Kingdom of States. I go back over the years and remember how Eukos was created.

Half a century ago after the World War II, Winston Churchill - the Prime-Minister - came up with the idea of establishing a brand new state in Europe – a land of freedom, democracy and welfare. To this end, he gathered the Council in order to decide on the most suitable frame. I have always admired this great statesman: a determined, active former war leader who led his country against the apparently invincible Nazis.

At that time I was the Vice-President of the Council for New Ideas. I suggested that a new state should be established that should have at its core the two principles expressed in Magna Carta Libertatum, which in my opinion would ever be of great value:

“No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, disseized, outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land.”

“To no one will We sell, to no one will We deny or delay, right or justice.”

The Council had been debating for weeks. As we were approaching the end, I remember that Winston said: “Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have”. In view of that, we decided to establish the capital city of Eukos around Stonehenge. No matter who built it, this marvelous and mysterious monument has a positive energetic impact on every living being. It's enough to visit Stonehenge once and go through the inner circle of the blue stones and you'll never get any disease. I'm 150 years old and even now I play football with my best friend Winston Churchill. He is younger than me: he has just turned 148.



## ***Eseu* de Serban Maria-Luiza - Liceul Sfantul Sava**

I reckon that the most inconspicuous people have the most strong-willed minds and the most daring ambitions, therefore I know that you can achieve anything by taking small steps. If I were to be a citizen of a new European country, I wouldn't need the entire France to see the romance flowing in the air, or the British islands to seem sophisticated because I merely need the essential, yet the most important things of every country in order to make mine the most representative of all European ones.

Firstly, I would make sure that the citizens have where to live and to spend their free time. I would bring the outstanding Renaissance Tower from Istanbul next to the Frankfurt Cathedral right in the center of the country, probably in the capital city, but also the Eiffel Tower and some of the sites of the Roman Empire, such as the Colosseum at its outskirts. Having all of these, I would make sure that the people will admire a few of the world's architectural wonders and learn a minimum part of Europe's history, benefiting from a great range of monuments to visit.

Secondly, I would like all of the inhabitants to live in the best conditions and to feel accomplished. They should be able to choose from Italian or Turkish food because these represent a mixture of the most pleasant dishes. Also, an important tradition would be the seven o'clock tea party which would help people relax and they could exchange information on a daily basis. To maintain the atmosphere as effusive as possible, I would take into consideration the problem of entertainment and I'd bring Spanish dancers, British rock bands and also French opera singers to accomplish every citizen's desires.

In the end I must ensure that we will integrate easily, therefore the currency should be the euro, our motto might be „Diversity is the key to success” and perhaps Charles de Gaulle would come to teach us to fight for our rights and to build national pride. My country may become a European icon itself, but only through its originality.

**WELCOME TO GRACELAND** de Ciobanu Ioana-Simona - Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu", Bucuresti

Morning finds you on Mount Olympus. Surrounded by nature, you can almost feel your heart growing inside you and a silent peace brushing away any bothering thought. You are not yet at the top, but you can already have an astounding view over the thousand lakes of Finland.

Why that look? Don't you like it? Oh. Mount Olympus, the lakes of Finland. Exactly.

Let me illuminate. This is a new country. It's called Graceland. I helped with the plans myself.

I'll describe it, then...

We firstly planned to craft a beautiful, cozy environment for the future inhabitants. This is why, apart from rich plains and gentle hills, we chose to bring Mount Olympus (with its stunning landscapes, crystaline rivers and a whole pantheon of Gods on the top) and the thousand lakes of Finland (with the feeble hope of finding a piece of Nordic light attached). Then we decided the setting of Graceland is finally perfect.

After, we looked for some people to dwell in it, not only for their history and customs, but also for their happiness. A first choice were the Vikings, but, as much as we love them, we decided these guys tend to be a little... destructive. So we finally made our option for the Celts, not only for their love for their lands, but also for their finely crafted treasures. People nowadays dig Celtic pendants and music. Yeah, some people also dig for them.

So, up to this point, we gave our country a name, a history, an environment... But we all felt like we needed one more thing, something to link all these and make everybody feel welcome. But at that point, nobody knew what. It felt close, yet far... And then we figured it out. What has the power to make anybody happy? Chocolate. This is why the last gift we brought to Graceland is Belgian Chocolate.

Do you like it?

Oh, you want me to continue that story? But didn't I just tell you one? Ah, well, so be it. You feel a silent peace brushing away your thoughts...

***ESEU* de Buican Patricia Avganti - CNB George Cosbuc, Bucuresti**

People, above places, articles or any other products emergent from human enterprise and knack, are not merely the backbone of their country but the very fundament of its creation, a fact which validates the affirmation that, to a certain degree, citizens substantiate their state. It should thus come as no surprise, my choosing a cluster of iconic men over European symbols like the Louvre or Stonehenge if starting from the premise that such prominent figures prove infinitely more prolific than the most inspiring achievements the world has to hold. Consequently, in constructing a fictive nation, my demiurgic self would rather have four prodigious personalities as pillars of the new country: Leonardo da Vinci, James de Rothschild, Christine de Pizan and Socrates.

Firstly, since I opt for a little society where welfare and tranquility could reign supreme, the election of a sagacious president is vital to the wellbeing of the citizens, hence turning the Middle Ages humanist Christine de Pizan into a perfect candidate. Pragmatic and gumptious, not only is she preoccupied with matters of gender equality and corresponding access to education, but, as woman trained to administer a household, she's congenially better fitted for the management of a state's resources. While the other three are supposed to focus on certain areas, she'd be ideally appointed to handle the implementation of their projects with regards to the general interest.

Similarly, Leonardo, genius in a profusion of fields, is just the man to undertake the systematization of all artistic initiatives plus the developing of a proper infrastructure, while Baron James de Rothschild, distinguished baker, sees after the economical dimension. To Socrates remains the task of cultivating the people by stimulating reasoning with an emphasis on inner balance and mutual respect. His is the function to instill a prevalent preference for harmony and happiness pursued through a fusion of discipline and hard work.

Ergo, these four, so assigned, would be material sufficient for the good functioning of a small country I'd name "Prosperity", a land whose population thrives and rejoices in simple acts. Yet why would I not like to inhabit it?

## ***Eutopia*** de **Panainte Ana-Thea** - Colegiul National de Arta "Octav Bancila" Iasi

When asked to create a new country, I thought it would be well-suited to invent a place that would get the best out of its citizens, just by what it represents. With this idea in mind, I remembered something I read: “utopia” versus “eutopia”. Both come from Greek, but the difference in meaning is given by the prefix. So, translated literally, the first is a “non-place”, something that’s too ideal to be true, whereas the second means “good place”. Naming my country Eutopia, I’ve decided to choose the icons to take there based on two simple conditions: the four elements – for balance, and the old saying “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue” – for good luck.

First, the “old” part would be Greek Mythology, representing the core beliefs standing at the basis of human development from the very beginning. I think this is crucial for a society because it’s as human as possible to need something to believe in, something that is above us and our comprehension. In my opinion, Ancient Greece had the purest form of religion, therefore symbolizing air.

Second, I chose Alfred Nobel as my “new” symbol, also representing fire because of his invention: dynamite. I think he shows human nature at its best and people should see him as an example. He tried to help mankind by creating something beautiful at first, which later turned for the worst. But Nobel didn’t yield. He accepted what he had done and did his best to reconcile with the world, leaving a legacy that goes on until today.

Third, I borrowed British Literature as my earth symbol, with the purpose of extracting and forming a new Constitution from it. I believe we can learn what’s right and wrong from the words of Shakespeare, Austen, Brontë and Eliot.

Last, representing water, I took the blue Danube, because it crosses different nations and brings cultures together, thus symbolizing the diversity of people living in Eutopia. I believe we need a place of pure well-being and, compared with the impossible concept of “utopia”, Eutopia is a practical aspiration.

## MENTIUNI – Categoria 15-20 ani

***Silktopia*** de **Petre Maximilian** - Colegiul National de Informatica " Traian Lalescu"  
Hunedoara

A country, the country that successfully preaches and applies the most valuable ideas of humanity: peace, stability, unity and equality.

Economically-wise, a place where the existence of monetary incentives is no longer justified. Instead, you simply work towards earning something that you would've otherwise acquired with money. Earning money should've always been a means to an end rather than a purpose. Also, life sustainability is free in Silktopia, meaning that you don't have to work for food, water and medical support.

When it comes to education, scholars are being taught the values of unity and equality. The downfall of the monetary system meant that no individual was richer than the other; instead came the much simpler and fundamental concept of one working harder than the other, concept that serves as motivation rather than jealousy. So, everyone is equal, some work harder, but opportunity stands for each and every one of them to achieve their potential. Another important cultural aspect dwells in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. The novel is highly recommended to every citizen of Silktopia due to the fact that it deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality and education, topics one has much to learn from. Unity is also present, scholars are taught how to work as a team and why, how to collaborate between themselves, how to respect and learn from one another regardless of their skin color, sex, etc.

Geographically, Silktopia features every type of terrain from seashores to deserts and tropical forests and one of the most famous historical landmarks, the Colosseum, where the Romans(ancestors of Silktopians), more specifically Gladiators used to gruesomely fight one another, or wild beasts, all for the entertainment of the audience.

Science is crucial for the constant and progressive development of Silktopia, that's why the most prominent figure in science is Albert Einstein, whose teachings have been finally and utterly understood, something that led to a technological leap of almost 100 years.

Oh and, Silktopia also takes pride in the fastest internet connection in the Whole Wide World(pun intended), available wirelessly absolutely wherever and whenever.

***Music flows, Visumtopia shows...*** de **Georgescu Sofia-Cristina** - Liceul de arte plastice  
"Nicolae Tonitza"

Somewhere, in Europe, caught in-between the reflecting glass of a time-blackened mirror...in semblance of vintage and oldness...a country where dreams and new commencements have just emerged, or gravitate in a suspended eternity, drawing themselves unperceived...a country where the essence of an entire continent, a shredded résumé made into a collage of magnificence and cold beauty of infinity.

Drawing lines spreading widely like a web within a tumult of a somber fall from which a melody barely creeps losing some of its musical photons...just the way the gamut with its eight sounds notches converting into the Chinese one, a simple song becomes unearthly, trickling down in my ears... Culture and history, centuries of war, love and pain pulsate through the veins of this lively chef d'oeuvre to become...

The melody streams in sourdine, just as pierced, forming the arcades of a sacred marble palace, braiding and knotting column capitals between the newborn black hills. May it be the Greek temple of Acropolis, revived and crammed with ancient phantasms, shadows of an exquisite, but majestic past?

Musical notes overwhelmingly vigorous pulsate into an era of great discoveries...I see myself travelling alongside Cristofor Columbus on the whirling rough sea, in the power of the reassuring wind before a breakthrough.

Then, barely moving in a web, fragile in the arms of the blow, the sounds are pressing into each other, forming a reflection of a devastating war...In this streak of time, I find myself signing the peace treaty, living victoriously in the Schönbrunn palace...reigning from the symbol of peace, where Mozart is still walking on the rhythm of his works.

The melody continues little and unearthly...little and playful, but threatening...little and sweet, but powerful...

...microscopic...unseen, but heard...silence...

I stand with the foregone taste of the song, the remaining bits of sumptuous decorations now made of broken mirror shivers...with the last vibrations of a long gone melody...

An ephemeral country has just exhibited its beauteous values...but it is long gone...a vision...a country of all cultures, which happens in a strike of a clock...a world from which I have just woken up...

## *Neyopolis* de **Buda Narcisa** - Colegiul National "Mihai Eminescu", Satu-Mare

A floating structure overshadows the Atlantic Ocean while rebellious seagulls fly around the massive object crying aloud in fright at the alienating appearance. Suddenly, two aircrafts appear at the horizon and speed towards the gigantic floating structure.

The sun gently strokes the waves of the oceans as it's slowly emerging under the sea. The black starry night envelops the surroundings as the hurls of the sea drowns the noise away. Einstein, covered in the smoke of his pipe, carefully corrects some calculations involving the water system on Neyopolis. Nikola Tesla enters the room and reminds Albert to not be late to the conference "again.". The scientist just waved inattentive to his visitor and continued scrawling on the paper. Outside Neyopolis, Andrea Yancovich steps out of her aircraft and sets foot on the ramp. Being president of this newly born country, a self-sustainable ship that floats over the Earth surface, makes her not only the first female president elected in the entire history, but also the ruler of the scientific marvel which is called "Neyopolis". She had a hard day in front of her, a conference was held to investigate the recent failures in the water system at the board of Neyopolis. The source of the problem being very hard to trace, since the immense machine was 300.000 km long and 400.000 wide.

While the president of Neyopolis was preparing for her conference, 5000 km away, in a park, Charlie Chaplin thoughtfully examines the dark night above him. He was one of the many clones that populated this country. Scientists have retraced their genes and cloned them. Thus the most illustrious minds in our history created this paradise. Charlie was sad, as he always found that his original person accomplished more than he did. Gasping heavily he is struck by an idea, a brilliant idea.

In the midst of the prickly lights that beamed on the surface of the streets, Sir Issac Newton, lost in his thoughts almost bumped into Chaplin. They barely noticed each other and continued on their paths... only the whispering wind hunts tirelessly..

***NEW GROUNDS*** de **Avram Octavian Stefan** - Liceul Teoretic George Calinescu, Constanta

My god, they have done it! The European Union finally decided to let a 16 year old forge his own country.

I stand before a map of Europe, planning, analyzing, diabolically laughing, thinking of the perfect mixture to properly collide the essence of a few countries into one, dubious looking, Utopian paradise.

As my fingernails slightly scratch the soft paper I acknowledge a figure that grants me a marvelous idea: My country should most definitely look like a fish! Not a specific kind ,though, because some may stand by the belief that it should be a sea bass while others would prefer a more evil approach like the angler fish.

I'm calling it Ted! Ted, the universal fish-country.

The first addition to consider is The Leaning Tower of Pisa. The angle it shows while battling the enslaving forces of gravity inspires something you'd only describe in a paradoxical manner like "the flawless imperfection" or "chaotic stability". Convincing as it looks, it makes everyone wonder if it was meant to stand in its awkward pose and influences every uninspired tourist to take those cheesy "prop up the tower" photos. A great addition indeed!

Most of my days will be spent at home: The London Eye, placed on the top of a massive building just because I can. A huge Ferris wheel on a giant 20 story structure is definitely a good place to call home even if I'm not sure where the bathroom should go.

For the music, I choose Finland.

With beer in hand, joined by a combination of adrenaline and happiness, infinite crowds of Teddians will sing, from the bottom of their lungs, along with outstanding Finnish bands such as Poets of The Fall and Apocalyptica during their weekly concerts. Every word sung, every sound played will unite each fan with the bonds brotherhood.

Last but not least, my gaze falls upon Brancusi's Endless Column for the fact that I take pride in being Romanian. It stands tall, reaching for the heavens, for the unreachable!

Welcome to Ted. Enjoy your stay!



***ESEU*** de **Robu Andreia Iulia** - Colegiul Național „Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi” Rădăuți

You know that feeling when you're in your bed, covered up, soft and warm? When you aren't sleeping but you aren't awake either? That feeling that everything is going to be okay, that anything can happen and nothing is ever how it seems? But what if that isn't a feeling? What if it's a place? A country that is happening in our heads, but still exists. A country named Parfpagne. If this place existed, it would change its location. Impossible to find if you are searching for it, right near you if you have the heart to feel it.

And once you find it, it's everywhere. It can be up in Norway, where you can meet Santa or play with the elves. It can be in Rome, where you can fight gladiators or enjoy some pasta near the coliseum. It could be in Greece, where you could talk to the biggest philosophers that ever lived, or go to war and save Sparta. It could be in Romania, where you could swim in The Red Lake, or meet real vampires in the dark, shadowed forests. Or it could be in Britain, where you could help Sherlock discover criminals, go to Hogwarts, help Harry battle Voldemort or be the Doctor's companion and have the trip of a lifetime.

I bet you are wondering how you can find Parfpagne. The thing is, Parfpagne is not a place. It's a state. It's just like when you are a kid and your mother reads you a fairytale. And you can feel it. You can feel yourself being there, living the adventures of Prince Charming. And now you wonder how you can feel that way, right?

The thing is, it's not about what to feel, it's about what not to feel. You need to be like a little child. If you feel hatred all the time, if you don't feel love, if you lie and make other people feel bad about themselves, you will never find Parfpagne.

In order to find this place you need to let go. So take a deep breath. Head for Parfpagne. Help someone in need, bring a smile to a crying face, choose a random stranger and tell them they are beautiful. Do the little things. At some point you will look back and realize... they were the big things.

***Quadrophenia*** de **Ciolacu Andreea** - Colegiul "Costache Negruzzi" Iasi

The wind was howling round the house when a smooth musical note stopped the chaos. Out of the blue, the harmony of a fado song filled the empty streets with sorrow and gloom.

I went out on the balcony and looked despondently at the city which once was the capital of the most appreciated European country. As I was turning back to my room, I started to seek the books which gave me the idea to create this new land, Quadrophenia ... Shakespeare's plays, Jane Austen's novels and Mozart's music were the only pieces left from it.

A sudden knock at the door made me quiver. Antoni Gaudi was standing in front of my house! "We don't have much time!" he said. I let him in and he started to ask me questions about my country's history. "It was the worst idea I had ever had! I made this country based on people's kindness. Every good deed would be rewarded with nature's gifts. Being a warm-hearted person in my country meant to be the richest person with endless greenhouses. But suddenly, people stopped being ill-bred and my country simply withered away. These sad buildings are all I have left". "Maybe not!" Gaudi smiled. He took my hand and brought me downtown. A beautiful sound made me tear: it was the sound of a heartbeat. "See? Your country is not dead! You need to find the ability in yourself to bring it back to life. What made you think of creating this country?" Suddenly I remembered my romantic novels.

I rushed back to my house, chose the most beautiful works of the romantic era and shared one in every mailbox. The sad fado song ended and a happy Mozartian tune started to play. My country stopped feeling numb and became merry and jolly instead. When I looked around to thank Gaudi he was no longer there. Then I realized that all that had happened was in my mind: Gaudi was just a product of my imagination, an impulse from my soul to change myself and everything around me.

## **Premiul III – Categoria 15 – 20 ani**

***Searching the unfindable*** de **Badeu Andreea** - CNB George Cosbuc

“Something is missing”, he said.

I merely couldn't understand him. What could have been missing? As far as I was concerned, it was perfect. Disappointed and disoriented, I lay down on the grass and started to review my journey from the very beginning.

I closed my eyes and I was back there, under the scorching sun of Italy. I had been hanging around for more than three hours on the streets of Florence, searching for the best traditional moccachino. All of a sudden, my eyes were caught by an old lady who was selling Italian drinks on a boat. At that moment, I knew she had exactly what I was seeking. I bought a cup of that savoury moccachino and put it in my pocket. After that, I knew I was ready to fly to France.

Fortunately, finding what I was looking for in Paris was much easier than I had expected. You could see artists absolutely everywhere. From the tenths of painters over there, I chose the green-haired woman. To my mind, she was the only one who would agree to travel in my wallet. And I was right.

Next, I took the train to Romania with one certain target: the Transalpina Road. That was by far the most difficult to stuff into my bag. However, it worked and I was almost ready to return home with just about the best present for my brother.

I needed one more thing for his dream-country: the Mediterranean Sea. After I had asked it nicely to transfer into my bottle, Bagwattlet was complete-a perfect country that possessed all of my brother's favorite landmarks of Europe.

And still...not good enough. What on Earth did it lack? Then it struck me-it had no scent of mystery. Bagwattlet offered him everything, except for the need to travel again. At that moment, I knew what to do. I took my pocket, my bag, my wallet and my bottle and set all the presents free. Instead of them, I bought my brother plenty of plane tickets to travel the world.

## **Premiul II – Categoria 15 – 20 ani**

***ESEU*** de **Dozsa Paula Valentina** - Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu"

Ninety-nine aliens and...

I glance at the shuttle's dashboard. It's 11:50 PM, the 31st of December 2999. Ten more minutes until the fourth millennium. Ten more minutes until I set foot on Varietas, the first intergalactic country, formerly known as the Moon.

"Citizen 100, prepare for landing," sounds a robotic voice throughout the cabin.

Citizen 100, the ambassador of the creator of this country, the European Union. I strap on my seatbelt and take a deep breath.

Sitting next to me is a bearded man, staring out the translucent shuttle, mesmerized by the familiar, yet strange globe. His eyes seem to be glittering. Or is that just the reflection of the stars? It appears as if Antonio Gaudi, or at least his clone, has found his next artistic muse: outer space. Scientists have succeeded not only in cloning bodies, but in cloning personality and intelligence, in cloning brilliance, making it possible for Gaudi's creations to enliven not only the streets of Barcelona, but also the cratered white streets of Varietas.

We are now descending. Or are we rising? There's no telling in space. The humming of the reactor slowly fades away. As I near the exit, a bouquet of bright red flowers pops in front of my face. I turn around, coming face to face with a smiling man, sporting his trademark moustache, black suit and derby hat and swinging his cane. Although black and white and silent, Charlie Chaplin's movies have succeeded in making the world more colorful. Humor is a universal language, shared and understood by all and as Charlie Chaplin once said himself, "A day without laughter is a day wasted".

Before stepping out of the shuttle, I take a small sack out of my chest pocket. I remember my grandfather's sun wrinkled face as he handed it to me. „Show the aliens what the elixir of the Gods tastes like," he said, his eyes sparkling mischievously. Inside was a handful of grape seeds.

Ninety-nine aliens, a human, a genius, a clown and one of humanity's most ancient vices- we are the Founding Fathers of Varietas.

***PSEUDOPOLIS*** de **Dinu Mircea** - Liceul Teoretic Ion Barbu, Bucuresti

I can't believe that this city-state is my "home".

The skyscrapers covered with billboards advertising poison, the bright neon lights which blind your reason and turn you into mindless puppets, whose strings are being pulled by a corrupt government which drinks up your blood like wine.

The Big Ben makes absolutely no difference. The President thought it would be a great investment, that it would make people want to visit this gutter. But it wasn't like that.<sup>80</sup> So he, together with his council decided to add the Eiffel Tower, as well. And right next to "Ben". And now it looks like they are fighting each other. Which one is more beautiful, which one is architecturally more complex, which one is the best.<sup>125</sup>

I am now heading to the Library, where a new book is being released, written by Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The main avenue is big. Four lanes on each side, three of which are occupied primarily by the too familiar yellow TAXIs, shops are full, people are waiting in line to get in the theater and the cinema and I am sure the casinos are full...as always.

I still can admire<sup>200</sup> the marvelous architecture of the houses and building, combining old techniques with new methods to create amazing structures which makes me think there is something worth seeing in this city.

The Library is my favorite place. I love the outside grandeur, but the inside makes me feel even smaller, more humble, nostalgic and fulfilled.

I leave the event and take another road. This one has open canal mouths, in which I am sure the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are having a pizza party right as we are speaking. This street is dirtier than most and has alleys between the buildings, where homeless superheroes are freezing and cats are looking for fish bones.

This Neo-Noir cityscape is just the way of the world of saying, with one hundred percent recycled words: "That's all, Folks!"

## **Premiul I – Categoria 15 – 20 ani**

***United in Unitaria*** de **Petrica Lavinia Ioana** - Liceul Teoretic „Ion Mihalache” Topoloveni

Is there such thing as the perfect country? Every day we are faced with unexpected burdens, but still, we have the will to carry on. Tossing a coin, we have been given a chance for our relentless hope and untamed courage. We are now citizens of Unitaria, a land epitomizing a glimpse of our common thoughts.

However, we ought to be bound by something that defines us on this tortuous road. Identifying myself as part of a new and ambitious nation is of utmost concern. I consider our middle ground to be the mixture of different cultural backgrounds. My lodestar is the return to forlorn figures. Unitaria has offered me the chance to make time stand still, so i can have a light chat over not-so-light issues with Immanuel Kant and, for a change, to get a better grasp of freedom and its frailties through George Orwell. Moreover, these would be deemed a startling success with Beethoven's "Eroica" in the background, while not losing sight of time thanks to the old Astronomical Clock of Prague.

Ambiguous as his work may be, Kant thrived on his dream of Perpetual Peace in a united Europe. What would peace be, you may ask, without freedom? Orwell enhanced the omen of totalitarianism, while good old Beethoven ventured to assemble the pieces of what we now recall as "Ode to Joy". Last but not least, Prague is the golden city of what Stefan Zweig named "Middle Europe", the cradle of an unveiled charm.

I strongly believe that maintaining our high aims in Unitaria, an enclave amidst internecine bloodletting, encroachments on liberties and festering conflicts, will prove to be a daunting task. Nevertheless, girded by these iconic figures, we gather the strength of retaliating. We benefit from understanding current affairs by living between past and present. We hum the tune preaching that "all men will become brothers", while endeavouring in reading Kant, without forgetting that while options like Big Brother beckon, freedom reigns. Finally, I am a citizen in an undivided nation. Here, every particle has a say; here, we are brothers!