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## Visit to Necmettin Erbakan University of Turkey, Faculty of Education. Personal report

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*Wizyta w Necmettin Erbakan University w Turcji, na Wydziale Edukacji*

On May 8, 2024, Dr hab. Beata Bednarczuk, professor of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin, Department of Didactics, visited Necmettin Erbakan University (NEU) of Turkey, Faculty of Education. Necmettin Erbakan University is one of three state universities in Konya, a city in southern Turkey, the Anatolian Highlands. The university provides education in various fields, such as medicine, social sciences or engineering. It was founded in July 2010 under the name of Konya University, while in April 2012, the name of the university was changed to Necmettin Erbakan University. There are 20 faculties, 8 vocational schools, 28 research centers, 4 institutes, a foreign language school, Turkish Music Conservatory and 8 coordination offices within the university. Currently, NEU is a large living center with over 35,000 students, including 25,454 in undergraduate, 2,872 in associate degree, 5,664 in postgraduate and 1,181 in educational training with a teaching staff of 1,909 and 1,149 administrative staff (<https://www.erbakan.edu.tr/en/s/universitemiz-hakkinda>). The Faculty of Education is located in Eregli, approximately 160 km from Konya. The Faculty consists of 4 departments: Basic Education, Mathematics and Science Education, Turkish and Social Sciences Education, and Educational Sciences. Department of Basic Education includes two subunits: Pre-school and Classroom Education Departments. Beata Bednarczuk was the guest of the Department of Early Childhood Education established in 2017. The Head of the Department is Professor Rahime Filiz Ağmaz.



The visit took place on May 8, 2024 as part of the Erasmus+ program. Professor Rahime Filiz Ağmaz was the organiser of the visitor's arrival and stay. She welcomed the guest from the UMCS, introduced her assistant Ceren Hanbay and the director of the Montessori kindergarten in Ereğli, Yasemin Sevimli, in the beautiful rest room of the Faculty staff, with window overlooking the Taurus Mountains. The first informal meeting over coffee took place.



Classes started at 10:00 a.m. The students were waiting in the meeting room on the third floor. A total of 50 students attended the meeting. In addition to Professor Ağmaz, the class was attended by: Dr. Münire Aydilek Çiftçi and Ceren Hanbay, who translated English classes into Turkish. The course began with the presentation of the history of Montessori education in the province of Lublin, in order to identify the places and events that influenced the professional activities of the Polish guest. Next, the students were familiarized to the Montessori approach to the child. It was an introduction to the two-part workshop. Beata Bednarczuk selected practical life exercises

and sensorial materials to be presented to students. The aim of the workshop was not only to provide an opportunity to learn and experience the specificity of working with Montessori materials, but also to make visible their role in supporting the cognitive, social and emotional development of the children. Turkish student willingly participated in the workshop and asked several questions. They were open and interested in experimenting with didactics materials they had only heard of before.



Professor Ağmaz, Dr. Çiftçi and Ceren Hanbay encouraged the students to explore the meaning of the activities they undertook. After classes the short official meeting with the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Dr. Bülent Dilmaç took place. Then, the informal part of the visit completed the fruitful visit. The possibilities of cooperation between the Department of Didactics (UMCS) and Department of Early Childhood Education (NEU) were discussed during the dinner. It is worth highlighting the extremely warm and friendly atmosphere of the visit created by the staff of the Department and the involvement of Professor Rahime Filiz Ağmaz in organising and conducting both didactic and informal meetings.



