EMBRACE YOUR CHALLENGES

ERASMUS+ YOUTH EXCHANGE

18 - 26 August, 2025

Kniebis, Germany

Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Portugal, and Romania

PROJECT OUTLINE

The International Stuttering Youth Exchange will be held in Kniebis (Freudenstadt, Germany) from Monday, August 18th to Tuesday, August 26th 2025.

The participant countries include Belgium, Estonia (head organization), France, Germany, Portugal, and Romania. The event will be conducted in English.

It's a wonderful opportunity to meet people who stutter from all over Europe. Previous participants described the programme as a life-changing experience where they made lifelong friendships and connections.

The participation fee is €125, with a non-refundable €50 euros due upfront. This amount is for the full week, which includes accommodation in shared rooms and travelling expenses. If the fee is a barrier, please let us know and we can help.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

We are seeking participants for our Youth Exchange Program, specifically designed for young individuals who stutter. If you meet the following criteria, we encourage you to apply:

- Age: 18-30 years old.
- Stuttering: open to all individuals who stutter.
- Interest in Cultural Exchange: eager to learn about and share different cultures.
- Personal Growth: open to developing communication skills and building self-confidence.
- Active Participation: willing to engage in workshops, discussions, and activities.
- Respect and Inclusivity: committed to fostering a positive and inclusive environment.

Join us to connect with others, share your experiences, and experience personal growth.

PREVIOUS PROJECTS

2017	https://vimeo.com/233341877
2018	https://vimeo.com/294526043
2019	https://youtu.be/F5cTui_NSKI
2022	https://youtu.be/q7jdb8SoX8Y
2022	https://youtu.be/CxuzNhFZDGo
2023	https://youtu.be/3nIWgI7Mzek?si=fSOujWz2nc52a3Xx
2024	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTcpRg0ifz4&t=466s

EMBRACE YOUR CHALLENGES

In this year's Youth Exchange, we invite everybody to 'Embrace your challenges' and to go out of their comfort zone by trying new things. The Youth Exchange reinforces the belief that accomplishments - including in communication - are possible by experiencing how much you can do.

We have included exciting activities that you might not usually do easily.
For example, during the week we will create a movie with a self-written script and do different public speaking activities that can usually be quite scary to do.
The programme also includes daily meditation sessions and helping each other with food preparation.

Overall, this is a fantastic opportunity to meet and connect with young people from various European countries. The YE seeks to create a space where young people who stutter can collaborate and build meaningful connections with others.

OUR OBJECTIVES

EMPOWERMENT

Create a safe space for young people who stutter to build confidence and self-esteem by being surrounded by peers who understand their experiences.

INCLUSIVITY

Create an environment where stuttering is not an issue, allowing participants to focus on their strengths, interests, and passions.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Encourage participants to step out of their comfort zones and engage in new experiences, such as public speaking and creative activities, to develop their skills and abilities.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Facilitate the sharing of cultures, traditions, and values among participants from more than six countries, promoting friendships and a sense of community.

THE TEAM

Erik Lamens (Belgium):

I have been active in the stuttering community for 20 years. I was present at several Elsa Youth Meetings and Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges. It's fantastic to see how young PWS grow in this week, how they get more self-confidence and how they make friendships.

Marit Lepp (Estonia):

My journey in the stuttering community began more than 10 years ago in Estonia. In 2018, I took part in my first youth exchange camp in Italy, which sparked my involvement. Now, I'am a group leader in Germany-a role that allows me to provide support and create a safe, judgment-free space for all

Martin Jandet (France)

Embrace all :) (including stammering !)
I've been involved in the community since I had an epiphany and am now vice-president of the French association.
I enjoy meditating, dancing tango, rock climbing and many other things !

THE TEAM

Lukas Gehrmann (Germany):

Servus! (yep, that's how we greet in Bavaria!)
I've been stumbling my way through various positions in the stuttering community for the past 6 years. My passion? Singing and making music - because with a melody words sound even better.
Cheers!

Fábio Carvalho (Portugal)

Hello, I participated in the YE in 2022 which was great, I like to practice sports (krav maga and gym), and spend time with friends playing board games and snacking!

Laura Lascău (Romania)

I'm one of the collaborators on the stuttering pride flag (see below). I believe in the power of individual and collective action and hope the Youth Exchange will mobilise further action towards destigmatising stuttering.

THE TEAM

Marc van Kralingen (Netherlands):

I am representing Stamily. I have an organizing and facilitating role. Contact me if you would like to help organize future events I work in finance, like to do DIY home projects and enjoy crossfit.

Sybren Bouwsma (Netherlands).

Having been a person who stutters all my life, I like to help organise events for other people with a stutter. I am involved in different stuttering organisations and love international contacts in stuttering. In my freetime I love to hike, to run, to travel and to be in nature :).

PROGRAM

Time	Travel day	Day 1	Day 2		Day 3	Day 4				Day 5		Day 6	Day 7	Travel day
	18-08	19-08	20-08		21-08	22-08				23-08		24-08	25-08	26-08
			Group A+B	Group C+D		Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D					
8:30 - 9:15	Arrival	Breakfast	Breakfast		Breakfast	Breakfast				Breakfast				
9:15 - 9:45		Break	Break		Break	Break				Break				
9:45 - 10:00		Mindfullness	Mindfullness		Mindfullness	Mindfullness				Mindfullness		9:45 - 10:30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
10:00 - 11:15		Name games	Script writing for movie	Multi-sport	Mindful communication	Film shooting	Film shooting	Speaking circles	Arts&crafts	Non-violent communication		10:30 - 11:00	Break	Break	Break
												11:00 - 11:15	Mindfullness	Mindfullness	Cleaning (optional)
11:15 - 11:45		Break	Break		Break	Break				Break		11:15 - 13:30	How to give a workshop workshop	YE follow-up brainstorm	
11:45 - 13:00		Get to know games	Multi-sport	Script writing for movie	Script writing	Film shooting	Film shooting	Arts&crafts	Speaking cirlces	Speaking circles big group				Participants workshops	
13:00 - 14:15		Lunch Group leader meeting	Lunch National delegation meeting		Lunch Group leader meeting	Lunch National delegation meeting				Lunch Group leader meeting		13:30 - 15:00	Lunch National delegation meeting	Lunch Group leader meeting	
14:15 - 15:45		Break Announce. Fears, needs and expectations	Break Secret friend intro Improvisation without words	Choir singing	Break Announce. Geo-caching	Break Announcements Arts&crafts	Speaking cirlces	Film shooting	Film shooting	Free afternoon and local connections			Break	Break	Departure
15:45 - 16:15		Break	Break			Break						15:00 - 15:30	Friend sheet	Youth Pass	
16:15 - 17:30		Youth pass / Erasmus+ Challenging game, theme intro	Choir singing	Improvisation without words		Speaking cirlces	Arts&crafts	Film shooting	Film shooting			15:30 - 17:30	Open mic	Final evaluation Closing ceremony	
17:30 - 18:00		Self-reflection	Self-reflection & evaluation			Self-reflection & evaluation						17:30 - 18:00	Self-reflection & evaluation	Self-reflection	
18:00 - 18:45		Break	Break		Break	Break						18:00 - 18:45	Break	Break	
18:45 - 19:45		Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	Dinner				Dinner		18:45 - 19:45	Dinner	Dinner	
19:45 - 20.15	Dinner	Break	Break		Break	Break				Break		19:45 - 20.15	Break	Break	
20.15 - 21.15		National evening (Estonia)	National evening (Belgium)		National evening (Romania	National evening (France)				National evening (Germany)		20.15 - 21.15	National evening (Portugal)	Movie night	

THE VENUE

Welcome to the Naturfreundehaus Kniebis!

Nestled in the serene landscapes of the Black Forest, our cosy house offers a warm, welcoming atmosphere that serves as the perfect base for your adventures.

At Naturfreundehaus, you can expect comfortable accommodations, friendly service, and a communal spirit. Whether you're here to explore the extensive hiking trails, enjoy some peaceful time away from the hustle and bustle, or engage in exciting winter sports, Naturfreundehaus Kniebis is your gateway to an unforgettable experience in nature.

Discover the charm of our house and the stunning beauty of Kniebis with us. We look forward to welcoming you!

BLACK FOREST, GERMANY

Below are a few things that you can expect from the area -

- Forests and Nature Reserves: Kniebis is surrounded by dense coniferous forests, primarily spruce and fir, with lush landscapes and extensive hiking trails.
- Climate: the area has a temperate oceanic climate with cool summers and snowy winters, making it popular for winter sports like cross-country skiing.
- Flora and Fauna: the rich biodiversity includes numerous species of plants, mushrooms, birds, and mammals such as deer and wild boar.
- Tourism and Recreation: Kniebis offers activities like hiking, mountain biking, and winter sports, with well-maintained trails and scenic viewpoints.

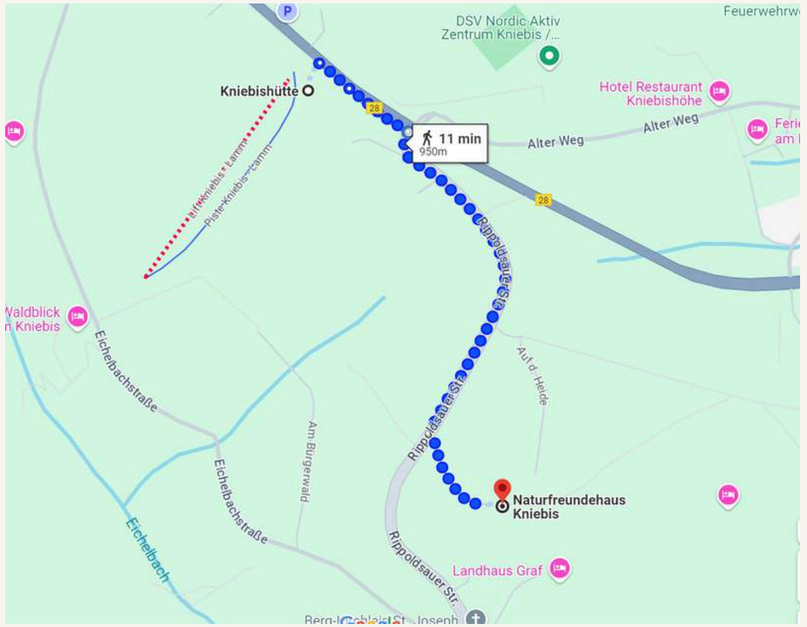
Overall, Kniebis exemplifies environmental preservation in Germany with its natural beauty, diverse ecosystems, and active conservation.

HOW TO REACH THE VENUE

Address:

Naturfreundeweg 12,
72250 Freudenstadt, Germany

1. Arrival to Freudenstadt (HBf or Stadt) (via Stuttgart or Karlsruhe)
2. Bus from Freudenstadt to Kniebis Skistadion/Besucherzentrum (20 minutes), every hour: https://www.vgf-info.de/
3. Walk from the bus stop to Kniebis Naturfreundehaus (15 minutes walking)



How to book train travel to Freudenstadt, Germany

Below are some ideas to help you book your train tickets and ensure a smooth travel experience.

- Use the international website of Deutsche Bahn (https://int.bahn.de/en) to look up train options and booking tickets. But be careful:
  - Some trains offer a transfer time of 3 minutes, which is not enough. Modify your search details to set a minimum transfer time, such as 10 minutes.
  - Some of the trains cannot be bought on this website for unknown reasons. It is better to choose the trains that already display a price on the search results page.

- Consider FlixBus: You can use FlixBus to travel to major hubs like Stuttgart, and then continue your journey with regional trains.

How to book train travel

to Freudenstadt, Germany

- Train travel is a relaxing way to travel. Enjoy the scenic views and comfortable ride.
- However, prepare for delays as they are common.
    - Tickets for long-distance trains (like Thalys or ICE) are often for a specific time slot. It's essential to plan for some time buffers, similar to arriving early at an airport. Tickets for regional trains are not for a specific time slot, allowing you to take an earlier train if needed.
    - Starting your journey early in the day helps to account for any unexpected delays. Try to avoid arriving late in the evening. Aim to reach your destination by 6 PM to ensure you have backup options if something goes wrong during the day.
    - Remember to keep all receipts for reimbursement.
- Need Help?
    - Issues with apps and websites are common. We are happy to assist you.
    - For further assistance, feel free to reach out. Safe travels!

TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Arrival date: Monday, August 18rd, 2025
Departure date: Tuesday, August 26th, 2025

We strongly suggest that you travel in an eco-friendly way.

- Eco-friendly traveling includes any mode of transportation except flying or driving alone. Carpooling is also considered eco-friendly travel.
- If eco-friendly traveling cannot be done within one day, you receive €41 euro per extra traveling day.

Please save all your invoices, tickets, and boarding passes for travel cost reimbursement.

- Reimbursement will only be processed after the event.
- Please note that transfers via Taxi/Uber (or similar services) are not eligible for reimbursement.

Budget per country	Standard travel	Eco-friendly travel
Belgium	€211	€285
Estonia	€309	€417
France	€211	€285
Germany	€211	€285
Portugal	€309	€417
Romania	€309	€417

HOW TO APPLY

- **Germany:** See link here
- **Belgium:** contact Erik Lamens at voorzitter.bsv@gmail.com
- **France:** See link here
- **Estonia:** contact Marit Lepp at maritlepp@gmail.com
- **Portugal:** See link here
- **Romania:** contact Laura Lascău at laura.lascau@gmail.com