

Group Mobility BELGIUM 11-2024

Visit to Thor Park and EnergyVille in Genk



The second day of the Erasmus exchange programme was dedicated to exploring the innovative Thor Park in Genk and the cutting-edge research centre **EnergyVille**, which focuses on sustainable energy and smart technologies. Thor Park, a former mining site, has been transformed into a campus for energy transition, housing companies and research institutions that work on renewable energy and digitalisation. EnergyVille itself conducts advanced research in the fields of solar energy, batteries, power electronics, thermal systems, and smart cities.

During the guided tours, students learned about the history of the site and the transformation from coal mining into a hub for renewable energy and innovation. They were able to see practical applications such as **solar panels with LED lighting, parabolic solar heating systems, a heat pump testing laboratory, and robots in test houses simulating residents' behaviour**. This hands-on insight allowed them to better understand how science and industry collaborate to create solutions for the energy challenges of the future.

The feedback from students reflected their curiosity and excitement. One student remarked: *"I didn't know that there used to be 'black gold' here – the history of the site was fascinating."* Another highlighted: *"I found the solar panels and the way renewable energy can be applied in daily life very interesting."*



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Photo Alexandra shows the **Thor Park grounds**, symbolising the transformation from mining to modern energy research.



Photo Manuel captures a **presentation on solar panels**.

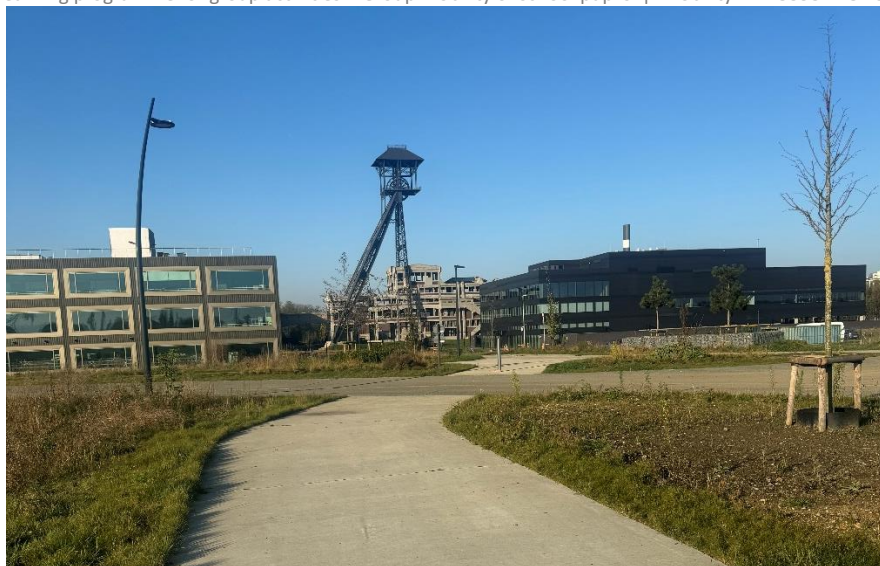
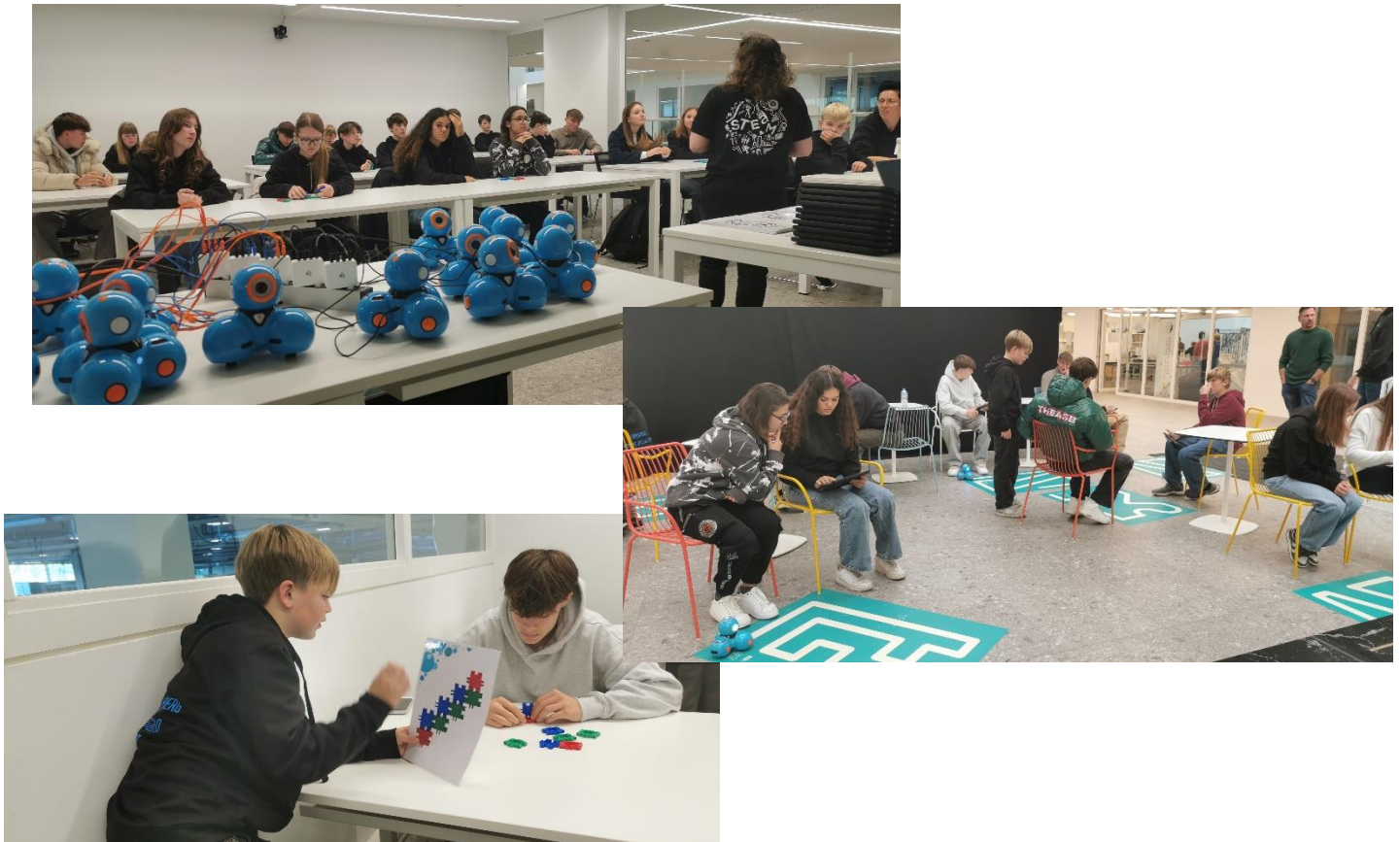


Photo Antonio documents the contrast with the coal power plant in the background.



Photo Luca G. (Link) – offers a view from the rooftop next to the solar panels.

Several participants particularly enjoyed the interactive parts of the visit, such as the **Dash robot programming workshop**: *“The session with the robot was definitely the most exciting part for me.”*



*Photos of **Dash robot programming** workshop*

While the ratings for the day varied between 2 and 5 out of 5, most students agreed that the programme was insightful. Looking ahead, they wished for a mix of **“more relaxation and less stress”**, **“a cool excursion in the afternoon”**, and **“a fun and beautiful time with classmates and exchange partners.”**

Overall, the day provided a unique opportunity to combine technical knowledge with cultural exchange, leaving the students both informed and inspired by the possibilities of renewable energy.