

Report: Nuclear Game Challenge Kick-off event

At the beginning of this school year, the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre (SCK•CEN) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) launched the **Nuclear Game Challenge**, a scientific competition for youngsters from the third level of secondary school. The competition aims at giving these pupils a better understanding of nuclear science and applications as well as fostering cooperation, creativity and critical and transdisciplinary thinking. During this competition, the teams of 5 pupils are challenged to create a transdisciplinary educational game on nuclear science and applications. Each team is helped by a mentor from SCK•CEN or JRC.

In order to help the teams find inspiration and to create interaction between the teams and the scientific experts, the competition started on 8 November 2017 by a **kick-off event** in the Museum of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels. Some 21 teams (99 students), 20 accompanying teachers and 19 mentors were present.

The kick-off event was set up in three parts. During the first part, the teams would become acquainted with various nuclear themes thanks to four lectures (on radioactivity, radioprotection, nuclear applications and nuclear research) given by JRC or SCK•CEN experts. Each lecture was followed by answers to the questions of the teams and their teachers.

After having listened carefully and taking notes consciously, time had come for the teams to take action. The teams faced each other in an interactive game (*Duel Challenges*) in which the acquired nuclear knowledge could be used and initiative and teamwork were essential. During the *Duel Challenges*, the teams were challenging each other to duels which were enthusiastically monitored by the mentors. These duels consisted in short missions/games involving memory, a true or false game, a relay quiz, a 'radioactive decay' card game, time's up, etc. The final score of the *Duel Challenges* counts for 25% of the finale score of the whole competition.

During the last part of this event, a brainstorming was organized in which each team could get to know their mentor and could exchange ideas for the educational game.

The team 'U235' of the Sint-Jozefschool in Mere finished top of the table, followed by the team 'PentaFusion' of the Kardinaal van Roey Instituut in Vorselaar and the team '4 is all that matter(s)' of the Daltoatheneum Het Leerlabo in Westerlo.

The event concluded with a drink which led to many discussions and posing in front of the impressive dinosaurs skeletons in the museum.

