

Erasmus+, a memorable experience

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The Erasmus+ Program is one of the most successful initiatives of the European Union, promoting educational, cultural, and professional cooperation among young people from different countries. The main goal of Erasmus+ projects is to foster the personal and professional development of participants, contributing to the strengthening of European values such as cultural diversity, solidarity, and lifelong learning. By taking part in our school's Erasmus+ project, we were given the opportunity to discover more about the Italian culture and learn new things. Our participation in this project for a week, from 22.04.2024 to 26.04.2024 had a great influence upon our perspective of Italian culture, as our expectations were surpassed. Their hospitality was beyond our expectations, and we had a great experience.

Our main interests were climate change, economic and social sustainability, green energy, and developing our skills in Information and Communication Technology classes. The hosting school, Accademia Risorgimento in San Benedetto del Tronto, made sure that our learning programme was respected and would align with our interests.

Some of the most useful and relevant activities organized by Accademia Risorgimento were: attending IT classes, instructed by an IT teacher, in order to equip us with digital skills; improving the English language and communication skills; developing critical thinking and teamwork; the workshop "Go green! Reduce plastic!", followed by discussions about the ways in which we can prevent future damage to the environment and a city tour, meant to improve our knowledge about the historical past of the city San Benedetto del Tronto and to observe the environmental problems such as the pollution.

Our experience begun from Târgu Mureș, our home town. We travelled to the airport in Bucharest by train, flying to Pescara from there. The town where we stayed for five nights was Grottamare, about 5 km away from the hosting school, where our coordinator from Italy waited for us to walk us to the hotel and make us comfortable. We arrived on Sunday, so we had a free day to walk around the town and explore its beautiful architecture and the beach. Although we were tired from the long journey, we took a stroll on the beach to feel the breeze and enjoy a little bit of sun.

The week started with a project called "Be green!", in which we were encouraged to walk to Accademia Risorgimento as a solution to reduce pollution in the area. They welcomed us warmly and encouraged us to engage with other students from different countries. Every country that participated got to present to the others something about their country. Our team had prepared presentations about our high school, our traditions and our beautiful country. This activity enlarged our knowledge about other countries and we learnt about other cultures.

The following days we participated in cultural activities, visiting museums and the port, where we saw how ships docked. Our visits to the museums taught us about the importance of the economy in a city, the effects of pollution and enlarged our biology knowledge, due to the museum's wing about marine life. We had the opportunity to attend a classical music concert that was held in a beautiful church in the old town, up on a hill. The views were mesmerizing, and so was the concert.

A person we could never forget is lady Romina. She owns a modest ice cream shop, near the seaside. We befriended her during our stay by being loyal customers every night after dinner, no matter the weather. She has such a big soul because our main problem during our stay was not to be able to find a restaurant that served lasagna, so she surprised us on our last evening there with the most delicious lasagna we had ever tasted. We still chat from time to time, to have a little catch-up, and we plan to visit her if we ever get the chance again.

Erasmus + experiences are some of the most memorable, because you realize that cultural diversity is not an impediment in friendships, but the opposite. Socializing and opening up to other cultures turned out to be an important step in our evolution as humans and a crucial influencing factor for interpersonal relations. This project gave us the opportunity to get to know other cultures and make new friendships, that might last a lifetime. We would recommend everyone to participate in such projects, to learn and form new friendships.