

Erasmus Diary – Lithuania Meeting (Elif Bengisu)

April, 30th

After a long bus trip, flight and two train trips, we finally arrived Radviliskis. I loved this green city pretty much. And meeting Mija and her family was also good. I loved Mija's sister Leappa so much. The weather was colder than Izmir but didn't feel cold so that was fine. After we stayed at Mija's house for a while, we met some friends of Mija at their house. Aysu, Nilsu and Almira were there too. We played a card game together, and it was a lot fun. When we were there we got the news that Italians had arrived, so we went to get Elizabetta with Mija. After going home and eating some snacks, we played Monopoly with Mija, Leappa and Elizabetta. I had a lot fun that day, and I was hoping the others days will be as much as fun. And it became so.

May, 1st

We were all excited for the upcoming week when we were waiting for the opening speech in the conference hall. To be honest, I couldn't concentrate to the speech because it was so long and I was so impatient. But in the end, speech finished and we started the tour at the gymnasium. I really loved the school with its sitting places for students and drawings on the walls. Then we went to lunch, which we had to walk for about 15 minutes. I enjoyed the fresh air. We ate chicken and potatoes. It was delicious. After lunch, we were ready for the orientation game. We walked through Radviliskis with our teams, and it was a lot fun for me to walk in this green town. After we went to school, we all were pretty tired, so we did a relaxing activity: Soap therapy. It was designed in the form of an experiment. The ingredients were ready, so all we had to do was to mix them accordingly. It was really relaxing. Soap therapy was the last activity on the program, everyone went with their host to eat dinner. In the evening, students met up at the Central Park again. Everyone was playing sports like volleyball and basketball, but I wasn't really skilled at them. So we went to a park nearby the sports fields with some of my friends. It was a lot fun again. When we came back to the home at night I was pretty tired. I went sleeping.

May, 2nd

This day, we went school earlier. We separated into two groups. I was in the second group so I went to biology laboratory to take engineering classes. We separated into the same teams as the previous day. And we were given 4 tasks based on using the lab equipments. I enjoyed them all, and different than our system in Turkey, we were supposed to present our results. It was another fun part of the lessons for me. When the engineering class ended, a short break was given. And after that, my team went to conference hall to take robotics classes. We did a small introduction to Arduino. I showed my teammates how to use some equipments like LED bulbs, servo motors and buzzers. The lessons were all about my interests, so I felt really happy while working on them. After the lessons, we went to school cafeteria to eat lunch. It was chicken and potatoes again. Because we couldn't eat pork, they didn't have much options other than chicken and potatoes were culturally popular there. After lunch, we went to Hill of Crosses. I enjoyed the bus trip, normally I don't like bus trips so much, but the green view of Lithuania made me love it. Hill of Crosses felt like a places coming out of fairytales with so much crosses. I felt the hopes of people while putting those crosses there. On our way back, we went to Siaulai. We didn't have much time there but we had the chance to see the sundial of Siaulai. It amazed me with its incredible height. After coming back to Radviliskis, everyone went to their houses. After dinner, Some of my friends and Mija's came to our house. We sang songs and danced that night. It was a tiring day again, after they went to their houses, I slept.

May, 3rd

We woke up really early for our trip to Kaunas college. The road was pretty green again, so I didn't get bored while listening to music. We visited a few robotics classes of Kaunas College. I was inspired for my future robotics projects. When we finished the trip to Kaunas, we were ready for our trip to the capital, Vilnius. We ate our lunch at somewhere on our way. It was a place making traditional food of Lithuania, so had a chance to taste them. I tried a food looking similar to bread with chicken in it. Next place on our route was the Museum of Energetics and Technologies. I was quite amused when we got in there, because that was the first time I had the chance to watch Tesla coils live. We had a lot time there, so I had chance to try a lot of different kinds experiments there. I am really glad that I have found the chance to be there. After we finished the trip to museum, we had free time in Vilnius. We went to Vilnius Castle, and the view was amazing. I spent a lot of time watching the view there. In the rest of our free time, we looked up for souvenir shops to buy gifts for our families and ate dinner. Walking in the streets of Vilnius was great. I could feel the history of the streets thanks to the old buildings of Vilnius. When our free time was ended and we were waiting for our bus in front of the cathedral, the bell of the cathedral started ringing. I felt so happy to find the chance to hear it when I'm pretty close to the cathedral. When our bus arrived, there was a long way waiting us to Radviliskis. When we arrived I was pretty tired again. As we went home, I slept.

May, 4th

This day was going to be the day for Robotics competitions, so we were going to be at school all day. When we arrived to school, we separated to teams as we did in Monday. We were given our tasks and we were supposed to prepare for the first stage of the competitions. We did so, and after a short coffee break we presented our future towns. To be honest, the first stage of the competition didn't really interest me because I'm not good at designing. But after the lunch, the second stage started and I was so excited for it. We were supposed to build a sumo robot. But I don't think we were given enough time to build a sumo robot. Most of the robots at competition didn't work properly, including ours. But the excitement of the competition was worth everything. After the competition we went to a billiard saloon with my Turkish friends. We ate pizza and played biliard there while other students went for dinner. After dinner we met up at school again to watch the Lithuanian folk group. We also tried their traditional dances and food. Food was delicious and the dance was fun but tiring. But still I enjoyed that night a lot. After folk night we went to Central Park again. It was pretty cold, so we preferred going to a pizzeria nearby with my friends. We had great time that night.

May, 5th

This was going to be our last day in Lithuania, so I was feeling a bit of sorrow. In the morning, we went to Burbiskiai Manor. The tulip scenery there was amazing. I took many photos there. And we went back to school after this short trip. When we came back to school, we did presentations on our countries and schools, and took our certificates. After eating lunch at the place we ate on Monday, we came back to the school and filled a survey about this Project we had that week. Rest of the day was free time for us. We went to Siaulai by train, to play bowling at the shopping centre. I am not into bowling, so I preferred watching everyone play. After that we ate dinner and spent some time in the shopping mall. After we got back everyone went to their houses. We wanted to meet up again for a farewell but it was already and it was pretty cold. But some of Mija's and my friends came our house again. We spent time together and then separated.

May, 6th

We woke up early to catch our flight at Vilnius. Everyone was there to say goodbye, and that was the end of our trip. I thought about this amazing week I had in Lithuania. I am thankful for everyone who helped me to get the chance to visit there.

Elif Bengisu Gezder

Radviliškis, May, 2023