

## **LITHUANIA MEETING REPORT – NILSU**

On the 30th of April 2023 at 21.00 I met up with my friends and my teachers in front of “Narlıdere Atatürk Kültür Merkezi”. I was a little sad about going away from my parents, but I was equally excited to go to Lithuania. After saying goodbye to my parents, the bus left to İstanbul. During the bus ride we played ice breaker games, played music, sang songs, and accidentally caused our teachers to lose sleep. After some time stopped at a gas station and my friends and I took photos with funny glasses and played in a children’s park. I had a lot of fun. When we got on the bus again, we were a bit calmer and despite of our teachers’ warnings we stayed up all night long chatting about our schools, our friends, the people we like etc. After a long bus ride, we finally reached İstanbul Airport. At the airport we found a nice playing area and decided to go over there but we couldn’t stay for long because we were too old. Leaving the play area, we went to a cafe and played cards and uno. We weren’t allowed to bring water in the inner parts of the airport, so we gave Arda all our waters and he drank them for us. Then we finally arrived at our gate. While boarding the plane we all thought that we wouldn’t sleep on the plane, but we all fell asleep, and I almost missed the food. I didn’t like it very much, but I still ate all of it. After we landed in Vilnius, we took a bus and to the train station and waited for our train for about one and a half hours. Ate the station me and my friends’ played games and explored the station. We had to take 3 trains and we almost got on the wrong one, but we finally got to Radviliskis and I met my host Vilte. We had already been talking online but I hadn’t seen her face before. We went to the house, and I unpacked my clothes and other stuff. Half an hour later we went to my twin sister Aysu’s host Vyte’s house for a pizza party. Almira, Elif and their hosts were also at the party. We all ate pizza and played ice breaker games. They played music in their language, and we played music in our language. We left at 22.00 to go back to Vilte’s house. Before going to bed we exchanged the gifts we got for each other.

The next day (Monday) I woke up at 09.00 and I was very happy about that because I usually must wake up at 08.00 for school. After breakfast with Vilte we walked to school with Aysu, Vyte and Vyte’s twin sister Ugne. We arrived at the school and Vilte’s teacher Skirmante showed us a presentation of the school. My favorite part was the “Night at School” activity and I wished we also had that in my school or at Arkas Science and Arts Center. After the presentation we got a tour of the school. It was nice. After the tour we went out for lunch. To be honest none of us liked the food but we didn’t say anything because we were guests, and it would have been rude. After lunch we came back to the school and then we went for a tour in Radviliskis in groups. In my group we had me, Vilte, Emile, Elizabetta and a Romanian teachers daughter Petra. We walked through the whole city. My favorite part was the train model. It was cool. After the tour we went back to the school for the soap therapy activity. I made my soap with Almira, Elife and Aysu and it turned out pretty. After making the soaps we all left to go home. At home I ate some traditional Lithuanian food, and it was nice, but I would prefer my own countries food. After eating we left to go to Central Park to play Volleyball with the other students. After volleyball me, Aysu, Elife, Barkin, Almira and Deniz went to play in a children’s park. We are all high school students, but we still love playing in children parks for some reason. Lastly, we went to a gas station to get some coffee then went home. I read a bit of my book then fell asleep.

The next day (Tuesday) I woke up at 08.00 and had breakfast with Vilte and left for school. I worked on Arduino Uno with the students in my group from yesterday. I explained what Arduino was and what it was for and then started doing the projects. We all made our countries flags with Led lights and it was a nice experience. After Arduino we went to an engineering workshop where we had to measure the rooms light, humidity, noise decibel and more. We ate lunch at the school and the Turkish and Italian students ate lunch together. After lunch we went to “The Hill of Crosses”. After learning about the history, we got to look around. Before leaving I bought myself an amber necklace and a cross necklace. When we arrived at school, we did some theatre activities.

We made a human robot, and I got a bit bored because my ideas weren't being listened to, but I still acted respectful. After the robot we had to do a traditional dance from our country and us (the Turkish students) did a traditional dance called "Damat Halay" and we had so much fun. Arda, Ege and Deniz were doing it for the first time, but they did the dance very well. After leaving school we went to Elif's host's house to watch a movie. After the movie we ate some pizza and started chatting. It was a chill hang out, but we had to leave early because we were going to go to Vilnius tomorrow and we had to wake up early.

The next day (Wednesday) I woke up at 05.30. I was so tired, so I made some coffee to wake up. We arrived at the school a little early, so we started to wait for the others. While I was waiting, I met a Portuguese student named Gisela and we got close. After everyone arrived, we left for Vilnius. Our first stop was the Kaunas College. It was a really nice place. I learned a lot about robotics and coding. We even got to do some experiments with some of the robots. Then we started going to Vilnius again. I sat next to Gisela the whole time. After a while we stopped at a diner to have some lunch. All of the Turkish students except Ege ate with the Portuguese students. We had the best time. After lunch we got on the road again and finally got to Vilnius. First, we went to "Vilnius Museum of Energetics and Technologies". There we saw some of the inventions that Tesla made, and I even got to be a part of some of the demonstrations. After the demonstrations we all had some free time to explore in the museum. After the museum we walked to the city center, and we all separated from each other. The Turkish students and teachers went to the Gediminas Castle, and we got to see the whole city. After taking some pictures me and the other Turkish students separated from the teachers and started exploring Vilnius. First, we went to a bookstore and bought some books, postcards and more. Then we spent about 15 minutes looking for a souvenir shop. After much struggle we finally found one and went inside. Inside we saw other Turkish people that were in Vilnius with another Erasmus Project, and we were happy to see other Turkish people. After buying gifts for our family, friends we left and ate dinner at a KFC. While eating dinner Arda gave us bracelets he had brought from Turkiye and we were so happy and we all hugged him. After dinner we met up with the other students and got on the bus to go back to Radviliskis. I sat with Gisele, and we sang songs and talked but when she fell asleep, I went to sit with Ege not to wake her up. The Turkish students and I talked for hours. We arrived at Vilte's house at 23.00 and I fell asleep the second I got in my bed.

The next day (Tuesday) I got up at 08.00 and we ate breakfast and went to school. Me and my group from Monday started the "Future Town" Project. We had to build a city out of Legos and build a robot and program it to play a role in our city. I might be a little subjective, but I think our city was the best. After presenting our city to the teachers and other students we left to have lunch. After lunch we all played music and danced together. After the dancing we started the Sumo Robot project. For this project two groups had to work together to make a sumo robot to battle the other robots. We were supposed to be 8 people but only me, Elif, Gisela, Vilte and Emile worked for the Project. My favorite robot was Arda and Almira's robot. After the Sumo Robots a group called "Aidija" came to sing and teach us national Lithuanian songs and dances. It was my favorite thing of the day. After the dance they gave us traditional Lithuanian foods and drinks. After eating we left the school. Me, Deniz, Almira, Aysu and Elif went to a cafe with our hosts and a few Italian students. But we had to leave early because it was so cold. When we got home Vilte made some tea for us. While drinking our tea we chatted, and it was nice and calming. After our tea we both went to bed.

On Friday I woke up at 09.00 and we left for school. We were going to go to Burbiskiai Manor. The bus that was going to take us was small so the Lithuanian students couldn't come with us. I sat with my friend Gisele and we sang karaoke with the other Portuguese students. After learning about the history of Burbiskiai Manor we started exploring. The house was beautiful, and I was thinking "I wish my house looked like this". After the house we went to the tulip gardens, and it was so pretty. My grandmother loves Tulips so took lots of photos for her.

After that we got on the bus and went back to the school. When we got to the school me, and Aysu gave a presentation about Turkiye. I think it was a good presentation. After us the other students also gave presentations about their schools. Once all the presentations were over, we all got certificates and thermoses. We also got our soaps that we had made on Monday then we left the school for the last time. Almira and her host Emile took me and Vilte to a shopping mall where we met the other students to play bowling. It was my first-time playing bowling, and I became third. After bowling we all went to get hamburgers. While eating we talked about our week and how great it was. After eating we started walking in the mall and I saw the best toy I had ever seen in my life. It was a plushie of Tigger from the cartoon "Winnie the Pooh". I bought it and it might be the best thing I had ever bought. Everyone started leaving but me, Vilte, Aysu, Vyte, Ugne, Almira and Emile decided to go ice skating. It was so much fun. After skating we went to Elif's host Myja's house to hang out and we got home at 22.00. When I got home, I packed my bags. I was sad that I was leaving but I had missed my parents very much.

The next morning, I woke up at 05.20 and we went to the hotel where the busses would take us to the airport. We all said goodbye and cried a little bit. At the airport we saw the Italian students again and took one last picture. After waiting for some time, we finally got on the plane and took off. During the flight Ege put my Tigger toy on my shoulder and slept the whole flight. We all chatted nonstop until the plane landed. When we landed in Istanbul the first thing I did was call my mom and dad. After waiting for a little while our bus came, and we left for Izmir. During the trip our Geography teacher asked us questions about the cities we were passing. We stopped at a restaurant for dinner and ate together. Before leaving we went to a coffee shop and got some coffee. We kept playing games on the bus and after a while the teachers joined us. We had the best time. At 00.07 on Saturday, we finally reached "Narlıdere Atatürk Kültür Merkezi" and met with our parents.

This project is something that I won't ever forget. I met people from around the world and made friends with people I walked past everyday but never stopped to say hi. I learned so much about robotics and coding. I am so grateful to everyone that was involved and made this such a memorable experience. I feel so lucky to be a part of this project and I hope everyone can experience something like this.

Nilsu Gencer

*Radviliškis, May, 2023*