

**PORTUGAL MEETING – Erasmus Diary**  
*CAN ATALIK (TÜRKİYE, İZMİR)*

**October 16th, Monday:**

Monday was the first day of the ERASMUS project. Since we had arrived in Braga on Sunday, we had breakfast at the hotel around 11 in the morning and then walked to school, which is Esprominho. I was surprised when I first saw the school building. It was like a business center with a few shops underneath. When we entered, Portuguese teachers welcomed us with a smile. After a short conversation with the teachers, a few students showed us around the school. This school must be equivalent to vocational high schools in our country. After touring all the classrooms, we went to the classroom where we would have our activities. We went to have lunch since we didn't know exactly when the Italians would arrive that day. Even though the Italians hadn't arrived after lunch, we started the activities. On that day, we taught the students from other countries how to operate a humidity sensor. Betül and I taught this topic to the students from other countries. It was quite enjoyable. The students in my group showed great interest in this activity. At the end of the day, around 4:00 p.m., the activities came to an end. After walking back to the hotel and dropping off unnecessary items, we walked towards the center of Braga. We visited various historical sites there and entered some shops. We saw many old churches. However, most places closed around 6:30 p.m., so we returned to the hotel at around 7:00 p.m. Until midnight, we sat in the same room, played games, and chatted. When midnight came, everyone went to their rooms to sleep.

**October 17th, Tuesday:**

On Tuesday, we had breakfast at around 10, and then we arrived at school at 10:30. Today, we started the activities with a presentation about the education system in Portugal. After the presentation, we had lunch. The food was good. After lunch, we continued with Arduino activities. Each table had a different Arduino task. When we finished a task at one table, we moved to another. While everyone worked with Arduino, they also shared information about their own countries. After the Arduino activities, they took us to the school's hair and hand care workshop. There, they gave us a very relaxing head massage and softened our hands with hand care. The activities for the day ended around 5 p.m. We decided to go to a nearby shopping mall. Since it was raining, we decided to go there with Uber. We visited many shops at the mall. We returned to the hotel at around 8 p.m. and continued chatting in the same room until midnight.

## **October 18th, Wednesday:**

On Wednesday, we had breakfast again at 10. Due to heavy rain, we took an Uber to school. After waiting for 15 minutes at the school, we got on a bus to go to Guimaraes. After a 45-minute journey, we arrived in Guimaraes. First, we visited the castle. The castle looked very impressive. After the castle, we explored the historical city center. There were historical buildings everywhere, and I was very impressed by how well-preserved they looked. After enjoying some mint-flavored ice cream in the center, we took a bus to Minho University. We toured their robotics laboratory, and there were some very interesting robots. After watching a fascinating presentation about what they do there, we returned to Braga. Despite the heavy rain, we decided to go to the city center. Since we were all soaking wet, we returned to the hotel early, and everyone went straight to their rooms.

## **October 19th, Thursday:**

On Thursday, although we were supposed to go to Porto, we couldn't go due to weather conditions. So, we did the things we were planning to do on Friday on Thursday. We walked to school again. Dr. Piet gave us a presentation on how the education system should be. The presentation was quite nice and interesting. After the conference, the closing ceremony took place. Esprominho gave us very nice gifts and a beautiful certificate. After the ceremony, we went to a nearby restaurant for lunch with all the students. There, we tried Francesinha, and it tasted very good. After lunch, we went back to the city center. In the city center, we visited souvenir shops. When evening came, we walked to the place where the farewell dinner would take place. Just a short distance from the restaurant, heavy rain started. So, we took shelter inside. Slowly, everyone arrived, and we had a very nice dinner. After dinner, all the students went to play billiards. I played billiards for the first time in my life, and it was a lot of fun. Around 10 p.m., we took an Uber back to the hotel due to the rain. Everyone went to their rooms to sleep.

## **October 20th, Friday:**

On Friday, we woke up a bit later than usual. We had breakfast around 10:15 and left the hotel at 10:30. The bus that would take us to Porto was waiting for us in front of the school. After all of us got on the bus, it departed 5 minutes later. The bus dropped us off in Porto in front of an old city hall building. We visited historical buildings such as the City Hall, São Bento, Porto Cathedral, and the 1st Luis Bridge. They were all beautiful in their own way. I found it interesting that the top part of the 1st Luis Bridge was shared by pedestrians and trams. They allowed us some free time to have lunch by the Douro River. We crossed over to the Porto side and had a meal at a restaurant there. While we were eating, it suddenly started to rain heavily outside. Fortunately, the rain stopped by the time we finished our meal. After lunch, we gathered near the Vila Nova de Gaia side of the bridge. From there, we crossed back to the Porto side, and we watched two children jump from the bridge into the water. After crossing the bridge, we noticed that it was raining heavily a bit further ahead. So, we waited inside a tunnel just beyond the bus stop where our bus was supposed to arrive. When we saw our bus approaching from the other end of the tunnel, we walked to the stop and returned to Braga by bus. In Braga, after saying goodbye to the Portuguese and Lithuanian students, we sat at a cafe with our Italian friends and had dessert. After the cafe, we decided to walk around Braga. While walking, we entered another souvenir shop. I bought some nice souvenirs for my family and friends. After leaving the shop, we said goodbye in a park and continued to explore the area as the Turkish team. Later, we sat at a restaurant and had our last dinner in Braga. The food was delicious. After dinner, we went back to the hotel and packed our suitcases. I had mixed feelings because the next day, I would return to Turkey. I missed my family, but I didn't want to leave Portugal. It was a wonderful experience for me. If there is another project like this in the future, I would definitely want to participate.

## **Summary:**

The time I spent in Portugal was very enjoyable. At first, I was excited because I didn't know Portugal or my friends from other countries. However, as I got to know everyone and explored Braga, my excitement turned into happiness. Spending time with my friends from Turkey and friends from other countries was very nice and fun. We worked together in robotics workshops and learned about Portuguese culture by exploring the country. When the project ended, it made me sad to say goodbye to my friends and Portugal. I would love to visit Portugal again. I will never forget this trip.

*Can Atalık, Braga, 4/11/2023*