

PORTUGAL MEETING – Erasmus Diary **DURU (TÜRKİYE, İZMİR)**

Monday

Monday was the first day of our Erasmus project. Our hotel was only 10 minutes walking to the school, so we walked. I enjoyed the walk since we were able to explore the city as well. When we arrived at the school, the teacher and students greeted us. We got to know Portuguese teachers and students. They were so nice and kind. They showed us around and explained their school's history. Later on, we had lunch and met with more students from the school. It was fun to get to know and talk with them. After lunch, Lithuanian students and their teacher came as well and we met with them. We talked and got to know each other. Everyone shared their experience with robotics and this Erasmus project. After, we did an Arduino activity in which we made a soil moisture sensor. Working in teams, we could talk and learn from each other. It was both fun and educational. After the first day's activities, we walked to the city center, explored the city, and did some shopping. The city was so beautiful; I loved it! The historical architecture was so pretty. Overall, it was a nice and fun day. I was so happy throughout the day and enjoyed it a lot.

Tuesday

It was a rainy Tuesday morning, and we walked to the school again. When we arrived, other students were playing and teaching card games, so I joined them and I had so much fun. At the beginning of the day, we became into 4-5 groups and did various activities. While we were busy with those activities, a journalist came and interviewed my friend about our Erasmus project. Then she took a picture of our group and it was so cool to see it on the newspaper the next day. Then we played cards again and I learned a new game. It was very interesting. Later on, students from the school Esprominho showed us what they were learning in school. They made us hand massage, and it was so relaxing. My hands felt so soft afterward. Also, they styled our hair! It was really interesting to see their school day cause it's very different from ours. Since it was still raining and we wouldn't be able to explore the city, we students decided to go to the mall. We did some shopping and tried some really interesting food. Then we returned to the hotel. It was a calm and relaxing day.

Wednesday

Wednesday was an interesting day! We went to the Guimaraes in the morning and I learned a lot about the history of Portuguese. We visited the Castelo de Guimaraes and the teachers explained the history to us. The castle was so beautiful and the architecture impressed me. I took a lot of pictures and had an amazing time. The history was so interesting and the city was so pretty. We were chatting, walking around, and exploring a new city and it was amazing. After exploring the city, we had some ice cream and coffee then took the bus to the University of Minho. Honestly, it was an amazing experience. We had a chance to see the university campus and the robotics lab. They explained some of their projects to us and it was so interesting. They show a project in which they made a robot from Star Wars called BB8. They explained how their robot worked, and the engineering behind it. They also explained some other robots but this one interested me the most. I was inspired to see university students working on these projects. After we spent a lot of time at the university, we took the bus and went back to Braga. Later, we decided to go to the city center and explore the city more - which is my favorite activity. Sadly it was raining cats and dogs so we couldn't walk much but I still had a very good time. Then we decided to eat lunch at a restaurant with an amazing view of the center.

Thursday

In the morning, we walked to the school again and then played cards together. Later, Dr. Piet Kommers gave us an amazing and very interesting and educational presentation. After the presentation, we had

our certificates and a closing ceremony. Later on, we went to a restaurant with other students to try a traditional Portuguese dish called Francesinha. I really liked it it was so tasty! Later on, one of my friends wanted to go to the mall - so we did. We didn't spend a lot of time there to go to the city center -which was our favorite place! We walked all day and bought some souvenirs. We also tried the Portuguese dessert Pastéis de Nata from a highly recommended place. I already loved that dessert and the one we ate was so good! Later on, we went to dinner with all of the students and teachers. It was fun to spend time with our friends. Then Portuguese students asked if we wanted to play games. All of us decided to go and play pinball and billiards. It was the last day for Lithuanians because they were returning the next day, so we said goodbye to them. It was the night I had the most fun. Then we went to our hotel and slept.

Friday

It was our last day that we could spend time in the city - so I was kind of sad. However, it was the day to visit Porto - which made me excited and forget about leaving! In the morning, we took a bus to Porto and the bus dropped us off at the center. The teacher accompanied us and showed us the city, we walked to the bridge, and the city had amazing views! I was really really amazed by the city and still am. It was definitely so pretty and I would like to visit Porto again in the future. I took a million photos. Then we had free time to eat lunch. We found the cutest cafe with the most amazing views! It was so relaxing, calm, and just amazing! When it was time to return to Braga, I was sad to leave Porto. Eventually, we returned and it was time to say goodbye to Portuguese students as well. Later on, Italian students recommended an amazing cafe that made various types of Portuguese desserts Pastéis de Nata. Italians and we went there and tried a bunch of different desserts. Honestly, all of them were so good! Then we walked and explored some new places and it's always so fun to do it! We found a cute restaurant to eat lunch and while we were there, there was a university in front of us where a graduation was happening. At night, we went to our hotel, I prepared my suitcase and slept. The next day we had our flight back, so in the morning, we headed straight to the airport.

Summary

I had an amazing time in Portugal which I will never forget. Other than the opportunity to explore a new city, also traveling with my friends and working on a project that interests me was so nice! I got to meet with many students from different countries and learn about their cultures. It was so fun to spend time together. The robotics workshops we did together were also very educational and attracted everyone's attention. I had a great time because everyone worked together. Also, Braga was a beautiful city. The culture, history, and food were all beautiful. I also loved Porto as well. It was a fascinating city. I would love to come back again in the future. I am so thankful to my teachers and friends for this opportunity. I had an amazing, fun, and very exciting time.

Duru İbişaoğlu, Braga, October 2023