

## PORTUGAL MEETING – Erasmus Diary

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### **Monday (16.10.2023):**

It was the first day of Erasmus and I don't know about my friends, but I was pretty excited mostly about the school and about the people. The school was pretty close to our hotel so we walked to the school. The first look at the school I was pretty disappointed because of it looking like an apartment and it did not have a schoolyard (in our country the schools like that are mostly bad). After we got to the inside of the school it was pretty okay. Then Portuguese people showed us around the school. The school was so cool thinking about it being built inside of an apartment like building. I think the best thing about the school was that it was preparing the students for their future life, for the jobs they actually want to do in their future. After that the Portuguese people was very nice to us. After Portuguese showed us the school we got to the one of the top floors which the main ERASMUS Project was there. Italians were not able to catch up to the first day. We talked about the robotics now, the future of robotics, robotics and emotions. After that we split into groups and used Arduino and humidity sensor, which I already knew how to use them but it was okay because I teach the one that did not know about it. After that the job at the school was it for the day so we got time to explore the city, I think the best part of the city was that the old structures was still there really gave it a nice look. And that was mostly it for the first day.

### **Tuesday (17.10.2023):**

We went to the school by walking again. There was Italians this time. In today's activity we split to groups again. The activity was there was some tables and all of them got an Arduino task to do so every group started on different tables and then when we finished one we got to another tab to do another task. It was fun. After the activity there was some type of selfcare activity, firstly the people who want to go there went there while we were upstairs waiting for our turn. When we went downstairs there was 2 things. First one was the hand soft care or something like that, the second one was a type of a hair care thing. At first, I did not want to go any of these because they are not my type of stuff. Whatever I had a feeling that I at least need to try one which ended up being the hand care thing. I regret it, not because of it was bad probably some of my friends liked it but it was just not my type of thing and my hand ended up feeling really oily, so I washed that stuff off. Than that was the end of the job at school that day so we went out. Unlike yesterday, we didn't look at the general of the city we mostly tried shopping. So we got to the Braga Mall which was about 30min walking so we got an uber to get there. We eat there, do some shopping. I was surprisingly able to found real Pokémon cards which I love and the ones in my country are mostly fake so I was very happy. Then we went back to hotel by uber and that was it for this day.

**Wednesday (18.10.2023):**

Today we catch up the bus that is going to Guimaraes. We mostly passed village type of places which gave a break from all the city. After we got down from the bus and walked some we stopped and they started talking about the history of the place and they explained the whole meaning of the Portuguese flag which the thing that really liked about it was that the red part of the flag meant mostly the same thing as our flag did. We went to a castle which still looked very good after all these years. The castle was very nice in inside too. After leaving the castle we got a break for eating some stuff. Than we went to a souvenir shop which I did not bought anything from (some of my friends did by some stuff from there). After that we got to the city center and got an hour to do anything we want. The big church over there was insane and I took photos of it. After the hour we got to the bus and went to the Minho University. At the university we split into two groups and the first group gone first to the room. We waited about half an hour and then we went to the room. It was basicly a place where some students work for competitions about robotics. The thing that got my attention was that nearly all the things they do had artificial intelligence in it. They were working on some insane stuff like football playing robots and an assistant robot. The use of artifical intelligence was pretty insane. Then we went back to Braga. We sit to a restaurant. It was very raining and we got wet so we went back to the hotel as fast as possible.

**Thursday (19.10.2023):**

Today we got to the school by walking again. We waited until the activity starts and then we got to the Dr. Piet's conference about education. It was not boring because he asked questions many times that did not give any time to get bored. He even gave books to the people who gave an answer to their questions. After the conference we our certificates and took a photo that everyone was in it. After that for lunch we went to a restaurant thats near the school with every student. We got Francesinha that the Portuguese students recommended. Two Portuguese students even bet that if most of the people will like it or not. After that we stopped by the hotel then went to the city center. We found a souvenir shop that we like and got some stuff from it. We mostly went to the places we have not gone earlier. When it started getting dark and started raining we went to the restaurant that we were gonna eat our farewell dinner. Dinner went pretty fun. Than all the students went to a place that got games to play like 8 ball pool, punching machine and foosball. It was so fun because everyone was there playing games. At late at night we said goodbye to the Litvianians because they were not gonna be able to come to Porto tomorrow.

### **Friday (20.10.2023):**

We woke up and got to the bus that's going to Porto. When we got there they made a nice little tour of the city. We went to the train station and then a bridge. The structures were like Braga, the old structures was still there and under the bridge there was some houses that was covered in plants. After passing the bridge they gave us some time to explore and eat. We got to the nearest restaurant that got classic food and have a nice view. Then we got back to the meeting point which than we got back to Braga for the last time. At the in front of school we said goodbye to the Portuguese. After that we went to a cafe with Italians which was fun. After the cafe we said goodbye to Italians and then continue to explore the places at the city we did not. That it was getting dark we went back to the hotel and get our suitcases ready because we were gonna go to the airport early at morning. I was happy at that time because I was going back to my country after a week but I was sad because of leaving this very nice city and all the friends back. But I did not thought about it much because everything like this have an end, doesn't it?

### **SUMMARY**

Firstly, it was an awesome experience to get out of the country for the first time. Other than that the culture over there was way more different. Like the first thing we were some sort of scared about was the safety of going out at late night. Why we scared about it was mostly because of our country not having that safety. Other than that the old structures, castles and mostly the old houses being still there even if I don't know that anyone lives there. The people over there were very nice to us. The school was very good comparing to vocational high schools in my country; like nobody would want to go there in my country, they are like a punishment. Being with the students from other countries was really fun. Playing games with them, doing activities while talking only English; it was just something that everyone need to experience. Going out with people from other countries, having fun, exploring the city; these were all the stuff we did which made me miss them when I get back to my country.

*Refik Kürşat Baysak, Braga, October 2023*