

A Trip to Italy

Mostly, we did and learnt a lot of things in an Italian town called Giulianova. Apart from the studies in Giulianova, we also explored other towns and cities in the area. Mostly, we were with other students, sometimes with teachers. In this period, we ate food both from outside, and in the houses of the foreigners. We got on wonderfully with the foreigners, we were almost always together and they were inviting to us. I found many similarities in Italian and Turkish culture, so I didn't feel too much like an outsider there. Of course, there were many differences.

We did a lot of activities in the Marie Curie Science High School, with the majority being about robotics. The activities were a lot more entertaining because of the foreigners around. With the new friends I'd gained in these activities, I never felt lonely or cast out.

It might have been one of the best events in my life. If they asked me "Would you like to go to another country?", I'd say yes before I came back from *this* trip.

Saturday 1 October 2022

We landed in the airport at 4:30 at midnight, although since we came back so early in the day, there was a lot of time until the plane got up. I stayed a bit and played games there.

People started to come in. When everyone was here, we said our last goodbyes to our families and we went to the aircraft stand. After we waited for the plane a bit, it was here. I looked at my ticket and went to my seat. I was both happy and scared, because I was about to ride an airplane for the first time. When the plane started moving, I was very excited, but when the plane got in the air, the excitement turned into fear. The plane was shaking violently, and I started to feel like my brains would blast out of my head. When the airplane captured a stable position, I calmed down a bit.

I turned on my phone and started listening to music. Outside the window, there was a beautiful sight. We landed in Istanbul very quickly, it felt like 5 minutes. The landing was very tough, and I was sure that my whole chest dislocated. Istanbul was very crowded, and I could barely find a place to step. Finally, we had reached the external line. There were very few Turkish-speaking people there. Could you ever get through an airport without being ripped off? Of course not, so I bought water for 33 TL [Turkish liras].

We went to the area where we waited for the Istanbul-Rome plane and we sat there. No one around was speaking Turkish, that was for sure. We waited a lot, but finally, the plane was here. We got inside, and this time it was a calmer takeoff. I had gotten a 1-month trial of youtube premium[sic] to watch videos on the plane. After I watched a couple of videos, we were in the airport. This time, the travel felt longer, like decades. The plane made a very weak landing, I thought that was a good thing but contrarily, it was bad. When we landed in Rome, we waited 40 minutes for a taxi. Although, when it didn't come, we paid two taxis double the amount of money in total. We went to the station with the taxi, and there, we waited 30 more minutes for the bus. From there, we went to Giulianova. The Italians greeted us halfway. They briefly toured us around the city, before they put us in our hotel. There was internet in the hotel, and that was good. When we reached our hotel room, I unpacked all my luggage in the cupboard. I took off my socks, put my phone on the charger, and set my alarms to 7 o'clock. I went to bed and closed my eyes.

Sunday 2 October 2022

I woke up early in the morning and got ready. After going downstairs[?], I started to wait for morning breakfast. When the buffet opened, I ate my food. Nearly everything had pigs in them.¹

Afterwards, when the foreigners came, we were tired, and we sat in the seaside. We played games, including volleyball. After that, we went to a restaurant to eat pizza. There were barely any pizzas without pig meat, so we got one with cow meat instead.¹ They paid for the food. We went towards the hotel, stopped for

a park midway, played games, and rode a swing. Then, we proceeded. We said "goodbye" in Italian

Monday 3 October 2022

In the morning, we had breakfast and got ready for school. I said to myself, "we're out in Italy, school still?". The Italians came to take us by car. At school, I went to my class and sat in my desk. They gave us bags, which had 8 GB USB sticks and bottles in them. We waited for the others. Everyone, when they came, gave presentations about their schools. When all the presentations were over, they asked us about what we expected this week. I just wrote "A good, happy time". Afterwards, we played a game. It was quite simple; we made[sic] two circles, one of them the inner ring (Italians) and the other, the outer ring (other nations). When the music starts playing, the rings would swap sides; and when it stops, whoever's standing face to face would talk about each other. When the recess bell rang, we got out,

and the park place was full of motorbikes. We walked around a bit and got back into the classroom when the bell rang again. It was coding class. Before writing the code, I assembled the robots. During the class, we split up into 3 groups. One of my peers (can't give a name or country) didn't hesitate to try and write the code himself only, and of course, he failed. I said "Can I try?", and of course, he said, "like you could!". I wrote and ran the code he spent thirty minutes on, in two. He said "Of course, I wrote a lot of the code." and got all the compliments: I didn't really care. Whilst he was trying to understand how the robot worked, I was already writing another code for the robot and made it do other things. He didn't know. I coded for his robot not[sic] to work and then helped other groups. He was still trying to run the robot. When the classes ended, the school music group gave a music concert just for us. When their music ended, someone invited it to their house, and we couldn't refuse. We ate food, and they brought us back to the hotel. I slept.

Tuesday 4 October 2022

We had breakfast again in the morning and they brought us from the hotel to school. At school, we wrote code, listened to music, wrote 3D text and used lasers.

After school, they brought us to the train station to visit some cities in the area. We got in the train and started exploring. They showed us churches. We walked in the seaside, went to the music store, and even stopped at a park and played games. After that, we went back, not to the hotel, but—again—to someone else's house. We went back to the hotel and slept. Tuesday was a short day to write, but a long one to be through.

Wednesday 5 October 2022

After doing breakfast again in the morning, they took us from the hotel and brought us to school, but instead of taking lessons there, we instead went to a mountain to hike. Before that, they brought us to a famous German castle and I took photos there. It was very cold there but the mountain was hot. I wish we got out from that cold place. Whatever, on the way up to the mountain, we saw snakes and goats. I like hiking in nature and mountains. I realized I had a fear of heights only when I had reached the peak but it was great other than

that. I took wonderful photos. I was this high above land for the first time (with my feet on nature). Going downwards was a lot harder. None of the goats and snakes were here this time around, this made me very sad. Going down, it was like I was falling, and as if my life was standing on two inches. We got in the bus. It was meltingly hot inside, and I had to take off my long-sleeve shirt. Then, we explored cities around Giulianova, and saw museums. We ate pizza and stuff. When it was late, they brought us to the hotel and we slept.

Thursday 6 October 2022

Thursday, we did breakfast again and they brought us to[sic] the hotel. This time, we went to someplace other than school. This was a university. We did experiments, went to the cafeteria and did many, many other things. From there, they took us to the mall. I got lots of great items there. They brought us to the hotel again. Before staying at the hotel, we had cake at a restaurant outside. They called us back for the school farewell ceremony. We went there. Music was playing, there was food, and we were dancing. Thursday was a very long day, but it was very short to write. After the party, everyone went to a bar. Except for me and teachers: I'm only thirteen. I went to the hotel and laid down. When the others came, I fell asleep.

Friday 7 October 2022

We had to wake up very early in the morning because we were going to Rome. The foreigners picked us up from the hotel and put us in front of the school—the destination of the bus. The travel had taken so long. The foreigners came to Rome with us together. From there, they took us to our destination, the center. We started touring about Rome. There were very old buildings around, though a lot of them had their parts almost entirely replaced every year. They weren't very old but they were very tall, they could collapse in an earthquake any moment. Now, I'll stop defaming Rome... It had great fountains. Yes, I only liked the fountains, other structures didn't interest me a lot. I bought souvenirs, and they were all very good. The food was okay, but the pizza was amazing; their ice-creams were massive, the freeze pops were too. I ate a very good pizza. Then, we left the city center. We said our last goodbyes to the foreigners. We took the road to the guest house [?]. The house was very large, like an apartment. I was going to sleep in one of the most comfortable beds. We drank tea before going to sleep.

Saturday 8 October 2022

It was our last day at Italy. I was very happy because I was both going to see my family and return to Izmir. I woke up with excitement, and there were tears of sadness in everybody's face because we were leaving Italy. I drank a good glass of tea and the man who would bring us to the airport had arrived. We got in the car, got through security at the airport and went to the Rome-Istanbul section in international arrivals. Almost everyone there was Turkish. It had been a long time since I'd seen a Turk (that's 1 week, seems I exaggerated that a bit). The plane arrived. I got inside and the first thing I heard was "Hoş geldiniz" [t.n. "Welcome" in Turkish]. It had been a long time since I'd heard that (I don't hear it much in Turkey anyway ☹️) After I heard that word, I was very excited, and I sat. The plane was taking off. Again, I felt like my head was about to blow up, but I didn't care, because the pilot spoke Turkish too 😊. I don't know how fast time went, but we were already in Istanbul. I was about to get something from Istanbul, but after I saw the prices and the fact that they were sold in euros, I said to myself, "you know what, I'm not even hungry!", and I got away from there as fast as I could. We went to the aircraft stand. We waited for the plane to Izmir and it came. I was very happy, because I was going to see my family. I waited for the plane in joy. It was like we teleported, since it felt like after something like 15 minutes, we were in Izmir. I started running from the plane's door. I was very happy when I saw my family. From the airport, we went to the subway. Here, the subway was much better than that of Italy... because Italy had no subways. Before going home, I ate çiğ köfte and of course, ayran, since Italy didn't have that either. I went home, slept a very long sleep in my own bed.

October, 2022, Yusuf İbrahim ESMER