

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

From March 8 to 12, we hosted the Erasmus exchange, which was the 3rd student exchange in our project. We were happy that students, teachers and debate experts from all four countries, who are with us in the project, came to us.

From an organizational point of view, being the host of 43 foreign people is quite a big deal, and since we were well aware of this, we started preparing for it already in the month of December. Of course, we wanted to show ourselves in the best light and we didn't want to leave anything to chance. Our task was to organize afternoon activities, i.e. those related to socializing between us, getting to know places, customs and cuisine. We organized the afternoon activities in such a way that we filled the time until the evening. In this short time, we wanted to show as much as possible and include as many local producers as possible, who have been very supportive. The goal of this exchange was that during the debate workshops, which took place on Thursday and Friday mornings at our school, they would also get to know the place Limbuš and the city of Maribor and have fun while doing so. We approached the matter in such a way that we always had teenagers in mind and what was interesting to them. That's why we set up every day with activities that will be remembered. On the first day, they walked around the city of Maribor, where they ate local ice cream, tried making clay products, and ended with the dinner at the local restaurant Vnukec from Limbuš, where they tasted some traditional Slovenian food. The next day we went to Pohorje, where we held an international snowman-making competition, which was very successful. After that, we went to Limbuš, where we went to the chocolate village and Teta Frida chocolate shop, where we also made our own chocolates during the tasting. We ended the evening with a final programme where each country presented itself in its own language with a song or dance. We introduced ourselves to the hosts with our dance - folklore, the students played the accordion and also sang. At the end, we had a Slovenian dinner with traditional dishes from all over Slovenia. And since all good things come to an end, we also said goodbye at the farewell party and ended the evening with good memories.

The exchange went very well and we all had a great time. Everything went as we imagined. We achieved all the set goals - both debating and leisure. Friendships were formed and probably, at least some, will remain. As a school, we are very proud to have been successful as hosts, especially since this is our first Erasmus project.

Monika Biderman, Slovenia

On 8-12th March, Moletai Gymnasium students' debating team guided by the teachers Valentina and Danguole participated in the Erasmus+ KA2 international project "Debating as a New Approach to Learning" mobility in Limbuš School, Maribor, where to debaters from Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Finland arrived as well.

The mobility activities started with team presentations. The countries, hometowns, schools, traditions and nature were presented. That was followed by some debate training activities, workshops, games for both students and teachers. After the lunch break, all the project participants went on a guided tour to Maribor Old Town and took part in a clay moulding activity, where each person created a souvenir.

The next day, the project teams continued the debate activities in Limbuš School, where both the students and teachers developed the debating practice, deepened their debate knowledge and built strong relationships with their new friends. Later, the participants were taken by cable cars to the top of Mount Pohorje, where they admired the Slovenian countryside and competed with other teams to build the most beautiful snowman. After spending a lot of time in the fresh air, we went to the Teta Frida Chocolate Factory, where not only did we learn many new things

about the origin, production and other secrets of chocolate, but we also had the opportunity to make it by ourselves. We ended a long and eventful day where we started - at Limbuš school, where we showed how to dance the Lithuanian folk dance "Gransveras" and watched performances of other countries. The second day activities ended with tasting traditional Slovenian dishes and dancing to disco music.

The last day of the project mobility was spent at the 21st International Debating Tournament in Ljutomer Gymnasium, where debating teams from Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Qatar, Slovakia, Slovenia and the USA competed. The students and teachers had the opportunity to meet some of the European leading debate judges and get useful advice. After the meeting, we watched the semi-final debates, which left a great impression. Before the final, we had a break during which we visited the most famous places in Ljutomer: the horse-riding stables, the park and the old Town. The most memorable experience of the day for all the participants was to watch the final debate between the Italian and Chinese teams. After a tough battle, the Chinese team was announced the winner of the international debate tournament. The debaters demonstrated the highest level of debating skills and impressed both the judges and the audience. There was a lot to learn from.

The time spent together was very useful, full of unforgettable impressions, new experiences and fun interactions. The debaters improved their English and public speaking as well as argumentation, communication and teamwork skills. All the participants also learnt about the culture, traditions and customs of the partner countries.

Danguole Dirmiene and Valentina Zapolskiene, Lithuanian teachers

The third student mobility of the Erasmus+ project "*Debating as a New Approach to Learning*" has been a complete success. An unforgettable and unbeatable experience perfectly organized by Jelka and Monika, who welcomed us to the Rada Robiča School in Limbuš.

Our first day was spent travelling which was quite tiring, but it was an entertaining experience for the students and we had a lot of fun. We arrived at the hotel at night feeling exhausted, but very happy to meet with other teachers and students who came from Finland, Italy, and Lithuania.

During the following days, we attended workshops in which the students put their debate skills into practice, such as argumentation, critical thinking, and reasoning. The workshops also helped them to practice their English while at the same time generating and implementing useful activities for the project's writing team.

We visited the beautiful city of Maribor and participated in workshops where our students created great memories. They could design their own chocolate tablets and souvenirs made of ceramics from Slovenia. The students thoroughly enjoyed these unexpected activities. We also had the opportunity to try traditional Slovenian food every night at a different restaurant.

On the last day, we had a farewell party at the school that hosted us. The party was filled with delicious food, music, and students who were eager to dance and have fun.

The attention from the teachers who hosted us was excellent, a result of great preparation work that included a warm welcome from both the students and teachers.

Overall, it was a trip filled with great experiences shared with teachers and students from various parts of Europe. We fell in love with Slovenia and would love to visit again.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity provided by this Erasmus project. It is a valuable experience that allowed us to connect with people from

different countries and cultures, improve our teaching and language skills, and create unforgettable memories.

Daniel Cayuela, Javier Solano, Marina Conesa, Juan Carlos López, Spanish teachers

We had such a lovely time and learned so much about debating and Slovenia. The hosts Jelka and Monica were completely dedicated to making sure we were learning about Slovenia and enjoying every moment. My debate students came back very enthusiastic and now are very active participants in the debate club. They are all very envious of those going to Italy in September.

Lissy Clement, Finnish teacher

Elena: I'm the Italian school ITE Tosi coordinator of the project and this was my forth mobility. I'm really interested in debate and think it's such a powerful way to improve the skills of my students like critical thinking and the promotion of a new, self-centred way to improve English.

Andrea and Stefania: we work all together with Elena in our school as all the three of us are debate coaches and judges in the national tournaments. We also loved working together to bring our experience and our ideas in the international project.

The Slovenian coordinators **Jelka and Monika** did an incredible job to make us feeling welcomed and part of the lovely "Slovenian family ". Every moment of the visit was accurately prepared and lots of interesting activities were organized for the students too. Mainly, they had the opportunity to practice exercises and debating techniques with their international partners and, of course, ... they had to speak in English all the time!

Looking forward to seeing and working with you in September in Italy, dear partners!

Elena Tornaghi, Andrea Radice, Stefania Savoia, Italian teachers