

Mobility in Bulgaria - part of the Erasmus+ KA229 Project - Students Actively Learning Entrepreneurial Skills - an expected and successful experience despite the pandemic

After a delay of one year, the first mobility of the Erasmus+ KA 229 project for students – *Students Actively Learning Entrepreneurial Skills* (Reference No. 2020-1-BE02-KA229-074685_2) took place under extremely difficult conditions due to the pandemic. The host school, partner in the project, Professionalna Gimnaziya po Transport, from Bulgaria prepared this mobility and the specific activities provided in the project – respecting all the rules imposed by the pandemic and ensuring a suitable learning climate for all participants – students and teachers from the partner countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania and Turkey (unfortunately due to existing restrictions the students from Turkey could not be physically present, they joined some activities in online format).

Professionalna Gimnaziya po Transport School is located in Razlog, Bulgaria and for five days from 25th to 29th October 2021 it was the host for the four partner schools mentioned above. Students from these five schools, accompanied by their teachers, carried out several activities in order to achieve **the overall goal** of the project to develop cooperation through the exchange of ideas, opinions and perspectives and the generation of business ideas relevant to local economies. This project was created with the contribution of all partners and all activities and responsibilities were agreed in advance. Therefore, we have decided on a number of common and specific tasks that are carried out according to the experience and expertise of each partner.

As this was the first mobility of the project all participants made presentations about their school and their country, focusing on the economy and for the first meeting on agriculture and identifying business ideas in this field. The aim was for the participating students to get to know each other, understand the local economy, visit local businesses and learn about the challenges they face and the solutions identified to overcome these challenges.

Being in the red zone for participation in the mobility in Bulgaria, the Romanian team (made up of students Gabriela Ciobanu, Adina Bîlha, Andra Bejan, Iulian Paraschiv, Codrin Păun, Leonard Rotaru, Denis Fechet, accompanied by teachers Aissa Neculăeș, Claudia Petrilă, Ciprian Neculăeș and Iulian Ghercă) had to have not only a vaccination and a green certificate but also a negative PCR test, which is valid for 72 hours. All these restrictions related to the pandemic made it difficult to prepare and carry out the mobility, but in the end it went very well, without events and succeeded in achieving its goal.

On the first day we carried out several activities aimed at getting to know each other, all the partners, their countries and institutions, and the activities we were going to carry out together during the next week:

- Participation in the welcome ceremony
- Conducting the school tour
- Presentations of partner schools
- Presentation of the detailed programme of the week

In the following days, the learning activities provided in the project were carried out and were coupled with cultural visits and some study visits to local businesses in the field of agro-tourism.

The students, grouped in mixed teams (made up of students from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Belgium and Romania) worked in workshops to create a specific logo, representative of each group of participating students. After these activities the students presented the final product and they also chose the best/representative logo.

In another activity, also held in the host school, the students formed mixed groups and analysed some specific problems of the Bulgarian economy/agriculture and presented solutions to these problems. They made interesting presentations on these solutions, thought of some business ideas/business plans in the field of agriculture, identified sources of financing and were able to make comparisons between the economies of the project countries.

Each solution/presentation was evaluated by a jury of teachers participating in the project. We would like to mention that our students did very well, actively participated in all the activities and managed to be awarded in this competition.

All the specific entrepreneurship activities provided in the programme and carried out in this first mobility were coupled with study visits to an agri-pension, a trout farm, a horse riding centre, etc., as well as cultural visits to a museum, a ski resort, tourist attractions in the country's capital, etc. These activities were a complex, intense and beneficial experience for the participating students.

Certainly the objectives proposed and undertaken in this project were fully achieved and provided the pupils with unique learning and development opportunities.

The particular objectives pursued were:

1. To enable participants to meet new cultures and develop their intercultural competence;
2. To develop the entrepreneurial mindset of the students, thus providing the context for the development of joint-venture ideas, improving the transition to the business world;
3. To facilitate students' professional development, critical and analytical thinking, communication, creativity, etc.;
4. To increase students' self-confidence in foreign learning contexts and develop language skills in concrete contexts;
5. To improve the European dimension of the school through cooperation with other schools; thus achieving the transfer of good practice from European level.

We consider this first mobility a success in terms of project management, organisation and especially in terms of learning and experience gained by the students. We are looking forward to the next mobility which will take place in March 2022 in Romania where we expect about 24 students and 8 teachers from the partner countries to participate.



