

Impressions of Students Participating in Mobility in Bulgaria

Leonard Gabriel Rotaru, 12th A grade

Ever since I was given the opportunity to participate, I've been a little reluctant about what was going to happen. There were plenty of times when I wanted to give up and find reasons to avoid it. The experience I had during my visit in the first mobility of the Erasmus+ project was one that you can only feel if you participate.

In my opinion, when you say Bulgaria you are only assimilating what already exists in that country, not what you might discover. By participating in the first mobility I was going to discover not only places but also different people.

Staying in another country, expectations were low, until both the activities and the contact with other students from other countries made me look at the situation from a different perspective. From this I had only to learn. Apart from the amazing scenery, I felt at home from the moment I entered the school. The bread and hospitality of the foreign students was not missing from the entrance door. One of the moments I took part in, the traditional Bulgarian dance, made me find many similarities between Romania and Bulgaria, especially the joy with which people carried on the tradition. The folk costumes, which are also kept with sanctity, made me believe that each country has something special, which only has to be discovered to be amazed. In a word, culture means life all over the world. Other activities I took part in, such as visiting Mount Golak, horseback riding, visiting the town of Bansko and discovering other wonderful sights, but also the Holy Trinity Church, only made the experience in Bulgaria one of the most wonderful experiences. With the other students, we still talk on social media and we hope to meet again one day.

The week went by very quickly and I didn't realise when it was over, leaving wishing to participate in more of these exchanges. I made new friends, did what I little thought I would end up doing, gained experience, and did it together with nice people.

Iulian Denis Paraschiv, 12th A grade

For me, the experience of the Erasmus + project in Bulgaria was a point of formation for a vision of life and a re-encounter with myself. Meeting students from other countries, having the

chance to talk to them, to see how a different educational system works, is more than just an experience, it is an emotional and mental training. I had the chance to participate in various school activities, to present my ideas, to work in a team and even to win a prize!

I visited places that gave me new motivation and encouraged me to move on and never give up. I shared ideas with both students and teachers from the Czech Republic, Belgium, and Bulgaria. Each day came with a new challenge and a new lesson. When I had no reason to smile, I had this experience that I may not have shown much on the outside, but I enjoyed it wholeheartedly. But most importantly, we were able to make friends with new people, create memories, and tell stories to each other. More than an experience, it was a life lesson and a lesson for the future. Thank you for giving me this chance and I hope to see you all one day, talking, learning and travelling to other places and experiences!

Irinel Codrin Păun, 12th A grade

A few weeks ago my best adventure was about to begin - I was going to a foreign country alone where the only people I knew were my teachers and other students.

Before I arrived in Bulgaria, there were times when I thought I wouldn't make it, that I wasn't good enough to make myself fully understood by the students in the other countries. Of course, these things were only in my mind. Most of the time, we fall into the trap of the mind, we think that we are not good enough, that we don't deserve a certain thing, that it wasn't for us anyway and so we end up staying in our comfort zone all our lives, never knowing what is really inside us.

The most important conversation you will have in your life is the one you have with yourself.

Anyway, I deviated a bit, but who knows, maybe I'll come back to the things I wrote above on another occasion. In this mobility I can say that I knew better the other teenagers as well as the teachers, and at the same time I can say that I was pleasantly surprised by each one of them, because we were united like a family. From my point of view, the organisation of the activities in Bulgaria was not exceptional, but if I had to say one thing I learned in this project is that we should appreciate more those who try to make us feel better, to feel "at home". The students and teachers from the other countries were very friendly and open-minded; we also saw different perspectives than the ones we knew. I look forward to seeing you all again!

This was my experience in Bulgaria.

P.S: I'm looking forward to the next one!

Andra Tereza Bejan, 12th B grade

Mobility in Bulgaria was an unforgettable exchange of experiences. We were greeted with great warmth and the fear of not being able to communicate with them passed quickly, given the fact that it was my second experience where I had to speak English most of the time, as I had the same level of language skills as my other colleagues.

The team activities we did gave each of us the opportunity to get to know each other better with those from the participating countries, for example, creating a logo, the project on a given topic, but even those outside the school – horse riding, the visit of some tourist objectives, the “little party” that we organized.

The company of teachers who came with us in mobility was a wonderful one; they helped us in times of difficulty or supported us in times when we were unsure of ourselves.

I am very happy that I did not miss this experience and I look forward to another one as well!

Adina Bîlha, 12th B grade

For me, the Erasmus+ “SALES” mobility in Bulgaria was a constructive experience in many ways. It was a very good opportunity to practice my English language, and along with that, I made new friends from different countries and shared ideas and personal experiences. The activities at the school were also interesting as we had to do group projects with teammates from all the countries involved in the project.

On the first day, I met Eliza, a student of the school in Razlog. During the week we knew each other better. She was also my “tour guide”, both in Razlog, a town in the Pirin Mountains, where we were staying, and in Bansko, a town known for its ski resorts, and Sofia, the country's capital, where the architecture was quite similar to that in Romania.

In addition to interacting with others, culture and natural surroundings, we also had a nice connection with the colleagues and teachers who took care of us. Communication, understanding and trust were not lacking and I think that was a plus for our group.

As a result of this project, I felt that I gained new and enjoyable experiences that will help me in the future, and I keep in touch with the friends I have made from other countries through social media.

Gabriela Ciobanu, 12th B grade

I chose to participate in the Erasmus+ mobility because I wanted to have a new life experience, to travel, to make new friends and also to enrich my knowledge, such as the new cultures of the countries I came into contact with. I think that so far this experience has gone the way I expected: new cultures to discover, new friendships and a tremendous enrichment of my vocabulary (as I try to pick up new words in different languages “on the go”).

We arrived in Bulgaria, in Razlog, on 24th October. What surprised me immediately was that the people were very welcoming and friendly. Whenever I had a problem understanding the language or had questions about places or moving from one place to another, each time I was explained patiently and with understanding. I visited the school which was not very big, but still you could easily get lost; a school that impressed me by the simple fact that in the room where geography was taught, on the back wall, a huge map of the world was drawn. Together with students from the other countries - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Belgium - we visited the beautiful surroundings of Razlog and climbed the Golak Mountain with a tower on top, from where we could see the wonderful view of the whole city. We visited various museums that revealed a culture similar to that of the Romanians. At one of them we were greeted with “banitsa”, which I could liken to a simple doughnut made by grandma. The ladies at this museum taught us how to roll out the dough and how to make bracelets.

We participated in different group activities where we could develop our skills and practice our English language, of course, just like every day. On the last day we also visited Sofia, the capital city. The city has a mix of culture, history, art, music scene and the settlement is at the foot of Vitosha Mountain. We visited St. *Aleksandar Nevsky* Cathedral, the city's popular building, which is one of the largest Orthodox churches.

I would like everyone to enjoy such an experience, because indeed this Erasmus+ project manages to make you combine maturity with the appreciation of new friendships, and at the same time it succeeds in making you cherish every moment more!

Denis Fechet, 12th B grade

Through this mobility I have created connections with people from very different cultures, which will surely help me in the future. The activities of the “SALES” project were clear and very interesting, testing our skills, some of which were real challenges that we successfully overcame. The other participants proved to be very good colleagues, learning new, attractive things, as well as elements of the culture of the participating countries, which created a very interesting connection that can hardly be described.

The educational activities were complemented by some fun activities, such as cultural visits, meals taken together, and even a horse riding activity. A beautiful moment was the cultural evening, when we shared some traditions, dances and songs specific to each country, which brought us closer and through which we realized the differences within some cultures, and the existence of unexpected similarities was what I thought the most interesting.

If I was left with something from this project, I can say that it was one of the most beautiful opportunities I benefited from, harmoniously combining the relaxation activities with the educational ones.