

Experience report :
Individual student exchange with Erasmus +

Name	Liza
Age at the time of the stay	17 years old
Hometown, State	Hennebont, France
Host town, State	Lahr, Germany
Period of stay	2 months (from 17/09/20 to 18/11/20)
Links (blog and/or project website)	https://twinspace.etwinning.net/78360/home

Summary

- I. Who am I?
- II. Why did I want to go to Germany with Erasmus +?
- III. How did I prepare my long-term mobility?
- IV. My host family.
- V. My new school.
- VI. How did I communicate with other people?
- VII. My experiences.
- VIII. The association “Freundeskreis Flüchtlinge Lahr” for immigrants.
- IX. My conclusion.

I. Who am I?

My name is Liza, I am 17 years old and I live in Hennebont, in France. I'm a year 12 student and I study at the school "Victor Hugo" in Hennebont. My special subjects schooling are Mathematics, Science and Biology. I spent my long-term mobility in Lahr, Germany. During my stay, I lived with a host family. I also went to the school IBG in Lahr where I studied Biology, I.T., English, Sport and French.

II. Why did I want to go to Germany with Erasmus +?

By going to Germany, I wanted to discover the German culture and language. In fact, before my stay in Germany, I couldn't say a word in German and so I hoped to learn how to speak German a little bit. Moreover, Germany is a country that interests me a lot and I think that when you want to discover a country the best way to do this is with Erasmus +. Indeed, here you are directly immersed into the German culture because you live with your German host family and you go to German school whereas when you just take a trip to Germany for only one or two weeks you don't really discover the German culture. I also wanted to do this long-term mobility because it is the opportunity to meet new people.

III. How did I prepare my long-term mobility?

To prepare my stay in Germany, I had to do a lot of different things. First, I had to fill out paperwork which is not really a funny part. I had different forms to complete about my health, my placement in a host family, my application for the long-term mobility... All these documents were to be completed in French and in English too. I also had to collect documents such as the European health insurance card, an authorization to leave the territory and a "Civil liability" insurance. Now let's talk about a funnier part: my research about my host country and host town. I did a Power Point presentation to learn more about Germany and Lahr. I searched information about the history, the economy, the demography, the cultural heritage, the politics and of course about immigration. It was very interesting to learn more about that and to have an overview of Germany and Lahr. To prepare my stay, I also worked during two months on Babbel to improve my English. If I couldn't speak German, I wanted at least to be able to speak fluently English. Finally, before going to Germany, I had to prepare an essential thing: my suitcase. I took a lot of clothes because my stay lasted two months. I also took sheets and a sorter for my courses in Germany and I took course books in French. I was careful to take a notebook with me in order to record all the activities, outings and my impressions during my long-term mobility. Of course, I took all the essential papers like my European health insurance card, my authorization to leave the territory... I am really proud because when I arrived in Germany, I realized that I hadn't forgotten anything! In fact, if we prepare everything in advance, we are sure not to forget anything.

IV. My host family.

I first met my correspondent in July. Her name is Lola and she sent me a message on Instagram to tell me that her family was going to welcome me during my stay in Germany. I have to confess that talking to her really reassured me because I was a little stressed about entering a family I don't know. I had already guessed when I talked to Lola by messages that she is a lovely person but the fact is that she is even more so in real life! In addition, she learns French at school so we could talk French together! So, before my departure for Germany, I went shopping with my dad to buy gifts for my host family. I really wanted to buy things which are typically Britton because it is the region where I live. Therefore, I bought a bottle of cider which is an alcohol tasted apple juice. I also bought Britton biscuits, a Britton cake, a jar of salted butter caramel and a Britton bowl in which we usually drink cider. Then, I packed my suitcase and I took the train to join Germany and my host family. Lola, her mother and her sister came to greet me at the station and it was very good to finally meet Lola in real. After that I left my luggage in my new room which is much bigger than the one I have in France and Lola, her sisters and I went by bike to an ice-cream shop where Lola usually works. Afterwards, we went back home and we ate pizzas with Lola's parents. I can say I have been really well welcomed by Lola's family! The rest of my stay with my host family was as magical as the first day!

V. My new school.

The day after I arrived in Germany was my first day in my new school: IBG Lahr. During my first day at school Lola showed me around the building and then I met Mrs. Hornstein who is one of the teachers who managed the Erasmus + project. She gave me my new timetable and she lent me a computer to work with. As I have said before, I studied Biology, I.T., English, Sport and French. So, after my meeting with Mrs. Hornstein, I went directly to my English class where I found Lola. I did a presentation in English in front of the whole class to present myself and my school in France. I was really stressed about doing a presentation in front of people I don't know at all but it's all gone really well and everyone was very kind with me. Of course, as I don't speak German, the lessons were a little bit complicated to understand but thanks to Lola and her friends I was able to take the courses by understanding the essentials. During my two months in Lahr, I had to do the homework which were given to me in my new school but I also had to catch my lessons of my French school. Sometimes it was tough to deal with that but most of the time I was able to organize myself well. During my time there, I noticed few differences between my new school in Lahr and my school in France. The major difference is school schedules. In France, I start at 8 AM, the class finishes at 6 PM and I have a 2-hour lunch break, whereas in Germany, I started at 7.45 AM, the class ended at 3 PM but I had only half an hour to eat. It was very difficult for me to eat in such a short time because I am used to take my time to eat. Another difference is the fact that teachers in Germany seem closer to students and less strict. A last different point between the two schools is that there is no canteen while in France almost all the students eat at the school cafeteria.

VI. How did I communicate with other people?

As I have said before I couldn't speak German so I had to adapt myself. Fortunately, Lola speaks French very well therefore it was really easy to communicate with her. But not everyone studies French at school or is able to speak French, then I spoke English with people most of the time. With Lola's friends and family for example, I spoke English. It was really great for me because it allowed me to improve my English. However, even if I couldn't speak German, I wanted to learn a few words. So, Lola and her friends helped me to learn this language firstly and secondly, I had German lessons with students from the Erasmus group of my new school. Once a week, I had a German lesson with two people of the Erasmus group. It was really interesting and so that I could talk German a little bit. But it was also the occasion to spend time and to discuss and discover people that I didn't know! I truly loved German courses!

VII. My experiences.

Now, let's talk about the funniest part: my experiences. What did I do during these two months in another country? The answer is: a lot of things! Indeed, during my long-term mobility I had the opportunity to experience new things thanks to Lola. For example, I have ridden a scooter for the first time, it was incredible! I have also tasted a lot of specialties like the Currywurst, the Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte, the Bretzel, the Spätzle, the Schnitzel, the Flammenkuchen... I also went to a typical German party which is called the Oktoberfest. It was very fun and Lola and I wore a dirndl which is a traditional German dress. Every Sunday, we went with Lola and her sister to stables to take care of the horses, and I could also ride a horse through the vineyards! Thanks to Lola, every day was full of fun and adventure! I discovered the region and different cities such as Fribourg and Offenburg, and I also went to Bavaria during the holidays. My most beautiful experience is when I had a hike in the Black Forest with Lola's family. We climbed rocks and we drank Schnaps, it was really entertaining! I had a lot of other amazing experiences like the day I went to Europa Park, all the picnic I did near lakes or vineyards and also the parties with Lola's friends! With all the things I did, I didn't have time to feel homesick and I haven't seen the two months go.

VIII. The association "Freundeskreis Flüchtlinge Lahr" for immigrants.

During my stay in Germany, I also went to an association which helps refugees to integrate the society. This association is named Freundeskreis Flüchtlinge Lahr and I went there once a week. I attended to literacy courses given by Mrs. Bayer who is French. So, every Monday, I went to the association in the city center of Lahr at 2 PM. From 2 PM to 3 PM takes place the literacy course for a blind person. It was really interesting to see how a blind person

can learn the alphabet and write with the Braille alphabet. Mrs. Bayer made little cards and each card represents a letter of the alphabet written in Braille. To learn the alphabet, the blind person had to write or read a sentence with the cards. Mrs. Bayer told me about his very moving past and how he became blind wanting to flee Syria. He's planning to train to become a masseur and I really wish him success because he is a very nice person. Then, from 3 PM to 4 PM takes place another literacy course. Mrs. Bayer is always very invested in her work and I think that refugees really appreciate having such a patient and pedagogical teacher. What I preferred during my time in the association is meeting the refugees and discovering their past because, even if they don't know the German alphabet, they have a cultural background a thousand times higher than ours.

IX. My conclusion.

As a conclusion, I would say that my long-term mobility is a truly incredible experience that I will never forget. If I was offered to go two months to a foreign country again, I would say yes without any hesitation. I learnt so many things about myself and about the others. For example, I feel like I am more confident and independent, my English is better and now I can speak a little bit German! It is a life-changing experience! Of course, I will miss my host family, particularly Lola who has always been there for me and has made these two months in Germany a real dream. I'll always be grateful to her. I will miss the school, the breathtaking landscapes, the horses... I will miss each second that I spent there. I hope that Lola can come to Brittany next year because I really want to see her again and show her my region. I would never have hoped to meet such a wonderful person as Lola. And if you who read this text, you hesitate to embark on the Erasmus + adventure, don't wait any longer because I can assure you that you will spend one of the most beautiful moments of your life! I know it may sound scary to go alone in a foreign country but if you are organized and above all very motivated to discover a new country then you shouldn't be afraid.

Thank you very much for reading my report, I hoped you enjoyed discovering my long-term mobility in Lahr. I wish you to live as beautiful experiences as what I have experienced.

Liza

My long-term mobility in a few pictures



This picture was taken the day I arrived in Germany. With Lola and her sisters, we went to the ice-cream shop where Lola works.



Every week, with Lola and her sister, we went to the stables to take care of the horses. This picture was taken during a horse ride in the vineyards.



This picture was taken during my first week in Lahr. I went to the city center of Lahr with Lola and a friend of her and for the first time in my life I ate Currywurst.



On this picture, you can see Lola and I wearing dirndl for the Oktoberfest.



This picture was taken during the Erasmus days with the whole Erasmus group of the German school.



Here is a picture of Lola and I which was taken when we went to Fribourg.