

A trip to Romania

In March, Lixa Secondary School participated in an Erasmus program in Romania, a one-week trip. Four brave, committed and ambitious students were selected to participate in this life opportunity.

I, Henrique Marinho, was one of the luckiest ones who was selected. Nothing can describe the moment when I received a message saying, "Congratulations!". At first I even thought someone had made a mistake on my birthday. Only when I opened the site *geopalavras* and saw my name at the top of the table did I realize that I was one of them.

What struck me the most was when I arrived school Monday morning and told my closest friends. None of them seemed to have a change of expression. *"We already knew that you would, you left the interview so confident that it did not surprise us."* I was out of reaction, I did not even know how to interpret that comment, but I was too happy anyway to take it seriously.

Days passed by, but the trip always seemed far away, not even the work necessary for our activities in Romania seemed to approximate it. I only fell on me when I was saying goodbye to my parents and brother at the airport.

Until that moment I had already imagined all sorts of possibilities: *"What if I go there and won't like the house or the people?", "If I feel bad and want to go home, I'll have to put up with the rest of the week until I can ..."*

Even though it did not seem like it, I started to think about the worst- was it what I really wanted to do? - Then I remembered that I was not going completely into the unknown. I had already had some conversations with Alexandru Popa, the boy who was going to welcome me during that week. In all the conversations I had with him, not once did I think that I would not like my reception, only then I could calm down and think better of what I was about to do.

This trip was really a golden opportunity. I would certainly feel good, I would feel comfortable and I would learn and have fun as much as possible.

And so it was! When I arrived in Romania, after a fantastic visit to Madrid, I started to get nervous again. The first night was very strange, I did not know the place, I did not know

what to do or what to say and I did not feel comfortable talking neither to Alexandru nor to Eros, the student from Italy who also stayed at Alexandru's house.

The rest of the week, however, could not have gone any better, full of activities to get closer and have fun. I was able to integrate well with the other students, both with those from Romania, and with the other countries participating in the program: Italy, France, Cyprus and Hungary. Of course I felt a greater affinity with certain people, especially with the Romanian and Italian students.

The family I stayed with was simply flawless. They were Always worried about my well-being, they even bothered to cook some typical dishes for me. Although they looked different, they were really delicious. One of the moments that struck me the most was when Alexandru's mom told me she saw me as a son.

What I liked the most were undoubtedly the parties that we did, both the dinner in Alexandru's house with all the Erasmus students, and the party on the last night.

I can say without fear that it was an unforgettable week, something that will really remain in my memory as one of the best moments of my life.

This experience has helped me to grow as a person, especially at the cultural level. I think it was an unparalleled experience. I cannot wait to repeat it at the university and above all, I cannot wait for the Erasmus students to come to Portugal. It will be something extraordinary.

I leave here a big thank-you to the teachers and students who gave me this opportunity. And here is a tip: if there is something you want to do in life, it is undoubtedly an Erasmus program.

Henrique Marinho