

My Journal – Scordia November 2018

Sunday:

We left our small Mediterranean island of Malta, heading towards Sicily, the largest island in this sea. This early morning flight took less than one hour. Upon arrival at the Catania airport of Fontanarossa, the driver who was to take care of our transfer to Scordia was waiting for us at the arrival area of the airport. During the transfer to our destination, we passed through the outskirts of Fontanarossa and close to Lago di Lentini; a lake, something which we do not have on our island.

The minibus arrived at the school in Scordia and we were greeted by the Italian Coordinator of the project Mr Salvo. Later in the morning we went with our school's teachers Ms Shanon, Ms Joslin and Ms Josette to orientate ourselves with the picturesque and quite Sicilian village of Scordia. At two in the afternoon, we met our host families and headed towards their houses. Their houses had slanted tiled roofs, something new for us to see, as our houses have flat roofs. These houses were to be our homes for the next five days.

Monday:

We arrived at the school at nine in the morning, accompanied by our host families. During this first meeting, we had a very nice introduction with general knowledge about Sicily. At ten o'clock we had our ice-breaking session with the other students participating in the Erasmus Project – Fit for the European Job Market through Application, Training and Internships,

coming from Portugal, Germany and Sicily (Italy). We had our dinner with the host families and passed most of the evening walking around the village.

Tuesday:

After breakfast, our host families accompanied us to school. We departed at ten o'clock, heading towards Mount Etna, an active volcano about seventy kilometres from Scordia. This was an amazing experience for all of us because we had never been on a mountain or a volcano. For most of us, seeing snow falling to the ground, touching and playing with snow was another first experience, maybe the best, unforgettable and coldest experience during this visit. We are very thankful to our teachers who bought us a cup of hot chocolate to keep us warm.

On our way down from Mount Etna, we stopped for a light snack at Zafferana, where we enjoyed the lovely views of the mountain and the sea. We visited the Agenzia Agricola Costa, where honey, olive oil, wine, liquors and preserves are locally produced. We all showed interest in the explanation given about the production of these products. We could all follow and understand because the information was given in English.

Later in the evening, very tired, we went back to our host families' homes.

Wednesday:

Today, we had a very early breakfast and we were at school before eight o'clock. We departed for a two-hour trip towards Enna, some ninety kilometres away. Our first visit was to the Library of the Enna University. Then we went to the Enna University Aeronautical Research Centre and to a laboratory where materials used in buildings to resist earthquakes are tested. These visits were very interesting, and we gained a lot of new knowledge about technology. Later, we had lunch and some free time at Sicilia Outlet Village.

At three in the afternoon, we went to Catania's city centre, where we had a short, guided tour of the old part of the city by Professor Salvo. This was followed by a shopping trip around Catania's shopping areas, where I really enjoyed myself. We were back in Scordia at about seven in the evening.

Thursday:

Back to school at eight in the morning, we started the day by filling in a questionnaire about Malta's most famous or important places, people and dates. At ten we left for a visit to Oranfrizer, an orange factory in Scordia. We started this amazing experience by a brief presentation about the process of orange cultivation, harvest and production in the factory, the different oranges they cultivate and their unique characteristics. At about half past eleven, we started the tour in the fields and Research Centre for Citrus Crops in the Mediterranean. We enjoyed tasting different kinds of oranges. Some oranges were also new in colour and taste even for our 'older generation' teachers.

With the taste of oranges in our mouths, we left for Caltagirone, to visit a ceramic laboratory and for a sightseeing tour of the city centre.

Back to Scordia at six in the evening, we had dinner with all the other students in the project and even danced together. We had more time to talk freely as friends, rather than as fellow students. For this reason, this was one of the nicest experiences that we had with the rest of the students from the other countries.

Friday:

Today we brought our luggage with us to school. This was the first sign that we were to leave our host families and go back to our families in Malta. We went with our host students to attend the first lesson of the day, this being our last part of the project.

I could not believe how I managed to communicate with the Italian speaking family who took great care of me during this week; maybe sign language and broken Italian and English did work after all. I really felt sad when I realised that it was time to say goodbye, 'ciao' or 'arrivederci' to my Italian friend and family. All the participating groups left for their respective countries. We left Scordia at half past ten heading towards Catania.

We arrived in Catania about one hour later and settled down in the hotel. Our teachers asked us to write down our experiences during our stay in Scordia and the Erasmus Project. What is written here is part of my unforgettable experience.

In the afternoon we went for a sightseeing tour of Catania, followed by dinner.

Saturday:

This was our last day in Sicily. After breakfast, at about nine o'clock, we went to visit Taormina, about fifty kilometres away. During our tour of the city, we managed to find time to share the experiences we had with the host families, with our teachers and friends.

Sunday;

Departure day. We had our last Italian breakfast at the hotel, checked out and left towards the iconic Villa Bellini, to take our last photographs before heading to the airport.

We were back on our little island of Malta in the afternoon.