**FOLLOWING THE FOOTPRINTS OF EMPERORS**

**ERASMUS PLUS PROJECT No.** 2015-1-TR01-KA219-021405\_8

**Short-term teaching, training and learning activity (C4)**

**Gimnazija Metkovic, Croatia**

**5 – 9 March 2018**

**Host school**: Gimnazija Metkovic, Croatia

**Participanting schools**: *Şehit Umut Sami Şensoy Anadolu Lisesi,* Tasrus (Turkey)*, Ion Luca Caragiale*, Tulcea (Romania), *Hristo Botev,* Kocherinovo (Bulgaria)*, Berufskolleg am Eichholz*, Arnsberg (Germany), *Istituto Comprensivo Statale Molise Altissimo*, Carovilli (Italy), *Taki Daskalo*, Bitola (Macedonia), *Escola Profissional de Hotelaria e Turismo de Lisboa*, Lisbon (Portugal), *Colegio Virgen de la Rosa*, Burgos (Spain)

Gimnazija Metkovic hosted the LTT Activity planned under C11 / C12 in the project application form, which took place from 5 to 9 March 2018 in Metkovic, Croatia. The week's itinerary as well as the budget were planned according to the project application form and sent to the participating schools for their information and approval well in advance of the meeting. According to the application, the aim of the programme in Croatia was to learn about the Roman politics system and Roman art in the form of mosaic workshop and competition.The week's activities were in compliance with the aims of the project and its description in the project application form, as follows:

**Sunday, 4 March 2018**

The students and teachers from the participating schools arrived in Metkovic at different hours according to each school's travel arrangements. They were picked up by the host families and teachers of Gimnazija Metkovic. The guest students were accommodated in host families with students of Gimnazija Metkovic who are participating in the project and some of whom had travelled in the project mobilities. Some of the host students were not in the project, but are students of Gimnazija Metkovic with families who volunteered to help by hosting. The guest teachers were accommodated at Hotel Narona in the center of Metkovic. The help of families outside the project and the cooperation with local small businesses (hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies, transport companies...) increased the dissemination and visibility of this project and the Erasmus programme within our local community and within the whole region.

**Monday, 5 March 2018**

The first working day of the meeting took place at Gimnazija Metkovic. In the morning the guest students and teachers were welcomed at the school with an opening ceremony which included a short musical programme performed by the school choir and followed by speeches from the principal, the school’s Erasmus coordinator, and the project coordinator from Turkey. After this introduction, the host students presented the week’s itinerary in a short presentation and videos about the sites to be visited.

The students and teachers of Gimnazija Metkovic had prepared a workbook for the guest students which was given to each guest during this introduction ceremony. The workbook allowed the guest students to follow the week's programme, by marking their previous knowledge of the visited places and entering newly-gathered information. The workbooks were frequently reviewed by the host students, who were helping their foreign friends with any necessary information, and finally by the guest teachers on the last day of the visit. The best workbooks were later awarded a small prize during the closing ceremony. The aim of this was to make sure the participating students took an active role in the week’s programme, as they had to listen carefully, cooperate, work in teams, draw or note their own impressions, which facilitated the learning process.

After a tour of the school’s facilities and a coffee break offering home-made traditional sweets from the local area, the guests were invited to participate in regular lessons at Gimnazija Metkovic. They could choose between Latin (the language of the Roman Empire), English, German and other subjects. The guests were sitting in the classroom together with their hosts, which enabled them to compare school systems and the organization of the learning process in different schools.

After this lesson, the guests listened to a presentation about the most important aspects of Roman politics during the three different stages of Roman history: kingdom, republic and empire, presented by the history teachers of Gimnazija Metkovic. This was followed by a group discussion in which all participants were discussing the similarities and differences of political life in Ancient Rome and their own home countries.

Connected to this, what followed was a workshop on European politics. As Gimnazija Metkovic has recently been awarded the status of European Parliament Ambassador School, we have the task to educate about the institutions of the European Union and European citizenship. Although we began this programme well after this Erasmus project, we believed that a gathering of 50 plus people from 8 different states would be an ideal opportunity to inform and discuss about Europe, especially in the light of its Roman legacy. Thus the junior ambassadors – students of Gimnazija Metkovic who carry out the Ambassador School programme – prepared a short presentation about the most important facts about the EU. This was followed by a Kahoot quiz in which the most attentive and well-informed guests won small prizes, and group discussions about some crucial EU values such as human rights, the rule of law, solidarity and freedom. Through these activities it was discovered how much the guests knew about the EU and its foundations in the Roman Empire, how they felt about their country's (non-)membership in the EU and about the current issues within the Union.

After lunch for all students and teachers at hotel Narona, everyone returned to the school in the afternoon for presentations about ancient Roman amphiteatres. Each guest school had been given a task to prepare a short presentation about the most famous or well-preserved amphiteatres in their country. This was then presented by the guest students.

When all presentations had finished, in the evening the students were picked up by the host families and the teachers met for dinner at local restaurant *Adria*.

On this first day the attending schools paid to our school the amount that was necessary to cover the costs of the meeting for each school, according to the budget that was agreed beforehand and within the numbers planned by the project application. For these payments they were given official invoices from Gimnazija Metkovic.

**Tuesday, 6 March 2018**

The second working day was spent in Split, visiting ancient Roman remains at this former seat of the Emperor Diocletian.

A bus rented from a local transport company drove the group of guest students and teachers as well as a group of students and teachers from Gimnazija Metkovic first to the town of Solin near Split. Solin is ancient Roman Salona, which was the capital of the province of Dalmatia. The group took a tour of the archaeological site of Salona, which includes a well-preserved amphitheatre. The major features of the site were shown to the guests by students of Gimnazija Metkovic, who acted as guides, explaining all the most interesting information to the guests in English. This approach was applied in all the visits apart from Dubrovnik (where only official guides are allowed in town) as we believed this peer-teaching and learning-by-showing was an excellent learning tool for everyone involved.

The group was then transported to Split, where we first visited the Archaeological Museum in Split. This museum houses a huge collection of finds, mostly from the ancient Roman period, from the sites in Salona and Narona. The official guides of the museum explained the exhibits inside the museum as well as outside in the wide lapidarium area.

The central activity of the day followed: a tour of Diocletian's palace in the centre of Split. As in Salona, the students from Gimnazija Metkovic supervised by the history teachers led the guests through and around the palace explaining its history and key features.

Throughout the day the guest students were encouraged to fill in their workbooks which included questions about the sites and exhibits they saw during the day. In this they were helped by their Croatian hosts.

After some free time and dinner in Split, we returned to Metkovic to the host families and the hotel.

**Wednesday, 7 March 2018**

The third working day of the LTT meeting was spent in ancient Narona.

In the morning a local bus company took the group to the village of Vid, 3km outside the town of Metkovic. In Vid there is the Archaeological Museum of ancient Roman town of Narona that used to lie here. The museum has been built on the site of the Roman temple Augusteum which was at the centre of Narona. The museum includes a reconstructed temple with all the statues of Roman deities and countless finds from Narona, from small objects of glass, clay and gems to large exhibits like statues and epigraphs.

The group was divided into two groups for this day: one with younger students and one with older. Each group was awarded several guides consisting of students and teachers of Gimnazija Metkovic. The schedule was created so that no time was wasted: while one group was working in the mosaics workshop, the other group was touring the museum and surrounding archaeological site.

As planned by the project application form, one of the goals of this LTT meeting was to learn about Roman art, particularly about mosaics. For this purpose Gimnazija Metkovic had contacted and hired a group of experts from the University of Split – an art professor and his students who are trained to hold mosaics workshops. They arrived in Vid on March 7 and spent the day with our guests. Each group was first given a lecture and presentation about the history and meaning of mosaics in ancient Rome, and then the students were given tools and materials to make their own mosaics. They worked alone or in pairs, according to their wishes. They could recreate a mosaic from a pattern or create their own. The best examples were fixed with glue to be preserved and were given to their creators (the guest students or their teachers) to take to their home countries. Some mosaics were preserved at Gimnazija Metkovic to commemorate this activity, and some were given to the coordinator school to present as a product of the project.

Apart from the mosaic workshop, the guests took a tour of the archaeological museum and surrounding site of Narona. Again the guides were students of Gimnazija Metkovic supervised by their teachers. The guests were shown the exhibits inside the museum, with special emphasis on the reconstructed temple Augusteum, which had been presented by Croatian students during the LTT mobility in Bulgaria. They also saw the ruins of the city walls of Narona and many epigraphs and statues incorporated into the architecture of today’s village of Vid.

After lunch of local specialties in a restaurant in a nearby village, the group returned to Metkovic, where the students were picked up by the host families and the teachers later met for a light dinner in a local pizzeria.

**Thursday, 8 March 2018**

The fourth working day of the meeting was spent in the historic city of Dubrovnik.

Although the town of Dubrovnik itself was created during the Middle Ages and flourished as Dubrovnik Republic during the Renaissance period, the hosts as well as the guests felt that the opportunity could not be missed to visit this magnificent gem of the Mediterranean when it is only an hour’s drive from Metkovic. Besides, one of the goals of the project is promoting learning about history, and much of what has been learned about Roman history, politics and art is visible in Dubrovnik Republic, and the guests were invited to discover that.

Upon arrival by bus into the centre of Dubrovnik, just outsite one of the city gates, we met with our official tour guides. (They were from a tourist agency from Dubrovnik and had been hired by Gimnazija Metkovic, as in Dubrovnik there is a strict policy of only official guides being allowed to show groups around the city.) We were divided again into two groups according to the age of the students and each group had their own official guide. The guides adjusted their performance and information to the age and interests of the students, which made the tour very successful. Upon entering through the main gate into the city, the groups walked through the streets and visited the major sites inside the city walls: the Franciscan monastery, the main street Stradun, Orlando’s column, Onofrio’s fountain, Rector’s palace, the city port. After the official tour, the guests walked the giant city walls, which offer breathtaking views of the sea, the forts around the walls and the city within the walls.

After the two-hour walk the groups were given free time in Dubrovnik. Upon meeting again outside the city gates, a bus took us to dinner in the town of Ston, which is on the way back to Metkovic. Ston itself boasts the largest city walls in Europe and the second-largest in the world. After a dinner of local specialties in a seafood restaurant in Ston, the group returned to Metkovic.

**Friday, 9 March 2018**

The last working day of the meeting was preserved for touring Metkovic itself and for the closing ceremony.

In the morning, with host students as their guides, the guest students were taken on a tour of several local sites in the town of Metkovic. They visited a cave called Jama u Predolcu, a unique geological feature of the karst landscape, then they took a nature walk across the park-forest Predolac, and they visited the local Natural History museum. This modern and interactive museum is located in the centre of Metkovic and houses an excellent collection of animal and plant species from the marshland area around Metkovic and the delta of the river Neretva.

Meanwhile the teachers were invited to meet the representatives of the town council of Metkovic. They were welcomed by the deputy mayor and several town councilors in the building of the town hall. This was an excellent opportunity to discuss the project and the Erasmus programme with local representatives, to present the goals and products. These were applauded by the local representatives, who welcomed such programmes in our area as promoting tourism and international cooperation. The guests were given souvenirs of our area, took pictures for the local media and were interviewed for national television.

Gimnazija Metkovic was disseminating and advertising this LTT meeting in local media throughout the week (local radio and internet news sites), and we had contacted the regional office of our national TV, asking them to come and report on our activities. They did so on the last day, when they interviewed and filmed both guests and hosts, students and teachers, asking them about their activities, aims and impressions of the week. This way not only local but national audiences were informed about our project and the Erasmus programme.

After lunch for students and teachers at hotel Narona, the guests were given free time in Metkovic while the hosts prepared and rehearsed for the closing ceremony.

The programme of the closing ceremony had been planned and executed by a large proportion of the staff and teachers of Gimnazija Metkovic, not only those in this particular project, but combining the expertise and resources from other projects as well. The aim of the ceremony was to engage the talents of our students and celebrate the diversity of our group of partners. The ceremony took place in the sports gymnasium at Gimnazija Metkovic, which had been transformed into a stage for musical perfomances, with seats for the audience brought in from the classrooms. All the teachers and students of Gimnazija Metkovic were invited, as well as representatives of the town, other schools from the area, and the host families who had taken in our guests.

After speeches by the representatives of Gimnazija Metkovic, thanking everyone for their help and company during this week, and by representatives of the Turkish coordinators, the guests were awarded their official certificates of attendance. Each group was called out to come forward and receive the certificates, together with small gifts of souvenirs and prizes for the best students’ workbooks. A representative of each group was then invited to say a few words in their own language. To continue this celebration of diversity of our group, each partner country was treated to a musical performance in their own language. The school choir and solo singers from Gimnazija Metkovic had prepared and performed a song in each of the national languages of our guests. This was accompanied by photos of the week’s activities being projected on a video-wall behind the performers. The programme was finished with a video made by the students of all the major moments of the week.

All the parts of the closing ceremony, the performance, the scene, the technical requirements, had been planned and prepared by the students of Gimnazija Metkovic in and outside this project. The students’ families had also prepared the food, drinks, the treats and specialties which were then served after the closing ceremony at Gimnazija Metkovic.

The evening and the week’s programme ended in tears of laughter and joy, celebrating the friendships that were created during our work together on the project.

**Saturday, 9 March 2018**

The groups took their leave from Metkovic at different times, according to their flight schedules and travel arrangements.