# Erasmus 2021

#### Paula van de Bogert

**Erasmus succeeded!**

Hello my name is Paula van de Bogert, I am a student from Belgium who is a part of the Erasmus project 2021. In the beginning of the project I was very worried about this experience, because I have always lived in Belgium. I was worried that the culture gap would be to big and that they would keep on speaking their mother tongue. Unlike I thought, everybody is trying their best to speak their best English the whole time. The students are very curious about Belgian culture, like our food, our schedule etc. I thought that the trips would be a little uptight, that we would only be following the guides. But the teachers told us that we could introduce them to the real Belgium as we live it. What I think is very nice, you not only see the touristic beauty of Belgium. But you experience the heart of Belgium.

For me until now, I really loved it. I have gotten a lot more curious about the differences between people within a short distance. And I want to learn more about every country, not only the European but worldwide. If you understand the way they behave, you create an inner deep respect for them. What became a goal for me to achieve.

Let us in the future bring each other together, create through this fun Erasmus project.

#### Arthur Van Geel

I really wanted to do the Erasmus program because I thought it would be fun to meet people from other countries and cultures.

To learn about their habits and what they love to do.

I’m Arthur Van Geel and I'm a Belgian. I’m in the 6th grade and hope to graduate high school at the end of the year. When I heard the Erasmus program started again, I thought would I do?

And then I thought why not? It will be fun.

When my Teacher announced the program of activities for the week. My expectations of it were like: It’s a good program they are gonna see quite a lot from Belgium.

After 2 days have past of showing them Belgium. It met my expectations.

They have already tasted a lot of typical Belgium like balletjes in tomaten saus,Belgische frieten,wafels,……

They even already learned some Dutch and some dialect, an example: hottentottententententoonstelling.

Also in the other way, I have learned some Italian,Greek,and Spanish already.

I’m happy that everyone liked the trip so far and liked the food. After visiting Antwerp en Brussel we’re gonna visit Leuven and Brugge.

It’s a nice group and there is a good vibe so the rest of the week is gonna be as fun as the beginning or even better.

At the end of the year I’m going to Lipari an Island just above Sicily. I’m that’s also gonna be a whole new experience. Life on a small island must be totally different then in Belgium. because you can just take a car or the train or a motorcycle’… and the only way to travel over there is with a boat.

So I’m already looking forward to it.

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#### Esther Socas

I wanted to inscribed in the Erasmus project because I want to travel and learn things about different places, so when I found out that I was going to go to Belgium I was so happy because it’s a place totally different than Canary Islands

Before I came here I didn’t have a lot of expectations because I didn’t know almost anything about Belgium but I’m so glad that I came here because Ihave loved everything that I have seen. My host family is also amazing.

#### Marco Sapienza

Hello, my name is Marco and i am an italian student from Catania, im into the erasmus project named "Stop Fences" and the goals of this project are to share the culture and the tradition of each other. This erasmus experience is giving me the skill to see Europe like a second home, and maybe the whole world. In these days i lived my life differently than normal, i was able to get close into a different culture, language and food, especially this because im italian, so i think the project was successful.

When this project started i was excited to know how i was going to live that week, and what i was going to learn. Its not over yet and i'm already satisfied about things are going. I'm making new friends that are teaching me their culture and i'm doing the same to them, this is the real meaning of the project.

#### Lorenzo Di Salvo

A year ago some guys from our school participated at an eTwinning project called “stop fences”. Today, the project has evolved into mobility. We have therefore been in Belgium for a couple of days and there are many projects to be implemented. The first evening when we arrived we went to the host houses and established the first relationship. The next morning we went to Antwerp, leaving from Tervuren by bus. We visited the Centraal Station, then continued towards the Chocolate Nation, where we followed the entire process of making chocolate, tasting different types. After this we went to Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal. For the rest of the day we were free, going to the carousel and then home. The next day we went to Brussels, visiting the Parliament, taking the guided tour, seeing a lot of things and studying a lot in an interactive way. Later we went to the Palais Royal, but only outside, and I learned that when the Belgian flag is there, it means that the king and queen are working inside. After that we went to a large square, and we broke up with the teachers. We went with the group to visit the Atomium, touring and taking the metro and bus. We ate together and finally went home. Today we are at school, and we are posting photos on a padlet and we are writing this text to describe the projects made and the expectation drawn from this experience. The expectations are high, I am learning the language much better, and also the places I visit. The projects we are doing are very beautiful, because they do not isolate people and we have the opportunity to interact all together. And finally, in the evening when it's just us guys, we have some time for fun, so that's okay.

Lorenzo Di Salvo

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#### Sofia Foresta

Bonjour je m’appelle Sofia j’ai 17 ans et je vis à Catane. J’ai participé au projet stopfences que mon école a proposé. Erasmus cet une expérience que je recommande à tous, parce qu’il y a des échanges culturels entre différentes langues, par exemple dans mon groupe les élèves parlent:anglais, français, grec, espagnol et italien. Je m’attendais ainsi à ce que nous partagerions tout avec les familles qui nous accueilleraient et en effet c'est ça qui est arrivé. Le premier jour nous avons visité Anvers et la chocolaterie que j’ai aimé est surtout l’usine du chocolat . Le deuxième jour, nous sommes allés à Bruxelles et nous avons visité le parlement qui est très intéressant et nombreux magasins. Encore mon expérience continue mais jusqu’à présent je me trouve bien avec le groupe et la famille.

#### Riccardo Condorelli

My name is Riccardo Condorelli, I am an Italian student who is attending the last year of high school.

 My expectations for the project are very positive because I think it is useful to meet new people of different nationalities and with different ways of thinking than mine.

 From Belgium I expect it to make me change the way I see Europe, but also the world, and obviously to see the most important places and to try their typical dishes.

 In the last 2 days we have had various experiences. On the first day we visited Antwerp, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal, Chocolate Nation and then in the afternoon we walked around some of the Belgian and Spanish guys together. The next day we went to the center of Brussels where we visited the royal palace, the European parliament where we followed a guide who explained role and history of the parliament. In the afternoon we stopped in Brussels to see the Manneken Pis, the Automium and we tried a typical dish called balletjes in tomatensaus.

 Even though it's only been 2 days since I arrived in Belgium I can say that it is a unique experience that I will remember for a long time.

Riccardo Condorelli

#### Andrea Gasparroni

Everything started some years ago, when I knew the Erasmus+ project.. Since the first moment I was interested in it because I always wanted to do an Erasmus experience, but the Covid-19, stopped all the activities and we must postpone the travels. It was really sad because everyone wanted to travel. Afterwards, schools started again to organize mobility and finally on the 7th of November I and other 9 teens of my school, (De Nicola high school of San Giovanni la Punta, in Sicily) left from Catania Airport. We arrived in bruxelles at 22:00 and we were picked up by our partners and brought to their home… here, everything is amazing for me: places, houses, food and also people that are really friendly. Thanks to the trips that we did in Belgium, we visited some of the best squares, churches and also shops, stations and so on. I understood a bit about Belgium’s society end culture and I think that everyone understand that Belgium is a good place to live, so I can say that I understood the main sense of this beautiful experience, that is learning about the rest of Europe and feel other countries like its own.

#### Edoardo Paladino

It all started when I was chosen for Erasmus, when I found out I was very happy because it is an experience that I have always wanted to do. I think that Erasmus + gives many opportunities to everyone, students, staff, trainees, teachers, volunteers and more.For students, studying abroad has a positive effect on their job prospects and beyond, it gives them the opportunity to improve language skills, gives independence and security and gives the opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of another country. This Stop Fences project involved various study and research activities at the "E. De Nicola" technical institute, continuing with the mobility in Belgium in Tervuren at the Sacred Heart college, which took place from 7 November to 13 November, were made several visits, for example: Antwerpen Centraal, chocolate nation, Oude Markt, Antwerpen reuzenrad, European parliament, Brussels, cathedral, a study day was also planned at the school. The students stayed with families and this allowed them to see their cultures and live the experience at 360 degrees.

#### Giulia Sciuto

Erasmus in Belgium was a great opportunity that happened by chance.

Erasmus "stop Fences" consists in making projects together with other young people from other countries and also visiting places.

It is a wonderful experience, having cultural exchanges and acquaintances with young people who come from different countries for example Spain, Greece, Catania, Lipari and Belgium.

We left on November 7th at 12:55 pm and arrived in Belgium at 9:30 pm, we will leave on November 13th at 9:25 am and then arrive in Catania at 5:30 pm.

We are staying in Tervuren, a small town near Brussels, and my host family is Van de Bogert.

The first day we were in Antwerp. All together we went to the chocolate factory, the main square and finally the cathedral.

At the chocolate factory we saw the processing of chocolate and tasted various types of chocolate.

In the central square we took a walk and in the afternoon we went to the cathedral dedicated to the Madonna, it is in Gothic style and has many stained glass windows with mosaics.

The second day we were in Brussels, we went to the parliament, we saw the royal palace, where the Belgian royal family resided, we went to the central square and finally in the afternoon we went to the Atonium.

We had a fantastic two days and will certainly have another equally beautiful day.

This experience will be a baggage that I will carry throughout my life and if I could I would do it again millions of times

#### Hiram Suriano

Get out of your comfort zone. I believe it is not only important but necessary.

 Personally I have never felt like a sedentary type… I have always been looking for a solution to get out of the world of false beliefs that surrounds us, and I find that traveling is a great way to do it.

 I had no particular expectations before arriving here: when I happen to go away from home for a long period I like to be white, to clear my mind of everything to be able to face any type of situation; in this case I was lucky, because my host family is a really "good" family as they would say in Catania.

 I also get along very well with the rest of the students, I was able to talk to practically everyone despite the language barriers, socializing is not difficult and everyone here has a great desire to do so ... I think it's thanks to the influence of the Belgian spirit: always ready to get involved, not for nothing they always run: they are fast and precise in everything they do and I like this because I feel very productive.

 They don't waste a minute and every day is an opportunity to learn something new about their culture, also thanks to the activities included in the project

#### Thanos Moukas

This week, we visited the beautiful country of Belgium. My expectations for the program were quite similar with my experience.

 The hospitality of the Belgian students was more than good. Belgium its something new for greek students cause we live in a small city with deferent culture and climate, so from this travel we learned a lot of new things. All students were really nice and we had a lot of fun. The program thanks to the teachers and the students was really fun and full of surprises.

 I really enjoyed my travel to Belgium and if its possible i will do it again in the future.(:

#### Francesco Fianda

My name is Francesco Fianda, I'm an italian student who took part at the "Stop Fences" school project. In that project, our objective is to live new experiences, living with host families around Europe and learning how different their life is from yours.

I joined the project because I wanted to live new experiences, see what life is like in a different country. I wanted to meet new people, make new friends, expand my knowledge and have fun!

I was a bit scared at first, I didn't know anyone, I didn't know if I could keep up or fit in, I didn't even know if I WOULD have fun. The day of the flight was very stressful, we had to wait a lot and we arrived late.

But once the project really began, everything changed! I met such nice and fun people, made new friends around the world. Living a new life in a completely different country. Seeing so many new and beautiful places, sharing different stories, hanging out together and having so much fun.

I would never regret taking part in this and I would suggest, to anyone who has the chance, to take part in the "Stop Fences" projevt. It's fun, it's new, it's a wonderful experience.

#### Kassiana Latropoulou

When my teachers told me that I would travel in Belgium, I was very excited! I started doing my suitcase and planning my trip. I really wanted to see everything!

 First of all, I could not imagine that I would go to Belgium. I really wanted to understand the culture of the belgian people, to interfere with local people, to learn the history of European Union and of course to taste belgian chocolate. It was very important to me to understand the way people act in a different country.

As far as the project is concerned, it was very interesting. When our teachers mentioned the title of the project, I thought that we would learn a lot of new things. It was also a motive for me to take part in this project. I was sure that we would learn new things about people from other countries, their civilisation and of course the way they interact with each other.

 When I arrived in Brussels, I could not believe that I finally could fulfill my expectations. We went to the house with the family and after that we visited the city of Brussels. It was amazing because there were so many lights and i could see every corner of the city with different colours. I was sure that here I would have the time of my life!On Monday, we visited Antwerp. The city was very beautiful and very different from the greek ones. We visited museums, plenty of attractions and we saw a lot of different places. On Tuesday, we went to Brussels and I saw the how big and how beautiful this city was. We visited impressing buildings, museums and of course the European parlamentarium! We learnt a lot of historical details that I ignored.

 To sum up, I really enjoy everything here in Belgium because it is very different from what I was used to.

#### Laura De Coninck en Luna Van Impe

8th of October: You are selected to participate in the Erasmus project!

We were so happy and grateful. We are so excited to go to Greece, but first the exchange students were coming to Belgium in November.

We wanted to show them the most beautiful places in Belgium but where do you start?

6th of November: The Greeks arrived at the airport. I took them to Brussels right away to show them the Bright Brussels festival. It was a great start to an even more amazing week.

7th of November: I took the Greeks to a real Halloween experience: Walibi Halloween was a great success and a lot of fun!

Meanwhile the Spanish girls arrived at Laura’s place. First they had to stick with their habits and did a looooong siësta. Afterwards they went for a walk in the park of Tervuren. Nayra and Claudia were really amazed about how beautiful the park is.

8th of November: We met all the different exchange students in the bus on our way to Antwerp. It was really fun and an experience to meet all the different nationalities.

Everyone was excited about the chocolate museum because we at the end we could taste the best chocolate in the whole wide world. They were also very impressed with the big buildings and beautiful architecture styles. The grand place was the biggest highlight. Then we visited the Cathedral, also very impressive. When we got home it was already really late. We eat real Belgian food and went to sleep.

9th of November: Now that we know each other a bit better it was really fun and amazing to visit Brussels. We went to the parliamentarian and did a great tour. When we go outside we walked to the grand place of Brussels. I can not tell you how beautiful they thought the buildings were. They were speechless. We hope the rest of the week will be as fun as the beginning!

We thank you for giving us this opportunity!