

## ERASMUS+ project - My experience

### TARANTO – ITALY



Last month I went on an ERASMUS+ project to Italy, and I couldn't be more grateful for this experience. I stayed at a little village called Monteiasi, where the family and, especially, the student that received me welcomed me the best way they could, and I loved to spend there that week.

Also, the people, including the other students and teachers, were really nice, and made us feel as if we were a part of the school since we were children. I loved all the places we've visited, different cities and all so beautiful, but, to be honest, I would have enjoyed to explore these places a lot better, I feel like we've missed some important parts of this cities because we spent a little portion of time in each place. In spite of that, I can say this was one of the greatest experiences of my life, because I met lots of people that I can call my friends and it is exciting because we interact in so many different languages, giving me the opportunity to learn a little Italian. I also loved it because I've basically never travelled abroad, and Italy was a great way to accurate my curiosity and to start my travelling adventures. I was almost forgetting about an important point, the food, which was pretty amazing, and there was loads of pasta, which I simply loved.

To sum up, I felt welcome there, by the family, students and teachers and I enjoyed all the activities we've made, although we could explore some of them a bit better .

***Margarida Resende, Portugsl***

In my opinion, this experience was absolutely incredible. We met so many people... My hosting family was so kind to me... they gave me everything that I could ask for, for real, they received me so well! Couldn't ask for a better hosting family. I actually miss them a lot.



I didn't found Monteiasi a beautiful place, but the "big" cities that we visited were amazing.

I really think that the activity we made on the first day in which one we had to present our country and our city was really good to help us knowing a little bit more about the places the other people were from.

On the other hand, I think that we could have visited more places than the ones we visited, but anyways it was really good.

We developed a really good friendship with the people from the other countries, we were always making jokes with them, singing and that things. Even today we talk with them by social media.

The food was a strange thing to me as I spent a week eating pizza and pasta. I like both

but it was way too much, even though it tasted really good. I also think that the fact that they eat first just pasta and then the meat or fish comes was strange, but in that week we get used to that.

Another thing I noticed was that they do not talk English very well, they had some difficulties understanding what we were saying and also the fact that we could understand better what they were talking in Italian than they trying to understand us talking in Portuguese (not very relevant, but I really paid attention to this).

Despite these not so good things, I really loved this trip and I would repeat it again without thinking two times.

### ***Inês Monteiro, Portugsl***



Hello! My name is Mariana. This school year I had the wonderful opportunity to be selected and participate in the project Erasmus+.

This project is, in fact, an unforgettable opportunity and my piece of advice for those who might be interested is go for it!

Nevertheless, don't think this project is perfect because, in fact, it isn't. Just like everything else in the world nothing is. I had this great opportunity to travel to Italy and as a result I came home a different person. In fact, Erasmus+ gives us the chance of experiencing, being and living a different reality.

We live and socialize with people we never talked to or saw before and that is scary. Sometimes we bond immediately with our host, however most of the times it requires more time.

While I was in Italy, I faced my own odds. First, I had never been away from home for so long and that was hard. Second, I didn't bond right away with my Italian host and I had to struggle to fit to their routines and customs. In spite of all this, I can say that I returned wiser and more mature. Now, I'm more aware of the natural beauty, history and richness of our country. But while I was in Italy, I could learn how to prepare fresh pasta and mozzarella. Besides, I could also learn some interesting stories and facts about some historic buildings told by my Italian host family.

In conclusion, the Erasmus+ project is a unique experience as it provides us memories and experiences in a foreign family's home in a genuine and true way.

***Mariana Viana, Portugal***

The Erasmus+ was only the best experience of my life. In this programme, I visited a lot of Italian monuments and I got to know better the Italian culture. The most important part of this programme was the friends that I made and who I will never forget.

The teachers were wonderful and I just have to say thank you!!

***Marco Sousa, Portugal***

To me, this Project is a really good opportunity for us. With this project, I had a chance to know the monuments and historical places of Italy and its culture. I met lots of new people from other countries and we had nice relationships. We spent a great time together. My hosting family was very hospitable and kind to me. I felt myself as if I were at home.

Now, I have lots of good memories that I will never forget. I am thankful to everyone participated in this Project.

***Elifcan ER, Turkey***



Life in Italy, Taranto is really nice. The best place i visited was Grotaglie, which is a town of ceramics. Then a small village called Alberobello is preety nice like it came out of a fairytale. Castello Aragonese is another beautiful place i visited and it has a long story. Cathedral of Sain Catald and Basilica di San Martina were another two special places i visited. Finally except of archaeological places there are many good places for food and for shopping.

The school in Monteiasi wasn't too big as i had imagined but it was such a great school. Firtly you can see a big yard and then when you go inside you can see some of the classrooms. The kids there were very friendly and sociable so it was easy to speak with them. The teachers weren't strict, they were very helpful. I didn't found many differences between my school and school in Monteiasi.

The family who hosted had 4 members: The girl, Her 2 parents and her big sister. This family was soo happy and was the best family i could go. Eleonora (the girl who hosted

me) was very good with me and she helped me all the time. Her mum every day prepared me the food which was so tasty. Finally this experience will be unforgettable to me.

***Giannouli Olia, Greece***



The trip with Erasmus in Italy was an unforgettable experience. When we arrived at Italy I went at the family which hosted me. The family was very good with me. Antonio was the guy who hosted me he was a good friend at I had a great time with him. The school that Antonio go was very clean and the teachers was very friendly with as and they want to learn asout our country. The most exciting places that we met was the town of Taranta the castle with his history and the Albero Bello.

***Nikolas Loukas***

A few months ago I went to Italy with three other kids. There we visited many places. First, we visited the school of our host mates. The building was big and very clean, it was also a modern school with many facilities. The teachers were very helpful and polite to us. The students were gentle and they were looking forward to meet us. During the teaching the students payed attention to their teacher without being noisy.

Some of the places we visited were Castello Aragonese in the town of Taranto, it is located in the old center of Taranto and in the entrance of <<Mare piccolo>>. Alberobello which is a small beautiful village in north .We visited it in the evening and the whole village was full of Christmas decorations and lights. A farm that makes local cheese, in which they showed us the way of making mozzarella, it was really fun. A factory which makes traditional ceramics and Grottaglie in which we visited the cathedral church. This temple has impressive statues and beautiful details everywhere. It is also a tomb of a holy priest.



Every night we were back to Monteiasi there I was staying in my host mate`s family. They have a great sense of hospitality. The boy of their family, Federico, tried to make feel comfortable and he showed me the way they live. The family gave me the opportunity to taste many Italian foods as we went out all together for a dinner. Additionally

Federico`s mother was an excellent cooker. The last day presents and souvenirs to take with me. I am very pleased to meet and honestly I am looking forward to meet Federico again.

***Konstantas Axilleas***



The school was very nice, clean and comfortable, with lots of facilities. The children were very friendly and we had great time.

We visited a lot of interesting places and museums and each one of them was unique. I was very impressed by Alberobello which is a small village with small white houses with gray roofs (trulli). We bought wonderful souvenirs but it was very very cold!!

The family I stayed with was very hospitable kind and friendly. I had a great time playing with the girl and her sister and the food was amazing. I liked a lot how large and nicely decorated was the bedroom.

The last day at the party we had wonderful time. I loved the music and we danced a lot.

I'm very happy I made this trip and I wish I could go again in the future!!!

***Kotina Angelina***

My name is Nicholas Cardona and I am 13 years old. I live in Gharb, Gozo. My school is Sacred Heart Minor Seminary. My hobbies are fishing, cycling and sculpting.

I went to Taranto in Italy in 2018, from December 9th to December 16th. Joining me on this trip were teachers Mr. Gorg Farrugia, Ms. Francesca Mizzi and fellow students Gaybor, Jerome and Jean.

I learned about this project from our school headmaster. He informed us students about this opportunity and gave each of us some information about it. I put my name down as soon as possible because I have always wanted to have this experience. Some weeks before leaving for Italy, our school organised two meetings. One for us students and one for us together with our parents. I packed warm clothes and boots, some toiletries and a Malta souvenir as a gift for my host family.

Upon arriving in Italy, we were taken to our host families. Even though it was very late, the Strusi family, my host family were very happy to meet me and welcomed me with open arms. Alessandro was my host friend. He has a sister, Sara. Their home was very cosy and clean. The family were very friendly and nice. They treated me like one of their own children.

We met many students from different countries during our stay in Italy. We had many activities like workshops at school, walking tours and a visit to the Cathedral. We even visited Alberobello, a Unesco World Heritage Site. This was my favourite landmark

because we could see the different houses: trulli, white stone houses with cone roofs. We went to Aragonese Castle and to many museums. But my favourite activities were when we did the pottery workshop in Grottaglie and when we visited a farm and had a cooking lab. Towards the end, we had a farewell party which I liked as well.

I spent my free time with my host family. The family Strusi and I played card games. They took me to a local pizzeria where I could see my pizza being done in front of me! Mrs. Strusi prepared very good local food like lasagne, orecchiette (pasta) and panzerotti, a delicious fried pizza! They even took me to visit Alessandro's grandfather. They were super nice and generous.

I really enjoyed this trip and was a bit sad when it was time to leave. I wouldn't change a thing! I learned about a different culture other than ours. I also learned a little bit of Italian. But the thing I like most is that I made many new friends from different countries, especially Alessandro, my host friend. We are still in contact with each other and communicate as much as possible. I would recommend ERASMUS+ projects to all my friends because it lets you visit new places and meet new friends from all over Europe. I would really like to participate again in a similar project.

***Nicholas Cardona, Malta***

I am Jean Debattista, I'm 13 years old and I live in Kercem, Gozo. The school I attend to is Sacred Heart Minor Seminary. My favourite hobbies are cycling and playing computer games. But I'm not here to talk about myself but, rather about my trip with Erasmus+.

With Erasmus+ I went to Italy from the 9th of December till the 6th of December with my teachers, Mr George Farrugia and Ms Francesca Mizzi and also my classmates Jerome Attard, Gabor Farrugia and Nicholas Cardona.

I found out about this project when I was checking out the school's Facebook page and then my classmates pushed me into going to Italy, but overall I'll never forget the experience. At school we had various meetings about the trip and they gave us various tips about what we should pack. Clothes, a bit of pocket money and my phone were enough to satisfy me for the trip.

In this trip I didn't stay at some sort of hotel but instead we had to stay with an Italian family in Monteiasi, but the stay wasn't bad at all, I would honestly rate it five stars. The family was very friendly and the home was very comfortable and clean.

As for activities we went to Taranto, learned about the history of Italy, went to a handmade pottery factory, went to the Christmas markets, went to a the host's school and went to a factory that made homemade cheese. My favourite activity was the Christmas markets because they were decorated beautifully. At my free time I would play with the host's little brother on the Wii or play Minecraft on the Ps3. My favourite historical landmark was the Aragonese Castle.

Overall I really liked the whole trip and I would change absolutely nothing from it because it was perfect. From this experience I learnt about Italian culture, how to make homemade pasta and most of all how to live with a family that I've never seen in my whole life. I also found some new friends and we still chat with each other. I would totally recommend the ERASMUS+ project to you and my friends because it helps you to explore the world. If I have an opportunity to participate in any other similar activities, I will go.

***Jean Debattista, Malta***