

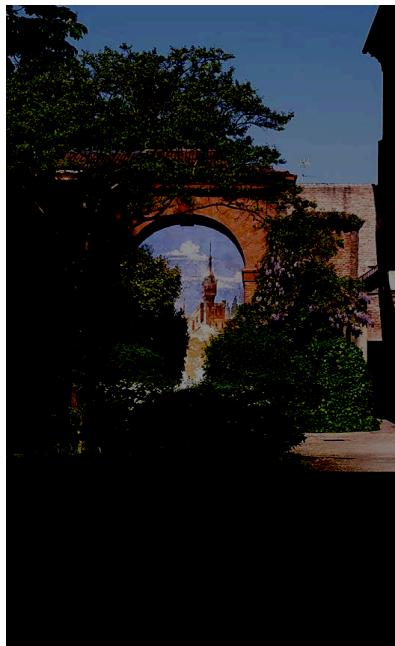
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Erasmus + “Fit for Job”

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My future plans

Once I've done my final exams in Italy (2017) I would like to return to my homeland Germany and go to university there. But before going to university my dream is it to go abroad and travel for the whole world - discover new places, new cultures, new languages and also the most famous and beautiful sights.

Even better would be to do voluntary work abroad in countries, which haven't got the high standards that you can find in Central Europe or in North America. I want to help the world, help children without many chances of a pleasing future, disabled people who can't count on the "normal" medical assistance every person in the world deserves. I could help to build up new towns, schools or streets or save endangered animals, that need human help, because other humans have destroyed their habitats before. I'd like to travel to South America, Africa or Asia to learn about their cultures, to help the people to improve their lives and maybe also to understand what a nice and relaxing life people in Europe are used to, compared to other poor persons all around the world. There are many different organisations, which send you abroad to do volunteer work. A very known example is the German association "weltwärts" - here you can choose the program you want to do, you can choose between education, health, agriculture and environment, handcraft, culture and sport, human rights and peace and many more. Normally you don't have to pay for this volunteer work but you have to qualificate yourself, having a good final exam and preferably already having some experience.

After coming back from this wonderful and fascinating experience, I'd like to share an apartment with my best friend in a big German city with lots of different activities to do and different sights to see. We've dreamed of sharing a flat since we were little children and I think that we would have great fun staying together all day long.

Probably I would start working in a part-time job to earn some money, so I don't have to be dependent from my parents and I'd love to work in a shop for clothes like "H&M" or "Bershka" because there you always see the newest clothes and you meet many people (and since I'm good at having contact with people probably it could be an advantage).

Studying tourism at university is my biggest dream because I was interested in tourism since I was little – probably due to the fact that I travel a lot since I was born. I have always been keen on the idea of planning trips, organising vacations or being in charge of a travel agency. At school I study four languages – German, Italian, English and Spanish – which I really enjoy, because they show you so much of the culture of the countries, where these languages are spoken. Still I would like to add other (more difficult) languages like Chinese or Japanese, Thai or Hindi and probably also some French and Portuguese. In my opinion knowing languages nowadays is a very important aspect for getting a job – often big concerns don't only work on a national level but on an international one and so they need employees, who know how to treat foreign customers and who know how to make contact with them, speaking their language.

What is “Erasmus + Fit for job“?

The project “Erasmus + Fit for Job“ is a project, which helps the participating students from the Progymnasium Altshausen in Germany, the Liceo ginnasio statale “Giuseppe Cevolani“ in Italy and the Riga Valsts 3. gimnāzija in Latvia to orientate themselves better with regard to their future working life. With the visit of different working sites in Germany, Italy and Latvia the teenagers learn about their competences and their interests and so also about their future possibilities in their career. In this way they learn to see different fields of work and later on it could make their choice of work much easier, having seen many different kinds of work places before.

This project also is useful to make new contacts around Europe and to unite Europe more (even if this little amount of people doesn't change much, regarding whole Europe – but if everybody would do this kind of cultural exchanges, we could become a very united and much more powerful continent). By meeting new people from different cultures and doing group activities together, you get to know these persons much better and learn to understand the different ways of living in all the different cultures.

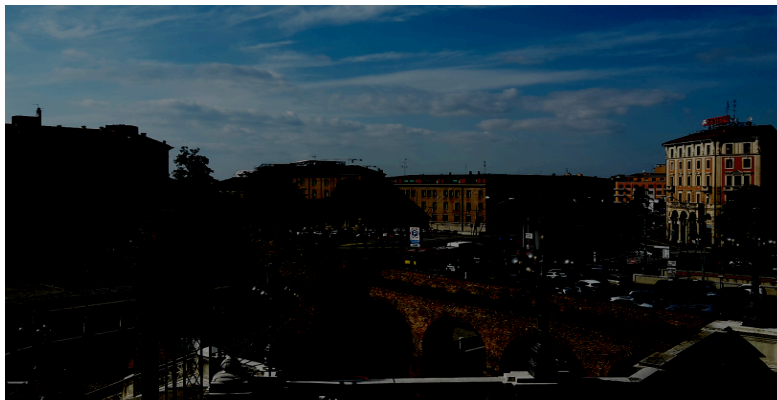
I took part in the second pupil exchange at Cento (the first one has been from the 8th of March to the 13th of March 2015 in Altshausen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany) from the 19th of April to the 24th of April 2015. We were 24 students (12 Italians, 6 Germans and 6 Latvians) and the Germans and Latvians were accommodated by the Italian students in the villages in and around the city of Cento.

Day 1

On the 19th of April my exchange student from Latvia called Kristine arrived with the other Latvian students and teachers at Cento at about 11 a.m. We welcomed our guests, they received some information about how the week is going to be and then we went home to show them their stay for the next week. She was really impressed of how warm it already was here in Italy compared to her hometown Riga.



During the afternoon we managed to go to the capital city of Emilia-Romagna together with small group of other Italian and Latvian students. Once we arrived at Bologna (the bus took one hour to get from Cento to Bologna), we went shopping in typical Italian shops, I showed Kristine the big market of Bologna, which normally takes place during the weekend and we visited the main sights of Bologna, like the "Parco Montagnola", the "cathedral of San Petronio", the "Piazza Maggiore" with the "fountain of Neptun" and the "two towers".



They got to see the typical life in an Italian city with a lot of traffic,, many people, much noise and very nice and beautiful little streets with cozy bars to drink an aperitivo or to eat a "panino" (sandwich) or a "piadina" (Italian flatbread). Surely a big cone of Italian ice cream couldn't miss and so we got an icecream too.

In the evening I offered Kristine a original Italian pizza and she was really overwhelmed from the good taste and the flat and crunchy pizza crust.

Day 2

On the second day we went to school for the first lesson and the foreign pupils participated at school to see, how school works in Italy. Afterwards we went to the most historical building of our school (our school is divided in three different buildings, scattered all over the city) and some students showed us the most important rooms of the school.



Later on we went to the “Casa Pannini” (the local town hall), where we met a delegate of the mayor of Cento called Pietro Lodi, who expressed his pleasure and joy of Cento participating at this kind of cultural exchange. He also explained that the really important things about this project aren't only the facts that we learn during this week but especially the international relationships we establish, that could be the first steps to a united Europe.



With the following guided tour in Cento with Fausto Gozzi as guide we understood the importance of Cento, it's a center full of culture and art; also because Guercino, a very famous Italian painter lived here. The guide showed us the historic places of interest like the “Rocca” (a sort of castle), the “Pandurera”, which is the theatre of Cento, the library, the other old historical theatre in the city center- which unfortunately is closed due to the earthquake three years ago – and the main square called “Piazza del Guercino” with the statue of Guercino himself.

After the lunch break we visited the most famous and international company in Cento – Baltur. Baltur produces gas burners, oil burners and condensing boilers for all over the world. It is a family- run business and it was established in 1950 by two friends Giuseppe Ballanti and Ferdinando Tura. A few years later they crossed the Fava family and in 1987 they purchased all the shares in Baltur S.p.A. Riccardo Fava is the current Vice Chairman, Managing Director and General Manager of Baltur since 1999 and he in fact was the person, who presented the company with a presentation, talking about the aims and the progress of the concern since it was founded. He talked about the range of products produced by Baltur, about the mission of the factory, the internationality of the company (partners all over the world especially in China and Japan) and the three most important components of Baltur: research, development and innovation. He showed special interest in his “ragazzi italiani” so to the Italian students, since he wants to make sure that his company remains in Italian hands and he would be very pleased to see some of their faces in the future, working with him in Cento. Following Riccardo's introduction we had a tour of the company's ground to see the different production halls and the research laboratory.



Towards the evening we went to see the „Osservatorio astronomico P. Burgatti“ (the astronomical observatory) and we were shown the sun by Dr. Davide Balboni with a huge telescope. Also he showed us a presentation about our solar system and many interesting facts about the different planets and the Milky Way galaxy.



Day 3

On the 21th of April we drove to Maranello, to the head office of the “scuderia Ferrari” (the Ferrari stable). Here we had two workshops at the so-called “Red Campus”, which is the place where the comprehensive educational programme of Ferrari is held. One workshop lasts about 75 minutes and in the first workshop, which turned out to be a presentation by an employee of Ferrari, he told us about the factory of Ferrari and a bit about the generic information about the foundation and the development of Ferrari. Ferrari is known and famous worldwide for its passion, team work, performance, sustainability and exclusivity. The most important thing Ferrari is based on is the team work. You can only succeed by being a team, not only a group of people, who try to do something together. In a team everyone has a specific important role and everyone does the thing that they can do best. Being a good team is not always easy, because you have to know well every single team member and in order to gain a smooth working process every team member has to be trustworthy, experienced, well-trained and reliable. As example of good team work he showed us the process of a pit stop in the Formula1 and we could try it ourselves.

The second workshop was mainly about advertisement and how Ferrari can maintain their image even without advertising their products in television, radio or newspapers. Ferrari is known worldwide as one of the leading car companies together with Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Volkswagen, General Motors and Ford. But quite contrary to the other companies, Ferrari produces much less cars in a year than them. This means that the demand is bigger, the customers have to wait longer for their cars and so are “tested” if they are loyal towards Ferrari and “worth it” to get such a special car.

The second part of this workshop was dedicated to the work environment, which is also a special aspect in this famous company. The importance is given to how the work places look like: there are big windows, many green plants (the color green makes you relax) and water to make the workplace as natural as possible. It is also important that it's noise-free or at least that the noise level is kept very low and the workplace has to be clean and dust-free to avoid errors in the production.



Also the guided visit at the Ferrari museum was very interesting and we learned much about the history of different kind of cars, about the first attempts to race in the Formula1 and about the life of Enzo Ferrari, the founder of Ferrari.



Day 4

Our fourth day we spent in Ferrara, the capital city of the province (which includes also Cento). It's a city qualified by UNESCO as World Heritage Site because of its beautiful sights from ancient times.

Here we visited the "Consorzio del Turismo Ferrara", which is a union of many operators of tourism at Ferrara. They told us that the tourism in Italy isn't completely developed yet and that this is a pity because Italy is the country with the most beautiful sights in the whole world. Working as a tourism operator you have to search gaps that others didn't find yet and make them work. In Ferrara or in Emilia-Romagna in general for example they are working on a concept to increase bicycle tourism, in fact the region of Ferrara is perfect for this kind of tourism, because it is surrounded by flat land, so everybody – even little children or old people – can make a bicycle tour easily without too much effort. In this way people can also pass by little old towns with beautiful things to see, which they probably wouldn't even go to visit, if they made holidays with the car.

Another important thing to increase the number of tourists in the region is the presence on the internet. Nowadays almost everybody searches places to spend their holidays on the internet and if a city or a region represents itself well on the internet and on social networks, it's more likely that people decide to stay there.

I found this presentation especially fascinating, since I'm very interested in tourism and it is my dream job. I've learned how to work in the tourism industry, especially in Italy and I think that I will remember this presentation and the things he said about tourism, if I should go to university. Who knows – maybe I'll come back to Italy as an operator of tourism!

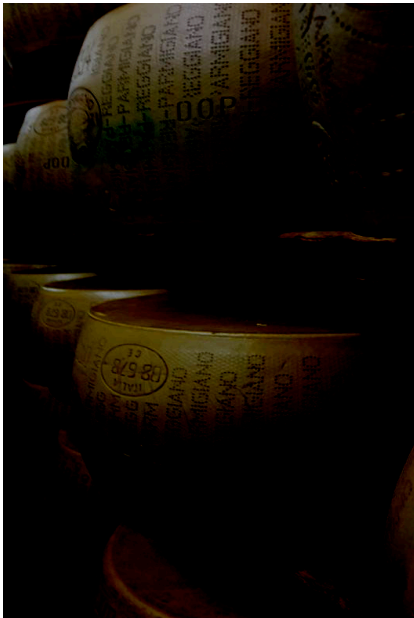


Eventually we had a guided tour in the city center with Ilaria Nagliati and she showed us the most famous and important sights, like for example the Castello Estense (castle of the Este family), the cathedral of St. George, the Jewish Quartier and the synagogue of Ferrara.

Day 5

On the 23rd of April we went to visit the Vocational School “Spallanzani” at Castelfranco Emilia, which is specialized in agriculture and hotel management. In Castelfranco Emilia there are produced two of the most famous Italian specialties worldwide – the “Parmigiano Reggiano” and the “Aceto Balsamico tradizionale di Modena”. We had the chance to see how this famous and good-tasting cheese is produced and also were allowed to try some.

The “Parmigiano Reggiano” was first made several hundred years ago at a Benedictine monastery and is still handmade, in contrast to many other cheeses. The milk that comes from regional cows is used fresh and without any additives and it takes about 16 litres of milk to make 1 kg of cheese. The most important person of the way from milk to cheese is the cheese maker, who has to be very skilled and experienced. After warming up the milk in a copper cauldron, he has to add natural whey starter, which makes the milk curdle. Once curdled, the milk is broken down into small granules with a big whisk called “spino”. Then follows the cooking process, in which the cheese maker has to stay very careful when he controls the heat. When the heat is shut off, the granules sink to the ground of the cauldron, forming a compact mass, which is lifted from the bottom and divided into two parts. Once the cheese is done, the marks of origin are applied to each wheel of cheese and the cheese ages for at least 24 months.



Traditional Balsamic Vinegar (or Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale) is a costly type of balsamic vinegar produced in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy. Unlike inexpensive "Balsamic Vinegar of Modena" , Traditional Balsamic Vinegar is produced from cooked grape must, aged at least 12 years.

Before we had the lunch break, the director of the agricultural school held a presentation about the different internships realized by the students. Some went working in a garden centre, others at a farm and a few students stayed at Castelfranco to make cheese and vinegar.

The lunch was served by some pupils from the part of the school, which is specialized on hotel management and so the food was self-cooked, the tables have been laid by them and they brought us the different dishes in the right order.

Conclusion

I really enjoy being part of this project, because it shows you so much, it makes you cosmopolitan, more independent and it wakes the desire in you to go abroad, to see different cultures and different kinds of life. I was really sad when the exchange students left, because we got to know ourselves very good and I've found a lots of new friends. Unfortunately I probably will not see the German students any more but I'm really looking forward to go to Riga at September!

I hope that we are going to have as much fun as we had during the week here in Cento – since we are all the same age, more or less.

This project also makes you improve your language skills, especially English. But I already know some words and frases in Latvian too, so I hope to improve my “Latvian“ even more when I travel to Riga with some of my school mates.



Sources pictures

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private photos

photos from Paola De Matteis