



Diary by Anke Mathilda Heitsch, Annika Petrizky, Jette Marzahn & Mailin Behrens

### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February

We met at 6 am at the Airport in Hamburg, Gate two. I think everyone was still very tired. After we said goodbye to our families, we got rid of our luggage. It will



follow us to Greece. Yes, to Greece! I have never been in Greece before. We are two teachers and four students, from Germany. Our first flight was to Frankfurt. When we started there were still heavy clouds all over the sky, but during the flight we broke through them and were able to admire the bright glowing sun, that shined on the endless seaming structures of the clouds from above. This flight lasted round about one hour. The flight went well. It was the third plane that I've ever been on. We changed in Frankfurt to our next plane that was meant to bring us to Thessaloniki. This flight lasted much longer. I think round about three hours. We were flying with Lufthansa, which granted us the privilege of one bottle of water and one small

chocolate per flight. Everyone had some food on his carry-on baggage. After the most unusual breakfast I can think of. Most of us tried to catch some last sleep – not me! I was staring the most time out of the small window. Sometimes there were gaps between the clouds, through that I was able to see snowy mountains. Later I managed to read some pages in my book, but it wasn't easy to look away from this incredibly beautiful view. A short time before we landed it was possible to see Thessaloniki. The Mediterranean Sea touched the Coast and thousands of houses from white to beige stood close together on small hills. We landed safely and went to a cafe to eat and drink something. It was about 2pm, when we met the students and the teachers from France and Portugal at our bus to Serres. This was a longer drive. First every country sat separated and spoke in their own languages, but after some time the curiosity won and we started to speak with each other. The Bus finally stopped in front of the school. We got our luggage and went to the cloud of Greek host students. My



host found me very quickly. We said goodbye to our teachers and were led from our hosts to their home. I haven't been in the flat for a Minute, when I already got so much food for dinner that I would never be

able to eat. I got my own drawer for my luggage and even an own bathroom. We went out and meet some of the other hosts, there guests from different countries and other friends. We walked past the town hall, the pedestrian Zone and several shops and cafes. When we got home, I feel asleep immediately. I was so tired after this long day with all these new impressions. *By Annika Petrizky*



**Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February**



Monday, our first real day in Greece. First things first, we had to test ourselves in the school. Unfortunately, a student from Spain was tested positive,

so she had to get straight into a hotel and into isolation for 5 days. After all that was organized, we joined the school on the schoolyard. Every Monday morning the

whole school gets together, sings the hymn, the headmaster tells what's going to



happen in the week, they pray, and one student hoists the flag. When the ritual is finished, the students go, grade by grade, back into the school. We, on the other hand, met a local politician in the school. After this we watched the school videos from every country. We, the German students, did most of our presentations, like the consequences of covid crisis and the answers of our sport survey. Finally, we had workshops. I was in the group where we first went out on the schoolyard and a French teacher told us how we can take care of our bikes and posture. The other workshop was a short Pilates class, with a Greek PE teacher. At 2 o'clock we were finished in the school.



My host family cooked lunch and one thing I will remember, is that saying "no" to food, even if you are not hungry anymore, is kind of like saying you don't like them. On that day me and my host sister walked through



the city and met some other students, we went into a café and had waffles together. In the evening, we met many of the other



students as well as their hosts in a restaurant. After eating, everybody got up and danced to Greek music. The others showed us some traditional dances. We all had a wonderful evening together. *By Anke Mathilda Heitsch*

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**



Today was a really fun day! It started with some presentations about national sports. It was really interesting to find out about different countries taking pride in their sports and their team's participating and succeeding in competitions.

Next, we got to create our own soaps. Choosing colours and decorations made me feel like an excited little kid again. We were divided into two groups: Group A and Group B. While one was crafting their individual soap, the other was learning about ergonomics. It should be appreciated, that this was student based. We learned about the importance of

correct sleeping positions, which I thought was worth mentioning, since rest is such an



important aspect of taking care of your body and ultimately yourself. Additionally, we were shown that it is better for someone else to put a backpack on your back, to protect your shoulders and posture.



Back to presentations, each country showed their traditional game, which later would be part of the 2HB Olympic Games. Fast forward to that, all of us went outside, into the sun and participated in every country's game. This and a helpful presentation taught everyone something about the roots of Greek sports, since it is where the Olympic Games originated.

After we all got a nice lunch break to spend some time with our host families, we returned to the school in the afternoon to do an orienteering treasure hunt. We had to find out "who the perpetrator" was and used maps to find our way around the school yard to reach the hidden spots. After that, around 5 p.m., the students had a free evening to create new memories. *By Mailin Behrens*

## Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

We got up at 7 am. At home I wake up much earlier than this. I didn't have much time to get myself ready, but on the third day with this procedure I was getting used to it. For breakfast I got so much food again, that I had to leave some on my plate. My host brought me to the school. I tried to remember the way, but although it is not a long way and I have been going this way already so often I would not be able to walk it by my one. Serres is very different to Hamburg, where I am from. At school we



listened to more presentations. Some of them finished with a Kahoot game. Kahoot is an internet page which helps by interactive presentations. After the presentation the students scan a QR-code and fill out a quiz, with questions to the presentations theme.

After these presentations the bus, that already brought us from the airport to Serres, was already waiting for us in front of the school. We drove for a long time. Away from Serres through some villages and with a spectacular view to the

mountains in the distance. As we arrived at our destination there is already a small dog welcoming us all excited. Now we are at a horse therapy centre. A man showed us the horse boxes, the other facilities and told us that they have to survive without any support from the state. They depend on



private donations to also help people out of difficult circumstances. Those of us, who were interested were also to ride on one of the horses.

Our next bus stop is several kilometres further back in direction of Serres. A woman led us around on the first location of the sports university. We were able to take part in a sport's lesson for a short amount of time. We drove to the second



location of the university, where we also were shown how disabled children can take part in the school sports lessons. Our last bus ride for this day ended in a park, where we picnicked. After everyone was full, we packed our things together and started our way up to the acropolis of Serres. The



highest point of the town with the ruins of an ancient building. After the short hike on the steep path, we took a break in the café next to the Ruins and admired the incredible view all over Serres and to the mountains at the horizon. On our way down, we walked past three old churches. After we saw all the paintings in one of the churches, we said goodbye to each other and went back to our hosts' homes. We ate dinner, again so much, that I thought I would never have to eat again! We went to a bowling centre and met some of the other students. It was a great evening. When we went back home, I was already really tired and slept as soon as I lay on the bed. *By Annika Petrizky*



**Thursday 24th February**

Today started with some very impressive and brilliant presentations on body image. They included a video, about the disparities between one's self-perception and that of others, which moved a lot of people. We were also participating in a meditation and reminded ourselves of positive affirmations.

Next, we got on the bus to start our day trip. First stop: Alistrati cave. We were guided through the hauntingly beautiful cave and learned about the decorative power of rock formations. Additionally, there also was a robot guide called

Persephone, just like the Greek goddess of the underworld.



Our second destination, was the archaeological Amphipolis Museum, where we saw exhibits of ancient Greece. Definitely one of my favourite

visits! Near the museum is a monument called Lion of Amphipolis, where we all took a group picture.



After having seen and learned a lot, we spend the afternoon at the beach, searching for shells and rocks and feeling

the breeze on our faces. On the way back we sang on the bus, while looking forward to spending the evening with our hosts and dressing up for Apokries. Apokries is the Greek carnival, where everyone puts on costumes or fun clothing and goes outside to see fireworks and just to have a good time! *By Mailin Behrens*

### Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February

Today we had to present our presentation on addictions and prevention. Although we were all a bit nervous the presentation turned out to be good. We also focused on what our school does in the way of prevention – peer mediators, social training, career guidance, presenting successfully, etc. 😊



After that we got to learn some of the traditional dances of Greece, and it was really fun. Some of the students of Portugal and Belgium then showed us some of their traditional dances as well and I think one thing that was really interesting and cool about it was, that you really could see the differences between the dances from the different countries.

Then athletes came to our school and presented us two different kinds of sports and to my excitement, we even got to try them out by ourselves.

Ms. Walsh and I next got to meet the mayor of the city. I found it really surprising, that



he made the time for meeting us, because the mayor of Hamburg would have never made the time for meeting students of the Erasmus+-project. Although I still think it is a very different thing, because Hamburg is obviously a big city and Serres is very small and cute. The mayor was really nice and wanted to welcome us into the city. We also made pictures with him and the room we met him in was also very nice.



When we got back to school the others were already working on puzzles where we had to draw our favourite memories of the whole week on. In the end we glued them on a big poster, and it looked really cool. After that the sports teacher from France meditated and did stretching exercises with us. Two people had to work together, and one always had to do something on the other, for example, to pull and push their leg. It was really relaxing! Then it was the official end of the week and we all received certificates and our soaps that we made.



We also, like we did the whole week, took lots of pictures.

In the evening all of the Erasmus students went to a restaurant to end our week with a little celebration. But the most special thing about that evening was, that the Spanish girl, that caught covid at the beginning of the week, was finally negative again and got to at least spend the last evening with us. I was really glad and happy to see her get to know all of the people and



to see this huge smile on her face. The restaurant kind of turned into something similar to a club later this evening, because they had a live band which was really loud, it was so loud that my ears hurt from it, and they had special party lights. Every one of the Erasmus+ team started to dance, also the traditional dances we learnt earlier, and it was the perfect ending, to a perfect week. *By Jette Marzahn*

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February**

On Saturday we had to say goodbye. Our flight went at 6:45pm but we had to take the bus earlier. We had to be at the school at 10:50am. To be honest I was really glad that I got to sleep a bit longer, because I was very exhausted from the whole week. When I woke up, I finished packing my suitcase and ate Bougatsa - my favourite

Greek lunch. I even took some of it with me to Hamburg :)

After I was done packing and eating, we drove to the school, where the bus was already waiting for us. It was really sad saying goodbye to everyone and a lot of people even started crying. Portugal, France and Germany took the same bus, and after driving for almost an hour the bus let France and us (Germany) out to go into



a shopping mall, because we still had a lot of time left until our flight was going to leave. The shopping mall was nice, but also a bit boring to be honest. There wasn't much to do and we had to kill a lot of time. After we walked around the shops for some time, Lamia (my new friend from France) and I went into a little Café to spend the rest of it there. We talked a bit to the waiter, and he was really nice. A thing that I noticed throughout my whole trip in Greece was, that they are very polite and friendly people.

When we finally arrived at the airport, we did some work for the Erasmus+ project, just like the productive people we are 😊. I was very happy that we shared a flight with the French, because this way I got some extra time with Lamia. Sadly, I didn't get to say goodbye to her properly, because her flight was right after we arrived in Munich so we just got to hug

briefly :/ We arrived in Hamburg at 11:00pm.

I really worshiped the whole Erasmus+ experience. I got to meet a lot of new very nice people and some new friends. I think especially for me it was very easy to go up to those people and get to know them, because I am a very extroverted person and also pretty open I'd say, but even if you are an introverted person, you still got to be included. Everyone was interested in you, so that I think no one had to feel alone or left out. That was really amazing, I think. I also really enjoyed connecting with these people from different countries because I find it really fascinating talking about the similarities and differences we have in our cultures, and of course I also loved speaking in English the whole week, since I love communicating in English.

Overall, it was an amazing experience and I would absolutely love to do it again.

*By Jette Marzahn*

