



# AJ INTER JOURNAL

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INTERNATIONAL  
YOUTH DAY

THE OLYMPIC  
GAMES 2024

ERASMUS+  
TRAINING COURSE  
IN ESTONIA

WELCOMING NEW  
ESC VOLUNTEERS



# INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY



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# DÍA INTERNACIONAL DE LA JUVENTUD, IN SALA PAUL

‘ALZA TU VOZ: LA JUVENTUD CONDUCE EL CAMBIO’

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On the 12th of August, each year, takes place the International Youth Day. Initiated by the United Nations in 2000, its aims are to bring attention to youth issues and promote the young population’s potential, on local and international levels.

On this day, all public authorities are encouraged to give visibility to the youngsters. Overall, this event is a way to promote peace values among the new generation and to empower it in our different societies. International Youth Day 2024 is themed “From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development.”

For this very special day, Jerez townhall invited us to attend an event in the Sala Paul (“Espacio Jóven”, a space dedicated to youth), on the 9th of August. We had the chance to meet and speak to a lot of the city’s associations such as the Scouts of Jerez or el Dado Trucado which organizes activities around board-games and role plays.



We introduced ourselves, then volunteers from Oxfam Intermón were serving a breakfast made out of the fair-trade products that you can find in their shop : chocolates, dates, fruit juices, cookies... Yummy! We were offered shirts written “Espacio Jóven” and a dance teacher was here to train us on a choreography (you can find the final result on instagram!). In the end, we had some traditional songs and dances to enjoy the rest of the event all together.



The townhall's delegate of participation and youth Sra. Carmen Pina was here all along with the deputy mayor Sra. Susana Sánchez, and we also had the chance to meet Sra. María José García-Pelayo, mayor of Jerez, who gave a speech about the importance of youth participation to the civil society.

In Jerez, the youth is represented through the “delegación de juventud” of the townhall and by “la mesa local de juventud.” This last entity is a consortium of multiple youth-dedicated and/or youth-run organizations, for the representation and participation of young people in the city.

**Each and every one of us should remember that the youth of today is the builder of tomorrow. The future lies in how we treat them.**



On the Instagram accounts @aytojerez and @salapauljerez you can find reels of the Sala Paul's event. Don't forget to follow @salapauljerez to get infos on youth related events in the city.

Also, you can find on our TikTok account @ajinter the video we made of this day! You can find the United Nations's International Youth Day celebration ceremony here : <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1b/k1bt4pbogh>



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# ERASMUS+ TRAINING COURSE IN ESTONIA

# GREENYouth

## Greater Resilience through Experiential Education in Nature-based Youthwork

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In my opinion many people started to lose their connection with the nature. We are living in a block of tall buildings, feel stress sometimes in traffic to go our work place or school with a private car or public transportation, we do not know the growing a simple fruit or vegetable, we do not practice walk in soil with barefoot.

Now imagine a community where they open their resources for Erasmus+ participants, fruit and vegetable garden, forest, the lovely river "Piusa", sauna to explore and learn Estonian culture and forest therapy. The project coordinators planned amazing experimental activities for us and this experience was really one of the best Erasmus+ project I have ever been so far.

**August 19th to 25th, I (Hande) was in Tellaste Küla, Southern Estonia to learn about forest therapy. The project set of simple techniques designed to help youth workers connect with natural spaces. The core goal was to reduce barriers and increase the capacity of youth workers to use forest therapy and green spaces in both rural and urban settings.**





# WHAT IS A FOREST THERAPY?

Forest Therapy is like spending time in nature to help people feel better, both in their body and mind. Imagine going for a walk in a peaceful forest, where you can breathe in the fresh air, listen to the birds, and feel the soft ground under your feet. This kind of experience can make you feel calmer, happier, and more connected to the world around you.

Forest Therapy is based on the idea that being in nature is good for you. It helps people stay healthy by connecting with nature and improving their relationships with others. It's not just about walking in the woods—it's also about understanding how being in nature can help with certain illnesses, making people feel better alongside other treatments they might be getting from doctors.

**So, in simple terms, Forest Therapy is like taking nature's medicine to feel better inside and out!**





In the “Green Youth” training course project every day we started with some relaxing yoga and fun icebreaker games to get to know everyone. After that, we joined different activities, like creating art inspired by nature, practicing forest therapy, and making cool land art.

One of the coolest parts was exploring our senses. We used our ears to listen to the forest sounds, our nose to smell the different seeds and plants, our hands to touch nature & creating clay, and taste Estonian food by its history.

We also had chances to join in on local traditions, like enjoying an Estonian sauna & later swim in cold lake and sharing stories around a campfire. The program encourages me to use natural products, reduce waste, and take care of the environment around me.



**This Erasmus+ training course camp was not just about acquiring new skills—it was also about deepening my connection with nature and expanding my toolkit for youth work. Thank you for Justin, Rea, Trin, Eva, Triinu, Puri and Paabu. I will always remember you.**



# THE OLYMPIC GAMES 2024



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# Reflections on the 2024 Olympics



## *From a sports addict's point of view*



### *My passion for swimming*

Later on, I got into the competitive swimming world. Therefore the Olympics got an even bigger importance in my life; since in swimming, this is the absolute number one event that matters.

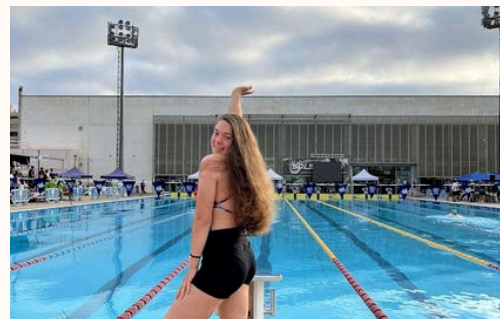
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Only the best swimmers in the world can even qualify and this is the event that every swimmer is dreaming about and working for day in and day out.

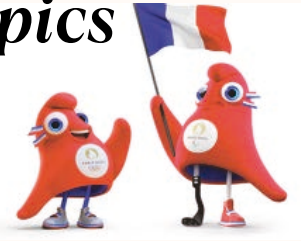
### A little bit about my background with sports



My name is Lily, I am from Hungary, a very competitive nation, so I have been following the Olympics since I was a little girl.



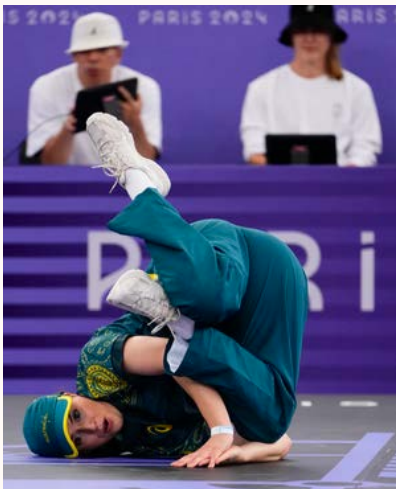
# *Fun facts about the Paris Olympics*



*It is interesting to look at some of the fun facts that made the Paris Olympics special :)*

1. Surfing broke the record for the farthest competition to be held outside the host city. Surfers will compete in Tahiti, 15,000km from Paris.

2. The official mascots of Paris 2024, The Phryges, are modelled on the red phrygian caps during the French Revolution of 1789.



3. The new sport at the Paris Games was breakdancing.

4. The Paris 2024 Games will achieve gender equality in athlete numbers for the first time ever.

5. For the first time ever, the Opening Ceremony was not held in a stadium, instead it was along the iconic Seine River, with athletes sailing down the river for 6km.

6. Competitions showcase existing Parisian landmarks instead of building of building entirely new stadiums and arenas like many countries have in the past.



# Controversies at the Paris Olympics

*However, besides all the nice and interesting things, there were also many controversies around the Paris Olympics, even prior to the event.*

## 1. “Extravagant” opening ceremony performance

The drag queens’ performance resembled the Last Supper created many controversies among many people, stating it disgraced Christianity.

## 2. Gender debates

The case of Imane Khelif, an Algerian boxer, who „stole” the gold medal from female athletes also created many debates among professionals. Many people didn’t agree with the fact that Imane was fighting against women, since in one of her previous tests, male chromosomes had been found.



## 3. Doping allegations

In April 2024, the World Antidoping Agency published an article which stated that twenty-three top Chinese swimmers tested positive for the same powerful banned substance seven months before the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021 but were allowed to compete, just as in Paris as well. A lot of swimmers found it very unfair.



## *Final thoughts on the Paris Olympics*

Besides all the controversy and problems that overshadowed the Olympic Games, it is always a huge event and a lifetime experience participating in any form. After all, Paris did a great job, organizing such a mega event is an extremely hard task to do, and apart from the negative voices, there were many positive ones as well, both from the athletes and spectators.



I hope after the next Olympics I can also talk about my own experiences.:)  
See you all in LA!



# WELCOMING NEW VOLUNTEERS



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# A SUMMER IN JEREZ

**HOLA, SOY MARGARIDA!**

**(IN ENGLISH, DAISY)**

*I am a Portuguese 20 year old girl from the southwest of Portugal.*

*I just finished my 1st year of college in Management and decided I wanted to do **something useful** with my summer, create lots of **memories** and also to get out of my **comfort zone**.*



*My favorite things in the whole world are **music** (any kind of it actually), **movies** (especially movies from the 90s and 00s), **books**, going to the **beach**, watching **sunsets**, watching sunsets on the beach and **travelling** and learning about new cultures.*

# A SUMMER IN JEREZ

HOLA, SOY MARGARIDA!



I come from a **tiny village** in the south of Portugal called **São Teotónio**, which barely has anything to do, but near there are a LOT of beautiful **beaches**, with clear water, nice sand and with almost no people.

If you ever go to that area, I totally recommend going to beach (especially my favorites: the **Alteirinhos**, **Nossa Senhora** and **Amália** ones.

Another suggestion is doing the **Rota Vicentina**, the hiking and biking trails leading through **forest areas, rural villages** and along the **coast** of that area, so you can explore the beautiful culture and landscapes .



# A SUMMER IN JEREZ

**HOLA, SOY MARGARIDA!**

*Last September I moved to **Lisbon** to go to **college** and I fell in love with the city. It is really calm with **lots of life** and things for young people to do! My favorite places there are the **Miradouros** (the viewpoints), where you can see the whole city and the river and watch the most beautiful sunsets, the **Belém Tower** and **Sintra** (an absolutely wonderful village right next to Lisbon with beautiful palaces).*



*In university, I am part of a Portuguese tradition called **Praxe**, which is basically an **initiation for the freshmen** into the institution and to promote **integration**, through traditions, “rituals”, humor, joy and parodies. Being part of Praxe is one of my favorite things in college.*

# A SUMMER IN JEREZ

HOLA, SOY MARGARIDA!



Also one of my favorite Portuguese things is **Pastel de Nata**, I absolutely love it! There is **nothing more Portuguese** than sitting in a café in the morning, having an **expresso** and a **pastel de nata**. I would also say that the famously known **Pastéis de Belém** are very overrated and overpriced, so any pastel from other local cafés is **way better**.

But enough talking about Portugal since in the couple months I won't be there but here in Jerez, exploring **Andalusian culture** and getting to know people from **many countries**.

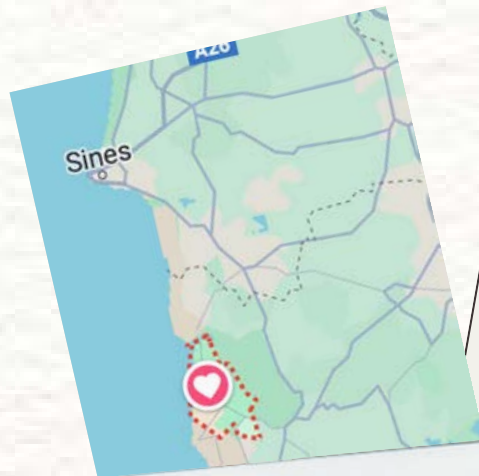


**And I hope when it's time for me to go home I will have more friends, experiences and stories to tell!!**

*from Alentejo*  
**TO MADRID**

*Hola a todos!*

My name is Beatriz and I'm 20 years old. I am Portuguese and currently live in a small town in the southwest of Portugal.



*Me & my mom*



*Almograve*

# from Alentejo TO ANDALUZA

If you want to discover the region I would advise you to do the Rota Vicentina trail, this is the perfect way to get to know the hidden beaches, try the Portuguese food, and be immersed in the local culture.



*Caldeirada*  
My favorite Portuguese dish

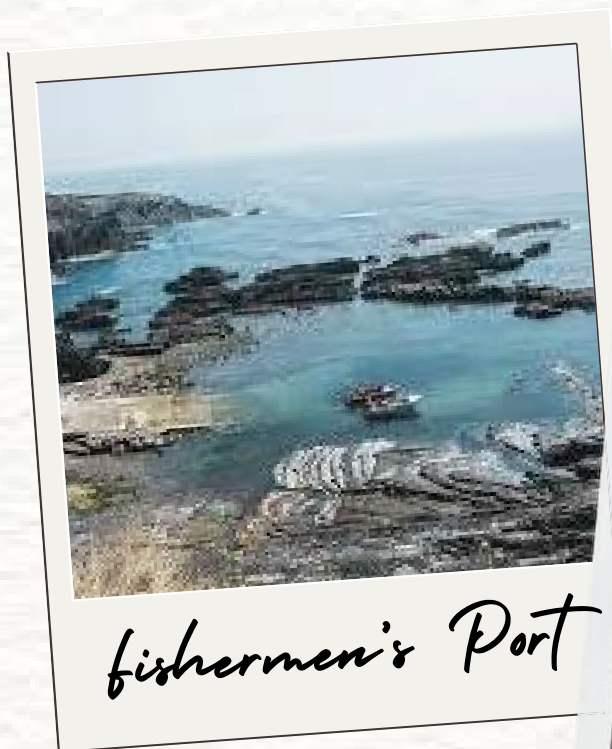
*Rota Vicentina Trails*



*from Alentejo*  
**TO ANDALUZA**

For me, my favorite place is the fishermen's port in Almogrove. I spend most of my summertime there, swimming and resting close to nature.

I spend most of my days making jewelry and selling at the beach, that is my passion and a great way to meet new people from all over the world!



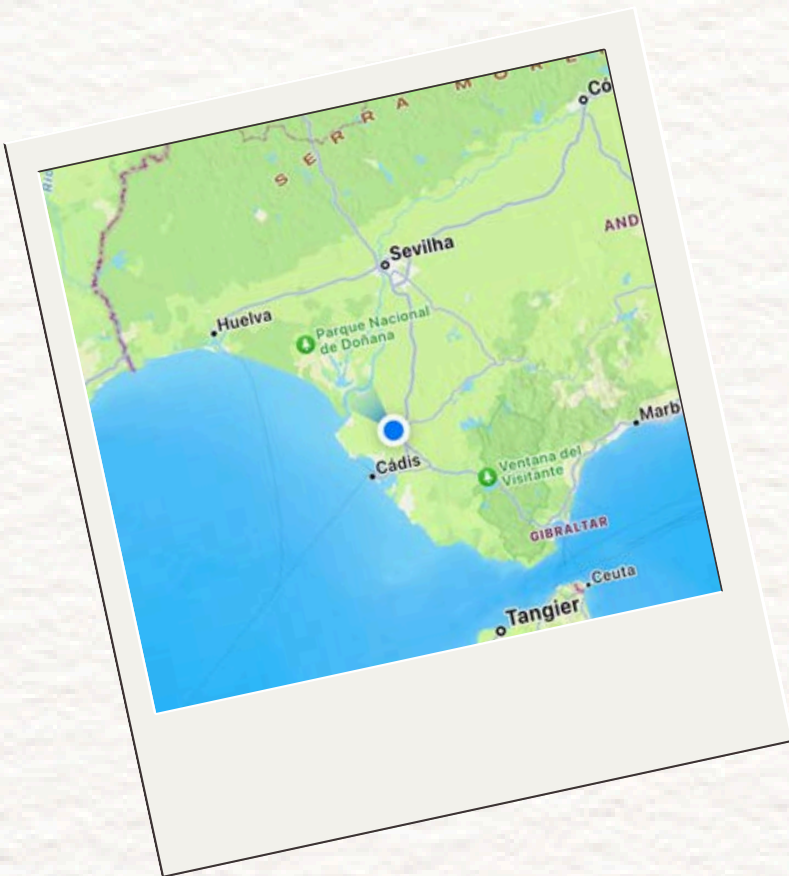
*fishermen's Port*



*Making jewelry at the beach*

*from Alentejo*  
**TO ANDALUZIA**

I applied for Jerez because I want to experience the Andalusian culture and learn how to speak fluent Spanish. I love to learn new languages and I am sure I will learn a lot with this experience.



Currently, I am working on my small jewelry business and learning more about content creation, I believe the work I will do with Inter will help and motivate me.

I hope this experience makes me feel more confident about my future!

*See you soon!*

L I L Y  
C S O N K A

*Hola a todos!*

My name is Lily,  
I'm 23 years old  
and I come from  
Hungary, Győr,  
but I did live in  
Italy, Denmark  
and the  
Netherlands, as  
well.



I finished Sports Management in Denmark  
and I have been working and volunteering  
at high-scale swimming events, such as  
World and European Championships.  
I also swim myself and I am absolutely  
loving it.



L I L Y  
C S O N K A

## Budapest

One of the most beautiful cities in Europe is Budapest.

The city is mesmerising, especially the Buda, the „posh” side with the castle, the Parliament or the breathtaking Margaret Island. Budapest is also very international with many students from abroad and tourists from around the world. Moreover, the city can offer various options for entertainment, cultural or sports activities for people of every age.



PS: please don't confuse Budapest with Bucharest

L I L Y  
C S O N K A



## Why I decided to become an ESC volunteer

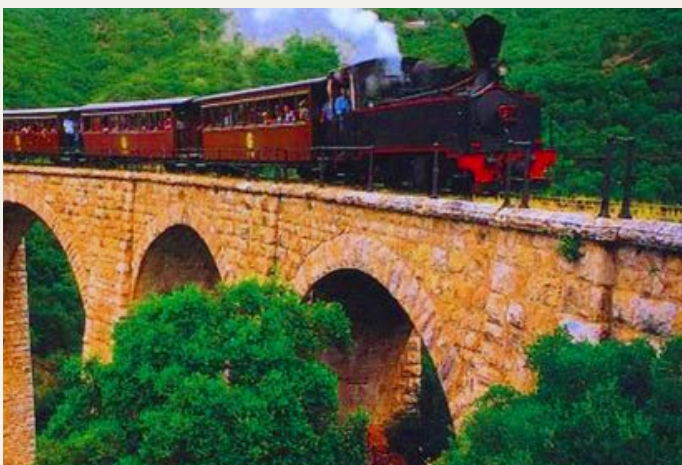
I have been volunteering for 7 years and I have done a few youth exchanges, as well. I have always liked travelling, going abroad and now I am at the phase in my life when I wanna try out a lot of new things and experience as much as possible.

### So I thought...

Volunteering at AJ Inter would be a great opportunity to immerse myself in the Spanish culture, learn new skills and become a better version of myself.



**Hasta luego!**



## MAGDA FROM GREECE

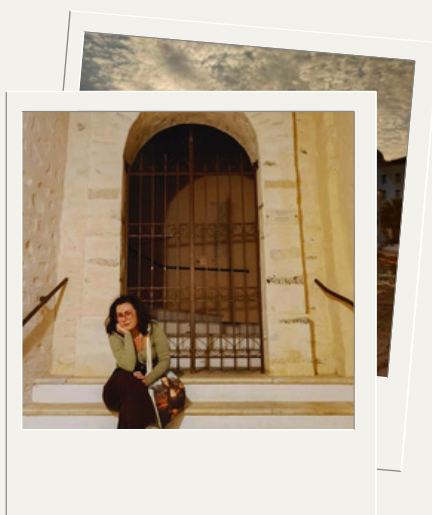
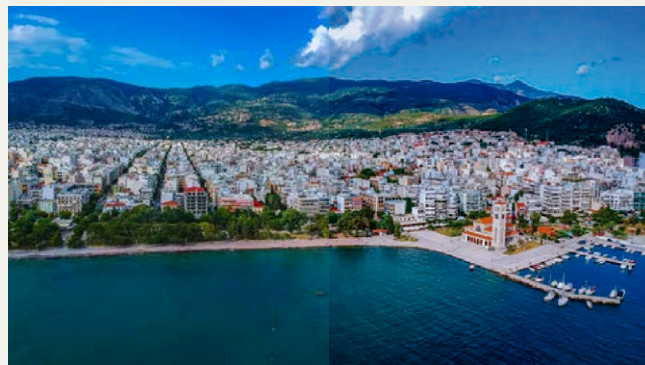
Hola! I'm Magda, a 23 year old primary school teacher, who loves learning new skills, exchanging views with other people and travelling around the world. I've moved to Jerez de la Frontera in July 2024 to become an european solidarity corps volunteer on AJ Inter after a life-changing training course here back in June, where I got to meet all of the amazing people in the NGO and the previous volunteers. From the first moment I came to this place, I fell in love with the beautiful landscape, the architecture of the city, the warmth of the people and the light hearted lifestyle.

For me, it's a real blessing being here and getting to practice not only my spanish skills but experience the reality of multilingualism, translanguaging and intercultural dialogue. I'm coming from a town very alike to Jerez, named Volos. Volos, my hometown, is located in the center of Greece, and is considered one of the 10 biggest towns/cities in my country. It's actually a combination of the picturesque mountain Pelion and the Pagasitikos bay with its numerous 26 beaches.

One of the things I love doing in my hometown is walking by the sea coast either to go to my university classes or to catch up with my friends. The so called “Argonauton” road near by the sea has taken its name by the famous greek myth “Jason & the argonauts” and it has many cafe, bars and tsipouradika.

Apart from that, I adore going to the many tsipouradika Volos has. It is estimated that the town has over 300 bar restaurants called “tsipouradika” who serve many different fish and the famous greek drink “tsipouro”.

One of the places I love hanging out is the University of Thessaly, where I’m taking classes for a MsC and its students’ cafe, where I am drinking coffee with my friends, play board games & usually study for the classes. It’s a place I consider as my second home for the last 6 years and where I feel free & secure to share my ideas, be creative and feel seen.



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