



AJ INTER JOURNAL

*Enjoy the
opportunities!*

JUNE 2025 - Vol.60



5TH ANNIVERSARY OF AJ INTER JOURNAL

ERASMUS+ YOUTH EXCHANGE (ECO CULTURE EUROPE)

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR INTERN LAURA

RECENTLY JOINED ESC VOLUNTEERS



5TH ANNIVERSARY OF AJ INTER JOURNAL



A Heartfelt Thank You to Local and International Youth Contributors:

As we celebrate the 5th anniversary of AJ INTER Journal, we're honoring a journey shaped by the voices, creativity, and efforts of young people from across Europe.

Over the past issues, youth from Spain, Romania, Türkiye, Italy, Estonia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, France, Portugal, Armenia, and Greece have contributed their time, ideas, and passion to build a space for dialogue, reflection, and youth expression.



Each article written, every photo shared, and all the moments captured in this journal reflect the diversity, solidarity, and vision of a new generation committed to creating change.



To every intern, ESC volunteer, and young writer who left a mark on our pages: thank you. This 5th edition is dedicated to you, the heart of AJ INTER Journal.

Here's to many more stories, connections, and voices to come!
Happy 5th Anniversary!



Gracias!

Muğtümim!

Teşekkürler!

Grazie!

Aitäh!

Danke!

Merci!

Köszönjük!

Obrigado!

Երիտասարդություն!

Ευχαριστούμε!



Youth Exchange

ECO CULTURE EUROPE

22/06 - 01/07



INTRO

In the last week of June (22/06 – 01/07), a youth exchange project took place in Jerez de la Frontera, involving six countries: Spain, Portugal, Romania, North Macedonia, Türkiye, and Estonia.

The participants' ages ranged from 16 to 63 years old, including the group leaders.

This project was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and coordinated by AJC Demeter.



During this week, all the people had the opportunity to share their own country with each other, and several topics were covered, such as: European Union, Sustainability and Stereotypes.

The project also included cultural trips to Cádiz, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and Jerez de la Frontera.

By the end of the week, it felt as if we had lived a whole month together!

ENERGIZER



The day one of the project has aimed to break the ice between people and know better each other. We want to highlight two of the most fun and creative activities that we start from the first day.

The Energizer – a short, interactive dynamic used to increase participation and motivation, improve focus and awaken the group's energy, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon.

SECRET FRIEND

The Secret Friend – everyone had one secret friend to offer something like (offer to help with something small, find a creative way to make your secret friend laugh today, compliment this person in a creative way, secretly leave a small snack or note in the envelope).

Just on the last day we found out who is our secret friend.



EUROPEAN UNION

COMPLAINTS AND RIGHTS

The European Union was at the center of this youth exchange, where several presentations were made about it.

We learned that there are 3 services provided by the EU, which help citizens to resolve certain issues.

The European Ombudsman - investigates complaints about poor administration by EU institutions or other EU bodies;

SOLVIT - helps citizens and businesses resolve problems with public administrations in other EU countries;

European Consumer Centres - it is a pan-European organization that provides free information, advice, and assistance to consumers on their rights when shopping and traveling within the European Union, Norway, and Iceland.

YOUTHPASS

Youthpass is not just a certificate of participation in projects supported by the Erasmus+ Youth program and the European Solidarity Corps, it is an European recognition instrument designed to identify learning non-formal and informal outcomes achieved.

There are eight different competences, such as: multilingual; personal, social and learning to learn; citizenship, entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression; digital; mathematical; literay.

EU OPPORTUNITIES

The EU promotes several projects for young people such as: Youth Exchange, Training Courses, Youth Participation Activity, Discover EU, European Solidarity Corps projects and Solidarity projects.



SUSTAINABILITY



NATIONAL EVENINGS



FEED 5 WITH 5

Other of the big topics on this project was the **sustainability** and some activities were done in this context, such as: feed 5 with 5, where each group had 5 euros to buy food and prepare a snack for 5 people.

After that we did a **MasterChef** competition evaluated by 3 different juries: chef to sustainability, chef of taste and chef of the eye (presentation).

The pountation was between 1 and 5. This activity received very positive feedback from participants.



PRACTICES FROM EACH COUNTRY

All the six countries brought a piece of their country to share with the other participants, on this activity they did presentations of each country, where we can learn more about: what is the capital, fun facts, food, typical parties, and tourist attractions.

On the **National Evening**, everyone could try the tastes of each country, learn the typical dancing, listen to music, sung by participants and some countries even handed out small souvenirs like magnets, postcards, and bracelets.

Sustainability practices implemented by each country were also presented.





NORTH MACEDONIA

It's a country in the heart of the Balkans and borders with Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Greece and Bulgaria.

Kumanovo is the second-largest city in the country and it is a city where Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Roma, and Vlach communities live together, respecting both Christian and Muslim religions;

It has more mountains and mountain peaks than any other country in the world, there are 34 mountain peaks that are over 2,000 meters high, most of them have never been visited by people.




Capital: Skopje

EU: Candidate for
(since 2005)

TÜRKİYE

The city of Istanbul is located in two continents: Europe and Asia.

It's the country where the most tea is drunk per capita in the world.

 The solar power plant built in Konya under YEKA (Renewable Energy Zone) has a capacity of about 1000 MW and it's one of the largest solar projects in Türkiye.

GAP is a human-centered regional development project implemented in Upper Mesopotamia. The project includes the construction of dams, hydroelectric power plants, and irrigation facilities on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.



Capital: Ankara

EU: Candidate for
(since 1999)

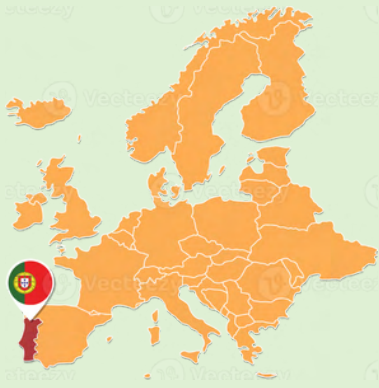


PORTUGAL

Portugal's story as a nation begins in 1143, when Afonso Henriques declares himself king and signs the Treaty of Zamora, marking independence from the Kingdom of León.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal leads the world in maritime exploration, with explorers like Vasco da Gama and Pedro Álvares Cabral, the Portuguese reach India, Brazil, and parts of Africa and Asia.

In 1910, the monarchy is overthrown, and the First Republic is born, the peaceful Carnation Revolution ends the dictatorship and brings modern democracy to Portugal.



Capital: Lisbon

EU: 1986



There are three main renewable energy: solar, wind and hydropower, in 2016 the country run only on renewable energy during 4 days.

ROMANIA

At the **School in Park** Buzau they selectively collect and encourage hundreds of children, parents and grandparents, who participate in weekly activities, in this endeavor through sustainable workshops, in which play and toys are subsequently made from recyclable materials and elements of nature.

They aim to reduce exhaust emissions, by replacing the public transport with electric buses, encouraging cycling by arranging bicycle lanes, providing citizens with electric bicycles, encouraging walking by transforming some areas of the city from car areas into pedestrian zones.



Capital: Bucharest

EU: 2007



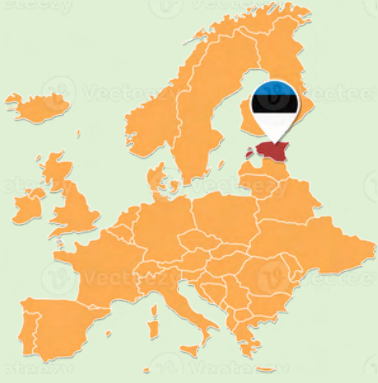
ESTONIA

Located in Northern Europe, bordered by Russia, Latvia, and the Baltic Sea.

In summer, especially around June, Estonia experiences “white nights” where it barely gets dark at all.



Sustainability is part of the school curriculum in Estonia.



Digital governance/ e-services - citizens can do almost everything online (safely and securely): vote in elections, pay taxes, sign contracts, renew prescriptions, check medical records, and book doctor’s appointments - saving enormous amounts of paper, energy, and travel.

Estonia is often called the “most advanced digital society” in the world.

Capital: Tallinn

EU: 2004

SPAIN

Flamenco is a Spanish artistic style, originating in Andalusia, which combines music, dance and singing.

Jerez de la Frontera is a famous city for wine and horses. It is where flamenco was born, it is very linked with gipsy people and gitano communities.



Fair Trade - It is a global movement that promotes more sustainable trading practices, and encourage people to buy local products; The city of Jerez is one of the most important in this practice.

Spain is planning to introduce a nationwide deposit system for single-use beverage containers which is set to take effect in 2026. This system will involve consumers paying a deposit on beverage containers which will be refunded upon return.



Capital: Madrid

EU: 1986

STEREOTYPES

Related to this topic, concepts such as **stereotypes**, **discrimination** and **prejudice** were discussed, one of the activities was analyzing various scenarios within the different concepts.



After that one of the most in-depth activities of the project followed, where each country described the opinion that their country has in relation to the others, or often the information that is passed on to them.



In conclusion we discuss whether these stereotypes about countries are true or simply unfair. At the end, we realize that regardless of the opinion we may have about a country, often without knowing it may be wrong, and we should always try to obtain more information before creating stereotypes (When we put stereotypes, we kill the fear of unknown).

The background features a complex abstract design. It includes a grid of small brown dots in the top right, a grid of small green dots in the bottom left, and a grid of small blue dots in the bottom right. Large, flowing, wavy lines in shades of green, blue, and yellow sweep across the page. A prominent yellow shape with a brown outline is located in the upper right, and a blue shape with a yellow outline is in the lower right. The overall aesthetic is modern and dynamic.

TRIPS

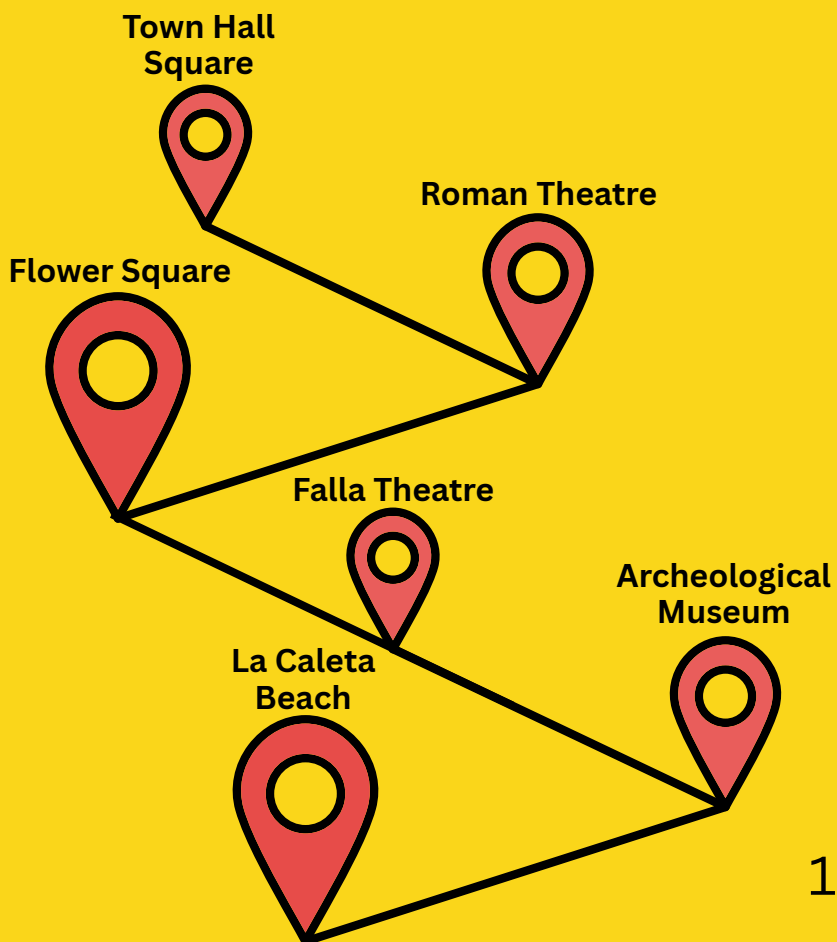
CÁDIZ

SANLÚCAR DE BARRAMEDA

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA



CÁDIZ





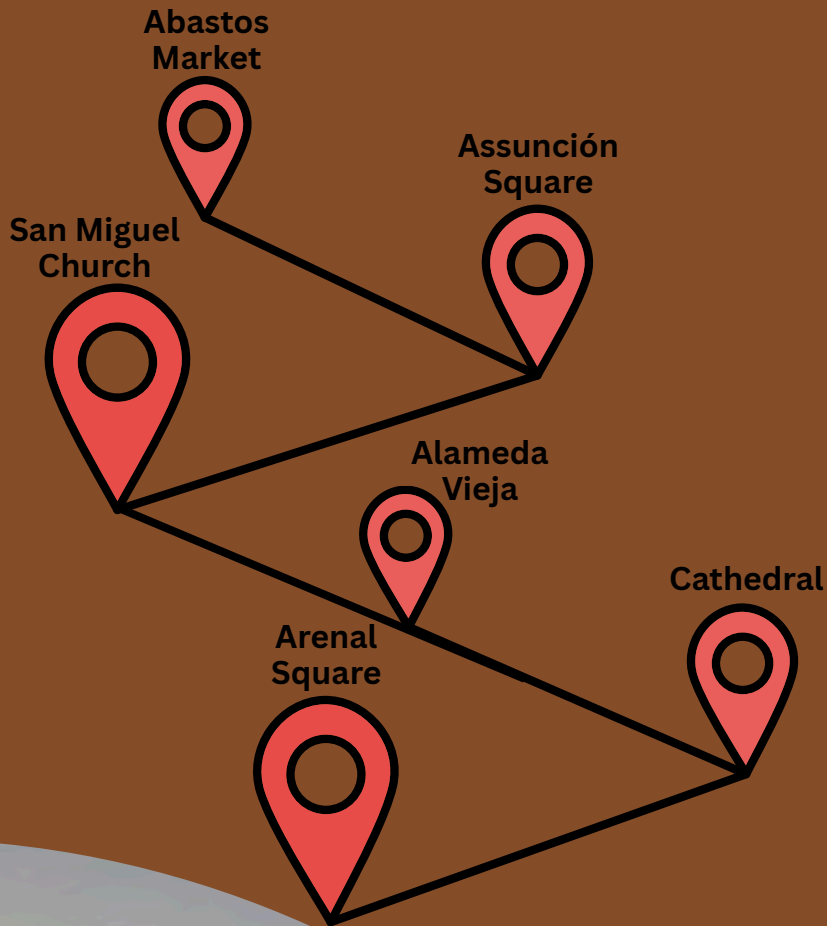
SANLÚCAR

DE BARRAMEDA



JEREZ

DE LA FRONTERA





PARTICIPANTS' OPINION





 **Lucía**

In my opinion, eventhough some things can be improved, it was an incredible proyect with really good activities that made you work in groups and improve your social skills and with great trips too.



 **Berit**

Taking part in the EcoCulture Youth Exchange in Jerez was an unforgettable experience. I learned a lot about sustainability and how small actions can make a big difference in our everyday lives. The workshops were creative and engaging, and I really appreciated how we could share ideas with people from different cultures. The trips, especially to the beach and the city center, helped us bond as a group and experience the local culture. I'm really grateful for all the memories and new friendships!



 **Yiğit**

The project was great for me. I made some new friends from different countries and it provided me with some array of knowledge which is useful for me to pay attention to some sustainable activities. We learned the difference between some notions, we learned the importance of local foods for sustainability.



 **David**


I really enjoyed my Erasmus project in Jerez de la Frontera. It was an amazing experience where I learned a lot and got to know a beautiful city. I also made many new friends from different countries, and we shared unforgettable moments together. I'm very grateful for this opportunity and will always remember it fondly.



 **Iosif**

This sustainability-themed project in Spain was an incredibly enriching experience! The activities were great, made to bond each person between them and their culture. Also, the trips were fun, interesting, showing Spain rich history and deepening our understanding of Spain culture. Each country team had amazing people, easily to connect with each other, that made the end of the project feel like a sad goodbye.



 **Simona**

All in all the project was great, we had different activities every day which made it interesting. The group was with people of different ages which allowed us to hear different opinions on given topics. All in all everything was good except we had a bit too much free time which could have been used more effectively but either way we used that free time to think about what we are going to do after the activities finish. Wonderful opportunity to have, and hope to experience it next year once again.



 **Oscar**

Participating in this project has been like traveling to five different countries in one week for me. The most valuable thing I've taken away from the project is the new friends that now I have in countries like Portugal, Macedonia, Romania, Estonia, and Turkey, thanks to the wonderful opportunity the project gave me to meet and connect with people from other countries, something you sometimes don't get just by traveling. In fact, I recommend everyone participate in a project like this at least once in their lives because I believe it's a very powerful tool for breaking down the stereotypes and prejudices we have about other countries. In addition to learn about best practices shared among participating countries and new tips about sustainability, you have a great time doing group activities, from more specific workshops to fun energizers that help you to overcome fears and embarrassment and build trust within the group. This experience has opened my mind and given me the opportunity to learn about their cultures, traditions, food, and even dances thanks to the national evenings. Thanks to facilitators and Erasmus+ for making this possible.

OUR PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO TAKE PART OF THIS PROJECT

YOUTH EXCHANGE - ECO CULTURAL EUROPE

NORTH MACEDONIA	TÜRKİYE
<p data-bbox="248 741 727 824">Youth Association KREATOR Kumanovo</p>  <p data-bbox="300 1077 671 1106">kate_dimovska@yahoo.com</p>	<p data-bbox="959 741 1251 779">Limit Gökyüzünde</p>  <p data-bbox="895 1077 1310 1106">limitgokyuzuyouth@gmail.com</p>
PORTUGAL	ROMANIA
<p data-bbox="304 1211 667 1249">Município de Odemira</p>  <p data-bbox="304 1496 671 1525">juventude@cm-odemira.pt</p>	<p data-bbox="852 1211 1358 1249">Asociatia Hair Redivivus Buzau</p>  <p data-bbox="922 1496 1289 1525">postoveitolea@yahoo.com</p>
ESTONIA	SPAIN
<p data-bbox="225 1632 746 1671">NGO Edela Eesti Arenduskeskus</p>  <p data-bbox="339 1917 639 1946">marika@edelaesti.eu</p>	<p data-bbox="991 1632 1209 1671">AJC Demeter</p>  <p data-bbox="943 1917 1262 1946">ajcdemeter@gmail.com</p>



Goodbye article Laura



After three months, it's time to say goodbye to a small but meaningful chapter of my life, and with it, the end of my academic journey. These past few months have been a time of personal growth, discovery, and overcoming challenges. Every single day brought a new opportunity to learn – not only about work, but also about myself. From the very first moment, I felt like part of the team, thanks to the empathy, kindness, and support of the volunteers. Their openness made it easy to build genuine friendships that I truly value and will carry with me beyond this experience. It hasn't always been easy – there were times when I had to step out of my comfort zone, face my fears, and trust myself a little more. But those are the moments that helped me grow the most.



One of the challenges I'm most proud of is having improved my English. Communicating daily in a second language wasn't always easy, but it helped me gain confidence and fluency, and now I feel much more comfortable expressing myself. This internship has not only allowed me to develop professionally, but also personally. And even though my time here has come to an end, the memories, lessons, and people I've met will stay with me for a long time. To everyone who was part of this chapter, thank you. Thank you for trusting me, for teaching me, and for being there throughout this learning journey. I leave with a full heart, a more open mind, and the certainty that this experience will be a solid foundation for whatever comes next.





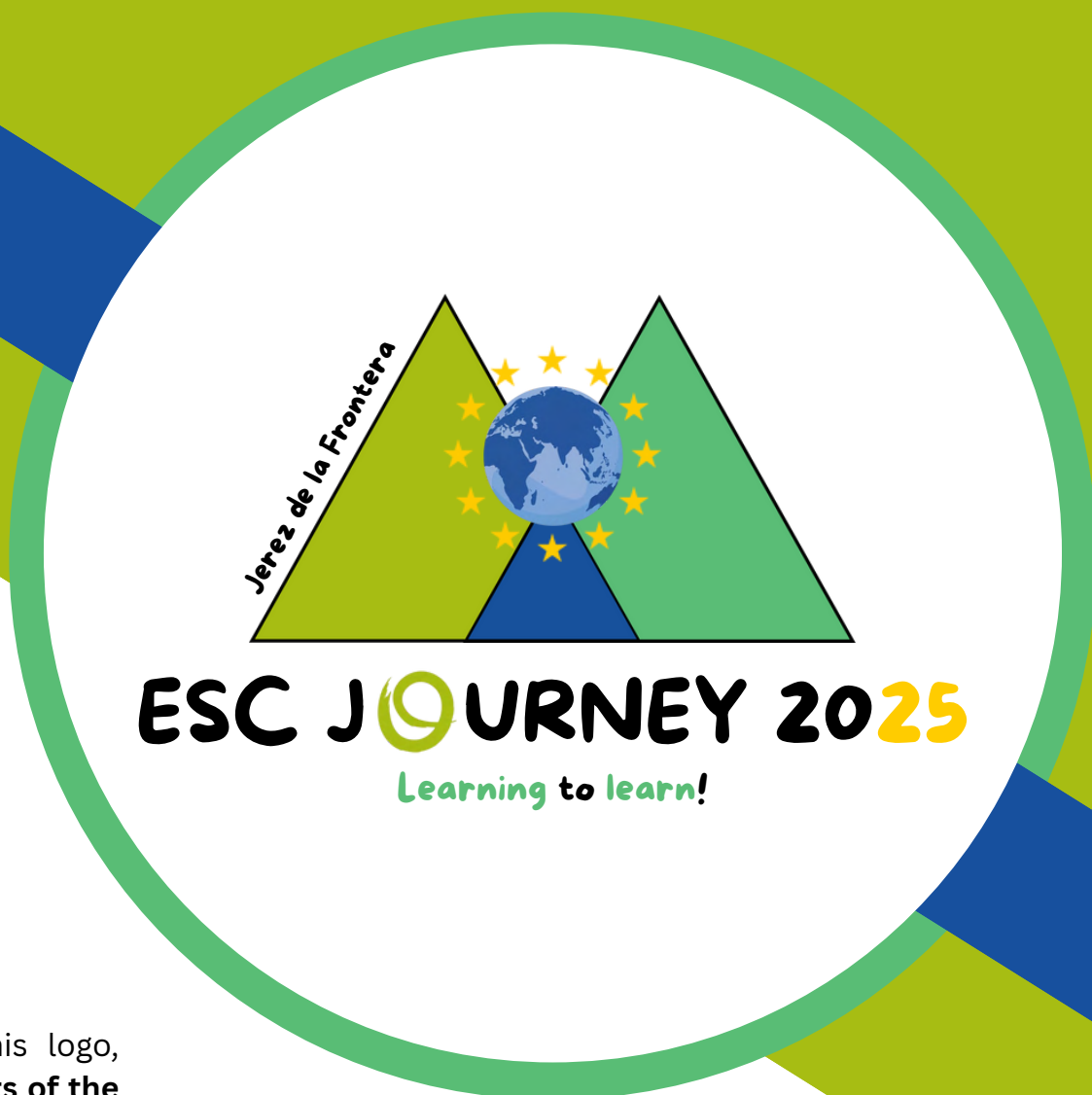
Thank you



ESC JOURNEY'25

LOGO

We welcome two short-term volunteers from Portugal for the summer. They have created a logo for their project, which we found very creative and such a great idea, so we wanted to share it with you here.



Design

The idea of this logo, was gather parts of the logo of each association that brought us to this project (Município de Odemira, CORE Centro de Aprendizagem, Asociación Juvenil Inter and European Solidarity Corps).

Project

The next step was to create a name and it couldn't be more direct, because we are starting our **ESC Journey in Jerez de la Frontera**.

Slogan

We created a slogan, inspired by the Youth Pass "**Learning to learn**", an expression that reflects all the adventure.

DISCOVERING MYSELF

LIFE EXPERIENCES



Padel

I found this sport 3 years ago. This made me meet a lot of people and different places.



Gym Life

The gym life is not always easy, but when you do a difference in the people life, it is rewarding.



Portugal

There is a mix between beautiful landscapes and a deep portuguese culture.



Spain Trips

Me encanta España (Sevilla, Madrid, Setenil de las Bodegas, Ronda, Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza).

Discovering myself as an ESC Volunteer

My name is Ana Catarina, I am 26 years old, I am from São Teotónio - Portugal. I decided to think outside the box (for me) and change my full-time job, which I have been doing for 4 years (after my degree in Sport), as a Personal Trainer at the Gym, to try out a volunteer project in Jerez de la Frontera - Spain.



I always were a sporty girl, sports always had in my life, in addition to practice Gym, at the moment my hobby is playing Padel.

More than a hobby, traveling has become part of who I am.

One of the many reasons to like Portugal is the mix between beautiful beaches, landscapes and many cities to know its history and visit the buildings and monuments.

Apart from Portugal, I believe that Spain is the country where I have visited more places. So, I want continue to collect my fridge magnets and postcards here.

Seeing that I am talking about fridge, I can confess that I don't know to cook so well, it is an obstacle that I think I will have time enough to practice during my new adventure.



JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA, ANDALUCÍA

Volunteering in Andalucía

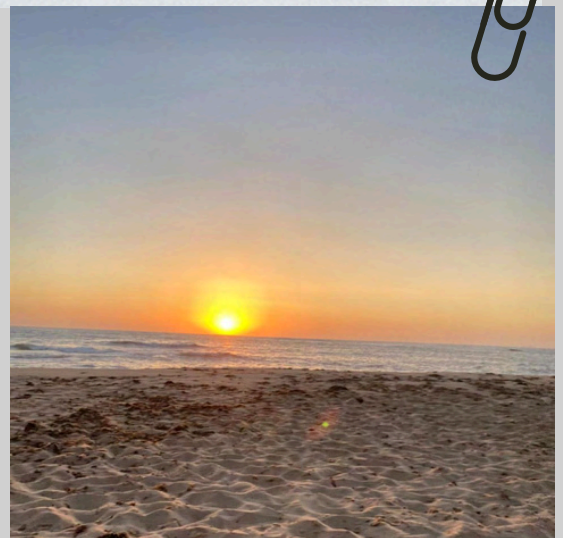
I have been saying that I really wanted to do a volunteer project, but I had never taken the next step and this time, I am here. I found this project on Digital Marketing and it is an area that interests me a lot. It is also a good opportunity to improve my english and my spanish, but I hope my brain doesn't collapse with three languages at the same time.

Pero, creo que la cosa más difícil es sobrevivir al calor...

AJ INTER JOURNAL



VOLUNTEERING 2025



WHO AM I?



I'm Maria, and I'm 25 years old. I come from São Teotónio, Portugal.

At the moment, I finished my degree in Physical Activity and Health Lifestyles.



Since I was very young, I've enjoyed helping others and making a difference in people's lives. I like learning new things and stepping out of my comfort zone!



I am passionate about nature and the sea, since I feel safe and connected! In my free time I like to discover new activities.

From an early age, I discovered my passion for sport, more specifically, swimming. In which, I competed at national level for about 7 years. Currently, I'm no longer competing, but I'll always be connected to sport!



Volunteering at the AJ Inter Association in Jerez de la Frontera

The AJ Inter Volunteer Association of Jerez de la Frontera was founded in 1997 with the main goal of promoting European mobility projects at the local level. Thus, AJ Inter aims to promote European values such as solidarity, respect, and cooperation.

Being involved in volunteering with AJ Inter in Jerez de la Frontera is a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth. It is extremely rewarding to participate in and contribute to meaningful social projects, support local communities, and promote intercultural exchange

On the other hand, volunteering at AJ Inter allows you to experience new cultures and opportunities that will surely be unique!



Expectations, Motivations, Objectives



My expectation for this volunteering experience at the AJ Inter Association in Jerez de la Frontera is to develop my communication skills with others, as well as to learn how to ride a bicycle over the course of these two months.



Regarding my motivations for undertaking this volunteering, it is to be able to contribute and assist with the activities or tasks whenever needed. Being able to participate in such a unique and special project is extremely rewarding for me!



Finally, my main goals at AJ Inter are to leave my mark through volunteering and to contribute positively to the associated projects.



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