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ERASMUS+ YOUTH EXCHANGE “PROVE YOU’RE NOT A ROBOT” IN ROMANIA



Co-funded by
the European Union

“PROVE YOU’RE NOT A ROBOT” YOUTH EXCHANGE IN SARATA MONTEORU- BUZAU, 10.11.- 20.11.2025

This article is meant to share our experience in the youth exchange “Prove You Are Not a Robot Youth Exchange”, a project coordinated by Hair Redivivus Buzău and taking place from November 10th to 20th, 2025, in Sărata Monteoru (Romania). The exchange is co-funded by the European Union, making it possible for young people from different countries to meet, learn, and grow together. The main objective of this project is developing media literacy and critical thinking competences for youngsters, which is essential in a world where information spreads quickly and it is not always easy to tell what is true from what is false. Through workshops, debates, practical activities, and collaborative work, we will explore how to become more aware, responsible, and active users in the digital environment.



For four of us, this was the first time participating in an international youth exchange, which adds an exciting mix of enthusiasm and nerves to the adventure. For the rest, it is a perfect opportunity to continue learning, discover new realities, and strengthen our social and cultural skills. We are looking forward to living this experience, sharing what we learn, and showing once again that young people are more than ready to face today’s challenges.

The youth exchange “Prove you’re not a robot” in Romania has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life. Not only did I learn more about the topic, but I also became more aware and improved as a person, and on a social level, it was incredible. I had the opportunity to meet people from all over Europe, including other Spaniards, Greeks, and Latvians.

What I take from this project is the intercultural enrichment, which is diving into another culture, such as the Romanian one, and sharing two weeks with such cosmopolitan people.

Genuinely, the Erasmus+ experience is something I recommend to everyone around me.



I think everyone should have the privilege of experiencing what it is like to immerse yourself in a parallel world for a few days in which the only thing you do is learn, socialize, and enjoy. These projects change your life, just as they did with me, and I hope many more people have the opportunity to live something like this as well.

Lidia Luque

About my experience, I really enjoyed every day I spent there. It helped me a lot to improve my English skills. Moreover, I met new people from all around the world and learned from them and their cultures. I loved the sense of family that all the participants created together. From this experience, I take away many positive and useful things that will help me in my daily life on a more personal level. An example: It helped me with AI issues, now I know more about this tool and I can detect fake news more easily.



I recommend it to anyone who wants to try a similar experience, because there are always new things waiting for you!

Miguel García Ortega

During the ten days I spent in the Erasmus project in Sarata-Monteoru, I had an amazing experience that exceeded all my expectations. The natural surroundings, the intercultural activities, and living together with people from different countries created a unique atmosphere where I learned, grew, and enjoyed every single day.



The group dynamics, creative workshops, and long conversations made us all feel like a small family. It has helped me realize how much you can learn when you step out of your comfort zone, and how valuable it is to know how to work in a team and with people from other countries, who always bring perspectives different from your own. I returned home with new friendships, a more open mind, and the feeling that I had made the most of every moment.

Belén Miguez

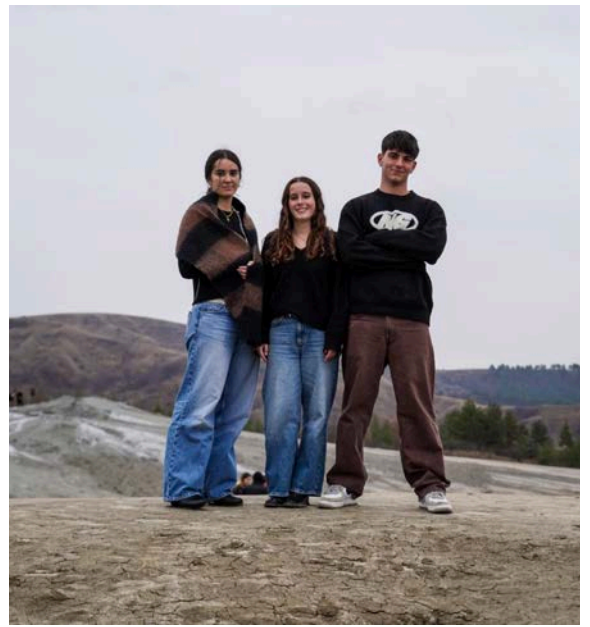
Before I start, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share our experience in this wonderful project. First of all, this is my first Erasmus project, and I can say it has been quite a challenge for me. One of the main reasons why I wanted to participate was to step out of my comfort zone. Regarding the learning process, the coordinators were very kind and helped me with everything. It was really useful. We worked on theatre, acting, editing, and talked about the history of AI and the big impact it has on our daily life and our future as well. Every activity was dynamic and creative.



We always had a great time together while also getting to know each other better. Something that I love the most was the interaction in English and sharing our cultures and learning from each other and as a end of the Erasmus we got a farewell party.

Katrin

My experience there was truly exceptional. Every day offered something new and I genuinely enjoyed every moment I spent in that environment. It significantly strengthened my English skills, not only in daily communication but also in more formal and academic contexts. Beyond the language aspect, one of the most enriching parts was meeting people from diverse backgrounds. Sharing time with individuals from so many different countries allowed me to learn from their stories, perspectives, and traditions, which broadened my understanding of the world take with me a wide range of positive lessons.



This experience has helped me grow, become more confident, and develop new skills that I know will be useful in my everyday life. One clear example of what I learned is that I became much more aware of how important it is to step out of my comfort zone. I realized that many of the things that once made me nervous for example, speaking in front of others or starting conversations with strangers, became natural once I allowed myself simply try. This helped me grow more confident and open-minded, not only linguistically but also on a personal level.

Irene Rodiles Lago



FUN FACT ABOUT ERASMUS+



37 YEARS OF EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

Did you know that Erasmus was created in 1987? Originally, it was a program only for university students.

Since 2014, it has been called Erasmus+ and has expanded significantly. Today, it includes high school exchanges, internships abroad, youth exchanges, volunteering, professional training, and sports projects.



Erasmus+

Today, since 1987, over 15 million people have benefited from the Erasmus+ program, including students, young trainees, teachers, and educational staff.



THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME ERASMUS+

Did you know that the name Erasmus comes from Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Renaissance philosopher and humanist famous for traveling across Europe to study and teach? His name symbolizes mobility, cultural exchange, and open-mindedness, values that the Erasmus program aims to pass on to young people.

ERASMUS+ IMPACT

Did you know that about 1 in 3 students in Europe knows someone who has participated in Erasmus+? The program inspires friends and family with curiosity and a love for discovering other cultures.



ERASMUS+ BEYOND EUROPE

Not all Erasmus+ exchanges happen in Europe. Thanks to extra-EU partner countries like Turkey and Morocco, students can take part in international programs and experience different cultures and education systems.

ERASMUS STORIES

Since 1987, when the Erasmus programme began, it has done more than help young people study and grow across borders. Real connections have formed, and an estimated 1,000,000 children have been born to couples who met through Erasmus—a true symbol of love, diversity, and European integration. Studies also show that 27% of former Erasmus students met a long-term partner abroad. Behind every mobility lies a story: Erasmus changes lives, not just CVs.



FOUR-LEGGED ERASMUS



Do you know that every year, some students move abroad with their cats and dogs? For example, Zenia from Greece moved to Rotterdam for her exchange semester and she didn't arrive alone. She brought her ginger cat, Curkie, with her. Jing, who moved from China to Denmark, couldn't imagine Europe without her dog. So new country, new degree, new challenges, but every morning still starts the same way, with a walk alongside her four-legged best friend.

Joanna from Poland has studied in Portugal, Germany, and Denmark, and her dog has accompanied her for most of the journey. Having a dog during Erasmus helped her maintain a healthy routine, fight loneliness during the first weeks, and start conversations with locals in parks, streets, and dog areas.



YOUTH WIKI

What is Youth Wiki ?

The Youth Wiki is an **online encyclopedia** that provides detailed and up-to-date information on youth policies in **34 European countries**.

Its main goal is to strengthen evidence-based **cooperation** and **peer learning in the youth sector**, supporting both the European Commission and national governments in their policy decision.

On the platform you can find: comparative reports, comparative overviews, country profiles , news and updates on youth policy developments



Why was the Youth Wiki created?

The Youth Wiki was created in 2015 to fill a significant knowledge gap. Before its creation the information on national youth policies was limited, fragmented and difficult to access.

Since then the platform has become a key resource for producing **comparative studies on relevant topics** such as young people's mental health, youth mainstreaming, and access to housing.



What are the benefits for young people?

The Youth Wiki helps young people to understand better their **rights**, the **opportunities** available to them and how youth policies work. It promotes transparency, supports active participation and gives youth organisations reliable data to advocate for better policies across Europe.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEERING



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEERING

Every year, the International Day of Volunteering highlights the importance of solidarity, active citizenship and community engagement.

This year, Jerez marked this day with a public celebration that combined community participation and artistic expression. As part of the programme, our organisation took part in two meaningful activities that allowed our volunteers to connect with the local community in different ways.

One of these activities was related to a street art initiative: the creation of a large-scale mural of around 200 square metres, located on the back wall of the Palacio de Deportes. The artwork was designed and painted by the local artist Décima, as a tribute to volunteering and collective commitment. Our volunteers collaborated in the process by painting the background of the letters, supporting the development of the artwork. After the base was completed, the artist added his own creative layer, transforming the wall into a finished piece of art.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEERING

In addition to this, our organisation also participated in the International Day of Volunteering event organised by the Local Volunteering Council. During the event, two volunteers from our organisation supported the initiative by helping with the catering, contributing to the smooth running of the day. The event brought together different volunteers, organisations and citizens.



Together, these activities highlighted that volunteering can take many forms. Whether through creative collaboration, organisational support or community participation, the involvement of volunteers plays an essential role in strengthening social bonds.

The International Day of Volunteering reinforced the idea that volunteering is built through collective effort and shared responsibility, promoting active citizenship and contributing to a more connected and engaged community.



VISITING THE “FRONTERA RADIO”



Visiting the “Frontera Radio”

On Saturday, the 13th of December, three of our ESC volunteers had the opportunity to participate in an activity in collaboration with the “Frontera Radio” in Jerez. The aim was to promote our work and our organisation, as well as to raise awareness about EU opportunities. We had a casual conversation with the session’s moderator, during which we talked about our personal experiences as volunteers living in a different country.

When I first found out that we would be taking part in this activity, I felt really nervous but also excited, because I had never been on the radio or in a radio studio before. I was definitely looking forward to this new experience.



I honestly expected the radio to be quite small and I thought it would just be a local radio that doesn't have so many listeners.

When we arrived at the studio, we were warmly welcomed. The moderator already started asking us a few questions to get to know us better and to check our level of Spanish. After that, we did a quick sound check with the headphones, and at 12:00 we started the session and went on air. Everything happened within about ten minutes, so there was no time to get nervous.

We were all a little overwhelmed, and for me it felt very surreal to be on the radio. Hearing my own voice through the headphones for the first time was especially strange, and I couldn't really believe that people were listening to us at that exact moment. The atmosphere in the studio was very relaxed and there was no pressure, which made me feel quite comfortable. The conversation was very spontaneous, as we didn't know in advance what questions we would be asked. We simply tried our best to answer in Spanish, and I think it worked out quite well. Whenever we were missing a word, we switched to English, and it was then translated for the listeners.

At one point, the moderator asked us how many people we thought were listening to the session. I honestly guessed around 500. When he revealed that there were actually 25 000 listeners, I was completely shocked and could hardly believe it. That moment made the whole experience feel even more unreal.



All in all, I think this experience was incredibly interesting, fun, and memorable. We shared our volunteering experience. It helped me step out of my comfort zone, gain more confidence, and see communication from a completely new perspective. Being able to share our stories and promote volunteering on such a large platform was truly rewarding. I would definitely recommend everyone to visit a radio studio at least once in their life, as it is a unique experience that teaches you lots of things.

CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT



CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT



On the 16th of December, we had a great movie night together, we watched the film Elf, a classic Christmas movie from 2003. a movie, that is always there to make people laugh.

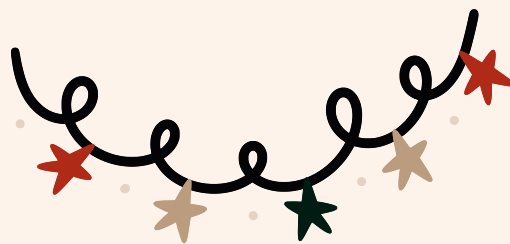


The film is about Buddy, a man who grew up thinking of being an Elf. When he found out the truth about his identity, he travelled to New York to meet his real father. Buddy is a very innocent human with a strong Christmas belief. His kindness and honesty made the movie into a really good Christmas comedy. The film was a great choice to watch during the holiday season.





The room got decorated in beautiful Christmas decorations. Our team was decorating and building a Christmas vibe during a few hours until our room gave us a good feeling. The decorations were so beautiful, that we decided to leave them for the following weeks too.



Food preparations were of course also done. With food from our different cultures like Belgian waffles or German chips or Spanish Polvorones and also typical Christmas snacks like Candy canes. Drinks like Hot chocolate were also prepared



After the movie was finished, our volunteers prepared a small quiz, to see if everybody payed attention. The quiz was really fun with many good results. The winner got a mug with belgian chocolate as a gift :)

*We had a great time and we hope to see you at our next movie night

SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR PORTUGUESE VOLUNTEER



My ESC Short-Term Volunteering Experience

When I arrived as an ESC short-term volunteer, I knew this experience would feel like living on borrowed time. It was a quiet reminder that every day, every task and every interaction matters.

I stayed for a little over a month, and it passed much faster than I expected. Adapting to the routine was relatively easy, but it was still challenging in its own way, mainly because it meant stepping out of my comfort zone.

Small things like getting around by bike became part of my daily routine, something I enjoyed even if it was challenging at times. Finding a balance between what was familiar and what was new became part of the experience from the beginning.



This was my first volunteering experience, although I'd already had other experiences abroad before. Even so, this project allowed me to deepen my knowledge in certain areas and approach my work from a different perspective, especially by working with people from different backgrounds and with different habits, which helped me see things in new ways. Being part of the organisation on a daily basis helped me understand how the work happens from day to day, not only during specific activities or events.

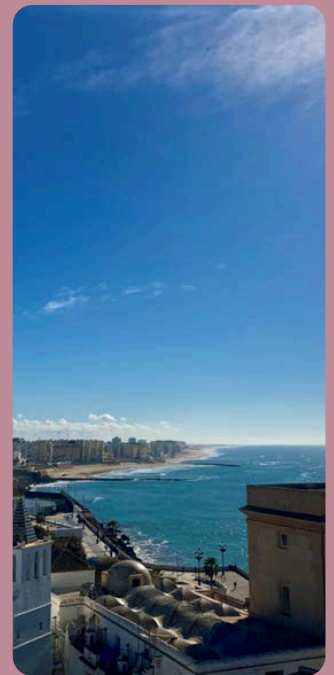
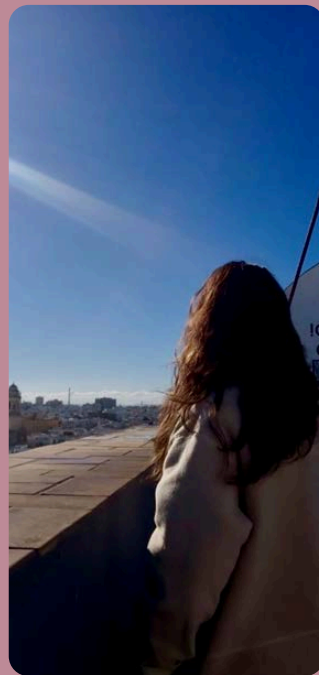


My ESC Short-Term Volunteering Experience



Most of my tasks were related to communication and support activities. I worked on articles, social media content and materials connected to different events and initiatives. Among all the activities, writing articles was what I enjoyed the most, as well as taking part in the Volunteer Day, where we had the chance to help paint a mural. On the other hand, coordinating the English Club was more challenging for me, as I realised that I feel more comfortable as a participant than in a coordinating role.

Due to the limited time, I didn't have the opportunity to visit many places. Apart from Jerez, I only went to Cádiz. I spent more time at home than exploring and realised that I have two very different sides: one that wants to explore everything and another that prefers staying in. During this time, the second one clearly prevailed.



Overall, I really enjoyed this volunteering experience. Despite the limited time, the work and daily routine made the experience feel complete.

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