



AJ INTER JOURNAL

July 2026

vol.73

**BACK
TO
THE HEAT**

Welcome Dasha

Training Course
Compass

Welcome
İrem & Yağmur

Training Course
Mindful lab





iHola Dasha!



_ □ X

¡Hola! My name is Daria and Dasha for friends :)

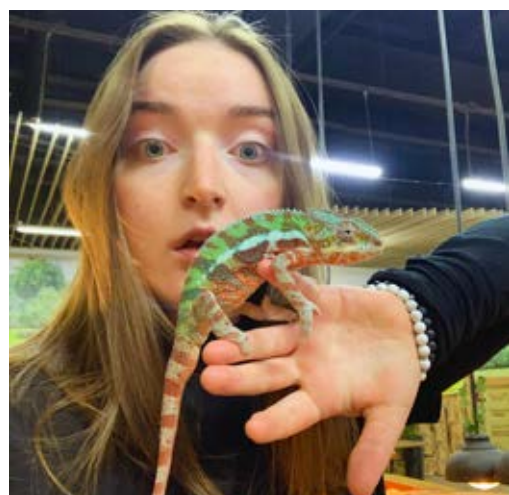
I am 20 years old. I was born on 26 May 2006 in Kyiv, Ukraine. I still live in a village near Kyiv.

I've been a big fan of Michael Jackson and Jimi Hendrix since my childhood. But I also enjoy exploring every kind of music as well. I love cinema, photography, science and sci-fi books, space, doing and discovering different kinds of art, yoga, and calisthenics. An absolutely random fact about me: I own a collection of almost 30 Monster High dolls. I was practicing classical art with People's Artist of Ukraine for 3 years. And I worked as a photographer at the zoo. I participated in setting a Guinness record (and we set it!!). And I climbed the highest mountain in Ukraine with the same group of kids with disabilities and their families.

X



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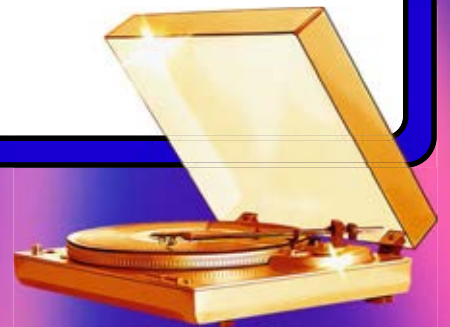
Why ESC?



European Solidarity Corps



I think a lot of us experienced episodes when your life feels like a movie. I've been feeling like that particularly strongly lately as a lot of out of pocket either funny or dramatic things have been happening. And this ESC volunteering opportunity feels exactly like a new season of the favourite show to me. I decided to take part in this ESC volunteering for various reasons ↓



Q Michael Jackson



Q Michael Jackson



Why ESC?



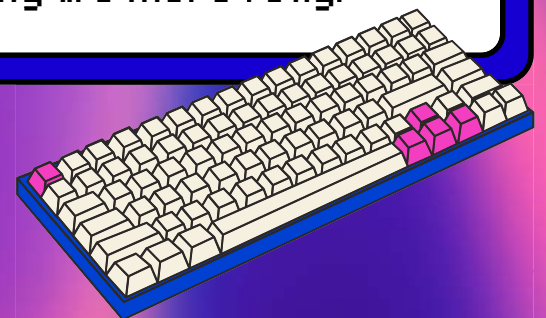
European Solidarity Corps



Firstly, it is the work in youth organization. I have already tried a bunch of professions and I am still not sure where I want to work in the future. Hence the responsibilities of the volunteer in youth organization appeared really interesting to me. The values of youth organization are aligned with my beliefs as well.

Secondly, the Spanish culture. Spain is few thousands kilometers away from Ukraine so it always seemed like something unreachable, beautiful and mysterious. A far away country with different climate, new food, distinct mindset, vibrant colours charmed me even as a kid. Therefore I have always wished to experience the culture of Spain that close.

Finally, I wanted to experience peaceful life again. I want to rest from some of my worries and try to live my life more fully.



LOADING...

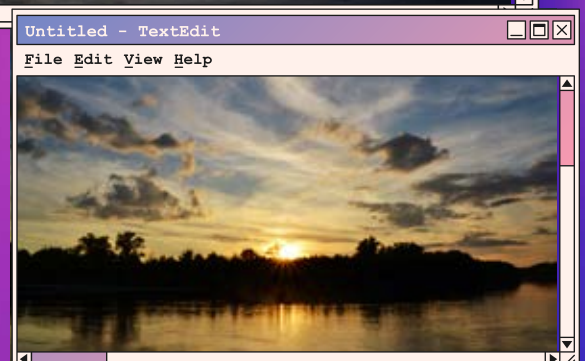
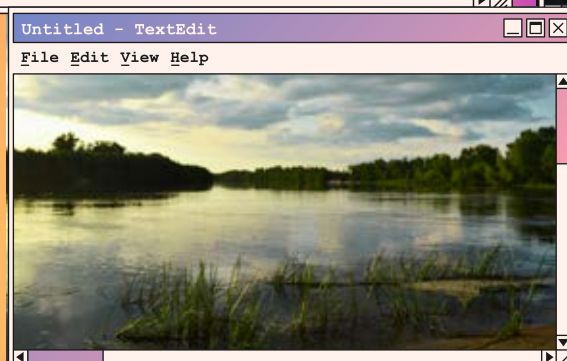
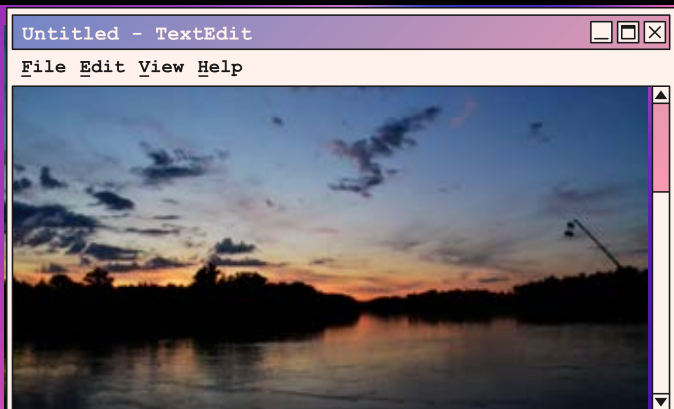
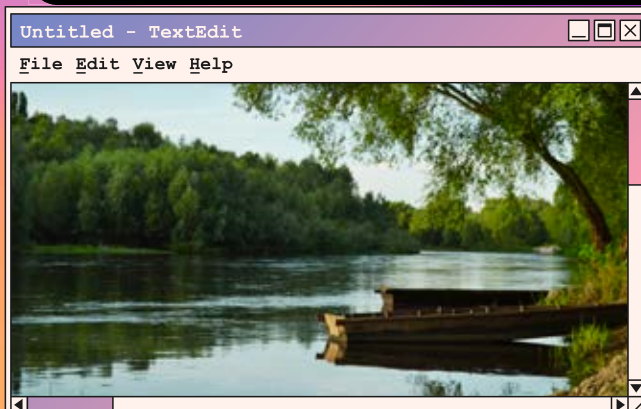
Where I am from?



Nizhyn, Ukraine



I have never lived in one place, so I don't know which place I should call my hometown. But I do have a place where I lived for 8 years during the most important period of every person's life – childhood. It is a small town in the north of Ukraine called Nizhyn. Fun facts about Nizhyn: there are 16 churches and the one and only monument dedicated to the famous Nizhyn cucumber, as the town has a factory of the best pickled cucumbers in Ukraine. Nizhyn is 1033 years old, and it has very big historical importance, even though the size of the town is roughly 1/24 of Jerez de la Frontera's size. There is the stunning Desna River located near the town. I've been spending my summertime break at this river every year.





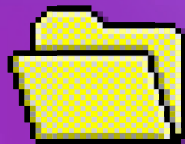
Where I am from?



Q Kyiv, Ukraine

About Kyiv... I just love this city. It offers you so much to explore as every district of Kyiv has its own unique infrastructure and culture. You just have to see it yourself.

But I am really sad that most of my favourite places got destroyed or partly ruined :(

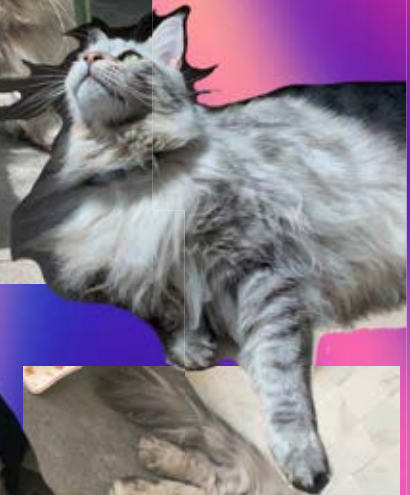


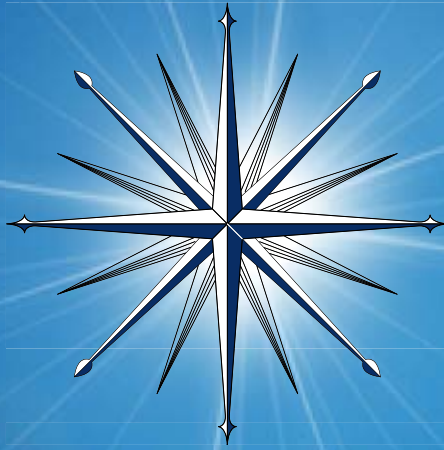
My cat Hercules



← → ↻ 🔍

And this page is dedicated to the beauty of my absolute favourite soul on this planet – my cat Hercules. I love my cat more than everything and I miss him everyday.





COMPASS

Training Course in Czech Republic

From 5 to 14 June 2026, AJ Inter took part in Erasmus+ Training Course COMPASS, organized by Narana in the Jeseníky Mountains of Czechia. The training gathered 21 youth workers from 13 countries: Georgia, Spain, Romania, Poland, Belgium, Ireland, Lebanon, Ukraine, Türkiye, Italy, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, and the Czech Republic to experience an extraordinary journey of learning beyond the classroom.



Unlike traditional training courses, COMPASS was designed around the principles of Outdoor Adventure Education, encouraging participants to step outside their comfort zones and discover their inner strengths through real-life challenges. During ten days, participants embraced nature as their learning environment, where teamwork, resilience, adaptability, and self-reflection became essential parts of the experience. The programme was both physically and mentally demanding. Participants hiked more than 70 kilometres while carrying heavy backpacks through the Czech mountains, successfully reached the summit of Králický Sněžník, and spent two days navigating the Morava River by canoe. Throughout the journey, they also experienced a complete digital detox, disconnecting from mobile phones and social media to fully reconnect with nature, their teammates, and themselves.





Every challenge became an opportunity for learning. Hiking long distances, setting up camps, cooking outdoors, paddling together, and overcoming unexpected situations required trust, cooperation, communication, and mutual support. These experiences demonstrated how outdoor education can become a powerful tool for developing resilience and strengthening the personal and professional competences of youth workers. The international dimension of the project created a unique intercultural learning environment where participants exchanged experiences, good practices, and different perspectives on youth work. Living and learning together in nature strengthened intercultural dialogue and built lasting friendships and professional connections across Europe and neighbouring countries.

COMPASS proved that meaningful learning does not always happen inside conference rooms. Sometimes the most valuable lessons are learned while climbing mountains, crossing rivers, or simply sharing stories around a campfire. By stepping away from everyday routines and digital distractions, participants gained a deeper understanding of their own abilities and discovered practical methods they can now apply in their local youth work activities.



AJ Inter is proud to have been part of this inspiring Erasmus+ experience and looks forward to transferring the knowledge, methods, and inspiration gained during COMPASS into future projects, empowering young people to develop resilience, confidence, and stronger connections with nature and their communities.

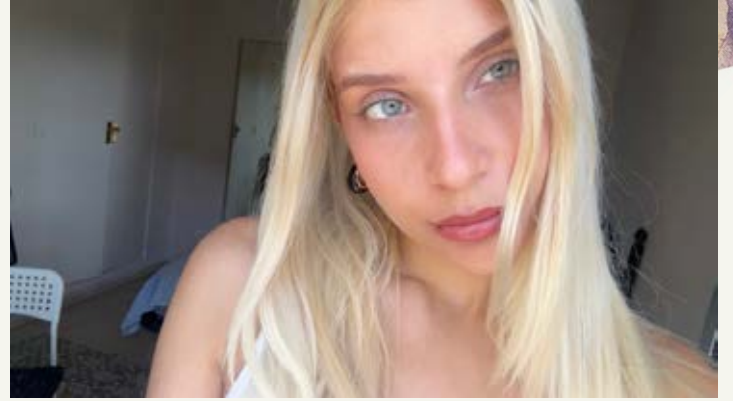


Hello Yagmur!



LET'S MEET: WHO AM I?

Hi! My name is Yağmur (yah-moor). I am 24 years old, and I am from Istanbul, Turkey. I am from Istanbul, and the city's mix of cultures, sea, and history has shaped a lot of who I am today.

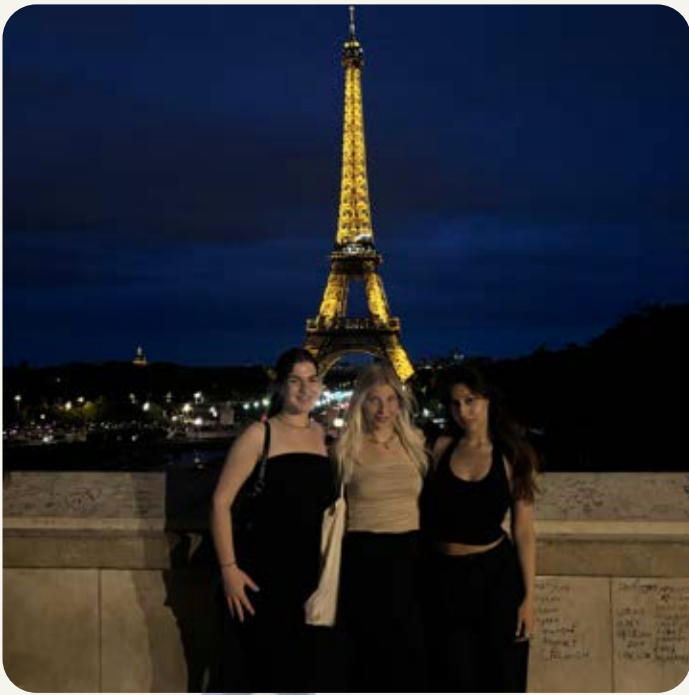


STUDIES

I am about to graduate from the English Translation and Interpreting program at Boğaziçi University. I have one semester left of studies before I return to classrooms again, and I decided to use this time before graduation to step outside my usual routine. This ESC project is going to be my second one. I applied to be a volunteer at AJ Inter because I wanted to relive the ESC spirit again, this time in a country I have never visited before, and Jerez de la Frontera felt like the right place to start that adventure.

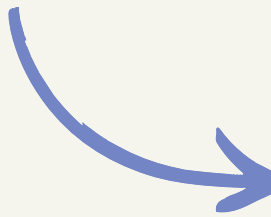
this
Barbie
is a
Translator





HOBBIES & INTERESTS

I am a very passionate individual about many things in life. I love traveling and discovering new places, learning new languages, taking photos, meeting new faces, ice skating, telling stories, spending time in nature, and exploring art in its many forms. Each of these passions feeds into the others. Traveling teaches me new languages, languages open doors to new people, and new people always end up giving me new stories to tell.





where i live

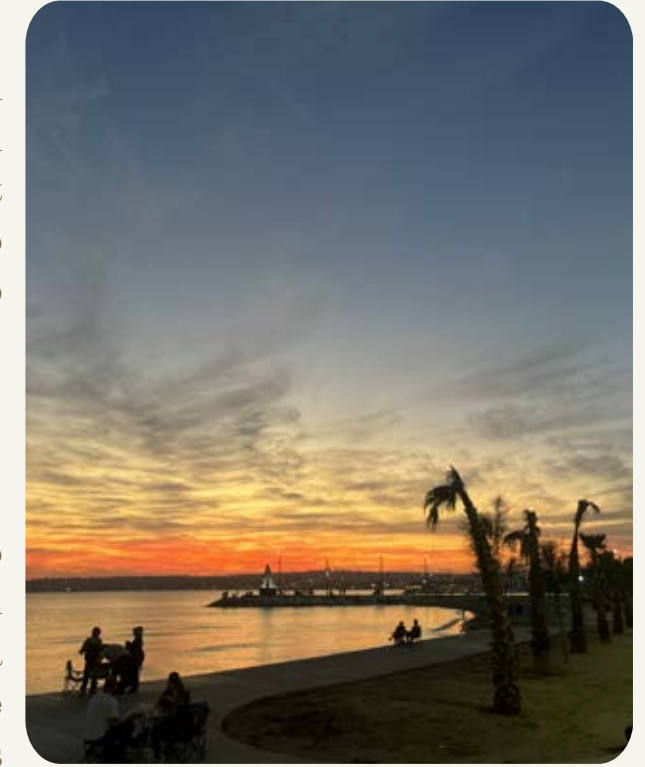
PERSONALITY

I would describe myself as an outgoing and social person. I truly love spending time with people and getting to know their stories. At the same time, I know myself well enough to recognize when I need alone time to recharge.

ANIMALS AND HOME

I am a big animal lover, and I have two ducks living in my garden back home, whom I miss whenever I'm away. I also have a grey cat that's sometimes a stray cat. We have a lot of stray cats in Istanbul, and it's normal to take care of them and let them live in their own world at the same time. Although it was difficult to leave them at home, I have always believed that the world is too big to stay in one place, and that belief is exactly how my journey to Spain began.

my cat



my ducks



MY HOME

Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey and one of the most unique cities in the world because it is located on two continents: Europe and Asia.

The two sides are connected by bridges, tunnels, and ferries. It was the World's Most Visited City in 2025. It's been the capital of three empires: Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman, which means the streets are basically a layer cake of 2,700 years of history.

Home to around 15 million people as of 2026, it is a chaotic and vibrant city that genuinely never sleeps, and I just love it for that.

The traffic never stops, people are always running around and somehow all of that noise adds up to something that feels alive rather than overwhelming.

I must admit that Istanbul may not be everyone's cup of tea because it demands patience, and it can be exhausting in ways that smaller, quieter cities never are.

But if you are in your 20s, I genuinely believe it's a city you should live in for some period of your life. It will rebuild you into a different person, someone a bit tougher, a bit more curious, and a bit more in love with the world than before.



FAVORITE SPOTS IN ISTANBUL

Bebek

Bebek is one of Istanbul's most beautiful waterfront neighborhoods, and it's by my university. I like to walk along the coast in the evenings.

The Bosphorus

I call this bridge my home.

Cihangir District

Cihangir is a lively neighborhood known for its artistic atmosphere, colorful streets, and cozy cafés.

Topkapı Palace

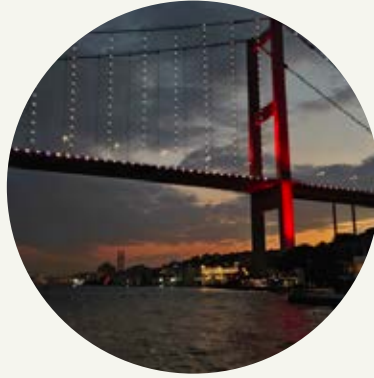
This is where I take my foreign friends when they come to visit me, i think it's the best way to get to know Istanbul's history and the Ottoman Empire.

Beşiktaş

This is the district that my friends and I go to for a good night out. The options are endless.

Galata Tower

It is a medieval stone tower offering one of the best panoramic views of Istanbul. The most popular legends suggest the tower is hopelessly in love with the Maiden's Tower across the Bosphorus, and that couples who climb its stairs together on their first visit are destined to marry.



WHY DID I BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

I have been involved in volunteering for the last 4 years. Thanks to Erasmus+ projects and ESC projects, I have been to more than 20 countries. Some of my favorites are Egypt, Italy and Portugal. After having completed an ESC project last summer in gorgeous Palermo, Sicily. I wanted the magic to continue. Over the years, I have made so many friends from all over the world thanks to these projects. Today, I can call many places my home. I also did my Erasmus in Paris, France. During these 5 beautiful months, I developed new skills, learned French, met amazing people that are still a very important part of my life. After this experience, I learned that traveling and volunteering are not actually about finding new places, they are about finding new pieces of yourself. I wasn't able to experience things like this when I was 18 or 19 having finished high school because I was so focused on studying, passing the university exam and building a good future. But now I have the chance to discover myself and contribute to a society and culture that is different from mine and this is precious.





favorites



favorite stores:

mercadona

primor



favorite spanish restaurant:

100 Montaditos



favorite Spanish word:

rebajas



favorite drinks:

tinto de verano

aperol spritz



artists:

sombr

sunnan



favorite TV shows:

severance

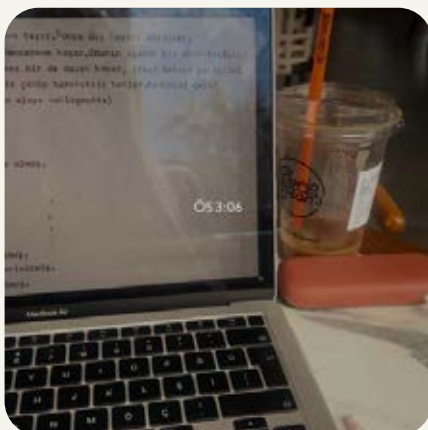
euphoria

laura branigan

harry styles

videoclub

cannons



hot girls
study
Italian



activities:

ice skating

working in cute little cafés

learning Italian

visiting museums

shopping vintage clothes

eating vegetarian



LITTLE MISS
CHATTERBOX



HELLO, I AM

İrem

Hello everybody! I'm the new volunteer İrem, and I'm from Antalya.

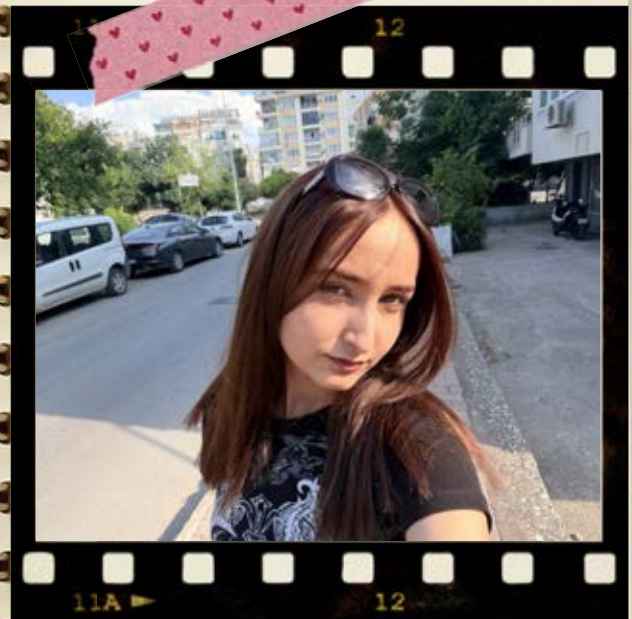
I'm 21 years old, born on 21st May 2005. (my golden year!) I'm currently studying Germanistik (German Language and Literature) at Akdeniz University in Antalya. I'll be in my second year when my school opens in September.



hot girls
study
german



me when der die das



I can be one of the most talkative persons in the world. Even when I was younger, people were begging me to stop talking, but I never did. Because of my talkativeness, I easily make friends wherever I go. I'm glad to be here because of that, even if I have a language barrier, it won't stop me from meeting new people!

I'm mostly outgoing rather than rotting in bed. Doing new things, meeting with friends, walking... I like to learn new languages a lot. I currently know three and am hoping to add Spanish to that list. I love doing Erasmus projects and going abroad also.

ACH DU MEINE



GOETHE



The things that make me who I am

My biggest passion is definitely theater. I enjoy reading, writing, and acting. Mostly, I love everything about theater. Because of that, I'm studying literature to understand theater writing and history better. I love acting so much; I love comedy, and mostly doing gestures. I have been at the Conservatory taking theater classes also.



I love reading historical or modern plays. My favorite is *The Merchant of Venice*. And lastly, why I love theater is because I think it is the naked form of showing arts.



I really enjoy watching anything. I'm a huge sitcom enthusiast; I love finishing 9-season sitcoms in 1 week.

My top favorites are: *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. I hate when people say the blue one, no, it is the bald one. *Community*. I wish I had a friend group like them, all chaotic and doesn't fit anywhere, but somehow they manage to go with it.

And lastly, *Game of Thrones*. I think there is nothing to say about whole.



I recently (over the last 3 years) started discovering musicals. Mostly Broadway. I like it when people starts to tell their feelings with singing and back flips. And of course, my favorite musical is Hamilton! Hamilton is unlike any other musical; it features rap and R&B, and compared to other shows, it is quite interesting



who lives,
who dies,
who tells
your story?

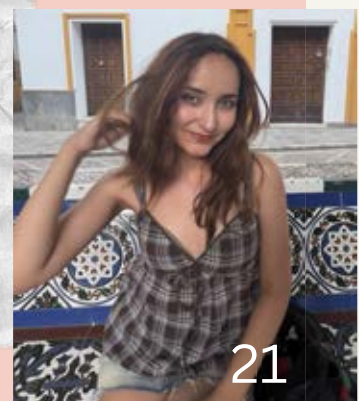
LITTLE MISS THEATRE KID



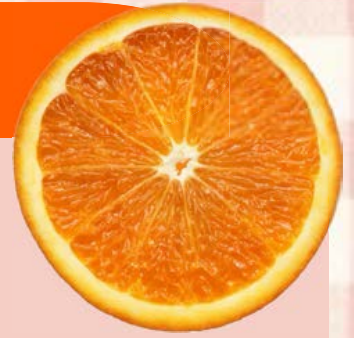
Moreover! Hamilton won many awards at the Tonys. Thanks to the composer and the song-writer genius Lin-Manuel Miranda. And my favorite song is "The Room Where It Happens."



I would like to recommend another Musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda. and it makes sense when living in Spain and try to learn some Spanish. It's a Spanish-English musical set in Washington Heights about Latin People called In the Heights.



Antalya



My beautiful hometown. I was born and raised in Antalya, even though my parents are from Ankara. So I took many different cultures from my parents, as well as the place where I lived my whole life.

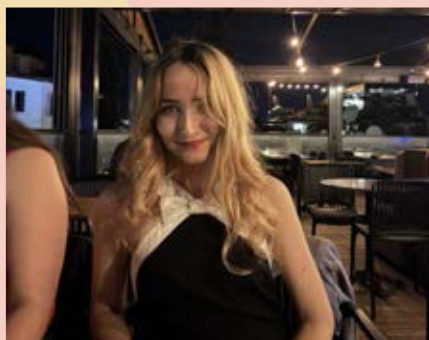
One thing about Antalya is: it is hot. Very hot, so hot. And with humidity, it doubles the torture. Summer usually lasts from the end of May to the end of September. And with that many tourists from around the world comes here for vacations.

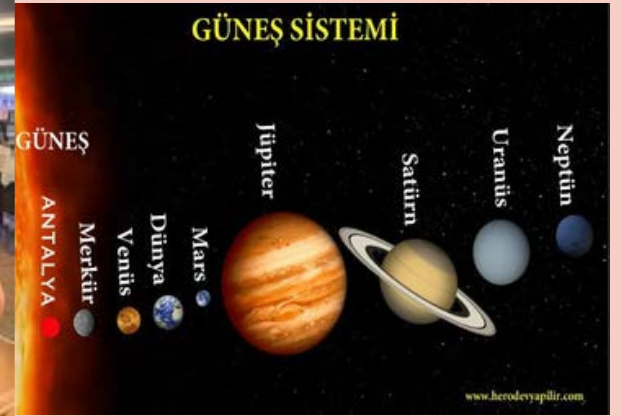
Antalya is not only for a sea holiday. There are many historical places and cities in Antalya. There is a historical site in Serik that also has a theater, and the interesting thing is that we still use that ancient theatre for theatre festivals in Antalya.

Why is it called Antalya?
Antalya was home to many nations throughout the years. Antalya was founded in the 2nd century B.C by King Attalos. Antalya is named after him, but, of course, it changed over the centuries and eventually became Antalya.

And our great leader Atatürk once said: "Undoubtedly, Antalya is the most beautiful place in the world."

My favorite place in Antalya is Oldtown (Kaleiçi). It is an historical street that includes Hadrianus Gate, the Clock Building, the Marina, and my favorite beautiful bars. My favorite beach is Lara, even though Konyaalti Beach is 10 minutes from my University.



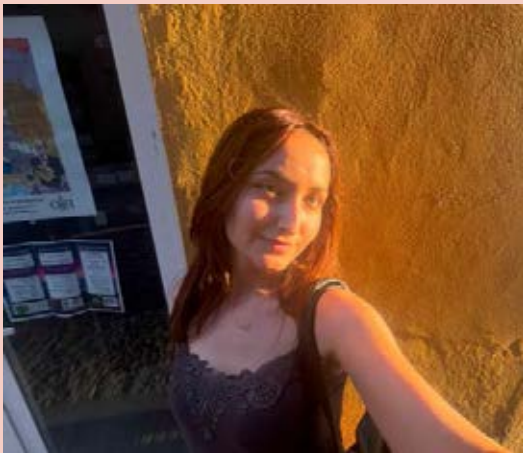


Why Am I Volunteering?

I always want to spend my summer holidays doing something effective. But I really didn't have any time for doing anything. I've been on short-term youth exchanges before, but I never intended to spend my whole summer in another country.



My friend told me about ESC, and I just started learning about it and checking it out. I thought it would be hard for me to do because I really didn't know what I was gonna do, and the truth is, I'd never separated from my family or lived alone before. But I thought it would make me a more different person. It would boost my confidence.



I wanted to meet new people, see new cultures and places, and, with that, help people to learn new things and make a difference in new places. So I decided to be a volunteer here with that I can learn by myself while helping and creating new things.

This was me, I hope I will have an excellent time here volunteering at AJ Inter.



MINDFUL LAB

TRAINING COURSE



Co-funded by
the European Union

In 15–20 June 2026, AJC Demeter had the opportunity to organize in the Mindful Lab Training Course in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Bringing together youth workers from different countries, the project focused on one of today's most important topics: mental health and wellbeing.

As young people face increasing levels of stress and anxiety, youth workers also need practical tools to create healthier and more supportive environments. The training was designed around the European Youth Goal of Wellbeing and Mental Health, offering methods that can easily be integrated into youth work.





Activites



Throughout six inspiring days, participants explored mindfulness, yoga, meditation, creative activities, and outdoor learning experiences. Sessions encouraged everyone to slow down, become more aware of the present moment, and reconnect with themselves, others, and nature. Activities such as trekking, silent walks, trust circles, painting, and mindfulness exercises demonstrated that wellbeing can be developed through simple yet meaningful daily practices.



One of the key themes of the training was Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Participants learned how to express emotions, understand personal needs, and manage conflicts in a respectful and constructive way.

The international atmosphere created a safe space for exchanging experiences, sharing inspiring stories, and learning from different cultural perspectives. Every participant contributed unique ideas and practices that enriched the learning process and strengthened cooperation across borders.

Opinions of Participants



What did our participants take home from the Mindful Lab Training Course? We asked them to share the three most valuable things they learned during the project. Here's what they told us!



Barbara Uflewski: –How to distinguish opinions from observations
–How to create safe space to share emotions
–How to be mindful during
–Physical activities (Los toruños hike)



Giulia Imperato: –Personal wellbeing is the key to help others
–To notice things to be grateful for is the best thing you can do to yourself
–The purpose of life is to live!



Kristiina Herkül: –I'm glad that our growing youth is so open-minded and empathetic.
–I learned that I'm actually a much more sociable person than I thought here in Estonia.
–Being mindful a day keeps the doctor away! ;)



Edoardo: –Enjoying experiences to stay mindfull
–Sharing and listening ideas and feelings from people all over the europe
–Creating valuable connections



Closing Remarks from the Trainers

As we come to the end of the Mindful Lab training course, we celebrate not only what we have learned, but also the connections we have built and the experiences we have shared.

During these days, we explored practical tools for wellbeing, mindfulness, non-violent communication, teamwork, and self-care. We challenged ourselves, reflected together, and created a safe space where everyone could learn, grow, and support one another.

We encourage you to take these methods back to your communities and continue promoting mental wellbeing among young people. Remember that even small actions—listening with empathy, staying present, and taking care of ourselves—can create meaningful change.

We hope this experience inspires you both personally and professionally, and that the friendships and partnerships created here will continue long after the project ends.

Safe travels, stay mindful, and see you in future Erasmus+ projects!



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