



# Cultural Treasure Hunt

## Electronic Anthology of learners' essays

### Cultural Visitors' Impressions

What cultural travellers need, remember and talk about

Joint project of seven European institutions from  
Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Germany, Iceland, Poland and Spain

Leonardo da Vinci Partnership Project 2010-2012



# Impressions of Germany

## DRESDEN

Dresden. The end of October 2010. The green S-bahn takes us to the hotel. A few metres of walk and there we are. A nice modest but comfortable and tidy hotel at the edge of the city. The night is cold, we see the first snow this winter. We wake up in the morning seeing white roof tops from our hotel window. Dresden – a city of memorable architecture and historical treasures. We try to imagine the powerful kings of the past as we watch the riches they left behind. Striking beauty of impressive old churches, palaces, museums, galleries, theatres and bridges over the river Elbe. The Semper opera house stands proud. The monumental cathedral takes us all in. Zwinger and the castle take our breath away. An evening walk past numerous statues of kings and statesmen through the city of culture, swept by a freezing wind that night. We are struck by the size and the modernity of the city which is most obvious in its young population of students attending seven universities and numerous schools. Modern shops and department stores make it also a practical place to live.

We end our tour in a cosy ale-house, warmed by a rich helping of chicken or ham or sausages with potatoes and unavoidable Pilsner beer. Life is still good here. Another treasure we discovered on our European journey.

*Name of the learner: Irena Žiger*

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*Country: Croatia*

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I was very exciting going for the first time to Dresden. In spite of close location to Polish border, I haven't got opportunities to visit this city. Before the journey I read that Dresden is a Baroque city. Being in Dresden, I really recognized baroque architecture. I found out of a long history as the capital and royal residence for the Electors and Kings of Saxony, who for centuries furnished the city with cultural and artistic splendor. The city was known as the Jewel Box, because of its baroque and rococo city centre. Since the German reunification in 1990, Dresden has regained importance as one of the cultural, educational, political and economic centers of Germany. For me The Zwinger Palace is Dresden's most famous landmark.

This baroque complex of pavilions and galleries was - like many of the city's most prominent buildings - commissioned by Augustus the Strong, elector of Saxony. I was very impressed of the Hofkirche, the Semper Opera and Frauenkirche that belongs to the Baroque church and is one of the most beautiful buildings in Dresden. I could collect many information, folders to study more. Taken photos helped me later to name and recognize many places after the visit. My great attention attracted "Balcony of Europe"- The Brühl Terrace that is one of the most popular places in Dresden.

The terraced promenade offers some beautiful architecture combined with magnificent views over the Elbe river. I was walking many times to and back to catch the most impressions I could. Dresden's Theaterplatz was the most impressive square for me, framed by some of the city's most important landmarks. From this point- I, as the visitor could admire the unique splendor of architecture and power of the Electors and Kings of Saxony. My overall impressions are great and I would like to visit Dresden again.

*Name of the learner : Stadnik Włodzimierz*

*Name of the organisation : Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country: Rzeszów, Poland*

# Impressions of Greece

## LESVOS

Our CTH trip to the Greek island of Lesvos had a bumpy start. While the plane was landing and almost touched the ground we suddenly felt the strong turbulence and were blown away by the strong force of winds which made the safe landing impossible. The pilot lifted the plane up again and cruised for a while above the island before another go.

The plane was shaking and bouncing and I realized that our Odyssey started right there. Since the pilot failed to land the plane for the second time, I started wondering what the winds had in mind and where they were going to take us. I truly hoped that the Greek hero had dealt with all the Cyclops long time ago... 'Wherever they bring us, I will kiss the ground as soon as I put my feet on it,' I thought. And so I did. Lesvos at last!

The winds changed as we left the plane and they turned warm and welcoming for the rest of our stay. And so were the local people. Wherever we went, we were offered traditional food and wines which were just perfect. I just had to take some recipes so I could continue having Greek food at home too.

We explored the island for three short days and when the time came to say goodbye, I took something with me. Some olive oil, a few pebbles, a bottle of Ouzo and a bunch of dill I had picked by the pathway. These will remind me of olive groves, the beach and the Greek cuisine.

There is an island down there in the Aegean, and on this island there are people who I know and who told me stories about their island and showed me around. Thanks to their hospitality I learned about Theofilos, the petrified forest, Sapho, their history and traditions and how they see their future in tourism. We visited Mytilene and took pictures of the fortress, churches and other sights. We took a bus ride round the island and saw how beautiful and green it was. The Emerald island. So this is what I've learned, what I saw and what I'll remember...

*Name of the learner: Snježana Bejuk*

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Lesvos is one of the Greek island located in the North-East of AEGEAN Sea, close to Turkey. As a visitor- learner I noticed a wonderful combination of modern Greece mixed with a fascinating culture, traditions and architecture of this enthralling island. The capital Mytilene occupies seven hills which rise like an amphitheatre around this charming town.

I was impressed by the medieval fortress that is one of the largest known in the Mediterranean area and lies above the town to the East. It is well enough preserved and has got a great past, it has been occupied and modified by many forces including the Romans, the Byzantines, the Turks and even the Venetians. Nowadays I have seen some exhibitions inside and I could read many unusual stories of the past.

The architecture of Mytilene town is magnificent and walking along the streets I could admire for hours the old mansion houses, churches and other spectacles of a long forgotten world. The capital is full of Turkish influence: religion and culture. I was impressed by three religions being together: Islam, Greek- Orthodox and Catholic. I have seen Turkish mosques and Greek churches being on the same street. I was surprised by the 'Statue of Liberty' similar to the American one. It forced me to find a story of this statue which was related to a young Greek boy travelling on a ship to America for better life. Very interesting story. He was very poor, but his dream came true and that is why Mytilene has got its own Statue of Liberty founded by this boy.

In Skala Loutron- a village near the capital- I have seen the Historical Museum dedicated to this village and founded by the local community and the dynamic president of the local community . This small museum shows us the culture of the Greek refugees who came from Turkey with the exchange of population in 1922. I could admire precious handicraft elements in Arabic language and national Greek costumes, many authentic documents such as : IDs, certificates of schools, personal letters and many others. The exhibitions showed me how reach and how difficult life was in the past centuries, how people struggled to survive, how people cultivate the traditions and how proud they are about them. A very instructive lesson for me. About the nature: I was impressed by the surrounding hills with the sea and the beautiful bay where I lived. I could also take some impressions of agriculture tourism, that I liked and could transfer to my country some examples of good practice. And... food is very tasty, particularly delicious meals and delights cooked by Women's Agrotouristic Cooperative for the CTH group. All in all Lesvos is recommended for visiting and getting experience to be transferred to any country.

*Name of the learner : Stadnik Włodzimierz*

*Name of the organisation : Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country of origin: Poland*

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At the beginning, my expectations before travelling to Lesvos consisted of learning about a different culture, lifestyles and ways of working. I also thought that the fact of meeting people from different countries and backgrounds would enrich my knowledge and give me a more open-minded view of the world. The experience exceeded those expectations by far!!

I liked the way I was welcomed by the locals. In addition, the project partners and learners from other countries did not have any prejudices and were open-minded and enthusiastic people.

I learnt a lot of things about Lesvos culture, history, geography and people. I was most impressed by the fact that people from Lesvos are eager to make progress and improve their economy while preserving their culture. I admire them for their interest in trying to find a model for sustainable development.

Actually, rather than focus on a specific aspect of the trip, I would like to emphasize that the whole experience was really enriching for me.

*Name of the learner: Antoni Gelabert Estrany*

*Name of the organisation: Consell de Mallorca*

*Country of origin: Spain*

Our participation in the “Cultural Treasure Hunt” project meeting on Lesbos has remained in memory as a combination of pleasant people and innovative ideas. The organisers of the meeting took care to allow for sufficient time for participating organisations to introduce themselves, which was wonderful and we were fascinated by the work the others are involved in. It was especially interesting to hear about the partners from Mallorca and their work in restoring and promoting the agricultural heritage of their island. Many lessons could be learnt from that in Estonia, we believe, and they definitely set a good example of how people should be proud to work at restoring aspects of their culture and, more importantly, teach others how to maintain it.

As for the activities performed on the island, we very much enjoyed making video interviews about the expectations of visitors of the island of Lesbos. This activity served as a good example of a tool that can easily be used anywhere in the world and that provides immediate, sincere feedback on the expectations of visitors and thus helps adapt the services provided according to the actual needs of the clientele.

A very good example of how to take advantage of the tourism sector in order to provide authentic local experiences to visitors was a visit to a local hotel not far from where our project meetings took place. This family-owned and -operated business that started out as a collection of farm-houses that are now rented out to visitors over the summer shows the local culture at its best, not the least due to the hand-crafted furniture and olive oil pressed by the owner of the property. Also very enjoyable was a visit to the women's cooperative at Paraskevi, an enterprise that turned around the lives of many a woman and family in the area.

That all these excursions, discussions and activities should be followed by a roundtable discussion on how to improve tourism services in Lesbos was, in our opinion, a great way to finish our meeting. It gave us an opportunity to voice ideas we had accumulated in the course of the workshops and trips and also to give feedback as visitors of the island. The local officials invited to the meeting were all very professional and had thorough knowledge of the topic, which made the discussion fruitful and pleasurable.

All in all, what we took away from Lesbos is not so much any one particular idea or experience, but a multitude of inspirational conversations and situations, each offering new approaches to how tourism services can be improved, and with them the lives of the local people.

*Names of the learners: Nele Langebraun and Aleksei Smulski*

*Name of the organisation : Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*

The Greek island Lesvos is for sure a cultural treasure. I was very surprised to see how different tourism in Lesvos is compared to other Greek islands I had visited before. Lesvos is not so crowded with tourists. The Island has a lot of potential to build up other kinds of tourism that we know on the other Greek islands. For example, focus more on quality and stay away from mass tourism. There are no big buildings and that makes Lesvos very special.

The capital Mytilene is a very charming small town with an attractive city centre and harbour. I also found the Mytilini castle and the ruins very impressive. For me it is no question that the olive business is beside tourism the most important thing for Lesvos. It was interesting to visit Alexis and see how he is building up his tourism company for travellers who want beautiful and quiet place. He's olive oil production has a high quality and I'm sure that he is going to do well in business in the future. In Lesvos Olive museum we learned the story of olives and olive oil production and business. The olive museum is a good example of a tourist attraction based on history and tradition.

In all our meetings and travels we had a good opportunity to meet the local inhabitants. The Greeks really know how to make people feel welcome, the visit and the lunch at the woman's cooperative was a good example of that. Speaking of food, we really had wonderful Greek food all the time!

The Lesvos meeting was my first meeting where I participated in the Cultural Treasure Hunt project. It is for sure also an important part of the project to get to know all these different interesting people from other European nations. We can learn a lot from each other according by working on the culture heritage, teaching and promoting our cultural treasure hunt.

*Name of learner : Kristín Jóhannsdóttir*

*Name of the organisation : Viska*

*Country of origin : Vestmannaeyjar Iceland*



# Impressions of Iceland

## Vestmannaeyjar Island

Iceland is very nice place to visit. There are many unique attractions, to be seen nowhere in Europe. It was my first time and I was very impressed mostly by volcanic lava and very unusual rocks that have been created by eruptions .

In my opinion, the top four tourist attractions are as follows: Gulfos waterfalls, active geysers, the landscape of Westman islands and the unique Blue Lagoon. All these places catch the attention of numerous tourists from all over Europe. The waterfall is a huge one with some cascades that make specific sounds. This is a very cold and windy area, that is why I had to put my winter jacket on visiting this place in June. Unpredictable geysers erupted quite frequently, every 10-15 minutes. It is a specific water show made by nature. I was waiting impatiently for the next show in order to take some photos for the collection of my memories. It is a power of nature and I had to feel respect for it. I could not stand too close to a geyser, it was too dangerous to be splashed by hot water. Anyway, unforgettable impressions were recorded by camera. I found Westman islands very attractive. There were puffins and lava rocks. But the most impressive view for me was the view of the houses covered by the volcanic eruption lava. People lost their houses and had to move to another place to live.

Blue Lagoon is the famous place in Iceland. It is incredible that I could swim in a hot lake outside at 39<sup>0</sup>C in seawater. It is a geothermal spa unique in the world. I could not think of a better way to end a long trip than soaking in the Blue Lagoon. I really felt like I was on another planet.

Icelandic people are very friendly and hosted me in the best way. My impressions of Iceland are fantastic and unforgettable. I would like to come back again.

*Name of the learner: Stadnik Włodzimierz*

*Name of the organisation: Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country: Poland*

Study visit to Iceland was my lifetime experience. I learned a lot from our partners in Leonardo da Vinci project - their knowledge and skills helped to understand better cultural diversity in Europe. We participated together in working sessions and travelled around Vestman island and I had a chance to share with people from other countries what I found out in Iceland, we learned about the country and people together, with each other and by each other. Training about communication showed the importance of team work.

I had a chance to show my photos about Estonia and Tallinn and make a promotion of our country. I also took hundreds of photos in Iceland - people, nature, museums, interesting places. My photos were published after this trip in the magazine "Krasivaja Zizn" in Estonia with an article about "Cultural Treasure Hunt" and about volcanoes.

So, I hope, Iceland will not be the only one of my favourite places in the world but other people will like it because of my pictures and one day will travel there to learn about the country and people of Iceland.

*Name of the learner: Leonid Smulskiy*

*Name of the organisation : Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*

The things I will always remember about Iceland are the unusual stories our hosts told us.

One of the stories was about the Icelandic horses, which are small, even pony-sized, but long-lived and hardy. They have almost no diseases because the Icelandic law prevents any horses to be imported into the country and once exported animals are never again allowed to return to Iceland.

Then, another interesting fact: Iceland, just like the Scandinavian countries, has a patronymic name system: it doesn't use family names. A person's surname indicates the first name of the person's father, for example, a man named Jón Stefánsson has a son named Fjalar; Fjalar's last name will not be Stefánsson like his father's; it will become Jónsson, literally indicating that Fjalar is the son of Jón (Jóns + son). The same practice is used for daughters. Jón Stefánsson's daughter Katrín would not have the last name Stefánsson; she would have the name Jónsdóttir. Again, the name literally meaning "Jón's daughter" (Jóns + dóttir).

One of the most frightening stories we heard was about the volcano eruption in the Vestmann Islands, in January 1973. The eruption came in the middle of the night, without any warning and was totally unexpected. Boiling lava started running down the slope of what is now the main crater of the new volcano, known as Eldfell. The eruption lasted for more than five months, so that in July 1973 the volcano reached a height of around 225 metres. The layer of ashes that had settled over the town was up to 4 meters thick! Nevertheless, by 1975, about two-thirds of the islanders came back and rebuilt their houses. The total population is now about 5000. Iceland is an amazing country, full of breathtaking sights, and I am incredibly grateful that I was given this opportunity to visit it.

*Name of the learner: Maja Kukolja*

*Name of the organisation : Škola stranih jezika – Žiger*

*Country: Croatia*

Geysirs and volcanoes – two things that first pop into my mind when I hear the word ‘Iceland’. These two geological phenomena have always made Iceland somehow a mystery to me, not really believing that I would ever really experience them in reality. When I found out I was going to go to Iceland on a Cultural Treasure Hunt I became extremely excited, did some research, found out a lot of fascinating facts about Iceland which made me even more eager to go there finally!

And so we did. Already the flight from London to Keflavik made me realize that we were not travelling to an ordinary country since we saw the sunset in London but still witnessed one more from the skies above Iceland. We landed around 1 a.m. and, although the sun had set around midnight, it was almost daylight. It didn’t get any darker during the night and the sun rose at 2.50 a.m. again. Fascinating. Among so many other things about Iceland.

The next day Iceland continued to impress us. We went on an amazing tour around the Golden Triangle. First Thingvellir or the rift valley – the area where Eurasian and North American Plate are being separated. We could literally see the rift which made us realize why Iceland’s geology is so much alive – because it is! These two tectonic plates move one from another causing friction which then causes other natural phenomena which we were about to see. First the Geysir. Natural spring of thermal water erupting every ten to twenty minutes. Well, we didn’t actually see the Geysir erupt because it hasn’t erupted since 2001, as we were told, but its younger brother Strokkur – twice. We continued our tour to see one of the most beautiful sights human eye can perceive – Gullfoss or the Golden Falls on Hvita river, one of the main Icelandic tourist attractions. But not all Icelandic attractions are connected to the landscape.

As we were approaching the ferry harbour from where we were about to go to Vestmannaeyjar or the Westman Islands we heard some interesting things about Iceland from our guide. One of them was about the Icelandic horse – the only breed of horse that can be found in Iceland. Sturdy and small, looking like a pony, but do not dare to call the Icelandic horse a pony! Icelanders are very proud of their horse and have made laws which do not allow any horse to be brought into the country, so they wouldn’t contaminate the breed. It is possible to take an Icelandic horse to an exhibition abroad, but impossible to bring it back to the country because the horse may have been in contact with other kinds of horses and the risk of contamination would be too high.

Another interesting thing was about Icelandic family names. Children get their surname after their father’s first name plus the suffix –son or –dottir, which mean son or daughter. So, a boy named Johan whose father’s name is Erik Leifsson would be called Johan Eriksson. His sister Hanna, however, wouldn’t be called Hanna Eriksson but Hanna Eriksdottir, as the daughter of Erik. Imagine what confusion Icelandic phone book would cause to a layman.

As we approached the Westman Islands we soon realized that this was also a special place. The entrance to the port of Heimaey winding between cliffs which form perfect natural protection from the high seas of Iceland. At the very end of this winding harbour road cliffs on one side and hardened lava from the Eldfell volcano on the other. And here comes the most fascinating story to me. Without any warning, on

23 January 1973 during the night a fissure opened in the field near the Helgafell mountain and started spouting lava into the air. All the inhabitants, which numbered at around 5000, were evacuated during the same night and nobody was hurt. The eruption continued for several months and buried a lot of houses in lava and ash. Another flow of lava threatened to block the harbour but they managed to stop it by spraying millions of litres of cold water onto it thus cooling it and stopping the flow. When the eruption stopped several months later, a new mountain, Eldfell or the Fire Mountain, 220 metres high, stood next to the town. The town could start its reconstruction and the inhabitants returned. For many years afterwards they used the heat of the volcano to bring heating into their houses.

As our Icelandic adventure nears its end, one thing worth mentioning were the workshops and classes at Viska education centre. I should definitely mention the teamwork exercise which made us all work, think and act as a part of a team with the same goal, having great fun at the same time. As a language teacher I also did my part in the project. I successfully delivered a lesson of English language to the other learners based on Iceland, its geography, ethnography and other interesting facts about Iceland. The lesson was written and prepared by Irena Žiger and is going to be a part of her English in Tourism course book by the end of this project. And so we get to the end of our Icelandic adventure. We get on the Herjolfur or the ferry and the roughest sea I've ever experienced make sure Iceland stays written in our memories as a very special country definitely worth visiting. I, myself, am sure to go back some day and repeat the experience.

*Name of the learner: Marko Žiger*

*Name of the organisation : Škola stranih jezika – Žiger*

*Country: Croatia*

When I found out about the project meetings, I was eager to know different cultures and foreign countries. I was particularly interested in visiting Iceland since I expected it to be entirely different from Spain, especially in terms of climate and landscape. Finally, the trip lived up to all my expectations.

As far as the local people are concerned, I would like to emphasize that they are really friendly and good hosts. I knew first-hand the volcanic activity of the island. In addition, I learnt a lot about the history and culture of Iceland, which is of Viking origins. I especially remember a meal consisting of traditional food, such as shark and dried fish.

In conclusion, what impressed me the most was the island's breathtaking scenery and amazing natural beauty.

*Name of the learner: Julian Moreno Ejgird*  
*Name of the organisation : Consell de Mallorca*  
*Country of origin: Spain*

# Impressions of Croatia

## VARAZDIN

I spent a few days in Varazdin as a learner to get the impressions and to acquire the knowledge of historical sites in the former capital of Croatia.

Varazdin appeared to me as a baroque historical town. The city represents the best preserved and richest urban complex in continental Croatia. Walking in the centre I have seen well-restored mansions, real estate properties, churches. There are many baroque and rococo palaces and houses as well. Particularly worth mentioning is Varazdin's Croatian National Theatre, built in 1873 and designed by the famous Viennese architects Herman Helmer and Ferdinand Fellner.

One of the attractions on a European scale is a baroque music festival held annually in Varazdin since 1971 (*Varazdin Baroque Evenings*) that attracts some of the finest musicians and their fans from Croatia and the world. I participated in one of the concert in a beautiful Varazdin Cathedral, which left a lot of wonderful impressions on me. Recommended to visitors is also the historical street festival *Špancir fest* every September.

I liked Varazdin's Cathedral, a former Jesuit church built in 1647 distinguished by its baroque entrance, eighteenth-century altar, and paintings. Very impressive for me was the Varazdin's cemetery dated back to 1773 and it was long time an ordinary place until 1905, when Herman Haller had an idea to make it more beautiful and park-like with large trees and alleys for citizens to stroll through. The reconstruction of the cemetery was done between 1905 and 1947 when it got the form for which it later became one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Europe. It is an outstanding example of landscape architecture and protected cultural and natural park.

I visited many churches and chapels and recommend them to other visitors: Parish Church of St. Nicholas, Franciscan Monastery and the Church of St. John the Baptist, Ursuline Monastery and the Church of the Nativity, Capuchin Monastery and the Church of the Holy Trinity, Chapel of St. Florian, Chapel of St. Vitus, Chapel of St. Fabian and Sebastian and others.

When I walked along the streets I admired Baroque palaces: Town Hall, Bužan Palace, Drašković Palace, Eggersdorfer Palace, Erdődy Palace, Herzer Palace, Hinterholzer Palace, Patačić Palace and others.

The unique fortress is an example of medieval defensive buildings. Construction began in the 14th century, and in the following century the rounded towers were formed. The Castle and the fortifications are the most well-known site in Varazdin. It is a kind of historical symbol and recognition of Varazdin. I participated in the flower festival that was held at that time in the Castle.

Varazdin is famous also of angels. We had a fantastic game to find hidden angels in the town. Indeed I found some angels hung in a very narrow place between two churches. The City tries to attract visitors in as many ways as possible.

I experienced very kind attitude of local people to the visitors, they were very kind and helpful to me.

Very impressive was the presentation of winery and the traditional methods of wine production. It was an occasion also to taste many kinds of Croatian wine and delicious hand-made food prepared by local people.

*Name of the learner: Stadnik Włodzimierz*

*Name of the organisation: Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country: Poland*



I really wanted to see and learn about a different country and lifestyle. I was excited and confused at the same time. I was wondering what kind of country I was going to visit. What kind of society will be Croatia? Either a country with reminiscences of the Soviet times or people still scared by the effects of war ... Either an inward-looking community or a forward-looking society. I was entirely wrong!! I learnt that people want to forget the nightmare of war and live again in peace and freedom.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the locals showed us great hospitality. Project partners from other countries were also extremely friendly to us.

As far as history is concerned, it seemed to me that Croatian people prefer giving more attention to the Middle Ages and the early modern period rather than focus on recent past events. Indeed, Varaždin boasts impressive and well preserved Baroque buildings and sculptures, which can be admired simply by walking along the streets, but also visiting the museums. In my opinion, there are a lot churches and angels in Varaždin old town, which creates a mystical and romantic atmosphere.

As far as geography is concerned, it is worth mentioning that Varaždin county is a hilly region and the city is surrounded by mountains. However, Croatian people know very well how to exploit their lands. For example, the sloping hillsides are planted with numerous vineyards and I was really impressed by them because they are planted vertically across the slopes while in Mallorca, on the contrary, vineyards are usually planted horizontally across the slopes. I'll always remember the long walks and a strong liqueur made from cherries. In short, I had very high expectations of the trip to Varaždin and Croatia, but the experience exceeded them!!

*Name of the learner: Ramon Cañellas Rigo*

*Name of the organisation: Consell de Mallorca*

*Country: Spain*

It was my first time in Croatia. The medieval and baroque historic center of Varaždin is exceptional. The ancient and unspoiled streets and places are lined with gallant baroque palaces and smaller buildings that used to be residences are very picturesque. The architectural impression of baroque offers Varaždin the right to be baptized the baroque town of Croatia. I really liked a harmony between the various parts of the town. The integration of modern urban features into medieval and renaissance streets and squares doesn't wipe out the cultural heritage, in a certain way this city reminds me my home town - Tallinn in Estonia.

A memorable and unusual experience was a guided visit and quest to the local park-like cemetery with its long green alleys and beautiful monuments.

I really enjoyed Trakoscan castle. The castle is located near Varaždin in the hilly area, and the magnificent castle is on the top of one hill. There is a nice path and stairs from the lake to the castle. Inside the castle there is a museum that hosts a collection of family paintings that owned a castle and the well preserved old furniture.

A Varaždin Baroque Evenings was the most interesting experience. We had a unique opportunity to assist at Antonio Vivaldi's evening performed by the Venice Baroque Orchestra led by violinist Giulio Plotino. The concert took place at Varaždin's Cathedral, a former Jesuit church, built in the XVII century, and notable by its baroque entrance. I would like to thank the organisers for this wonderful experience.

*Name of the learner: Pavel Smulski*

*Name of the organisation: Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*

# Impressions of Estonia

## TALLINN

I was really impressed by Tallinn because I didn't expect it to be so interesting and beautiful. The city itself offers so many interesting places to see. You can visit various churches, museums, go to the opera or just walk through the city center enjoying the medieval atmosphere which is present everywhere. I admire how the city managed to preserve the spirit from the Middle Ages : you can see street merchants dressed in medieval costumes selling sugar almonds, try out medieval dishes in real medieval restaurants choosing food from the medieval menu or enjoy the fire juggler's show in the main square. The stone wall which used to protect the city from the enemies is really amazing and adds the historical touch to the city.

I must admit that I am amazed by this city and the thing I especially liked was the visit to the Ukraine Greek Catholic Church. Two monks welcomed us in their monastery which is so authentic that you have a feeling of going back in time for a few centuries. The icons painted on the wood, their own printing and paper workshop, the toys made of wood and painted eggs, so many historical details which prove how they care about nature and their heritage. Another place that impressed me was The Cottage of Peter the Great where the guide told us so many interesting details about the Russian Tsar. He told us the facts about him that you can't find in any book, for example that he was a really strange person (he was illiterate, he had a phobia of open spaces and he was obsessed by pulling out teeth.) In general, what I liked about Tallinn was the fact that local people try to preserve their heritage and history and you can see it in every step.

As far as our project meeting is concerned, I enjoyed meeting people from Germany, Greece and Estonia. We were a small group because three countries weren't present. However, being a small group we had a better chance of getting to know one another better and we could easily agree on everything. Our hosts in Estonia were so hospitable and friendly. They planned our stay very carefully and gave us a chance to learn so much about Tallinn and Estonia.

*Name of the learner: Biserka Zajec*

*Name of the organization: Škola stranih jezika – Žiger*

*Country: Croatia.*

I was very impressed of Tallinn. I have never been there before. As a future tourism guide on the training I paid attention to historical side of the city and old parts of the city. There are numerous monuments lending themselves to sightseeing, among them St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. This spectacular, onion-domed structure is Estonian main Russian Orthodox cathedral. A trip to Tallinn isn't a trip to Tallinn without a visit to the magnificent northern Baroque Kadriorg Palace, built by Peter the Great for his wife, Catherine I, in 1718. Nowadays, it is also home of the Art Museum of Estonia.

The Kadriorg Art Museum displays hundreds of 16th- to 20th-century paintings of Western and Russian artists, as well as sculptures and other works. I could admire masterpieces of the famous Russian painters.

In the surroundings of the Palace there are several interesting palaces. For example the restored kitchen building is now occupied by a cozy art museum called the Mikkel Museum, and the summer estate is the Peter I House Museum. On the other side of Tallinn is Town Hall Square surrounded by merchant houses, in summer full of café tables and it is a natural magnet for tourists.

The Market Square creates unforgettable atmosphere that catches tourists, just to sit and admire. Historically, it was a market and meeting place for centuries. Today, the square remains the social heart of the city, a venue for open-air concerts, handicraft fairs and Medieval markets, where traditions from the Middle Ages are kept alive. I visited there many historical buildings looking for the Medieval remains. It was a nice working visit and I learned a lot about the history of Tallinn. I would recommend tourists to stay there a few days.

*Name of the learner: Katarzyna Rak*

*Name of the organisation: Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country: Rzeszów, Poland*

My expectations before the meeting in Tallinn were to meet people from other cultures, know their local customs and enjoy their lifestyle. After the trip, I can honestly say that it was an amazing experience, which lived up to all my expectations.

From my point of view, the locals – especially project partners from Estonia -are the best hosts that you can imagine. They were always at our disposal, willing to show us around the city. They definitely made us feel at home the whole time we were there.

Furthermore, there was a great camaraderie among project partners and learners from different countries.

As far as culture and history are concerned, I learnt that Estonians have been able to progress in spite of the fact that Estonia is a newly independent state.

Not only was the English class interesting and inspiring, it also was useful as it helped me to become familiar with the city and the country.

Finally, what impressed me the most was the visit to the Estonian School of Hotel and Tourism Management because we held a fruitful discussion, and saw different points of view about cultural tourism practices.

*Name of the learner: Daniel Alejandro Abregu Carreño*

*Name of the organisation: Consell de Mallorca*

*Country of origin: Spain*

# Impressions of Poland

## RZESZÓW

It was my first trip to Poland. We went by bus from Tallinn to Warsaw and then by train to Krakow and Rzeszów, so I had a chance to see a lot of Poland.

Early Easter Monday morning in Warsaw was amazing: no people on the streets, no cars, only two soldiers near the fire at the monument to Polish soldiers. We walked in the Old Town and later joined the morning service in the Catholic church together with many other people. After that we visited People to People Warsaw chapter members Andrew, Ivona and their children who invited us for Easter breakfast. It was very special.

Krakow was full of history and culture. Wawel castle, Catholic churches were very beautiful and I will remember this sunny day for a long time.

Meeting in Rzeszów with partners was very successful: I met a few people who were in Tallinn in March for the project meeting and many new ones from project partners' countries. The best part for me was the English lesson about Poland and, for sure, great hospitality of Polish hosts. They organised a very good program and I learned a lot about the country and people. Now I am looking forward to visiting Poland once again.

*Name of the learner: Svetlana Pirita*

*Name of the organisation: Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*

We arrived in Rzeszów late on Tuesday, April 10. We found it interesting to travel on a very old train from Kraków. We slept in the hotel Forum, which was nice and central.

The program started on Wednesday morning 11th April with an interesting excursion. We drove through the town of Rzeszów to the Lancut castle museum. The Castle is impressive and beautiful. The guiding in the castle was very good so we did not only get the history of the castle and its owners but we also learned a lot of Polish history. After the seminar we went down town in Rzeszów for dinner. The city centrum was a big surprise for me - many beautiful houses and a market square. Very different from the Polish cities I had seen before in the north of Poland.

Thursday the 12 April. We got a very extensive lecture about Cultural Tourism in Podkarpackie Region. The lecture was maybe too long and too big. Afterwards it is hard to spot out the highlights. After the lecture we visited the Rzeszów cellar or Underground. That is an amazing place and for sure the highlight of the trip! A big Cultural Treasure! We had also a great guide who took us through the cellar. He managed to impress us with his interesting and humorous way of telling things.

After lunch we took the train to Kraków. We were there at 17.00 so we got two hours to explore the city centre. Kraków is impressive and beautiful and for sure a city I will visit again.

On my way back to Iceland I had five hours in Warsaw between planes. I used that time to go down town. Warsaw is also amazing. The people there were just as nice as the other Polish people I had met before. I asked a stranger in the street for information and he walked with me through the city and explained everything to me without wanting any payment. I have never in my life experienced such a great hospitality.

For me the Poland meeting was much more than I had expected. I got a totally new impression of Poland and the Polish population. I will for sure come back to Rzeszów, Kraków and Warsaw and do my very best to recommend those cities to Icelandic travellers.

*Name of learner : Kristín Jóhannsdóttir*

*Name of the organisation : Viska*

*Country: Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland*

# Impressions of Spain

## Palma de Mallorca

I participated in „Cultural Treasure Hunt“ project partners' meeting in Spain, on Mallorca, on May 2012. It was my first visit to Mallorca and I expected to see sand beaches and see because I knew that Mallorca is place for holidays. But after the visit I learned much more about Mallorca and I know now that this island is much more than sun, sea and beach.

Windmills, small towns with old houses in Sierra de Tramuntana mountains, local people and local food – all were very new and interesting for me. My best place on the island is Fornalutx, I was amazed by hospitality of local people and the best fresh orange juice I ever drunk was in Fornalutx.

I liked very much study visits to Capdepera Castle and Manacor Museum of History where we learned a lot about people and history of Mallorca. Museum in Son Real was the best final accord in our trip: it was great example of mix of history, new technologies and human creativity in design, photos and exposition. Staff of this museum is so enthusiastic!

And I appreciate very much that we were invited to the City Council where we received our certificates of participation.

Now I share my knowledge about Mallorca with people in Estonia during official project meetings and just with relatives and friends. It is beautiful island and I recommend all to visit it.

*Name of the learner: Oksana Peetsalu*

*Name of the organisation: Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*



I participated in Leonardo da Vinci «Cultural Treasure Hunt» partners' meeting on Mallorca in May 2012. I had idea about Mallorca and thought that it is paradise for holidays but I change my mind and now I know that Mallorca is paradise for curious travelers.

We visited many places during the project – wind, water and oil mills, gardens, castles, churches, museums and learned about the renovations from Council of Mallorca staff members and local people. We were in few very unique places. My favorite are Fornalutx town in Serra de Tramuntana mountains with unbelievable hospitality of locals and great architecture and also Son Real estate museum with amazing exposition and its director Martin who did a lot for this place.

I can, for sure, tell now to all people that Mallorca is not only sun and beaches, it is place for tourists with wide imagination and expectations.

*Name of the learner: Jelena Parfjonova*

*Name of the organisation: Eesti People to People*

*Country: Estonia*

My adventure with Mallorca started just after arrival. When I was leaving Poland it was raining and cold, but when I arrived, Mallorca welcomed me by the sun and very warm temperature. I have seen many tourists walking on the promenade and staying on the beach. Green high palm trees enhanced my awareness that I am in Mediterranean country with warm pleasant climate. I was very happy about the sudden change from the dark rainy Poland into a sunny place. Those were my first impressions. I was very curious, how tourism organizations and hotels host foreigners, because hotels were full of guests in May who seemed very happy.

I realized that almost each hotel has got the representatives of tourist organization that take care of excursions run by professional guides and also leisure, animations and shows are served by hotel staff or artists almost every day. During our visit I had the possibility to see old country estates that are restored by the hosting institution Consell de Mallorca. It is a good example of preserving Mallorcan history and traditions. Most of museums are interactive, so I could watch and learn and after coming back to Poland teach. I tasted Mallorcan food, in one of the country estates, I could make orange juice myself from fresh fruit taken just from an orange tree. The juice was delicious and the process of making it was a great fun for me. I used an old small press that is a part of each household equipment. Visiting many other places, such as the historical centre of Palma de Mallorca, the Town Hall Palace and the cathedral allowed me to get a great positive experience and I can say that Mallorca is recommended by me to other tourists from Poland.

*Name of the learner: Halina Sieńko*

*Name of the organisation: Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country: Rzeszów, Poland*

It was my first time in Mallorca and the visit made a great impact on me. I was impressed by the beautiful nature, mild warm Mediterranean climate, many historical monuments and well-organized tourism services. As we came here for training how to host tourists and what and how to present in tourism places, I paid a great attention to all the aspects relating to this topic. I recognized that Consell de Mallorca realized many European project of restorations to preserve nature, landscapes, manors, country estates from previous centuries. It helped me to study more deeply the history, life, habits of past generations. It was for me very instructive lesson during visiting historical places, eg. Son Real country estate, Raixa country estate. I could compare the life of my grandparents to the life in the past century in Mallorca. There are many similarities in using the same household equipments for making butter, cottage cheese, ironing the clothes etc.... The windmills were very impressive for me, eg. Es Fraret' windmill - very specific machine to produce flour and often used by Mallorcan people. The capital Palma de Mallorca is famous for its beautiful cathedral and the castle. The landscape created of the cathedral, palm promenade and the ocean is the most beautiful view and the most attractive for tourists and also for me. I took many photos to show other learners in Poland. In the old part of the capital there are many very narrow streets with specific buildings dating from XIII-XVIII centuries. This district creates a nice atmosphere with a lot of small coffee bars and cozy restaurants. As an international educational group we were hosted at Consell de Mallorca Palace with a speech of the president, where all the group received the Certificates of Attendance and official gifts. My visit to Mallorca left a lot of positive impressions on me, nice memories plus great experience about how to organize tourism services.

*Name of the learner : Włodzimierz Stadnik*

*Name of the organisation : Stowarzyszenie VESUVIO*

*Country of origin : Rzeszów, Poland*

Just as we had expected, Mallorca was an island full of unbelievable discoveries, natural beauties and God-given wealth. An ideal place to be as an inhabitant but also as a tourist.

Positioned in the western Mediterranean Sea, it belongs to the country of Spain and it enjoys a mild climate, favourable not only for agriculture but for life in general, as well as for tourism in recent years in particular. The people of the island are hardworking and seem to be aware of the fact that the future is only in their hands. Wise management of resources and work discipline are the basic characteristics of the Mallorcan economy.

As soon as your plane lands, you are welcomed by a warm breeze of the island's pleasant climate, which remains with you for the rest of your stay. Although it is still May, the sun generously shines upon you its rays and makes you feel it is proper and pleasant summer.

The landscape lands itself to the eyes of eager visitors, who want to absorb every valley, every hill, not to mention the mountains Serra de Tramuntana, with its peak Puig Major, at the height of 1445m. The windmills, some ruined and out of use, some in a nice state of repair, catch your eye for their numerosity. One wants to know what their purpose in the past was and it is with the generosity of the hosts that you find out about several purposes of the mills. They used the wind power to extract water from the marshes in the lowlands! They used the power of water to turn huge grinding stones which ground the grains of cereals grown on the island to make flour! And, last, but not least, they were used to turn huge grinding stones to crush olives and get the olive oil!

Raixa country estate, which we visited on the second day of our stay, seemed like heaven on earth in respect of its size, its grandness, its vegetation, the freshness of the air after a night's rain, the view it offers of the steep terraced slopes of the surrounding Serra de Tramuntana, its Roman-time steps and statues, the pond full of fish overlooked by a luxurious terrace ideal for the morning coffee. The dry stone wall conservation is subject to another EU sponsored project realized in partnership with Croatian Institute for Monument Protection. It was in the restored mill of the estate that we saw how the process of wheat grinding and olive oil production is carried out. We leave the estate with grand impressions and head for another of Mallorca's jewels - the village of Soller with its cute houses lined up the steep terraced streets, from the top of which you have a most wonderful view of the mountain and the sea. It is also a good opportunity to buy locally plantation-grown oranges and lemons in one of the small, friendly shops. An ideal authentic present to bring home! Further north-east nearly on the coast stands one of many castles of the island, this one in the place called Capdepera, which has always had a protective role from many invaders, who had always wanted to conquer Mallorca's rich soil and abundance of wealth, regardless of whether they were Romans, Moslems or Christians. The church of Our Lady of Hope (Mare de deus de la esperanca) has been there for the protection of the inhabitants of the island since the 14th century. From the oldest and the highest point in the castle, which was built in the 1st century, on a clear day there is a view of the nearby island Menorca. But, as they say, if the view is clear, the weather will become bad tomorrow, and vice versa.

Mallorca has always been self-reliant on its resources, thus having the production of all kinds of fruit: apricots, oranges, lemons, figs, grapes, excellent wine, sheep-milk cheese, olives to eat and olive oil, tomatoes, lettuce and the whole variety of vegetables and herbs, meat products headed by sobrassada spread sausage called „the red gold of Mallorca“, production of leather, furniture, glass products, pottery and ceramics and whatever resources could be obtained for on the island, in order to avoid imports of these.

We sit on the terrace of the restaurant twenty metres above the sea level, with a breathtaking view of the bay and the crystal blue sea ... the sand beach, surrounded by green vegetation, while we enjoy the juicy seafood combinations and wash it down with a glass of full bodied red Mallorcan wine.

In the city of Palma, containing half of the island's population, night life is just as lively as in any other Mediterranean city – bars swarming with local people as well as with tourists, predominantly German. The only thing you need to be careful about is, however cute and tasty they may be, that even „tapas“ may cost you very dearly. They call yet for another and another drink, which is difficult to resist!

*Name of the learner: Dragutin Žiger*

*Name of the organisation: Škola stranih jezika – Žiger*

*Country: Croatia*

Mallorca is a tourist destination known for its beautiful beaches, pleasant climate, wonderful sea and excellent entertainment. Being there, I found out that Mallorca has much more to offer. Thanks to the welcoming hosts, I had an opportunity to get to know the other side of Mallorca – an outstanding and rich inland with its hidden natural beauties. The island is positioned in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the Balearic Islands archipelago and is also the largest of the Spanish islands.

I stayed in the capital - Palma de Mallorca. It is a town of just over 400 000 people, whereas the whole of the island has about 800 000 inhabitants. Palma is a city which can offer everything i.e. it can satisfy everybody's taste.

On the first day I learned about the main business activities of our hosts, which, among other, is restauring the windmills aimed at preservation of the rural heritage of the island. I visited their premises which are situated on the area of the first island airport. It is the Son Bonet airport which lost its original function. This is also where the members of the project group had their English lesson. I was also taken to the ceramic products fair in a place called Marratxi. The place Marratxi is known as "Terra del fang", i.e. as the land of pottery.

On the next day I visited Raixa. It is an estate at the foot of the mountain Tramuntana (Sierra de Tramuntana) which is surrounded by the most beautiful gardens on the whole island. I visited several museums, an oil factory Can Xoroi, in a small charming place called Fornalutx as well as the citadel Capdepera in the place bearing the same name. Every year the inhabitants of Capdepera commemorate the conquering of the citadel by „travelling“ back into the middle ages, remembering what life was like then.

Thanks to the hospitable people, new acquaintances, the nature that takes your breath away, gastronomic offer and pleasant climate, we were simply thrilled by Mallorca.

*Name of the learner: Dubravka Škrinjar*

*Name of the organisation. Škola stranih jezika – Žiger*

*Country of origin: Croatia*

It was nice to arrive in beautiful Mallorca. May is a perfect time to visit the island. The weather is good and there are not so many tourists.

The first seminar day was a traditional workshop day. The location of Son Bonet was an interesting factory area near a small airport. The English language lesson from Croatia was good and professional like always. European buffet was good. It is nice and interesting to be really familiar with traditional local food from the other nations at the end of the project.

We ended the day by visiting the Marratxi Ceramics Fair. Spain has a lot of beautiful ceramics.

The second day was an excursion to Raixa and the small village Fornalutx. The drive and the beautiful small village is for sure a cultural treasure. This is something you don't see without a good program from the local people. Lunch was a great traditional paella in a restaurant on the top of the hill with a breath-taking view.

The afternoon was sightseeing in the city centre of Palma... The group had an impressive reception at the consul de Mallorca Palace. Our local hosts took us to the traditional "tapas route" in the evening. For us the tapas route is an interesting business idea. The different cafes and pubs in the old town have a special offer of drinks and tapas on Tuesday. This is an attraction to make people go out in mid-week day. This is an idea we will introduce to our pub and restaurant owner in Vestmannaeyjar.

The last day we drove over to the east side of the island. The visit to the "Circle of life" exhibition is well-made, lot of impressive solutions to make the most of a small building. The Capdepera Castle and the guiding tour there gave us a lot of information about the history of the Balearic islands in the middle ages.

For me the Mallorca seminar was well organized, our hosts managed to show me that Mallorca has a lot more to offer than the sun and the beaches.

I learned a lot about how Mallorca organizes tourist activities. It was impressive to see how they can have a very unique nature and original old village's on the one side and the mass tourism on the other side. The museums and exhibitions we visited gave me a lot of good ideas for different culture projects that I'm working on in my job in Vestmannaeyjar Iceland.

*Name of the learner: Kristín Jóhannsdóttir*

*Name of the organisation: Viska*

*Country of origin: Vestmannaeyjar Iceland*