

# Your Europe

## Study Visit

Why was the week spent in Aalborg one of the best weeks in 2015? It's a question I still cannot answer with only one sentence – so brace yourselves!

Was it because it meant one week skipping university?

Definitely not. First it sounds fun (and in reality it is) going on to an Erasmus+ project in the 3rd week of the semester, but in case you study architecture I would recommend you to rethink the idea. That week I missed 2 presentations and had to face 3 angry professors who couldn't care less me being a member of the Hungarian delegation.



Why was it still worth causing myself extra stress and getting up 5 am every day during the project (after going to bed at midnight the earliest)?

Was it because of the adventure discovering a new country?

I won't deny it, wanderlust played a huge role in my decision. Denmark is a must-see for everyone! The fact that water is found everywhere in the country – rivers, lagoons, as border! –, the beautiful landscapes I travelled through, the chilly weather with the stormy wind on the seaside make me want to jump into the train again and go back. But it's not all that I loved about that week.



Is it a beautiful memory because of the people I've met?

Definitely. If I had met rude, mean people at the project I may not think of it with this much love. But me having fun with a crowd of youngsters isn't the only reason – I have fun with a crowd of youngsters most of the time. It was the feeling that we had something in common. Some of us were enthusiastic, engaged youth leaders willing

to help young people in their country and some of us were less engaged “youth”. Still we had something in common. We all wanted to be there. It was different from all school exchanges, where mommy sends you to “see the world and practice the foreign language you got so good grades in at school”. We were all willing to participate. We were all willing to communicate with each other on an international basis. With the members of the Hungarian delegation we barely spoke Hungarian. Seriously even if it were only the 2 of us Hungarians we automatically talked in English. Even without a C1 IELTS language exam you were able to have a conversation with the others, because they helped you to express yourself as they wanted to understand you. We all also were willing to exchange. Not just the traditional food of our countries – which actually made a perfect Intercultural Evening, – but also ideas, opinions, experiences.



Why I haven't mentioned the topic of the project yet?

Because it gives a frame to all the important things I've written about yet and

the frame comes at last – Trust me, I'm a photographer.

The main topic was EU citizenship. When I first read it, my association was “EU→politics→nevergonnahappen”, but then I couldn't get it out of my mind. I am an EU citizen and I already live with one of the opportunities it gives me (studying in Germany). It may sound selfish and egoistic but I wanted to know what kind of other opportunities I have in the European Union.



And we learned a lot during our stay in Feriecenter Slettestrand. Mostly non-formal. For example the difference between non-formal and informal education. In case you don't know what the difference is, you better ask Daniel, he will kindly help you.

And about all kinds of Erasmus programs we can participate in. I used to hear the word Erasmus and could only think of “semester abroad”. But our one-week project was an Erasmus project as well. And there are plenty of possibilities for volunteering programs, internships, even for “shadowing”. Oh, you don't know what

shadowing is? Well, you will have to meet Asser (this Denmark-born international man from InterCollege with a huge smile – but DO NOT BE LATE!).



I also learned a lot in an informal way. For example how to dance the Sirtaki (sorry Greece, if I misspelled it). And “Cheers” in 20 languages – and how to forget all on them after 2 glasses of wine... I also learned how to tell my Lithuanian lover that he’s hot and that I love him – which will be relevant as soon as I have a Lithuanian lover.

Not to mention the Italian hand gesture with which I can tell everyone that “I don’t give a shit” without words.

Also that democracy may cause the death of a lot of innocent people in the Palermo City Killer game... And that at 1 am everyone is suspicious.

But what was the most important thing I’ve learnt that week?

That it doesn’t matter if you’re claiming yourself as Croatian or Hungarian or whatever your nationality might be, as long as you are respectful to others, as long as you’re open minded, you’re an international EU citizen.

So come, join us being a good EU citizen and play with us among the Yellow Stars.

■ **Anna Janka Máté**

