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PAST – PRESENT – FUTURE: VISIONS AND CHALLENGES

(Erasmus + 2023/2024)

In the school year 2023/2024 we implemented the project Past - Present - Future: Visions and Challenges. With the project we are pursuing the general goals of Gimnazija Koper within the framework of the acquired accreditation: 1. progress in the use of foreign languages, 2. deepening the knowledge of current topics, questions, new knowledge and approaches in cooperation with other school systems, 3. internationalization of the school - ongoing international cooperation.

In this year's project, the theme was based on researching how the past affects the present and what we must pay attention to today, so that the future can be better. Through partnership with foreign schools, students and teachers were researching how we can connect traditional characteristics, habits, the environment ... with the latest findings in the fields of natural and social sciences. What knowledge, findings, behaviors, habits could lead to a more sustainable future (and friendlier to everyone, including with nature). An 'outside' view, comparison, ideas and knowledge that foreign partners can offer is very important for achieving the goals.

The fields we included were: fine arts, literature, biology, chemistry, sports, history, sociology... The students also took part in three mobilities: Petäjävesi (Finland), Tilburg (Netherlands) and Mairena del Aljarafe (Spain).



Mairena del Aljarafe – Spain, mobility 13th – 20th December 2024



Between December 13th and 20th, 2023, the students of Koper High School participated in the mobility to Spain. They visited the Cavaleri high school from Mairena del Aljarafe.

Day 1, Wednesday, 13th December, we traveled and got settled.





On the **2nd day, Thursday, 14th December 2023**, we were introduced to the program, goals and school. The Spanish students prepared us all for what we researched, observed and visited during the week. We also took a look at Seville, focusing our attention (or tried to :) on the connections between the past and the future, everything from the excellently organized public transport to the pros and cons of tourism.



Day 3, **Friday, 15th December 2023**, was devoted to research on renewable/clean energy sources in Andalusia (sun, wind, water). The students also visited the solar power plant in Sanlúcar.





The students spent the **4th and 5th day, Saturday and Sunday, 16th and 17th December 2023** with Spanish families. Saturday was dedicated to cooperation between them – they also had to write reports about what they saw and heard and plan and prepare final products with their partners.

GYMKHANA

1. University of Seville
2. The Palace of San Telmo
3. Torre del Oro
4. Torre de la Plata
5. Casa de la Moneda
6. Reales Alcazarinas
7. Archivo de Indias
8. Alcázar
9. Cathedral and Giralda
10. Ayuntamiento

CONCLUSION OBJECTIVES

SLOVENIAN
Sevilla je bila res neverjetna izkušnja! Obisk tega čudovitega mesta v okviru projekta Erasmus je bil nepozaben. Spoznali smo nove prijatelje, okusili odlično hrano, se potopili v bogato kulturo in brusili svojo angleščino. Delili smo ideje o trajnostnem razvoju in prihodnosti našega planeta. Ta izkušnja nam je odprla pogled v nov svet, ki ga moramo soustvarjati skupaj in bo vključeval prav vse, tudi učence s posebnimi potrebami, s katerimi smo sodelovali.

SPANISH
Sevilla fue realmente una experiencia increíble! Visitar esta hermosa ciudad como parte del proyecto Erasmus fue inolvidable. Conocimos nuevos amigos, probamos excelente comida, nos sumergimos en una rica cultura y perfeccionamos nuestro inglés. Compartimos ideas sobre el desarrollo sostenible y el futuro de nuestro planeta. Esta experiencia nos abrió los ojos a un mundo nuevo, que debemos crear juntos y que incluirá a todos, incluidos los estudiantes con necesidades especiales, con quienes trabajamos.

SPAIN SLOVENIA ERASMUS+ PROJECT

DECEMBER 2023

SANLUCAR SOLAR PLANT

REDOS RENEWABLE ENERGIES APP IN SPAIN

40 %	61 %
Renewable energies used at this time in Spain	Energies that have no CO2 emissions

¿WHAT TYPES OF TECHNOLOGIES CAN WE SEE IN THE SOLAR PLANT?

SOLAR POWER TOWER
They work with the solar light reflected in mirrors

PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS
They absorb the solar light and they transform it into electricity

ECOLOGICAL CITY

GREEN ROOFTOPS

TRASH BINS

TRANSPORTS
In Seville we can see a lot of ecological public transports that help with making the city ecofriendly

DOÑANA'S LARGE BIODIVERSITY

We did a 70km trip that lasted approximately 4 hours. We saw the longest beach in Spain that is 28km long from Matalascañas to the mouth of the river Guadalquivir

FISHERMEN HOUSES
Near the beach there's a generation of people that are allowed to live there and fish

PALACES
There are 4 palaces in Doñana. Some of them are used by the Prime Minister when he visits the Park

PIVE FOREST **RED DEERS** **SEAGULLS**



On the **6th day, Monday, December 18th, 2023**, students participated in workshops. First, Mari Carmen García, a researcher at the Spanish Institute of Oceanography, a specialist in the impact of climate change on the Mediterranean Sea and director of the Oceanographic Center in Malaga, presented the impact of climate change on the oceans. A discussion followed. In the workshop on the topic of nature conservation, students prepared leaflets or newspaper articles on ocean protection, nature parks, city parks, use of renewable energy sources (water, air, sun), urban traffic and being environmentally friendly at home. Then the students took part in art workshops using natural and recycled objects on the theme of Christmas.



On the **7th day, Tuesday, 19th December 2023**, the students worked in workshops collected and edited the material they had prepared in the previous days and present it in the form of presentations, short films, articles ... Finally, they visited the Doñana nature reserve, where the exhibition is connected with the importance of preserving natural environments for the future.





On the **8th day, Wednesday, 20th December 2023**, we said our goodbyes, but lots of memories were taken home (also because we still had to do our work with final products ;)).

MORE PHOTOS: Instagram (link)

Mairena del Aljarafe: <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18095459986389890/>

Petäjävesi – Finland, mobility 11th – 18th January 2024

Between January 11th and 18th, 2024, the students of Gimnazija Koper participated in the mobility to Finland. They visited Petäjäveden lukio high school from Petäjävesi.

On Day 1, Thursday, January 11th 2024, we traveled and visited the Finnish capital, Helsinki. In addition to cultural attractions, the Finnish hosts presented us with attempts at sustainable arrangements in a large city in climatic conditions that are quite different from our own.





On the **2nd day, Friday, January 12th, 2024**, Koper students first presented their school, region, country and project on the school radio. They were also taken around the school (they were impressed by the social spaces with couches :)). Then we discussed the weekly program and learned about the Finnish school support system in the youth center (social services, ways of working with children with special needs or with adapted programs). In the afternoon, we visited an UNESCO World Heritage site, the Old Church - a wooden building from the Middle Ages, where cultural heritage merges with the present and the future (they still meet in it on major holidays, it also hosts weddings). We learned how life went on in the past (including the fact that there is a place in the church, where the dead people were laid in winter, as they could not be buried in the frozen ground) and how a small settlement 'in the middle of nowhere' can preserve very special cultural a legacy for the future.



On the **3rd day, Saturday, 13th January 2024**, students visited Jyväskylä, the larger town some kilometers away from the school. We connected it with the theme of the project Past – Present – Future: Visions and Challenges. We visited the Museum of Central Finland, where we learnt about Finland from the past to the present, including a special exhibition about saunas, which were and remain an important part of Finnish everyday life for both physical and psychological well-being. We observed also some highlights from Finnish design, which was and still remain very special in the world of arts, design, architecture (just think Alvar Aalto).

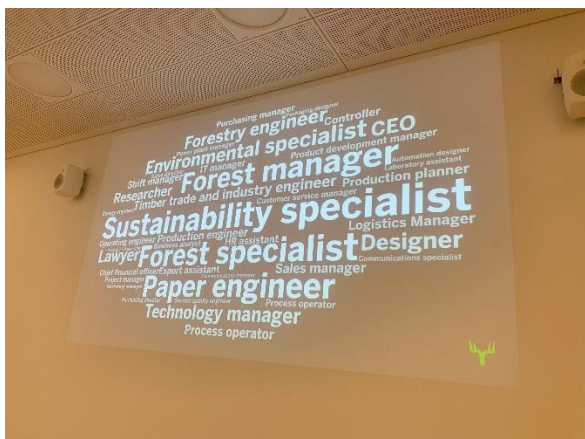
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Day 4, Sunday, 14th January 2024, students spent time with Finnish families. Also for this day, they had the task to collect material and information about the connection between the past, present and future, as well as sustainable aspects of life in winter conditions in the north of Europe, in accordance with the theme of the project. They started to prepare reports with their groups.

Day 5, Monday, 15th January 2024, we visited Metsä-group, a Bioproduct mill in Äänekoski, which is said to be the most efficient wood processing plant in the northern hemisphere. The students learned about sustainable practices related to wood: sustainable production of cellulose, processing of wood, bio by-products, electricity ...





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On **Day 6, Tuesday, 16th January 2024**, the students took part in workshops, where they used information, experiences from field trips and did research on their own. They also attended a few hours of classes and learned about the Finnish school system.



On **Day 7, Wednesday, 17th January 2024**, the students collected and edited the material that they had prepared in the previous days and presented it in form of presentations, short films, articles ... They combined findings about what is good from the past in both countries and is worth preserving for the future, and what are the challenges for the future in Finland and in Slovenia.

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On **Day 8, Thursday, 18th January 2024**, we said our goodbyes, but lots of memories were taken home (also because we still had to do our work with final products ;)).

MORE PHOTOS: Instagram (link)

Petäjävesi: <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18017293967060375/>

Tilburg, Netherlands, mobility 4th – 11th April 2024

Between January 11 and 18, 2024, the students of Gimnazija Koper took part in a mobility to the Netherlands. We visited the Odolphus Lyceum high school from Tilburg.

On **Day 1, Thursday, 4th April 2024**, we traveled and got settled.



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On **Day 2, Friday 5th April 2024**, students took a tour of the school and hosts presented and explained the weekly program. This was followed by a presentation of the history of the city of Tilburg – its transformation from an industrial city in the past, to a modern, architecturally interesting, sustainable, university city. The students also learnt about a brief history of the Netherlands and its struggle with water, as well as about the Delta plan – a project that is still futuristic. The students were then given tasks and searched for points in the city related to the project theme.



We also visited the Textile Museum, which is a fusion of traditional activities, typical for the city of Tilburg in the past and modern design, managed with sustainable and innovative activities.

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The students spent **Day 3 and 4, Saturday 6th April and Sunday 7th April 2024**, with Dutch families. Saturday was dedicated to cooperation between them – they had to write reports about what they saw and heard and prepared final products with their partners.

On **Day 5, Monday 8th April 2024**, the students visited The Hague and learnt about the international institutions located in this city (Peace Palace, International Criminal Court, International Court of Arbitration, International Pharmaceutical Federation ...). We also visited the Mauritshuis museum. In accordance with the goals of the project, they also observed how a large city lives and works against a historical background and with the future in mind.



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On **Day 6, Tuesday 9th April 2024**, the students visited Kinderdijk and Rotterdam, places where the traditional Netherlands and modern entrepreneurial, scientific and sustainable aspects intertwine. In addition to the picturesque site, the students had to observe, collect material and think about the visions and challenges for the future that the Netherlands is facing.





On **Day 7, Wednesday 10th April 2024** the students collected and edited the material in the workshops, and also prepared the final artistic products.



On **Day 8, Thursday, 11th April 2024**, we said our goodbyes, but lots of memories were taken home (also because we still had to do our work with final products ;)).

MORE PHOTOS: Instagram (link)

Tilburg: <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18005390627426011/>



At the end of the school year and at the end of the project, we also carried out an EVALUATION.

In debates with **participating students** (this year there were 56 of them), we found out:

1. They deem **international cooperation and mobilities** as a great experience, very different from tourist trips. 90% of the participants want to repeat the experience and they think that participating in Erasmus + brings them progress in the language field. They said that **getting to know the project topics** was also full of good and 'interesting' challenges :) (we talked about what they thought was great, and what they would suggest to improve the efficiency of participation in the project).

Teacher's comments: We gladly accepted suggestions, e.g. of having daily tasks (in the form of a diary, directed questions...), because this would help them to make better sense of both field work and free time.

2. They said that the experience of '**immersion in everyday work and private life**' (of visitors to us and our students abroad) is exceptional, but that it is difficult to be with one and the same person for a whole week (there is a lack of topics, ideas, what to say, what to do in free time ...). Some students see the week as very challenging and full, others would like more free time, many would like even more organized activities.

Teacher's comments: When hosting, we make sure that there are a lot of organized activities and not too much free time, but on mobilities, this depends heavily on the host school, its work organization, etc. We also prepare students for this, so there are no major problems, but we talk and teach tolerance and openness :).

3. Despite **preparation and expectations**, there are still surprises due to personal and cultural differences.

Teacher's comments: Professors will pay even more attention to preparation before mobility, to monitoring during mobility and to analyzes at the end.

4. **Results/products:** the students would like more guidance, so the debate went in the direction of finding compromises between the teachers' expectations (following instructions, focus on work, not free time, independence, even in seeking help...) and the students' wishes for guidance.

Teacher's comments: We agreed that next school year we will devote much more time to preparation (both before hosting and mobility). But we pointed out, that lots of things would be easier, if they would follow the instructions carefully, read the e-mails and worksheets ;) ...

Participating teachers (in alphabetical order of surnames: Tanja Brstilo, Suzana Čuš, Maja Gudič, Monika Jazbec, Matej Kocjan, Veronika Koradin, Helena Miklavčič, Tjaša Poljšak Miklavec, Elen Slavec, Andreja Škerjanc) note that:

1. In international cooperation, we prepare teachers and carry out activities in an multi-language, multi-school system, multi-cultural environment, which enable us to **progress** both at the level of **language** knowledge (most teachers are not foreign language teachers), but also at the level of getting to know new and innovative pedagogical and psychological approaches – both to learning and teaching, because coming to face with and by experience other school systems.
2. Participation in the project gives teachers **motivation and enthusiasm to break out of the usual framework** of our work.
3. It is very important for the good name of our school to **enable students** (who will study at universities and also study and work abroad) to have a guided toward independence but still safe, organized, yet truly authentic **experience of living and working in a foreign environment, school system**.
4. We would like to **improve in the field of psychological preparation of students** for mobilities (new approaches are already planned for 2024/2025).
5. We also want to come up with **effective, transparent, impactful (also challenging) ways to address project topics**, because we want **better project results – products** (we got some good ones this school year, but ...).

We are already looking forward to the new school year, new experiences, activities and challenges :))!

