

Euro Trip 2017

Day 1 – Saturday 24th June

The first day of the 16-day long Euro Trip was also the day of arrival for the participants. All of them have been excited for days to finally start their journey. Bert and Stéphane welcomed the students at the main station in Munich. Many of the exchange students already knew each other from their home country and so it seemed a bit like a hearty reunion with well-known friends. Since some of the students were accompanied by their host family it was time to say goodbye for them, which is why a lot of tears have been shed. However, after calming down, the journey could begin and everybody took the underground to go to the hostel. Afterwards, everyone went downtown to start the trip with an interactive quiz at the Stachus that tested the previous knowledge of the students on Bavaria and Munich. It turned out that some of them already knew a lot about the region. This was followed by a quick historical excursion concerning the development of the city as well as some cultural explanations. At this point, the Bavarian dialect and the language in Munich was addressed as well. Furthermore, the relationship of Bavaria to the rest of Germany and the part Austria is playing was discussed. On the way through the old town, the group went to the Frauenkirche and listened to the legend of the Teufelstritt, which is very famous in Munich. Afterwards, they went further to the Marktplatz. Here, the group took a short break at the tradition-steeped trade office of Dallmayr. Next stop was the Hofbräuhaus. Over here, everyone took many pictures of the huge beer mugs and the magnificent ceiling. Passing the Viktualienmarkt, the group went to the town hall and had some free time to explore the city by themselves. The day was capped by a pleasant dinner at the “Schnitzelwirt”.

Day 2 – Sunday 25th June

After a delicious breakfast at 8 o’ clock, the second day of the trip started with a short walk and a ride with the tram to the central bus station. From here, a bus took the group to Vienna. From the windows, one could observe the heavy rain as well as the impressive landscape as the German-Austrian border was crossed. When the bus arrived, the group took the underground to their Hotel. After a nice meal, the group made their way to the Donauinselfest. After hours of rain, the sky cleared up and the weather was perfect to enjoy the several concerts, food, self-made products and art. Everybody felt great and the students decided to get matching airbrush tattoos as a sign for their team spirit. Even after the festival, the mood was great and the group

kept singing and dancing to the smash hit Despacito. It was sure that this was the start of an amazing trip.

Day 3 – Monday 26th June

The third day of the journey was for exploring the cultural capital of Vienna in all of its colours and shades. After breakfast, everybody went to the castle Schönbrunn. While discovering the beautiful area, the group also talked about differences and similarities between Germany and Austria. After a nice lunch break, the most important sites of Vienna were visited and most of the students decided to go to the famous Prater, a theme park in the city centre. For the rest of the day, the group relaxed and packed their things to get ready for the next stage of the Euro Trip: Budapest.

Day 4 – Tuesday 27th June

After the last breakfast in Vienna, the group went to the central bus station again and took a short ride from Vienna to Budapest. The metropolis on the Danube was one of the favourite destinations of the group and thus everybody was extremely excited. One of the oldest trains took the group from the station to the hostel, which was situated right in the city centre. First of all, the euros had to be changed into forints, since Hungary still has another currency than the other members of the EU. The students were impressed by the foreign money and spent their first bills on snacks and drinks. The Hungarian language also fascinated them, since it is one of the most complicated and oldest languages in Europe. They explored the Buda side of the city and learned a lot about the Hungarian history and took a lot of photographs. In the evening, the group had a traditional Hungarian meal and afterwards enjoyed the beautiful sunset and the view from the famous Fishermen's Bastion. After a wonderful day, everybody was tired and excited for the days to come.

Day 5 – Wednesday 28th June

The start into the fifth day of the trip started not only with a tasty breakfast but also with a birthday song. One of the participants turned 17, which was the reason for a little birthday party. Firstly, the group visited the synagogue. In general, they had the opportunity to learn more about the Jewish life in Budapest, which was extremely interesting. In the afternoon, a boat trip was planned. While floating on the Danube, everybody had a spectacular view of the city and could take many pictures. Afterwards, there was time for shopping and independent sightseeing. The Pizza in the evening was more than well deserved.

Day 6 – Thursday 29th June

The final day in Budapest started with a visit in the German Embassy. It was very interesting to learn more about the German foreign affairs and have a personal conversation with the press officer. The rest of the day was rather relaxed and the group went to the highest tower of the city to have a nice view. They also did more shopping, sightseeing and prepared for the flight to Dusseldorf on the next day.

Day 7 – Friday 30th June

After a short night, the group made their way to the airport. After all passengers and the baggage have been checked in, the flight could start without any problems. During the flight, most of the students took a nap in order to be fit for the next stage of their trip. The next destination was Cologne. The weather was still nice, yet a bit cooler than in Budapest. Everybody was quite hungry now and so the next stop was a crêperie to have a delicious breakfast. After the nice meal, the group started discovering the fourth largest city of Germany. Of course, everyone had to take many pictures of the famous Cologne Cathedral. Not only from the outside but also from the inside, the giant ancient building was very impressive and there was a lot of interesting information about it. Afterwards, the students had some free time and decided to discover the centre or take a walk along the riverside.

Day 8 – Saturday 1st July

Unfortunately, the next day started with rainy weather. However, the rain stopped as soon as the group left the hostel for the guided bike tour in the city. Once again, there was so much to discover and learn about the historic city of Cologne. Furthermore, during the stops a lot of photos were taken. After the tour, everybody agreed that exploring the city by bike was a nice variety. Of course, after three hours of sporting activity, the group was very hungry and went to an Italian Restaurant to have a big plate of delicious pasta. In the afternoon, the group dived into one of the dark chapters of the city and learned something about the NS-era in Cologne. In the evening, everyone was extremely tired and so they decided to stay in the hostel and take a rest.

Day 10 – Monday 3rd July

After a great breakfast in the fifth floor of the hotel, the participants left Cologne. Sadly, Stéphane became sick and had to stay in Cologne to recover. However, Rita, another employee of aubiko, waited for the group in Brussels. Unfortunately, there were some difficulties with the bus and she had to wait a little bit longer for the group. The time was used to have some

snacks, phoning and relaxing. After the delay, the bus driver was very friendly and took the group directly to their hotel. Moreover, the bus was a luxury liner with leather seats and a lot of comfort, so the students could nap and sleep during the ride and were happy and awake when they arrived in Brussels.

Day 11 – Tuesday 4th July

The day started quite early, so that there was enough time to explore the city. At 10 o' clock Rita, Bert and the students had guided tour in the Parliamentarium. The tour offered information and historical facts about the European Union, which was very interesting. Afterwards, the city centre was visited and it was time for a quick lunch break. Since Belgium is known for its delicious fries and waffles, the group went to have some of them. They could choose the toppings and so everybody was very happy with their individual meal. Then, the Manneken Pis and the market place was explored as well as the many pretty side streets and little shops. Later, the group met again to the Atomium. The students took a lot of pictures there because on this day the sky was blue and clear. In the evening, it was time for packing again.

Day 12 – Wednesday 5th July

After one last meal in Brussels, the group took the train to Paris. With over 300km per hour, the train took them to their hostel very fast. After lunch, many pictures of famous sites such as the Sacre Coeur, Moulin Rouge, Montmartre, Trocadero and the Eiffel tower were taken. The first impression was amazing and everybody was talking about the beautiful city during dinner. Then the group went to bed early since the plan for the next day was going to Disneyland.

Day 13 – Thursday 6th July

Everybody was extremely exciting to finally go to Disneyland. The regional train took the group to the famous theme park in Paris and everything was even better than in their imagination. After a day of action and fun with the Disney characters and the numerous amusement rides, the romantic and impressive firework show in the evening was a perfect ending to a memorable day.

Day 14 – Friday 7th July

The highlight of this Friday was going to be the Mona Lisa in the famous Louvre museum and the Notre Dame Cathedral as well as visiting the Eiffel tower to have a great view over Paris. The Louvre was extremely spectacular and the Mona Lisa was very special and charming. Afterwards the group had to say goodbye to Rita in front of the Notre Dame cathedral on the

other side of the Seine River. Rita did a great job and everybody was sad to leave her behind. Afterwards, the free time was used to do some shopping and discover more of the city. Some of the students went to see la Défense to see the bigger version of the l'Arc de Triomphe. At 18:30, they met again in front of the Eiffel tower. Before going on top, the group ordered Pizza and enjoyed their picnic on the big field in front of the famous tower. The view from the Eiffel tower was stunning and the students could take amazing pictures of Paris in the sunset. Afterwards they could even catch a glimpse of the sparkling tower by night.

Day 15 – Saturday 8th July

On this Saturday, the group left France and took the train to Frankfurt. At the train station, the recovered Stéphane was waiting for the group. Together, they went to their last hostel before they took a walk and see the Cathedral as well as the Römer, a beautiful ancient square in the centre of the city. In the evening, the students had the opportunity to give Stéphane and Bert some feedback for the trip. Overall, the group was extremely happy with everything and agreed that they experienced many amazing things in the capitals of Europe during the trip.

Day 16 – Sunday 9th July

After more than wonderful two weeks, the last day of the trip began. On this day, most of the students had their flights back to Columbia and the mood was quite sad. An amazing time in Germany ended. Of course, the students felt happy to see their family and friends again in Columbia. On the other hand they had to say goodbye to their lives in Germany and the exchange programme. After checking in and organising the baggage situation, a last group picture was taken. Now it was time to say goodbye for good and everybody went back home with a crying and a laughing eye.

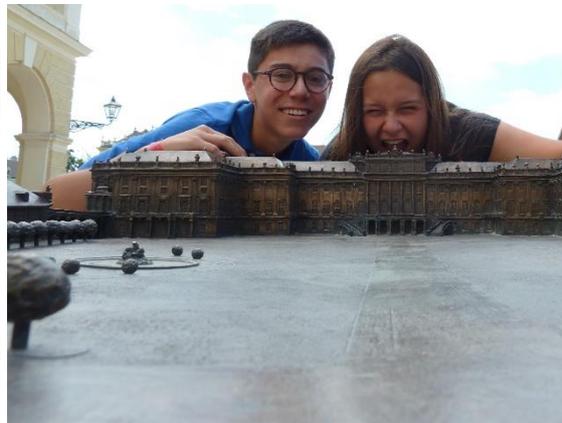
IMPRESSIONS



The group in front of the town hall in Munich



Happy students at the Donauinselfest in Vienna



Visiting the Schönbrunn Castle in Vienna



Heroes' Square with Millennium Monument and a view in Budapest



Cologne Cathedral Dom and the group in front of the Aachen Cathedral



The Atomium in Brussels



Sacre Coeur in Paris



L'Arc de Triomphe in Paris



Louvre in Paris



Time to say goodbye in Frankfurt