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REPORT FROM THE PROJECT:
FIRST STEP TO EUROPE

5th - 9th of October Drama, Greece



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ORGANIZATIONS & PARTICIPANTS

LEADER:

POLAND - REFLECTIONS ON EUROPE

- KAMIL STANOS
- ALEKSANDRA NIEWCZAS
- MAGDALENA SMORĄGIEWICZ
- RENATA SNOPKOVA

ORGANIZATIONS:

ITALY - MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES HAPPENING

- ROSANNA BELLOMO
- FLAVIA MARINCAS
- JACOPO FIDANZA

GREECE - INNOVATING ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATION, TOURISM, HEALTH, AND INTERCULTURALITY KDET YD

- PANAGIOTA TSAKIRIDOU
- IRINI ZAHAROPOULU
- STRATOS SARRIDIS

BULGARIA - ACADEMY FOR ACTIVE YOUTH

- STANISLAWA IVANOWA
- MARTIN GRICOROV
- BOJANKA CVETOVA
- HRISI TSVETILOVA





ROE - Reflections on Europe

The Association „Reflections on Europe” (ROE) gathers people interested in the issues of the European Union as well as local development, education (formal and non-formal), culture, social activity, entrepreneurship, and youth policy. ROE's conceptual strategy is focused on:

- increasing knowledge about European Union – its history, activities, and values,
- increasing youth participation in social, civic ,and political engagement and decision-making,
- creating opportunities for dialogue, meetings ,and sharing of experience
- involving young people in the non-formal educational process,
- promote intercultural dialogue, and youth mobility - to express oan opinion on themes, relevant to the European citizenship





MOH - Mobility Opportunities Happening APS

MOH is rooted in non-formal education that develops transversal skills with a horizontal communication in the desire for inclusion, equality and environmental protection.

"We're active in the field of youth mobility and one of our aims is to provide disadvantaged young people with opportunities to experience mobility projects abroad and increase their participation in society and decision-making processes. As a locally active NGO we provide several types of help to groups of young people facing economical and social obstacles and we help other associations with logistics, events organisation and networking. In order to do that we organize several activities: DIY workshop (zero waste, cooking lesson), video screening, settlement work in schools, cleaning events (by boat, kayak, paddle and on the ground), youth exchanges and training courses."





KDETYD - Innovating activities in education, tourism, health and interculturality

KDETYD is an NGO founded in 2020 and its activities are expanding so it can carry out educational programs, actions, counseling or training to all people without discrimination.

"We design and organize experimental workshops and seminars related to our objectives. Our vision is to implement new techniques and methods of education and training, to bring people together and achieve real social impact. We have a great interest in finding partners and together to work on programs focused on sharing knowledge and best practices as well as their applications. We aspire to promote active citizenship in making their own strategic plans for them, creating projects, spreading ideas to all organizations, intercultural dialogue, self- development, skill-building, environmental awareness, and encouragement of solidarity, especially among youth and vulnerable social groups. We want to help create the next generation of leaders to strengthen social cohesion and decision-making centers in their places."





Academy for Active Youth Association

Academy for Active Youth is a newly founded association that works mainly on to the development of youngsters in Bulgaria.

"We are youngsters ourselves and we know how crucial is to have other people your age that inspire you to do better and to be an active citizen that not only lives day by day, but lives for the community and to leave something behind. Therefore our main activities are regular meetings with youngsters and we discuss topics from how to handle difficult situations to how to be an active citizen and ways to improve your community. We consider this activities crucial since a lot of youngsters are not familiar with the youth work, participation and Erasmus+ in general. Therefore we are strongly concentrating on the betterment of our participants, and the surrounding around them. At the moment we are working on two other projects which aim to involve rural youth into rural agriculture and social entrepreneurship."





Aim of the project:

Together as a Reflection on Europe (Poland), Academy for Active Youth (Bulgaria), Mobility Opportunities Happening APS (Italy) and Innovating Activities in Education, Tourism, Health and Interculturality (Greece) we see a strong need to invest in young people from smaller cities and show them that Europe is all of us and that no one is excluded from enjoying the privileges of being a European.

That is why our main goal of the project is to build a strong and long-term partnership of organizations dealing with the social inclusion of young people from smaller cities (and thus strengthen the potential of our organizations) and encourage young people to invest themselves in their local communities, to participate in non-formal education and spread knowledge about European Union.

The project will be filled with many developing intercultural workshops on European values and the EU's top priorities. During the workshops, young people will also generate ideas that can be implemented within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps. There will also be all kinds of discussion panels on ecology, media or current events, as well as talks with experts.

Our target groups in the project will be youth aged 15-25 participating in youth workshops and Civic Youth Festival. This target group also includes young people with fewer opportunities, especially those with learning, geographic, social, economic and cultural difficulties from small cities: Starachowice, Targovishte, Drama, Triggiano and its surroundings. A large number of young people who will take part in the events have never participated in any projects under the Erasmus+ Program.

The main results of the project will be the increase in the potential of partner organizations, mutual learning from each other, by solving problems, exchanging experiences, inspiring each other, contact exchange, awareness of cooperation, in the context of cultural differences, a sense of a common goal, solidarity.

European Union especially this year, wants to show diversity in all fields of education and self-development. They value zeal of work and cognitive curiosity of the youth.



PROJECT AGENDA

DAY 1



12:00-18:00 Arrivals and hotel registration at "AYA hotel"

18:00 Drama Tour to the Park "Agias Varvaras' natural springs

20:00 Welcoming Dinner





PROJECT AGENDA

DAY 2



11:00 Welcome speech. Partners' presentations. Discussion and actions of the project.

11:30 Welcome speech of Vice Regional Governor of Drama Prefecture

12:00 Presentation of the Prefecture of Drama and its tourism development.

12:30 Coffee Break

12:45 Presentation of the actions of the European Information Centre – Youth awareness

13:30 Meeting of the management team - discussion on project matters -risk analysis, action plan

14.30 Lunch at "Ellinikon" Restaurant

15:45 - 17:45 Free time

18:00 Meeting with the youth team of Ladies Union in Drama

20:00 Dinner at " ENTEYΞΙΣ RESTO BAR" Restaurant



PROJECT AGENDA

DAY 3



11:00 - 13:00 Visits to the 1st and 2nd Vocational Senior High Schools. Workshops Italy: Ecology Poland: European values Bulgaria: media and fake news

13:30 Visit and Tour at "Oinogenesis" winery
Lunch at "Oinogenesis" winery

15:30 Return to the hotel

15:45 - 17:45 Free time

18:00 Youth Festival "Europe is here!"





PROJECT AGENDA

DAY 4 & 5

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Day 4

11:00 Meeting with " Micropolis Youth Committe NGO (Epitroph newn Mikropolis)"

12:00 Visit to Aggitis Springs. Tour of the cave.

14:00 Lunch at "Pepe" Restaurant

15:45- 18:15 Free time

18:30 Meeting with the Association of the People with Special Needs of Drama Dinner at "Me...nou" traditional grocery store, coffee shop - restaurant

Day 5

11:30 Meeting with youth team from the department of Drama of Hellenic Scouts

13:00 Visit to the Photograph Exhibition "The wonderful world of Drama in pictures"

15:00 Departures



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TRAVEL

DAY 1

Venue: Hotel AYA

First day of our project was a traveling day. After landing in Thessaloniki we got on the bus and travel to the city of Drama located in the Region of East Macedonia and Trace.





Day 2

Venue: Drama City Hall

11:00 - 13:00 Our international team was welcomed in Drama City Hall. We started the day with the welcoming speeches from the partners and projects hosts of the even. We received welcome speech from the Vice Regional Governor of Drama Prefecture and a presentation about the whole city and its tourism development. After the coffee break our hosts told us about the actions of the European Information Centre - Youth Awareness Centre in which we had our evening workshop session.

13:00 - 13:45 Meeting of the management team took place. The discussion on project matters consist of risk analysis, action plan and finance management.

14:00 - 17:45 Time of lunch, free time and networking.





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Day 2

Venue: Youth Awareness Centre

18:00

Evening workshop session we focused on the topic of youth development and youth participation in social life. We got to know the origin of the place who helps youth to foster and develop their skills. We also talked about our strengths and weaknesses and conduct team building energizer.

Aim of the workshop was to talk about youth participation in our countries and give the example of good practises of youth development.

In the end we connected through the net which was symbol of networking and team work.

YOUTH





Day 3

Venue: Local High Schools

11:00 – 13:00

Day of the workshops! Every international team was supposed to conduct workshops for youth from Greek High Schools. The topics were: Ecology, European Values and Media and fake news. Polish group was talking with youth about European values.

Polish Team - workshop agenda:

- 1. Energizer - brainstorming - What European Union Means to you?**
- 2. Groups work - world cafes - What European Union changes in: economy, policy, education, travel**
- 3. Results presentation**
- 4. Small quiz with prizes about the European Union**

Workshop expert:



Aleksandra Niewczas

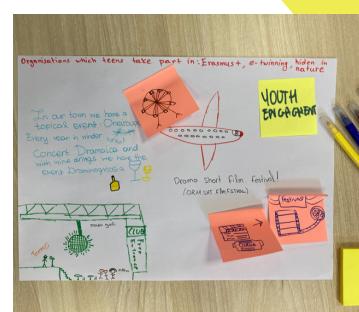
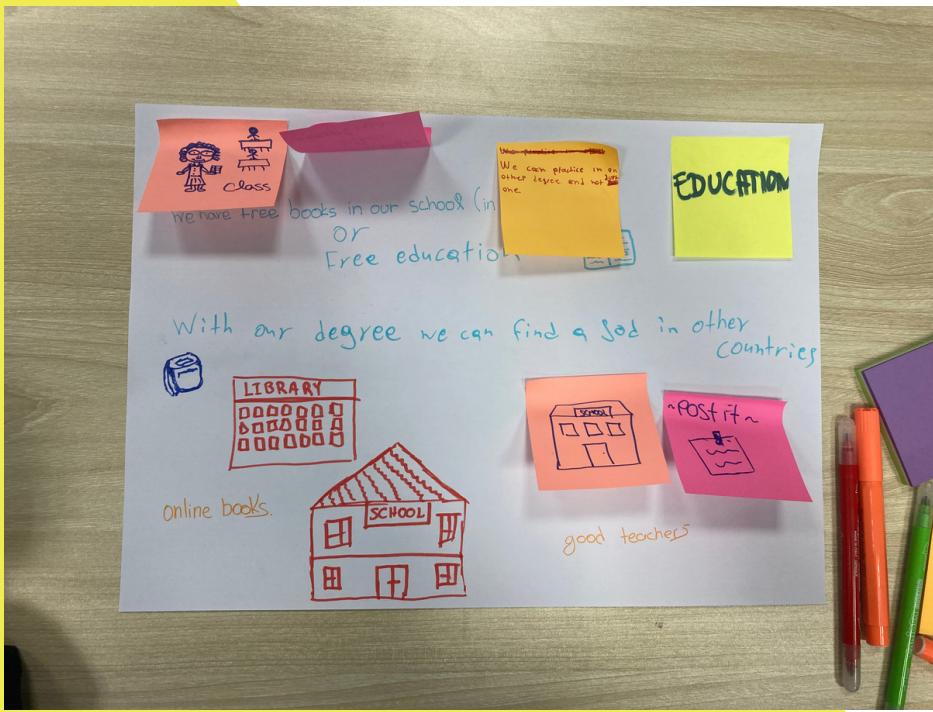
Member of Reflections on Europe NGO,
Youth Coordinator in Erasmus projects
and social media specialist,
International Relations student at
University of Lodz, local activist



Day 3

Venue: Local High Schools

Students results:





Day 3

Venue: Local High Schools

Workshops of Bulgarian and Italian team:



Bulgarian team was conducting workshops about media and fake news. It started from a quick energizer about associations with media and content creation. Team talked with youth

from greek school about their action in media. Everyone enumerated threats that internet can cause. The exercise of the workshops was training how to separate news from fake news.

Italian team was talking with youth from Drama about their actions in the city. Is city having any ecology actions? Italian group propose a few ideas how to make the city cleaner and how youth can contribute to those actions. The team was also talking about a few ways how to be more ecologic on our daily bases.





Day 3

Venue: Ladies Union in Drama

13:00

After the workshops we had an opportunity to visit Ladies Union in Drama. The foundation was founded in 1929. The Ladies Union provides a range of support services for vulnerable populations.

The association's purpose is to offer social and humanitarian work at the service of citizens, especially vulnerable social groups, and contribute to dealing with humanitarian and social crises.

It is a charitable, educational and educational purpose, seeking the development of solidarity, the fight against gender-based violence, xenophobia and racism, the public's awareness of issues of equality, equity, human and democratic rights, the support of needy fellow citizens and, in general, in promotion of members of the association and especially women in educational matters, vocational training and social justice.

14:00

After the visit we took a tour around the "Oinogenesis" winery, we got to talk with the owner, get to know its history and traditions.

ACTIVE YOUTH



Day 3

Venue: City Event Centre

FESTIVAL "EUROPE IS HERE"

Festival agenda:

1. Partners presentation
2. Discussion about European Values
3. Word cafes
4. Cultural night and regional treat

Speakers of the day:



Panagiota Tsakiridou
President of KDETYP, Teacher of
the 2nd Vocational High School



Stratos Sarris - Youth
leader of KDETYP, Student



Alexandros Rados - Political
Scientist, Member of Local
Council of Drama



Day 3

Venue: City Event Centre

FESTIVAL "EUROPE IS HERE"

The festival started from introducing everyone: partners presentations, youth from local schools attending the festival, local organizations, and activists.

As a quick energizer the audience had to answer the questions: What european values means to you? There were a lot of answers from the participants. Everyone agreed that being an european gives us many opportunities we can benefit everyday.

After this quick energizing discusion with the audience about the european values, participants got divided into smaller groups to work on a topic: Youth Activizations Ideas. Every International group had to came up with some ideas of Youth initiative that can encourage young people to be active in their social life. It was also an opportunity to get creative and create the event that will unite youth.



Day 3

Venue: City Event Centre

FESTIVAL "EUROPE IS HERE"

The presentations created by youth gave everyone lots of inspirations, it also created the opportunity to public speech as an exercise of soft skills.

Youth created many ideas such as:

- international breakfasts on the grass
- decorating local cities
- ecology projects in cities
- youth festivals and concerts prepared by local artists

In the end we played Kahoot quiz about the European Union

After the contest we admired amazing performances by local dancers. We tried regional treats and danced Greek dances all together.





Day 4

Venue: Epitrof Newn Mikropolis

4th Day was our day on the road. First stop was Micropolis Youth Committee. It was created in July 2016 and is open to all regardless of age. The Youth Committee of Mikropolis is the culmination of initiatives started by the young people of the village on the basis of volunteering. Their exclusive motivation is the contribution to issues that concern, mainly the young people and the role that we must play responsibly in the overall effort to develop the region. Owners - local youth from the region are aware of the issues of our society and they try in every way to beautify our place. Volunteering is a request and a necessity of our times. Full of patience and will, we do the best we can in the difficult times we live in.



There we saw the Museum of the Micropolis. We experienced a journey back in time and saw regional greek history and traditions of the region.
<https://epitropi-neon-mikropolis.webnode.gr/>





Day 4

Venue: Aggitis Springs Cave

Next stop was Aggitis Springs Cave. It is located 23 kilometers northwest of the city of Drama and is the only exploited river cave in Greece.

The Cave is dominated by white and red stalactites of various forms, monitors the natural decoration. The "Hall of the Wheel," owes its name to the presence of a large hydraulic wheel diameter 8m.

The place was must to see being in the region.





Day 4

Venue: Me Nou Association

Meeting with the Association of People with Special Needs of Drama was an extraordinary experience. We were invited to the restaurant run by the Association of People with Special Needs. In 2019, Dimitri's professional activities aimed at providing employment and thus making life more pleasant, as additional benefits of young people. Nowadays, 5 young people with disabilities works at Dimitri's store, where the restaurant and cafe are located. It was an inspiring meeting.





Hrisi from Bulgaria

Hi, I'm Hrisi. I am 18 years old and from Sliven, Bulgaria. I was recently on a project in Drama, Greece and it was amazing. I met new people from different cultures and had the opportunity to get to know some of their cultures. The project was called "First steps in Europe" and we had an activity to meet students and motivate them to be active citizens. They took us to many different places. One of the places I liked the most was the Women's Centre, which helps schoolgirls or women settle in Drama. The organization gives them temporary accommodation until they find a job and an even better home. This encouraged me a lot, because not every woman gets into good living conditions, but this organization gives them a chance to develop. What I appreciated the most was visiting Youth Awareness Centre. There, one of the volunteers explained to us how they help youth and we played a game in which we gave our special qualities through a thread. In the end, we created a tangled chain between all the participants and came to the conclusion that always we have something to give to the people around us. It was an unforgettable adventure.

Drama is an amazing city with preserved culture and values. I am grateful for the chance I had to touch Drama and the whole project.

Iriini from Greece

This October I participated in the Erasmus+ Project "First step in Europe". The opportunity was given to me by the association "INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES IN EDUCATION, TOURISM, HEALTH AND INTERCULTURALITY, KDETYPD", which was hosted from 5 to 9 October 2022 in Drama, young people from Poland, the association Stowarzyszenie Rozprawy o Europa, from Bulgaria, the organization Academy for Active Youth, and from Italy, Mobility Opportunities Happening APS. We visited a Social Cooperative Enterprise and some nonprofit associations and got new ideas on how we can be more active in our small towns. We participated in a few workshops and a youth Festival. Through all of these happenings, we discussed many things about European Values and active citizens. We also exchanged ideas on identifying and implementing good practices and empowering people. It was an excellent opportunity for me to meet new people that are active citizens and are caring for Environment and Tradition as I am. Meeting all these excellent people and making new friends abroad is also a benefit of this project. It was a unique way to expand my horizons. My participation in this project inspired me to be a more active citizen in my small town and give ideas on how to guide more people in this.





Panagiotta from Greece:

The second time - face to face - a meeting of the program "FIRST STEP TO EUROPE - stimulating the active participation of young people in small towns" took place in Drama, Greece, from 5 to 9 October 2022.

During the implementation of the project, the aim is to build a strong and long-term partnership of organizations dealing with the social inclusion of young people from smaller towns, to strengthen the potential of small organizations. The activities which have been carried out encourage the participation of young people, and give incentives to invest in their local communities, they also encourage the involvement of young people in non-formal education and the dissemination of knowledge about the European Union.

Meetings with young people in the area, with youth cultural clubs, visits to schools and communication with school students, communication with informal youth groups as well as with organizations that support the efforts of young people as active citizens, were implemented.

Young people from the local community of Drama, cultural associations, and school students participated in the "Europe is Here" youth festival held on Friday, October 7th.

Experiential workshops were implemented in schools and the Center for Prevention and Mental Health of the Municipality of Drama. The participants worked on topics such as European values, the participation of young people in politics, misinformation in the Media, environmental protection, and the voluntary actions of young people in their local community.

The Non-Profit Organization of Mikropolis, which we visited, presented to us the last-2-years effort made by the young people of the area to repair old buildings voluntarily and to promote the history of their place.

The meeting with the "Me ...Nou" association, a group of young people with special needs, encouraged us to participate in actions regardless of our ability level and reminded us that an active citizen means a healthy citizen



Bojanka from Bulgaria:

Hello, I'm Bojanka. I'm 17 years old and from Bulgaria, Sliven. I recently participated in a project "First steps in Europe" in Greece, Drama was a unique experience.

In this project, I learned many new things, met new people, and visited many beautiful places. We had several activities and one of them was to meet students and motivate, encourage and support them, we gave them hope for new things. I really liked that we went to the "Maara" cave, it's just indescribably beautiful there! I loved that we met people with permanent disabilities who had hope and continue to have an active lifestyle They even motivated other disabled people not to give up, they were one whole, united and real family. They completely complemented each other. In this encounter, I realized that being good is beautiful! Drama is an amazing city, it is a place that has real beauty that has good culture and values. I am grateful that I had this chance to feel the spirit of Drama and the project! It was a unique and unforgettable experience for me!

Flavia from Italy:

It has been a wonderful experience that gave me the chance to meet local people and people from different countries, in a small and remote town in Greece, in order to improve social activity and involvement in Drama, guided by lovely hosts and with a nice team, getting in touch with schools, organizations, and small activities, seeing the most beautiful touristic places in Drama and taste their delicious cuisine!



First step to Europe drama 5-8 October 2022

The “First step to Europe” project in Drama, Greece took place on 5-8 October. I was personally one of the coordinators so I will give the view from this position. I have to say that I had a great time, like the rest of the participants I hope so!!! For me personally, this was the first time that I met this great group of people, and I say group because the whole mood from the very first day, despite the fact that I was a new member, was so friendly and well-mannered. I felt that all the participants and leaders from all four different countries created a really strong bond between them (from their previous meet-up in Poland) so this made me feel very comfortable from the beginning and put me in a very friendly mood. Apart from the activities and the variety of visits we've made I have to say that all of the participants were very convenient and had good cooperation in any manner. We've learned a lot of new things about each other based on our project subject and I strongly believe that in the end, we achieved our goal which was to activate the youth from our city. Of course, this was helped by the event that took place in the City hall on Friday afternoon. On that I really liked the interaction between the project participants and the local groups of youth. In conclusion, I want to thank everyone who participated in this project and made it so special.

Jacopo from Italy:

In October I experienced really intense days in Drama and I am really happy to have joined this amazing project. Drama people are so dynamic, active, and helpful for society and for the people with fewer opportunities. These days we visited wonderful realities that put all themselves into what they fight for. This is really incredible because for example in Bari where I live, which is one of the main metropolitan cities of Italy, there are not so many actions/fights and not with all of this passion!



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