

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

"WINTER LANGUAGE EXCHANGE"

ESC

The European Solidarity Corps is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe.



Outward Bound Croatia

"There is more in you than you think"

Kurt Hahn, *founder of Outward Bound*

Member of the Outward Bound International Network. A leading organisation providing outdoor experiential learning programs. The main field of activity is organisation and implementation of innovative outdoor programs for school children and youth, with special concern of youth with fewer opportunities. Our values are: compassion, integrity, courage, trust and cooperation.

In this project which was held in Veliki Zitnik on 18.11-02.12/2019 volunteers got an amazing opportunity to learn languages in an environment of non-formal education, while getting out of their everyday routine and embracing new ways of learning through active involvement.

They also took part in community service to help locals with their everyday needs.

WHAT THE VOLUNTEERS REPORT:

With no doubt, this Erasmus volunteering experience has changed us a lot. Leaving your home and your country can prove challenging at times.

The idea of spending time abroad, meet new people and cultures, work all together and mingle with them can be sometimes very appealing.

Immersing ourselves in Croatian lifestyle, build relationships and help the local community were some parts of our daily life in Gospic.

Especially, giving a hand to Carlos organization and the preparation of it for disabled people was quite special and meaningful for us. Furthermore, during our free days we had the opportunity to explore beautiful places of Croatia and getting close to each other. Thanks to everyone who has organized, volunteered and participated in it, every lesson and activity was so memorable, funny, intense and foremost useful.

Andromachi Nikolaidou, 23, Thessaloniki

Participants Experience in a few lines

The Erasmus+ program gave us the chance to experience unique, special, intense moments. Moments we didn't expect to live. Two weeks in a small village in Croatia, we learnt how to cooperate and work together, in order to full fill the everyday small and important tasks. Non formal educational activities, volunteering work, language presentations and life lessons were our everyday life. Living in a wonderful, very well organized, warm educational centre, in nature, we had the chance to feel the pace of the village, enjoy the beautiful place and explore each other in depth. A combination of a good time, funny environment, good work, useful skills and lessons.

Konstantinos Mitakidis, 22, Athens

Two amazing weeks passed in a small village of Croatia, in a house hidden in the woods, living with 16 different yet wonderful people, volunteers and facilitators. Being able to connect with each other by working for the same cause, to share our passion and feelings, to help other people and become better individuals. This experience overpassed every expectation I had when applying for this ESC. Personally, volunteering for a new organization for children with disabilities was the peak of this experience.

Even though we did not have the opportunity to visit schools because of a strike we interacted with the local community and what is more, we had the chance to explore this beautiful country on our free days. Friendships that last no matter how far we are now is the result which is of major importance for me. Everybody should try this at least once in their lives.

Sophia Chasiridou, 23, Thessaloniki



This volunteering Erasmus programme was undoubtedly an unforgettable experience. Every part of the project was so interesting and well organized. We were in a routine that no one wanted to abandon at the end because every little detail was very important for us. Even housework was a part of the teamwork. At the same time, being a volunteer by helping disabled people and helping community worked really well for me and made me feel better as a person. None of us could imagine how many skills and competences we could gain not only by volunteering activities but also by everyday small tasks and little games that we will never forget. None of us had any idea about how beautiful and interesting a small village in Croatia can be. We were in the middle of nowhere but actually we were in the paradise of nature, full of trees, animals and fresh air. None of us could expect that only in two weeks we could be so familiar with each other and create a family that we will always have in our hearts.

Lena Polymerou, 18, Athens

The volunteers were chosen by the sending organization United Societies of Balkans. The organization was created as a response to the pressure of constant changes in the Balkan and Eastern European region and under the need for the creation of a better social environment. Key areas of the organization's activities concern the defense of human rights, the organization of youth exchanges and training courses, which will bring young people from Balkans and Europe together, the organization of local educational seminars and multimedia production, as well as promotion of volunteerism at local and international level. Finally, a crucial aim is to inform and raise awareness among young people on various social issues, as well as to strengthen and support them in the creation of a healthier and more integrated, thinking and active citizen.