**Returning into Middle Age or Visit in Latvia of Erasmus+ Project “Great Routes in the Middle Ages and Their Symbology ”**

The project “Ģreat Routes in the Middle Ages and Their Symbology” visit to Latvia took place in Yelgava Secondary School N4 from February 13th to 17th. This project is financed by European Commission, and 6 member states are taking part in it – Italy, Latvia, Greece, Poland and Spain. 49 participants – 35 students and 17 teachers – were involved.

The aims of the project are to analyze European routes and the integrated perspective that allows to understand their links to culture in all its perspective, understand current problems, which can be interpreted, analyzed and prevented by researching similar problems in the Middle Ages. Different learning methods as cooperative learning and Flipped Classroom were used during the project.

**Marta Kļavkalne – February 13th**

*The first day of the project began with the meeting in the conference room at our school. Ice breaking activities took place there – every participant had to get to know as more information about his/her partner as it was possible in five minutes, then everybody had to tell the auditorium about his/her partner. After that some information about Latvia, Yelgava and our school was presented to the guests, what was followed by the excursion around the school. Every member state told about the professions and jobs in the Middle Ages, and the group work took place. Each group had to devide the Middle Age professions according to the social classes, after that everybody had to tell about one of the professions and why he/she had chosen that job. Almost all wanted to be queens or kings. After lunch at the school canteen, there was Latvian Language Lesson, in which foreigners were introduced to Latvian alphabet. Secondary school students and their teachers could also see Latvian folk costumes. After that a dumbshow was played. Students had to make groups and nominate leaders. Participants had to guess what was mimed by the leader and to say the word in Latvian. In the afternoon we and our guests went on an excursion around Yelgava. In the evening,sport matches took place, volleyball and basketball were played. At the end of the day, our guests watched the school band’s “Varbūt Rīt” (”Maybe Tomorrow”) rehearsal together with us.*

**Laura Kārkle – February 14th**

*St.Valentine Day - the second day in the project “Erasmus+ “ “Great Routes in the Middle Ages”. We had got aquainted with our new friends more and more, they became more and more frank and talkative.*

*“Medieval Food” was the theme of Tuesday. At the beginning, each delegation presented their most popular and standard Middle Age dishes in their own cultures and countries, as well as the table culture in Middle Age in their countries. After the presentations practical workshop followed. We coocked Middle Age food ourselves. We made Apple Rose pastries, meat patties, curd cheese and small snacks – bread and harring. When the job was finnished, we tasted the food and voted for the best Medieval dish. The apple bundles in rose shape were the best.*

*After the full “second breakfast”, we went to Jaunpils Castle. The hostess of the castle told a lot of interesting facts about knights and the people who lived in the castle in the Middle Age. We visited the main hall of the palace, the cabinet and the wine basements of the castle. We could get out of the castle basement only when every delegation performed a song in their mother tongue. When we got out of the castle, the hostess made a cannon shot and we could go to the castle basement pub for dinner. The dinner table was set in a Middle Age style with Middle Age dishes – beans, peas, bread and meat-, and we had to eat with fingers. Full and glad we went home to Yelgava.*

*In the evening, we visited a basketball club “Yelgava” match against “Gulbene” and were feeling for Yelgava. With the support of so many fans,“Yelgava” won. After a funny day that was rich in adventures, we went home.*

**Laura Hofmane – February 15th.**

*On Wednesday morning we met in our Home Technologies and Economics room. Each state had prepared a presentation about the Middle Age costumes in their country. Participants wore even Middle Age costumes and organised a small Fashion Show. After the presentations everybody could make a Middle Age accessory - a leather or bead bracelet, broch, carols. Some made also bookmarks. There was a presentation of the research about the Midlle Age Festivals in each state after the workshop.*

*When the official activities of the project were over, we decided to go to the Pasta island foe public skating. We skated, and we were very friendly. Before skating, it seemed that people from the southern countries will not be so good at ice skating, but this was a wrong perception. They were better than anyone else. After public ice skating, we went to “Chilli pica” for dinner. We were satisfied, but Italians were a little bit upset about pizza in Latvian manner. At the end of the day we went to bowling. We tried different ways on how to throw the bowling ball with eyes tied up or backwards. Then we went home.*

**Krista Babrāne - February 16th.**

*The fourth day of the project started in the Conference room, where we got to know more about the Middle Age Routes and the Middle Ages. After the workshop everybody took his place at the tennis tables in our school corridor, and there was a tennis match among us, while teachers were discussing intensively about making the interactive map of the Middle Age Routes. At one o’clock we got into a bus and went to Riga. Many of us were sleeping on the bus because we knew that the day would be long and we had to save our energy. In Riga we went on an excursion with a guide. We were walking around the city and enjoying the excursion about the interesting history of it for two hours. We went for dinner to “Lido”where we tried Latvian food. Then there was time for the most waited moment of the day – we went for an ice hockey match. Everybody was excited, because it was the first such an experience for many of us. When we entered Arena “Riga” , the guards checked our tickets and bags, everything was alright. A great surprise was that, when we showed our tickets, we got presents – they were “Dinamo” T-shirts, so we could be real fans of “Dinamo”. All participants of the project felt for Latvia. We had emotions which are hard to depict in one article. After a beautiful and long day, we went back to Yelgava. That was worth it.*

***Elizabete Kovtuna - February 17th***

*Friday was the last day of our project. In the morning we had a table tennis match , and we visited lessons, but later we decorated the school hall and acted out a Medieval Market. Each state had prepared some goods for the market, which we sold or exchanged to another goods, as it happened in Medieval markets. Each state wore a special outfit which was made in Medieval style. You could meet clowns, gipsies , Medieval traders in the market. It was a nice way how to explore and bring Medieval traditions also to nowaday life. Later we had an orientiering competition around Yelgava. It was cold outside, but we were friendly and completed all the tasks. We had common jokes and fun. There will be lot of nice memories after this day.*

*There was an evaluation of the project days in the evening, we watched the video and completed the last tasks. After that we had a ball where we danced. We said goodbye to our friends and promissed to ourselves to meet once more. Saying goodbye was very emotional - Many of us were crying, it was so hard to part with our friends. We have met many wonderful young people during this meeting.*

***We are very grateful about coordinating the project to Ingrīda Drēska. The visit of this project would not be possible without her effort.***

*Sallija Kļavkalne ,a student of Form12a*