

LIS DIARY



Life Story Diary

Written by

Comenius Team





Lisdiary is the diary of an European girl. It is supposed to show the readers how a European girl lives the social and economical dimension of Europe. The culture of each European country is not anymore confined by territorial limits. The globalization, the development of technology and means of transport and communication gave the European citizens a new reality.

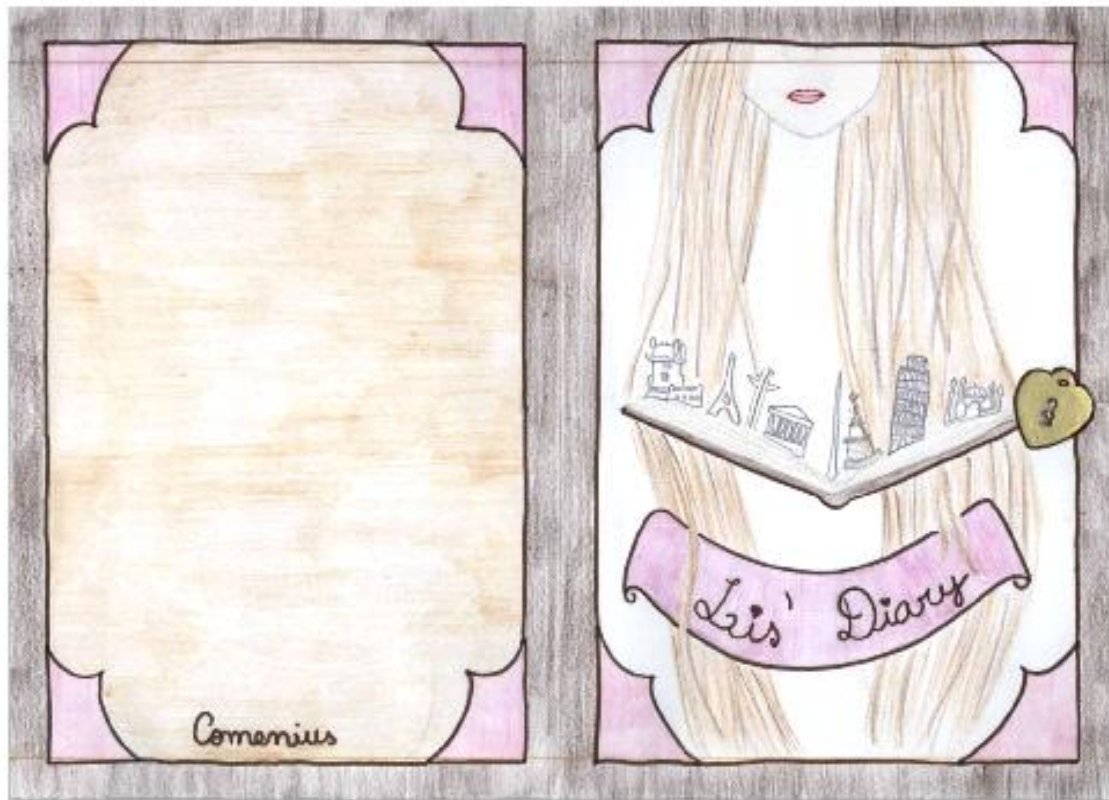
This book was written by the students involved in the Lis Comenius project as youngsters are the most important part in this kind of projects. During two years they were in permanent contact with the educational system of each Comenius partner country, which allowed them to be aware of different cultural realities and share knowledge, feelings and lifestyles.

The use of English as the official language of this project became an additional value as the students could improve their communication skills and enhance their autonomy and self-esteem as European citizens. To overcome prejudice against different behaviours in different European contexts and to break stereotyped conceptions was also a main objective.

We believe that all the participating students have increased a sense of belonging to a broader entity sharing similar preoccupations and opening new horizons arising from contacts and from what has been learned.

This final product is the result of the process and we sincerely hope that it can be of great value to other youngsters all over Europe.





COMENIUS



LIS



Diary



PART I - "THE SITUATION"

Section A - Student

The end

I don't really know how to start this diary, I've never written one... but that's what any bestseller writer, such as J. K. Rowling, must have thought when they started writing their first book... at least this is not written in a napkin, just kidding.

My aunt offered me this nice notebook with a hundred pages for my birthday, but I couldn't think of what to write until today. I decided to start writing my thoughts, my memories, my amazing, beautiful and wonderful life. I really liked this gift because I always wanted to write a diary just like Anne Frank... Without the tragedy, of course, and it's going to be amazing to read this when I'm older.

Now I have to leave, because I need to pack my stuff for my new house and country, so next time I will have a more interesting topic than a present from an old lady. I think I'm going to forget my new sunglasses that were given with this diary! When I'm wearing them I look like the Matrix chick -- that's not sexy at all!



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You may think I'm happy, but in reality I'm a bit sad, because I'm leaving my best friends and the home where I spent my childhood. On the other side, I feel the next months are going to be full of new experiences and adventures.

Section B - Teacher

So students and teachers together are going to do an EU project? Like father and son, mother and daughter, teacher and student? It's called Lis Diary? It will be a diary of a student called Lis and she travels through Europe? Great!

You're Lis's ... teacher ... I hear?

Yes. I teach languages, science, maths, history, geography, drama, art, sport and other subjects.

That's a lot to teach.

Well I don't teach them all at the same time but I think it is vital to develop links among disciplines.

What advice do you give Lis on her work on the project?

We want to deepen our understanding of our partners and ourselves. We want to realise the deep links between us due to our interacting histories, cultures and current concerns. We want to capture how our students see the world in the context of current events, their own interests and the opportunities provided by this project.

We need to encourage Lis to be confident enough to have her say, to express herself as she wants to and about her own concerns.

That all sounds admirable. But is that not too ambitious?

Ambition is essential for teachers: how else can we help our students to learn to think for themselves.

Are you not afraid you will just produce a confused group of students with little shared vision? Can you not just give them the facts?

We hope our students over time have a chance to appreciate and develop their own opinions and ideas around democracy, tolerance, diversity, language, humanity, culture and history among others. What one student develops may be different to another but we hope all can exist in a shared common vision. What do you mean by "facts"?

So what about the cutbacks in education in Europe: will the cuts not effect the project?

Well we have Comenius funding to meet face to face. Without meetings no effective project is possible. Free online services are available to allow us to continue collaboration outside the meetings themselves: to continue the dialogue. What we cannot know at the start is how teachers in the project may be effected by the cuts in education.

The worst case is that a coordinating teacher must leave their school or that experienced teachers will no longer be able to work on the project. We believe absolutely that the strength of this project is it's diversity but we need some cohesion to make most sense of that diversity.

What about the language issue? Is it not true that some of the teachers involved are not teachers of English? How will you communicate? And the students: some will be excellent in languages while others may find it difficult to speak and understand speech. Communication among ordinary people, teachers and students across Europe is vital if we are not to be a Union only for an elite of multi lingual communicators. While negotiations at inter State level require such skills and are necessary to provide a suitable political environment, a Union will only flourish if ordinary people are provided with opportunities to experience the diversity of the Union and to communicate at an appropriate level.

We hope that language development will improve but projects such as this form part of a weft and weave of many strands, binding us together. To communicate means more than to exchange meaning through careful construction and interpretation using the spoken word. We can communicate in dance, music, shared experiences, shared ideas and a general sense of goodwill. Varied experiences and disciplines will contribute to shared understanding.

Lis! Can you do your diary now?

Section C - Diary

The beginning

I'm writing from a new place so, as you might guess I arrived to my new house. From what I've seen it's a warm and sunny place, get ready for the BBQ! The only thing I miss is my friends, but that can be fixed, because I can talk with them on the Internet, even though I'll have to spend even more time in front of a computer...

The new house is not as big as my old one but I find it very cozy. The living room is large and there's a very comfortable sofa on which I had the very privilege to be the first to lie down. My new room isn't that big, but it has space for everything I brought, which isn't a lot. Maybe I can fill the wall with photos and posters... I want to turn it into an awesome place, different from my last room because I like to change from time to time -- it's refreshing! Besides, my room's floor has a very polished surface, so I find myself running and sliding all around... It's so funny!

We have a wonderful view from here. We are staying in a village. A beach and a forest are very close to our house. I feel I'm going to get tanned really fast, so maybe I shouldn't have left those ridiculous glasses at my old place... No, wait, I should: now I can buy some new, better looking ones. Around the house there's a lot of trees and you can hear birds (at dawn) or crickets (at night) singing -- it's a pleasant place with such an animal symphony.

*

Today the weather's been great, so we had dinner in the garden; I loved the fresh watermelon on this strange, warm night under thousands of stars!



As you may have noticed, I'm a bit tired with this moving thing, so today I'm going to bed early, like a nice child. I never found it easy to fall asleep in a brand new house in the first night... Let's see how it goes, but I'm sure this night the bogey man won't come after me! :P

Friend request

As you know I arrived here a couple of days ago and I really wanted to see how the beach is. I was warned the sea water's a little cold around here, but mum says it's good for your health. I didn't stay there for too long, although I wanted to, because I didn't have a lot of time..

Tomorrow I'm visiting my new school. I hope my new classmates like me and that my teachers are nice. My mother says I'll make new friends quickly. I just hope she's right, because I don't like being alone for too long...

*

Today we finished all the work, and our home looks amazing! I love it, I never lived in a country house before. The fresh air will be good for my lungs. Cold, invigorating sea water can make wonders too. When I leave, I'm going to be in rude health!

Well, a funny thing happened today... When I was unpacking, I found an old photo album. Oh, so many memories...! I was such a cool kid when I wore specs. While I was looking back on those times, I noticed a portuguese friend I haven't seen for ages. So I went on Facebook and found out his timeline -- holy



Facebook... you can really find everything there! Anyway, I'm still waiting that he accepts

my friend request. Does he still remember me? I hope he does, because we would remember good old times. Now that I'm here, we could spend some more time together.

First day at school



Today I was like a little girl when she goes to her first day of classes. Oh, don't worry, it was nothing special. It's kind of weird, because, when you enter the classroom, nobody knows you. I know what are the questions in their minds when they look at me: "Who is she?", "Is she new?", "What's she doing here?", etc. Basically, I felt like an alien... or I would if I had a neon sign pointing at me saying "new girl here".

Now, seriously, they weren't bad; the teachers -- and some students included --, were very supportive, but, when you're new, the first thing you don't want is to call attention. After that, I had a long day of classes until late afternoon. I was tired *at the end*, of course, but my classmates were already bored *since the first class*. Why?... My only complaint goes for the massive amount of books to carry -- I feel I'll get stronger every day just by carrying books!

During the lunch break, I ate in the school canteen. I think I'm supposed to be some kind of strong, big man who needs to eat a lot: They've put so much food in my plate, I was terrified...!

I still don't know how to get from one place to another at the school -- mice are probably better at mazes than me --, but there was a group of students from my class that helped me. So the mouse found the right way! They helped me, but they also posed a lot of questions: "Where do you come from?", "What do you think of our school?", etc. Nevertheless, it's good to know they care for me, right? They asked me if I wanted to visit the nearest city with them and go to the cinema. "What's the film?" I asked. Apparently, it'll be a surprise...

*

By the way, do you still remember my old friend? He accepted my friend request. We started to talk, and that *was* something! Memories, virtual laughs (:D, :P and so on). We've got to hang out someday, but we're both busy: I'm with my school, he's with his university. He's only a couple of months older than me, but he's already a freshman!

My Brazilian friend

Today I'm happy, because a Brazilian friend of mine, Carolina, sent me an email, saying she's coming visiting me in the summer holidays. So I'm already thinking about what to do with her, because I hope we'll have lots of fun. Have you got any suggestion? Though I've got lots of time to prepare everything, I know things are not easy: I should think of interesting but not so expensive things that we could do together. I really wanted to show her the way teens live in Europe... Even though we have a great historical heritage to explore, I'm afraid she'll find it a bit boring. What about the food, will she like it? I hope so. I'm anxious about presenting her to my friends: I can't wait to meet her!



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These last days have been amazing: I've been making new friends, getting in touch with old ones, one of which is going to visit me soon. What else?!

New friends, films and piracy

I actually found out that guys here are curiously cool. Bea (for short) is a very nice girl and has a lot in common with me, for example, we like the same music bands. She plays the piano and the saxophone. Someday we could make a duet with both of us playing the piano: the Piano Girls!

*



So yesterday we went to the cinema. It was quite fun. We watched a great film, but the most important thing was the people I went with.

Films have been giving me some good memories, I admit it, but sometimes it's more comfortable and funnier to watch a film at your home than watching the same one at the cinema: you can put your Dalmatian pyjamas on, eat popcorn and coca-cola without annoying people, your friend can also be there and (maybe!) it can lead to a pillow fight... I know it's also easier and cheaper to download pirated films and music on the Internet than to buy them at the shops, even though I don't think it's right to do so.

Copyright infringement doesn't pay the publishing companies,



so they don't trust the market; if they don't sell new artists, they won't be recognized. Piracy is putting in danger intellectual property, but it is also seen as a way to layer all forms of art. I think we should consider something between this: neither abolishing intellectual property nor punishing a website at the smallest clue of allowing its share. One thing I'm sure of: we should pay for intellectual property.

*

It's difficult to cope with so much homework! When I finally get through one exercise, I'm so tired I can't finish the rest... After all, they want us to study even in our *free* time: what about our life? I'm young, I want to be with my friends... It's not only the Internet -- oh, just a moment to check my status! :P

*

These past days what has surprised me the most was the weather. It's amazing! Today I really felt a huge force inside me saying: "What a nice and sunny day to pop by the beach"... but I couldn't. I had more things to do. Later, I chatted with Diogo about a lot of stuff: missing people, to be far away from the ones you love, etc. While thinking about last night, I got in a bad mood. :(



Strange, I never mentioned Diogo's name in previous entries... I'm sorry, it was just a slip!

Tomorrow, I'll go to the beach with some friends -- after school, of course...! Let's see how it goes!

*

Today it was a long and tiring day. I'm feeling weary, so I can't write any more. Maybe tomorrow I'll have something new to tell you... ;) For now, I've got to rest. I'll get my bikini, my towel, my sunglasses... wait, I still don't have any sunglasses! I'll have to borrow some, I can't stand an afternoon in the beach without them. Well, I can't forget the sunbathe for tomorrow... I just hope this night won't be like the night before!

PART II ODYSSEY – “A JOURNEY”

Section A Portugal

Planning a trip



This weekend I had a wonderful time! I went to the beach with my friends and we played volleyball. Here the sea water is very cold, just like I was warned... Still, we had a lot of fun! My friends said it's a bit unusual that it's so hot at this time of the year. It seems the cold weather and the clouds went together for some early holidays, so the sun is taking care of us... Today we had a typical plate for lunch. It's called "*Cozido à Portuguesa*". I didn't like it at all, but it

seems I was the only one who complained! At night we saw a folk dance show performed by the *Grupo Etnográfico*. I think it's an amazing dance. Their dress was bordered with sequins and is very colorful. They're splendid!

*

I've been watching the TV news and I realized many things that are not well in Europe. There's an economic crisis going on and many governments are taking action in the form of austerity policies. It turns me down...I had already heard my parents talking about it, but I wasn't really interested. I realize the situation we are facing these days. Even though I don't like politics as much as they, now I'd like to be more informed...

I'm planning to go somewhere in Portugal next weekend so I can explore a bit more of this country. Plus, I love traveling. I'm in a bit of a quandary -- which first, Lisbon or Oporto? The only way to solve it is tossing up for it. Just a minute... Ok, heads is Lisbon, tails is Oporto.

It's tails! Oporto it is. Oporto, here we go!

Braga, European Youth Capital of 2012

During the past week nothing special's happened, apart from tests and more tests -- nothing I'm not used to... and I also went to a neighbour city with my family. It was Braga, which was designated the European Youth Capital for 2012. I guess you didn't know that! :P

The first place I'll talk about is the city centre. It was mind-blowing! There's a wide square with a fountain and long, well decorated streets. There were also many stalls -- you know I love going into town, so I did lots of shopping. It was perfect!

At the end of the day, I had to come back home, since the next day I had to get up early. I was sad it got over...

It was good for me to get distracted from school, I was needing something like this...

New mate

Well... I can say that in this moment I feel very fortunate. My day was normal, ordinary, and ubiquitous. After going to school and doing my homework, like a good girl, I sat down watching a bit of TV. Minutes later my dad arrived from his work with a box with something in it. I was seconds wondering what could be inside it (there's no greater mystery than a carton box with something inside) but soon a tail gave it away. I know, "get to the point", but I like to make you curious! Know that you have thought of many animals with a tail (I was so generic, it was on purpose). Alright, I'm going to tell you... nooo! I'm going to make you guess. It is a mammal (scratch lizards), it starts with a "d" and ends with a "g". ohh now it's pretty easy...! It's a dog!

So my father brought a puppy from the animal shelter, the poor dog was abandoned. People are so mean and brutish! I looked at the little animal and I questioned myself how could someone leave such an adorable and defenseless creature alone in the street. Everything is fine now, he has a proper home. He is a beautiful mixed-breed dog, and I found them genetically healthier than a purebred dog. I felt really amazed watching him sleeping in my lap. I will attach a picture of the little white and beige fur ball soon...

European crisis makes me not so happy

Today I'm very happy! I don't know why, but I think it was just because I woke up that way! Well, my day it was normal, always the same routine! Wake up, Go to school, Back to school, Study and in the end writing on my diary about my day! OK, I'm not totally happy, because in the next month I will do some important exams, and I'm very nervous. I just hope it will be easy! Now, I'm going to talk about serious things, about where I live, Europe! If you watch the news you probably know that this country is suffering a severe crisis, and from day to day there are many families that don't have

money to buy food for their children! In my opinion, this situation it is very tragic, it is sad to know that most part of the population doesn't have anything to eat ... from day to day, unemployment is increasing, many families are at risk of losing their homes and property, it is disastrous what is happening in this country and so many others in Europe! It's time for many of us to go abroad, to meet new directions... It's sad to say, but it's our reality. And today I leave you with this realistic, happy tough...

Busy but able to talk about the crisis

Finally I have some time to write! Last week I was very busy, because I had many, many tests. This weekend I have many homework's to do, and this week I'll have more tests. To make me sadder the news aren't very good. They only talk about the crisis, austerity and the government. They cut our wages and just do a lot of things to make us poorer and them richer.

Dear diary: I went to Oporto

Look at me using words in different languages! That is dear in portuguese by the way. You learn something new every day, and you know I like to learn new languages. Well then, these past two days I've been to an important portuguese city called Oporto which in their language it's only Porto. Before going there I called my friend Diogo to tell him I was passing a couple of days there and he offered me a ceiling to sleep under. Taking in count the economy and my budget I accepted. He is a very good friend of mine, very funny and is now studying in Oporto University. He promised me he would spend some time with me, visiting the town, in his spare time.

I arrived early in the morning and went straight to Diogo's apartment which was difficult to find, Oporto streets are a bit confusing. In his "casa" we decided where I was going to install my sleeping bag then, before his classes we went for a coffee and talked a bit. I spend the rest of the morning on my own visiting some cliché monuments. I climbed all the stairs at *Clerigos Tower*, sat down in the peaceful gardens, went to the beautiful "*Palácio da Bolsa*" and I even bought a book at *Lello's*. I have to say that bookstore is extraordinary, if it wasn't for the new books I was imagining myself, back in time, going to that place, walking on that red velvet carpet.... Met with my friend again in the afternoon and he was so amazing by showing me a bit of his university. I admit it I considered studying there; it seemed interesting and very good in the scientific area. I had dinner at his home with some of his friends and it was a blast, very funny people!

The next day Diogo had no classes so we hang out together all day, but this time he chose the day plan. In the morning we took the underground and we went to “*Casa da Música*” it’s a peculiar building. It’s like a concert house, it has some very modern halls for a huge variety of music. Next we went to *Serralves Museum* with magnificent gardens and very interesting exhibitions. Right before lunch we had time for one more monument, the Church of São Francisco, a gothic monument with hundreds of kilos of gold, I was astonished! We had lunch and we headed to the lower town then, crossed a bridge to the other side of the river “Douro”, to a town called Gaia. An interesting thing about that bridge is that it has a lot of small padlocks placed by couples, how cute.... The river was a good scenario for a picture so I took a lot of them - show you later. Close there’s a lot of “caves”, that is where the famous Oporto Wine is made and stored to get old and better. We had a guided visit inside one of them. Has it been the last day I was there Diogo took me to a fancy café for dinner. I have to say, it is the most beautiful café I’ve ever seen until now! It’s called “Café Majestic”. You can really tell it was made in the 20’s the Belle époque, it is very classy and it made feel like a very important rich person of the 19th century.

In short Oporto is a very multicultural city, advanced and yet it has a lot of classy places to go. With all this long description it seems like the most amazing place in the world but I must remain a bit objective and say some bad points. There’s some old buildings in poor condition, a hell of a lot of traffic, many inartistic graffiti’s and like many other cities a little bit of air pollution. I had an amazing time in Oporto ...!

Lisbon

After these amazing days in Oporto, Diogo convinced me to visit the capital, the Alfa city, Lisbon. Well, Lisbon is close to Oporto, but there is so much to see that Diogo, said it would be better if he asked a friend of his a place for me to stay, because he had classes so he couldn’t go with me. He asked me to be careful, Lisbon can be a dangerous place (he’s so sweat, when it’s worried). His friend’s name is Luisa; she lives in *Alcântara* and studies in *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*.

When I arrived, Luisa took me to her place, and after I settle down, we went for a walk in *Alcântara*, it’s a really beautiful place, full of palaces (which means big houses, not really palaces) and churches (if I liked architecture, I would love live there), there were so many that I forgot most of the names, I only remember some of them like *Capela de Santo Amaro*, I remember because of that book of Eça de Queiroz (great book by the

way), *Palacio de Vale Flor* (now it's a hotel) that it's just beautiful, the gardens, the statues and the lake (I wish I lived there), and *Palacio de Burnay*, it's sound fancy doesn't it? To finish we had a walk in *Tapada da Ajuda*, a big place that has an Agronomy Institute and Astronomy Observatory, it has a *miradouro* that has a panoramic view over *Rio Tejo*, a old amphitheatre and is also a botanic garden (talk about multi-uses). Unfortunately we didn't have time to see everything, but it was a nice walk. At night we went to the *Docas*, and in to some discos (not for a long time, because I had a lot to see tomorrow).

The next morning we went to Santa Maria de Belém, and guess what... it's so cool! First we went to *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos*, I didn't go inside, because I had to save time but even so it's an amazing building, and Oh My God! Luisa said that close by was a café called *Pasteis de Belém* that sold this small cakes called "*Pastéis de Nata*", but she didn't say how good they were (so tasty!), and also it's a really big and beautiful café full of blue tile, full of history! After eating a number of pasties that I'm not proud of, we went to see *Palácio de Belém*, a pink palace, with a big garden, to short it up fancy place full of mystery and history, then we went to see a museum full of carriages, they were a lot, all so elegant and beautiful!

After that we saw o *Padrão dos Descobrimentos*, a monument that celebrates one of the most productive periods of this country's history (it's a lot because of them we know our world, they were the first country to take their boats to discover the world), I took the elevator to the top of the monument and saw the "*Rosa dos Ventos*" (a compass) and *Rio Tejo* and passed *Torre de Belém*. When we went for dinner in one restaurant, I had "*pataniscas de bacalhau*" a traditional Portuguese plate.

On the last day, Luísa said she had a nice surprise for me, and you won't guess what. She took me to see the Oceanarium, and I can't describe my experience there: I felt like I was in the middle of the ocean! Such a beautiful place... It had so many fish and I love otters! They are so cute! And a lot of penguins and corals, and OMG it was awesome, I took so many pictures (without the flash, I didn't want to hurt the fish). And don't tell anyone but when I saw the hammer shark I felt a little bite scared, it's such a fascinating animal.

Oh well, after that amazing experience, on our way back we passed for the big statue of *Marquês de Pombal*, and saw a little bite of the city, like *Terreiro do Paço* that had some yellow buildings, an amazing arc full of statues and of course the statue of D. José (and if Luisa is right he wasn't a very strong king, he practically obeyed *Marquês de*

Pombal), after that we passed on *Rossio* a very important part of the city like Luisa said, there I saw *D. Pedro IV* statue (I went to the internet for this one, I didn't remember the number), the *Estação Ferroviária do Rossio*, *Teatro D. Maria II*, the *Elevador de Santa Justa*, and we drank a drink called *Ginjinha*, on a small coffee. Then we passed for *Chiado* where I saw in front of a café a statue of Fernando Pessoa taking a coffee, and some ruins of a convent called *Convento do Carmo*. Then we also passed in *Praça de Camões*, where it was a very big statue of the poet. After that we went home to prepare my things because I had a train to catch.

Ah! What can I say, I had a great time in Lisbon, I didn't see half of what I wanted to see but for three days I saw a lot! Maybe someday I can come back and see the rest. To conclude I can say that Lisbon is an amazing city, romantic and beautiful, but like most cities it has its downsides, some streets smelled badly, a lot of undone and old buildings, a lot of graffiti, pollution and traffic.

After visiting two of the most important cities of Portugal I realized how much history, this tiny small country has, 800 years is a long time!

Section B France

Fantastic! I have the chance to go to the Euro football championships in Poland. I can meet many friends there. But first I am going to meet other friends in France. I can take the bus from there to Poland. It is very expensive to fly to Poland just at this time so I can fly to Beauvais near Paris, stay with my French friends then take a bus to Poland. It will be long but less expensive! My French friends will take me to some beautiful places near their home in Amiens. France, like Portugal, has a long and proud history full of surprises. Maybe I'll get to see some of Paris as well?



Saint-Valery-sur-Somme

Saint-Valery-sur-Somme is a French city, located in the department Somme, Picardy. The 2785 inhabitants of this town lives in an area of 11 km² with a population density of 253 inhabitants per/ km². The current mayor of the municipality is Stéphane HAUSSOULIER.

Saint-Valery-sur-Somme, medieval town, was formed about this time around the shrine of St. Valery. Its geographical position on the road from Rouen to Boulogne, as well as the opportunity to spend the estuary wading at certain times, made an important transit. Thus, it is from this port that William the Conqueror left in September 1066 to the Conquest of England. Saint-Valery could be supplied by the old wooden forest of Crécy, much larger than today. There are important remains, reflecting in particular the passage of Jeanne d'Arc in this city.

During the wars of religion, the captain takes Cocqueville Saint-Valery in June 1568. He was defeated at the Battle of Saint-Valery July 18 by the Governor of Picardy Cossé-Brissac. Saint-Valery-sur-Somme, medieval town, was formed about this time around the shrine of St. Valery. Its geographical position on the road from Rouen to Boulogne, as well as the opportunity to spend the estuary wading at certain times, made an important transit. Thus, it is from this port that William the Conqueror left in September 1066 to the Conquest of England. Saint-Valery could be supplied by the old wooden forest of Crécy, much larger than today.

The topic of the movie is Picardy and its landscape. So for the movie we choose to go to Saint-Valery-sur-Somme. It's a city in front of the sea, the Channel. In the morning we have visited the village: it's so beautiful! We saw typical houses of Picardy, but we had a problem: big clouds in the sky!! However, we have climbed up to the highest point of view of St Valery, the "Chapelle des marins".



After we have eaten in St Valery and we have waited to the locomotive to, go to the Crotoy. It's a city facing St Valery on the other side of the "Baie de Somme". But for go to the Crotoy we have taken a specific train, like the picture in the right. It's a old train with coal.

Train of "Baie de Somme" is managed by an association that was founded in 1970 and over the years it has become a major player in the development of tourism in the Picardy Coast but also the preservation, protection and development value of a part of the heritage railway in restaurant full of cars, wagons, steam locomotives and diesel locomotives.



After the Crotoy, the train goes to Noyelles-sur-Mer, it's a little city. During the travel we saw the beautiful landscape of the "Baie de Somme". When we arrive at the Crotoy, we visit this city.

Countryside

Mirvaux

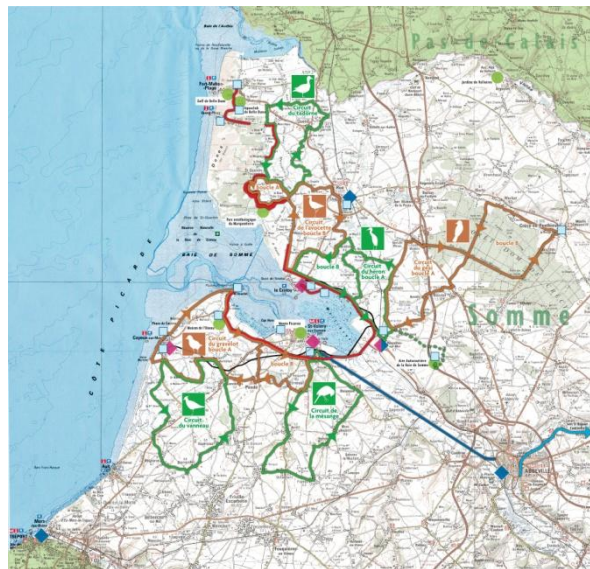
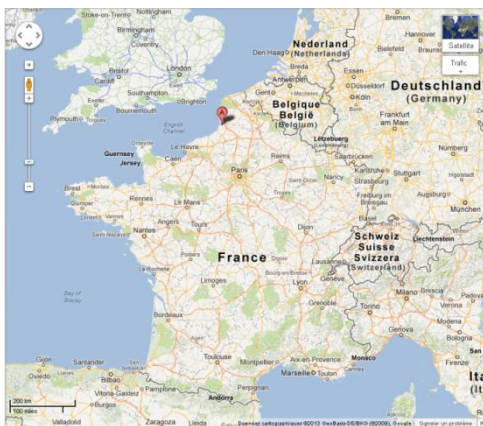
Mirvaux is a small village 15 km from Amiens. There are 148 people this year. In this village, many houses are old style picard as you can see on the pictures. It's a very little village but this characteristic give the charm of this village. So we decided to turn the next party of the movie in this village. Moreover, two uys lives in this village, Matthieu and Melissa.

Typical Houses of Mirvaux



The Beautiful Church of Mirvaux

In our film we have visited the Somme bay:



The Bay of Somme is a member of the 'Club of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World', with its expanses of open water, marshes, dunes... Discover one of the best place of bird watching in France !

It is one of France's major sites for migrating birds. Open water, marshes, dunes and saltwater meadows make up a landscape where water and dry land seem to merge. The Bay of Somme has particularly wide mouth into the English Channel offers exceptional vistas that are constantly changing with the tides and the seasons: monochromes in grey, beige or white, vast skies, light effects reminiscent of opal and mother-of-pearl, and walks that will leave you light-headed from the bracing sea air.



The Parc du Marquenterre is the place to find out more about fauna. A unique wealth of animal and plant life. An unforgettable spectacle you can enjoy all year round.



In the heart of the Bay of Somme nature reserve, the Parc du Marquenterre offers a completely fresh experience.

Concealed by planting screens or observation blinds, you can move across the dunes, marshes, forests and meadows in silence to encounter an extremely diverse fauna and flora.

The Parc du Marquenterre hosts the only White Spoonbill colony in France, visible to the public during nesting season, the fifth colony of Avocets, of Black-Headed Gulls and of sandwich terns.

Watch the migratory birds which have made this peaceful haven their favorite stopping off point between Scandinavia and Mauritania. All along the marked trails, you will be enchanted by the magic of the place and the enthusiasm of the nature guides, experienced scientists, whose

We have taken the little steam train: we started on Le Crotoy to go in Saint Valery.

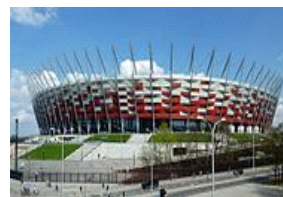


Section C Poland

Trip to Poland- Euro 2012

Hi there ☺. I feel very excited today because I am spending this month in Poland. I'm visiting this country for a very simple reason which is called "Euro 2012" - European Championships in football that take place in Poland and Ukraine. I am not going to visit Ukraine but Poland will be presented in my diary very thoroughly. So, my plane is just being called.... next info from Poland.

Here I am in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. The stadium is really beautiful and impressive. It looks like a big white and red basket. White and red are Polish national colors. The stadium is really modern and well designed. There is also an automatic roof but for some reasons it is closed today so inside the stadium it is really hot. It is the beginning of June so the weather is great even in Poland :).



I have got a Polish friend Michał, a nice boy by the way, who invited me here to watch the match. Poland is playing against Greece. I'm not very fond of football but this match is the first at the European Championships so it's important. Polish people got crazy about football. All the streets of Warsaw are in the national colours and plenty of Poles demonstrate their love and support for the national football team. The expectations are huge. There

are Fan Zones all over Poland and in Warsaw is the biggest one. You can meet there football lovers from all over Europe and even the world. There are green Irish fans, light blue Greek fans, orange Dutch, red and green Portuguese fans, dressed in their national colours French and Italians as well as other nations. Football apparently attracts people of all ages, nations and colours. They are incredibly happy and sometimes surprised with Polish hospitality. All of them sing and support their national teams, there is no aggression but joy and happiness. It looks as if a kind of craziness occurs in this country. I think I'll surrender to it. It's magic :)

Goal!!! Polish striker Robert Lewandowski scored a goal for Poland!!! All the people in the stadium are shouting. This is unbelievable! I have never seen such joy before! Oh, I shout with them! Hurray!!!

Goal again! Scored in the 56th minute. This time the reaction of the crowd is completely different. Polish fans are devastated. They



wanted their team to win but now it's a draw and it's not good for Poland. The next match they

are playing with Russia and it may be difficult to win. The match is over. 1:1 is the score. Nevertheless, Polish fans are full of hope because their team showed quite a good football. The Greeks are also happy. They scored a goal and their footballers played really well.



This day was long... Perhaps too long I'm sleepy. My hotel is located close to the stadium but also close to the magnificent Old Town in Warsaw. I hope to see it tomorrow morning.

I close my eyes and I still feel the atmosphere of the stadium and that's what I see.

Polish fans at the national stadium :)



My second day in Poland - beautiful weather

I'm going for a walk with Michał. Here's some info about the Old Town of Warsaw. It is the historic centre and oldest part of the city; it is also a living, breathing cultural salon. Founded in the 13th century as the prince's castle, it is surrounded by walls.

During World War II, 90% of it was destroyed, but thanks to its excellent restoration and recovery, in 1980 it was granted the status of a UNESCO World Heritage List.

Currently, it is a lively place, bustling with tourists and locals, and full of galleries, cafés and restaurants.



Michał showed me also the Royal Castle which was built in the 15th century, this castle served as residence of Mazovian princes. Once the capital was moved to Warsaw from Kraków, the castle served as seat of the king and the government. The castle has been renovated repeatedly and destroyed completely during World War II. It

was rebuilt between 1971-1988 using castle remains and rubble. Today, the segment with the clock tower opens the way to the Old Town. Museum attractions include two original Rembrandt paintings as well as works by Bernardo Bellotto, aka Canaletto, court painter to Polish King Stanisław August Poniatowski. Canaletto's paintings were vital during Warsaw's post-war reconstruction

On the Vistula side are the recently renovated Kubicki Arcades which support the foundations and the cliffs and give the structure its shape. Following the 1831 Uprising they were used as stables and barracks, and then as garages. The arcades are original, as they were not destroyed during World War II. Currently they house an archaeological exhibit and pension. Walking the streets of the Old Town allows you to rest from the bustle of central city life. Atmospheric alleys, squares, and cosy cafés create a unique sense of history, and in the summer, the Old Town Squares become stages for musical and theatrical performances and open-air galleries.

Ok it's time to enter one of those outdoor restaurants and relax after long walk.

I got really hungry so I decided to try some traditional Polish food. Michał recommended *żurek and pierogis* :)... funny names, aren't they?

Both dishes were delicious. *Żurek* (above) is a kind of soup and *Pierogis* (below) are Polish dumplings. They may be stuffed with meat, mushrooms or fruit. I tried *pierogis* with meat.



Mmmm, yummy :)

I will have to ask Michał's mother for the recipe. I will make them at home and impress my family:)



Today, there are two other matches. Poland is not playing so we are going to the fan zone to watch the match on big screens. There are thousands of people there. There is an incredible mixture of colours and sounds.

I have never seen so much positive emotions cumulated in one place.

Today Portugal is playing against Germany. There are plenty of Portuguese fans as well as Germans but they all seem surprisingly friendly and often ... drink beer together :). It looks quite strange but funny. I feel great in this magic atmosphere.

Here is the Portuguese team:-) ...with Cristiano Ronaldo number 7



OK, tomorrow is another day. Time to bed!

Bye for now.

P.S. Germany won 1-0, this time Cristiano didn't score a goal but I believe in him



My third day in Poland - Matches again, meeting with Michał and some other Polish friends.

The hit of the day is the match between Italy and Spain. I am supporting Italy, Michał just hopes for a good game.

We are watching it at the fan zone as the match is being played in Gdańsk a beautiful seaport city at the shore of the Baltic Sea. So, let's Gdansk!

Napoleon once said Gdansk is "key to everything". The maritime city known until 1945 as Danzig has been under the rule of Poland, the Teutonic Order, Prussia and later Germany. As recently as 1939 when World War Two started with the invasion of Gdansk, it was even a city state, with its own constitution, national anthem and currency. Since 1945 it has prospered under the Polish flag.

Throughout its tumultuous rule, trade and mercantilism has been a constant. Once in the Hanseatic League, much of Gdansk's major sights date from then and architecturally it is as



much Flemish as Polish or German. The evidence survives despite major rebuilding over the past 60 years but it is events away from the centre and on the shores of the Baltic, in the shipyards, that have had the biggest impact on recent history. It was there that the Solidarity trade union was born, whose opposition led to the end of Communist Party rule in 1989. Solidarity's leader, Lech Wałęsa, later became Polish president.

Lying at the mouth of the Motława river and very close to the outlet of the 1,050km long Vistula, Gdansk remains Poland's principal seaport. It forms, together with the city of Gdynia and spa town of Sopot, a metropolitan area spread along 25km of the Baltic coast known as the Tricity (Trójmiasto).

What is more the stadium glitters in the sun like a golden ring.



Italy - Spain 1:1 and here is the Italian team:



Fans apparently love both teams :)

There are so many matches that I start to be fed up with them. I know, I'll go... shopping:). Warsaw has got plenty of good shops. I am going to Marszałkowska Street, a busy main street of Warsaw, and I hope to find some good bargains.

So, no more writing for today just ...buying!

Ireland vs Croatia and France vs England

My next day in Poland starts with the news from Michał, that Ireland is playing against Croatia today. We are going out to the fan zone again.

There, the dominating color is green. The Irish are incredible! Somehow they all sing naturally well and have wonderful sense of humor. Polish people just adore them and their way of supporting Irish football players.

I just can't resist to include a photo of some Irish fans. Here it is:



Funny, isn't it?

Well, the Irish unfortunately lost 1:3 but they were fighting like lions. And here is the Irish team:



Today there was also another match between France and England.

This match was played in Donieck, Ukraine but of course we could watch it on big screens in fan zone. The match finished with the draw 1:1 but it was an interesting game.

Here is the national team of France:



Well, my lovely time in Poland is coming to an end. The Euro 2012 is still on and I am sure I will watch the matches at home. I will keep in touch with Michał and my other Polish friends. I have to confess that I have never been very keen on football but from now on I am a declared fan!!!

So, thank you Poland for your hospitality and beauty. I will definitely come back here. Although your language sounds strange I will remember "Polska biało-czerwoni" and żurek and pierogis. Goodbye white and red Poland.

P.S. Michał sent me a short summary of Euro 2012. Here it is:

☆ The tournament opened with a 1-1 draw between Poland and Greece at the National Stadium in Warsaw on 8 June 2012. The final match took place 23 days later on 1 July 2012 at the Olympic Stadium in Kiev, where Spain defended their title with a 4-0 win over Italy. Spain became the first team to win two consecutive European Championships, and the first international team to win three straight major tournament.



Italy Runners-up



Spain - Winners of Euro2012

My eyes are wide open, full of tears with memories

I left my dear friend back, Michał...Thank you for everything you did for me when I was in Poland. It was really incredible to experience the atmosphere of international football organization all over the country and over the face of Polish people, whom appeared to be grateful also to host lots of fans from all over Europe.

I will always remember the things I lived with some tears coming down with really nice memories about Poland. It was like a dream to be there and I will have to think of some plans about hosting my Polish friends I met there in my country too.

I have already decided to travel all over the Europe, but didn't really make a plan where to start or to stop it. Just wondering around and trying to follow the nice and important facilities planned to be held in advance. But everything has an end so next trip will be to Turkey, where one of my Facebook friends lives. She has been asking me to visit since we met on Facebook. Now it is time to make it real before the schools start in September and after that I will have a busy calendar to follow, including a trip to Romania with my school mates.

I haven't read much about her country but the things we have been talking with her have already made me feel curious about it.

Anyway, I will see what will happen...!

Section D Turkey

Istanbul

A great city....I couldn't find a chance to travel around Istanbul today because of my connection flights. I took a plane from Warsaw at dawn and it landed at the airport in Istanbul. Without a touch or look at this wonderful, fully historic city, I needed to take another plane to land in the city of Izmir, which is the 3rd biggest of the country and as Derya says in our chats, "It is the pearl!"

It has been a tiring trip for me with long intervals at airports. I started at 5 in the morning and am still on the half way. Tonight will be a different one for me because it will be my first time to stay near a Turkish family. I don't know how they think, act or look actually but will try my best and learn more about Turkish people. I heard, they are friendly and it will be a different experience for me anyway!

Izmir

What a lovely city it is. I have just heard of Istanbul up to now and have met lots of people talking about the beauties of that great city, but seem that Izmir is also worth seeing with its landscapes. Today we had a walk on the coast, full of restaurants, cafes and bars. Full of fun and entertainment the roads are. Passing the bay by a ferry was also nice to experience with soft breeze and seagulls following us. *Alsancak, Konak, Kordon* and *Karşıyaka*, wonderful places they are.

Sardes

Derya took me to Sardes today, which was once the capital of the Lydians and where the first coin was used in trade. I felt as if I was looking at the faces of the dwellers, walking down and up the streets, buying some nice bread from the shops, seeing some soldiers, riding horses in the crowded streets and some children also, running around and playing with others. Looking at the history from this age is so breathtaking and trying to feel the imaginary atmosphere which is believed to be lived in ancient times. Turkey has the smell of history and wherever you look, you see something belonging to the far or near past. I really feel great to have made such a decision to meet my dear Turkish friend and it worths.

Kuşadası and Ephesus

Wow, wow and wow!!! What a fantastic place Ephesus is! Thinkinng that once there used to be a port in this place is really strange. derya says, to reach the sea, we should drive nearly 20 kms from the ruins but ages ago, it was just in front of us, where we are standing right now. I have always wondered why so many people wish to visit this country and now I can see the reason obviously when I look at the great theater which was built just to host more than 10.000

spectators and which allows the actors and actresses to use their voice without spending much effort using the natural echo system. Incredible! I sat at one of the top seats and Derya only whispered but I could hear what she said clearly.

Kuşadası is also great and a nice small coast town, which Derya says hosts more than a million tourists every summer. The streets and the old houses seem very similar to the ones in Greece. This is because, Greeks used to live in this area in peace with Turks so many years. You can still see the well-saved old buildings and well-decorated ones also. One more thing, the fish restaurant is perfect!

School again!

Today the schools started and a very busy year is waiting for me, with exams, tests, trips and so on. Next week, I will be flying to Romania, Zimnicea for a school project and I will stay near a Romanian family. My english teacher held a meeting about the trip today and I felt really excited about travelling there. Meeting new people and friends is always good for us and I will for sure carry this friendship to the future.

The crisis still hits the society. The roads are full of people, marching for their economic rights. I hope this anger in the crowds won't last longer and the governments all over Europe start to think of permanent solutions for this. Two of our teachers are dismissed from work and I am really afraid that one day one of my family members will face with such a result if things go on like this. The weather is still nice, but winter will be at the door soon. I don't know why Autumn always makes me feel miserable with its leaves falling down the trees and the changing colours of the nature.

Section E Romania

Excited

Days passed and we are now waiting for our long trip to start tomorrow morning. We are going to Romania! It will be another perfect trip for me and a new experience, anyway! I do know Georgiana is also as excited as me, she told me tonight on facebook that she can't wait to meet me tomorrow. The feelings are mutual! My teacher told us today at school that a tiring trip is waiting for us. I do know that it will be a long trip but in the end, I will be meeting my friend and really wonder what they prepared for me. I bought some gifts for the host family members, hope they like them. Georgiana told me also that we will be travelling to so many places in her country and the most striking idea is staying on the mountains at a kind of a hostel, among the forests. Checked the place from internet and she is really right about what she says.

I need to take some thick clothes with me but this luggage, fffssss, I don't know what to add more and where! It is already full of gifts, shoes and clothes. Think need a bigger one for my next trip.

Anyway, time to jump into bed and sleep with dreams of the trip tomorrow.

Bucharest

Landed eventually and after the check points, now we are waiting for our Italian friends to arrive from Bologna. A minibus was hired for all of us to take us to the town of Zimnicea, which is nearly 4hrs far from the capital. According to the plan of the hosting school, we will be back in Bucharest two days later for the sightseeing.

Seeing the moon above with its shining light was



impressive during the drive to the town. It was a long trip also, but now feel good because when the bus stopped in front of the hotel, many people were waiting for us to arrive and Georgiana was also there. We hugged and got into her family car and drove directly to their house. Thank you for the room in fact, it is really well-decorated for me. I really feel tired due to the long trip and need some long sleep but seems impossible, because we will wake up at dawn to go to the hotel and a huge bus will be waiting for us to take us to Brasov, where we will spend a night on the mountains. I can't wait to see the view!





Bucharest and the Parliament Building

I woke up at 05.00 a.m. and we went to hotel. Teachers and our friends were at hotel. We got on the bus and went to Bucharest. I needed to sleep in bus because I was still tired. We visited the parliament building, which was built by the former leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu. That was so exciting to see such a beautiful and huge building. A huge building for one man only! This is strange anyway. The Then, we did some shopping. I bought a hat and my hat is very very sweet :))) Then, we went to an Italian Restaurant to have lunch.

Had long long way to arrive at Brasov eventually in the evening and arrived at the hotel among the trees. Hotel was really, really nice. They showed us where we would stay and after that served some dinner, although it was late. I couldn't eat anything because I felt exhausted. Later we danced, had some chat in Baran's room and that was so funny.

Time to go to bed! Sweet dreams to everyone!



The Bran Castle – Dracula's House

Another interesting place, the Bran castle, which is known to be the house of Dracula. It is such a strange building that was built over some huge Stones and which is located in a critic area to see all around. I wonder if the story belived to be is true or not, but I can say that it might

be when I saw the castle. It is like a maze, and I was about to get lost in the huge building if Georgiana didn't hold me on shoulder, asking "Where are you going?"

Apart from getting lost, with the effect of the landscape from Dracula's balcony, I felt as if it was about to take my breath away, looking at the depth of the mountains. We also went into a horror tunnel at the shopping area. That was so awesome and amusing!! Then, we walked around and had lunch. We really had great time and it was nice to see everyone singing songs on the way back to Zimnicea.

Now we are at home. Georgiana's sister came home to see and meet me...She is very very sweet and friendly. I love her!!

Missing my hometown and family anyway!



The Party

It was a long day and we were all busy with some visits to the local house and the Major of the town. In a small room, he greeted us and gave a speech, giving information about the history and the present situation of the town. Then the group took a photo on the steps of the Town Hall before going to the visit the school on foot.



It is a small town but pretty. You can travel all around on foot and not with much stress of traffic in deed.

Tonight, we had a big party at the hotel till 1.00 am. Although it was tiring, I felt relaxed and laughed a lot at some people, dancing strange and speaking different languages. What makes me feel close to these people is we are at the same age and we all have nearly the same feelings

or emotions but just live in or come from different cultures. Maybe this difference makes me feel close, just the feeling to be eager to learn how they react or talk to each other using their facial expressions.

I tried to dance with the traditional Romanian music. I am sure everyone tried hard to teach but feel I appeared too funny!

A Formal Celebration

Today we woke up at 10.00 a.m and we got ready and went to Georgina's school. We met other friends at school and went to Danube all together. Teachers organized a march on the street from the school and the park, where some official celebrations were going to be held, including traditional dances and songs with the attendance of the public. Marching on the street with flags of 8 participating countries. The performance started with the traditional dances from by the Romanians. Others then danced too and to tell you the truth, the performance of a Turkish student, Kaan was breathtaking. He danced Zeibek alone and honestly gave the right nature of Turkish people with his actions and effective music.

Departure

I am getting ready to pack now. It is really sad to live so many things in this short period and now leaving them back. Plus, I missed my family too much too. Just staying in the middle of feelings, staying or leaving! I think this will never have an end. What makes me feel happier now is to have so many different friends now, from different countries. I will never forget you folks!

When I got back a friend sent me her account of her experiences during the visit. She had many nice photographs.

Waiting is stressful!

Although I had talked to Ayca on facebook before leaving for Romania and I had seen pictures of her. I was not sure that I will recognize her among all those people but I found here immediately. We were very tired, so we went straight home where we talked, laughed and finally fell asleep.



On Saturday we were on the road to Bucharest. We visited the House of Parliament along with teachers. Then we went for a walk in the old centre of the city

Lunch was served at “Da Vinci” restaurant in Ploiesti and that was very nice as I remembered all that Italian food “pizza and pasta”.



Once we arrived in Brasov we visited the black church and we walked around the city centre to look at some shops. We tasted some delicious cakes!

After this visit we had dinner where Simon was hosted. That was very nice because we sleep together in the same room, 3 or 4 girls. It is easy to know that we passed all the night to talking. zzzzzz.....



In the morning we visited Bran castle and we made funny jokes when we finally got out from the house of terror. We had lunch in Sinaia and we tasted one soup I had never tried: vegetables and meatballs. It had a spicy taste but I liked it! After lunch we left and stopped in Bucharest again for a nice walk in Herastrau park.

In the morning we visited the most important buildings in Zimnicia and Alexandria. In the last evening we had a karaoke party at Interagro restaurant. Each student had to sing a song specific to that country. We have enjoyed very much the time spent with our foreign friends.

It was great to see how she had enjoyed our big meeting altogether.

Later she sent me this letter about what she did afterwards.

Because spring has come, nature is alive again. The beginning of April the weather was very nice. The first week of this month was very entertaining. We had lots of activities which were very interesting and fun, too. We learned how to protect our environment, we found out new things about the history of Maths and we also went on a trip to the mountains. We visited a cave, the Bran Castle and on the way back, the Antipa Museum in Bucharest.

This week was followed by a week holiday. My family and I worked on the fields and in the garden. I also enjoyed the daily walks in the park with my friends.

Now, school has started again and we have lots of tests. It is very hard for me to think that the project has almost finished, but I know I'll still have you, friends forever!

I wish you all the best and I send you a lot of hugs!

Another friend remembered things a little differently.

How interesting is the Romanian language. As in Spain, France, Italy and Portugal we can read signs and understand much of it. Even the driver says some things, which we can understand. Yet most of the speech we hear is incomprehensible. The language is latin in origin. The Romans were here in what was called Dacia and the country remains rooted in Orthodox Christianity despite many years of Communism.

We only visit for a short time. The airport in Bucharest is very quiet but coming through the city in a small car takes 3 and a half hours before we head onto the road to Alexandria and Zimnicea. Small country roads with many bumps but suddenly we are here in a quiet country town and the modern Interagri hotel. We meet our friends from Romania. We visit a school for students from 3 years of age. They have their own beds - many fold down from the walls. The principal, teachers and children are very welcoming.

The main school is for children up to 15 years of age. We meet the headmaster and teachers. We go to the Danube and travel on the police boat to see some of the river. Bucharest has many fine buildings. We visit the Palace of the Parliament a huge building built by the Romanian people in the time of communism. Many people volunteered at that time to spend some months helping to build. Some did not return. Due to the terror of that former time Communism is now forbidden in Romania

Out of town in the country we visit a church being built by nuns. We see the local people waiting for their cows to come in from the common field and see the homes of ordinary people. In the mountain hostel we eat and dance Romanian dances, circling around like in Greece. We hear tales of bears in the woods. We see huge mountains with ski facilities and fine towns with many cafes and restaurants. Dracula's Castle and Brasov's fine town are clear tourist attractions with all the trimmings. They are quite close to Germany and have a large tourist trade.

Section F Greece

The Greek students and teachers have invited me to come to Lesbos in Greece. It is another great chance to travel, meet new friends and to try to understand the countries of Europe. I wonder how different it will be. Will I be any different? Will I do different things?

Dear Diary,

Whoooooh. Waking up after a looong Saturday night. What a terrible wake-up. Walls are moving, the ceiling is turning all the way around my heavy head. I open the window....WOW! Everything looks the same as yesterday in Athens. Everything looks depressing: everything looks grey. Trying to think of something to color up my Sunday!

Well Athens the center of Greece. Having my last day here before I go to Mytilene I want to do something special. Being a typical girl of my age I need to spend 5 hours of shopping in Athens Mall.

Getting into the metro station. It's really stuffed. Everybody is in a rush .I can't stand the fast pace of a big city but I am determined to make Athens Shopping Mall my paradise. I buy some clothes and other stuff for me and my friends. But wait a minute!!! I GOT HUNGRY...HMMMM! I am thinking of a pita gyro with tzatziki and fried potatoes..Delicious...

Next stop Sintagma. Biiiiip. I get out of the metro station and I run into a demonstration. I can barely breath with all the smoke and I start thinking it might get too dangerous here. Fire, crowd, police, teargas and stones! I start thinking about the whole protest thing as I walk by the crowd and I understand the reasons they are protesting since they are screaming for their rights for a better future.

Along with those protestors there are a lot of homeless and poor people-some of them immigrants- who prefer a more silent way of protesting. Such an awful situation! pfffff!!!!

OK. I survived and I head to the Acropolis Museum. Well at last something beautiful after all the smoke and fire. At last some ancient Greek culture travelling all the way back to the times of Periklis and Plato. I got really excited about the sculptures but what got my attention was the glass floor: you can see the people above you or under you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Next stop: GAZI: (an old factory that produced gas, but now many culture events take place such as concerts, art exhibitions e.t.c). Around the factory was a poor neighborhood but now is one of the most popular places where the youngsters meet and enjoy. Many clubs, theaters, bars, restaurants, cafés! It is so hard to choose where to go before my flight to Mytilene. I just eat a piece of baklava and carry on...

I should hurry up!!

My flight is at eight o'clock and now is half past seven!

Ohhh My God!! I don't know which bus I should take in order to go in the airport?????☹☹

Dear Diary,

During my flight to Plomari I met a mother with her daughter who was sitting next to me. She started complaining about something so I asked her what was happening. She told me that she was complaining about the high cost of the tickets. So I took the chance to explain the current economy situation in Greece. Her daughter who was my age and spoke better English, she started explaining:

“The last three years a lot of changes happened in our lives. Especially now, the situation is even harder because of the new economic measures. Our parents are more worried about how to pay bills .The wage cuts have affected their psychology enough. As a result there is a lot of anger at home. We, as young people, have made sizeable efforts to reduce our expenses, but it is not easy because we are used to a different lifestyle and have the cost of private lessons. We don't know how to deal with this situation. There are young people who are aware of the situation and try to help their families as much as they can. However there are many students who have not understood what is going on.

I saw on TV something that really shocked me. A year ago the families who did not have the essential goods were 540,000 and within a year they rose to 700,000. It is shocking in the 21st century to make discrimination at schools. Also it is shocking to see children faint from hunger .We have lived similar situations during the Second World War in Greece and now we face it again. As Greeks, what can we do about this? It 's so painful to see your country that has influenced so much other civilizations to be destroyed in this way. And our future is hanging in the hands of people who care only about their own interests: Greek politicians. We study 12 years at school, 4 years in university and after all these we find ourselves working for 400 € or at worst unemployed. This is the current situation in Greece.

People in Greece are miserable and they suffer not knowing what the future holds for tomorrow. I feel depressed about the situation and wonder if it is the same in Lesvos.

Dear Diary,

It's early: at dawn, I've almost arrived at the Mytilini airport. The flight was wonderful and the view of the Aegean sea and sunrise was stunning!!! I took my suitcase and then I met my friend Ismini, who was waiting for me with her parents at the arrivals. Her father has a red pick-up truck.

Went for a small tour downtown and they showed me around. We went sightseeing! The last place we visited was Mytilini Castle, which was built on a hill above the sea. It reminded me of the medieval period and the knight battles. Fantastic! After a little while we started heading back to Plomari! Then it suddenly started to rain. Thank God the truck had a removable leather top so we covered the open back part of the truck. The weather



was a little moody but that didn't ruin my day because I'm finally close to my beloved best friend!!!



In less than an hour on the road and we were at home. I was tired so I took a bath. I went to my bed, which is next to Ismini's bed so we have the chance to talk all day and all night about girly stuff. After a short nap we ate lunch: souvlakia with chips, tzatziki and Greek salad.

In the afternoon, the weather was much better so Mr. Panagiotis (Ismini's father) suggested going fishing by his boat. It was the first time in my life that I've ever gone fishing. I'm very happy because of catching a big fish, even if I almost fell into water. So guess what we are going to eat tomorrow. You're right. Roasted fish...

Even though it was my first day I had a lot of energy. After three hours of preparation, you know: hair, makeup, clothes, shoes and photographs in front of mirror we are ready to go out with Ismini and her friends. We first went to the well known local café: The living room. The atmosphere was awesome. It was so crowded but we finally managed to find ourselves a place to sit. There were a lot of young people chatting, drinking coffee or an alcoholic drink and some were dancing too.

I met Ismini's friend and everyone was very kind and delicate with me. But among them I noticed one individual. He was so handsome!! He's name was Marios. We made a good company and had a blast through the night! After the café we went to "Monkey" nightclub. Ismini thought it would be a good idea because the club was hosting a well known Greek artist. Flou Babis! We heard the whole performance, drank a little alcohol, danced a lot and then went home exhausted. I can't write any more, I'm too sleepy to ... zZzZzZzZzZzZzZzZz

Dear diary,

Just woke up and I felt like was gonna fall apart. Ismini walked in my room and revived me. We took a small and quick breakfast. It was delicious. After that we got ready and boarded the car to start our journey to Molivos. Driving for an hour and forty minutes, we decided to make a small road stop. We stopped at a village called Petra, which in Greek means rock or stone, and that's because there is a very big rock. On the top a small old church lays which has a small well with drinkable water. Next we hit the road to reach our final destination. We arrived at about 2 o'clock. We went for a stroll at Molivos Castle and after that we stopped to grab a bite at a small tavern! I personally ate roasted ribs called kopsidia here. Ismini's family drank ouzo and the children just plain water. Then we went for a visit to Ismini's cousins at Sigri. We had a nice time with the family. We spent the night around the fireplace eating roasted chestnuts and the old men told us a lot of interesting stories. They were very kind and generous. After that we

went to our rooms to sleep, because the following day we had a long road trip till we get back to Ismini's house.

I'm reeeeaallyy bored..I would prefer watching videos on my computer about the political situation in Mars than writing texts for the diary.

The other day in the park, happened something that made me think. Some kids played football and then two of them started fighting. The thing that made me think deeper is the fact that one kid used the nationality of the other one as an insult (almost wrote insult :P).

So the question is what made the kid use that word as an insult? What is happening in Greece the last years?

I started thinking about that event so I searched the web and found the following article written by Greek students:

ELECTIONS MAY - JUNE 2012

Recently there were elections held in Greece via which a fascist party got into the Greek parliament with a percentage of about 6%. That means that 6% of the Greek population thinks that the basic problem of the crisis in Greece is the immigrants either legal or illegal and they just hate them...and hate them.!!

In Plomari that phenomenon has not got that intense. For example kids from Albania or Romania e.t.c play and get along with greek kids just like if they were Greek. But there is something small that if we just let it grow, it will grow bigger and bigger and finally it will become a huge problem really difficult for the society to face. And that problem is called racism...

Trying to give a modern definition of the word "Racism", we would say that is used to point that a group of people is seen as stronger to others. More specifically it describes the actions of a group of people (who share common characteristics such as nationality, sex, colour, religion, culture, etc) against one other group. The word comes from the most common type of racism, the racial racism, from the Italian word, "razza" which means race.

Racism is a sensitive topic that needs a lot of attention. According to experts, racism is considered a violation of the basic human right to equality, in the fields of labour, politics, economy, etc.

In Greece, there have been all kinds of racism. Today the racial racism is expressed increasingly loud. The cause of this? Based on the fact that Greece "hosts" more immigrants than it can afford. The problem lies in the fact that the Greek are taxed, or serve the military, while foreigners don't.

It's worth having in mind that it is no immigrant's fault. In fact, immigrants are people who have searched for a better future in a foreign country. So did the Greek immigrants abroad. No one has the right to blame them for this. The problem is purely governmental. Quite simply if

you need to get along both Greeks and foreigners in this country, we will have to contribute all the same, otherwise prosperity will be lost for both Greek and foreigners. Specifically there's a need to adjust the rights. Otherwise there will be consequences that in their simple form they lead to a devaluation of a group of people, while in more severe form, can give birth to the causes of terrorism or even war. It sounds extreme however it has re-occurred in the past.

As students this phenomenon causes us regret and concern about the outcome of this situation. Finally we feel despair about the inaction of the Government in relation to this phenomenon.”

I discussed the whole night with Ismini about discrimination, racism and we concluded to the eternal slogan: *ZzZz make zZ love ZzZz not ZzzZ war.!!!*

Factory

Today I visited a factory of ouzo with my hosting family. The owner of the factory showed us around and I was fascinated though I didn't understand much because he didn't speak English that great. It was a quite big factory with sizeable engines and the entire place smelled like anise, which is one of ouzo's ingredients. At the beginning I thought ouzo was a very interesting drink but when I tasted it I changed my mind because it has great content of alcohol and when I swallowed it my throat was burned.

In the midday we went to a restaurant to eat Greek moussaka. I've never tasted it before and this combination of minced meat, potatoes, aubergines and béchamel, was extraordinary! Then we walked beside the sea of Plomari in order to get fit and digest because here in Greece there are so many special dishes to eat and I want to taste them all, so when I leave Plomari I will have three more pounds.



After the walk at the beach we went home, I took a bath and I chose the most fascinating clothes that I had with me and I was ready to go out and get and feel the wild nightlife of Plomari!!! We met the rest of the kids in the square of the town and we went to eat souvlaki, a kind of traditional fast food. After eating five souvlaki, I said “PLEASE NO MORE! I will explode like a nuclear bomb!!!”

Next we went to Senso, a modern café-bar. The place was full of beautiful and sexy boys! The music was wonderful and the DJ too! ;) He was an ex-model called Alexandros Parthenis, he was very attractive and I was staring at him all night! We dance a lot and for a start we drank a couple of beers! After being there for a couple of hours we went to Oceanis to continue our crazy night. This club was really hot full of people that dance and get drunk! There was also a dancer that made tricks with her mouth and fire! It was very boring and creepy for me and the other

girls I guess!!! But when she left, everything went back to normal! We started dancing and drinking again! Around four o'clock in the morning we returned back home and I fell asleep with my dirty clothes! In conclusion the nightlife of Plomari was crazy and very wild!!!

The next morning I was feeling a little bit dizzy but also very happy and excited! I am looking forward to do this again!

Dear Diary,

Good morning!!!!

Oh, although I wanted to be in my bed with my fluffy little bear, I am at Ismini's school eating my favorite biscuits and listening to some Greek teacher who is trying hard to survive from twenty little teen devils. Ohhh God I am counting down the time for the nightOceanis, my favorite club is waiting for me and my friends to dance, drink and have fun!!

But life in Greece is less than a party most of the time..... In the class I was present at a conversation between the teacher and the students about bullying at Greek schools. Schools of Greece send SOS for the increase of school violence. According to surveys, Greece has the 4th place among 41 countries in cases of bullying (violence in schools). The silence that covers these incidents must be broken and teenagers should be protected as soon as possible! The financial crisis that exists in Greece has caused plenty of problems in families here such as irritation, concern about children future and the most important... the smile has already disappeared from all Greek people. Sadly, all of these problems are passed from the family to the children. The result is that students indicate family problems to the school with violent actions against their classmates or the school buildings. Ismini told me that a similar incident happened to her school here in Plomari! :(A student of the high school attacked a younger student when he offended him.

Although the older student should have complained to the headmaster, he preferred to solve the problem with violence. According to experts' opinion, the first step to give an end to this problem is to face it seriously. This sudden spate of violence that has flourished in the past couple of years is a nasty social problem, which just does not frighten only Greek students but all teenagers around the world and it's very dangerous for our physical and mental health, but also worries us about the future of the whole world! But, let's stop now I have to go home and plan the rest of the day!!

MY TRADITIONAL EXPERIENCE IN PLOMARI

Hello my sweet and beloved and hungry diary!

My hair looks like sh*t. Man(!) it's like 6 o'clock-freaking-a.m. I don't know if I am awake or asleep. So today I get to go to the field with the olive trees to collect olives with Ismini. I heard it is



not a hard job – I doubt it's not.

12:00 a.m. Whoah.... My back hurts a lot. They must have been kidding me about the ease of this job. I prefer collecting olive from the supermarket. We are about 5-6 armed with a lot of tools such as long wooden sticks (“debles”), some nets, big woolen sacks (“burda”) and some other stuff. We spent almost the whole day there hitting the trees so that olives fall in the nets. When we finished we loaded the sacks on the truck and went back to the town to take a shower.

17:00, Ultimate relaxation. A shower can be really relaxing. After that we decided to go to a traditional coffee shop-restaurant (“cafenes”). We tasted some Greek coffee and traditional sweets.



Dear “olive” diary.....



Today we are taking the olives to the oil factory to get olive oil instead. On the way back home we decided that it would be a nice idea to go cycling to Melinda rock.

On the way back home we almost bumped into a group of donkeys that are left free the whole year except winter. That is quite funny as I don't understand how people can distinguish each other donkeys. As we got closer to the town I stared at the old-traditional houses of Plomari with those little closed balconies they have.



Oh.... I am thirsty... With so much cycling I need some water. We are lucky though as Plomari is full of old founts –Ismini told me that some of them are Turkish with old Arab transcriptions on them- with cold fresh water....

glou glou glou...



As we quenching our thirst, we heard music coming out from a big old and well maintained building... my friend told me that this was the Multifunctional Cultural Center of Plomari. We decided to enter and find out what this music was about. I opened the door and I was magically transferred to Latin America....!!! Through the wooden and stone walls of the building the music was playing in a mystical way that made you lose your senses....We made our way by the wooden stairs to the second floor and there it was...people of all ages were taking latin dance classes...I saw Ismini waving and saying hi to Antonis, John and Taxiarchoula. We decided to join the other guys and learn some latin steps. After a while the program changed and it was time for traditional Lesvian dancing.

After the dances Ismini and her friends invited us to watch a film in the cultural club, the movie V for Vendetta.. the movie was about the struggle of a single man versus a very tyrannic government in the future England...

On the way back home we discussed about the movie and we continued that until we finally fall asleep.!!! zZzZzzZZzZzZ

Dear Diary...☺,

While I was sitting on the computer at Ismini's room, I saw an article on the internet with the following picture:



I was very impressed by the picture itself and also by this emotional phrase written on it: "Friends are made by heart not by skin color". A lot of thoughts came in my mind through this message. Why racism does still exists nowadays? Why do we discriminate people by their skin color, race, sex, nationality, religion and language? As our philosophy teacher told us all humans

beings are equal just only because they were born humans. We all have the same needs: food, water, air, a healthy environment, peace, friends, love and... LOVE <3 .

To my mind, racism shouldn't exist. However, I realize that there some people around the world as well who have a different opinion. The last year the racist actions against immigrants have been increased and, as it seems they 're going to be even more. In fact, the last decades, you can see everywhere many immigrants especially illegal. Some members of nationalistic groups attack those people and treat them as inferior creatures which should be deported. Unfortunately many Greek citizens, support these extreme actions. The main reason of this is that Greece is now in deep financial crisis and the criminality has risen, so many people blame it on the immigrants. But I think that this is just ... bullshit!!!

...Imagine no possessions

I wonder if you can.

No need for greed or hunger.

A brotherhood of man

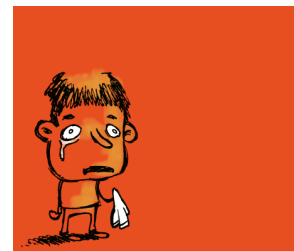
Imagine all the people sharing all the world...

(John Lennon, Imagine)



:'(...sniffiff Dear Diary,

Half an hour ago I said goodbye to Ismini, to all my sweet Greek friends and also all the goats and donkeys I came across. I am looking forward to visiting friends in Italy, leaning on a tower or two and tasting all the gelato I can.



Section G Italy

LIS AND THE "MAD FLIGHT"

"Learning to Fly"

Somewhere in Europe

For a long time I had been scared of flying again. But now I feel it's time to untie the hawsers and sail again in the big sea of Being.

Just like Dante's Ulysses I want to go for broke, giving chase to *virtute e canoscenza*. I've got my wings broken by the cyclones; anyway I still feel like flying. Paradoxes of my restlessness are scattered in one of Eugenio Montale's poems on a bus leading to the airport. But now, let's banish the ancient ghosts and start travelling again. So let's get on board, leave and fly!

A half serious dialogue between Lis and her poetic inspiration

CALLIOPE: Even this Comenius week has finally come to an end, and they are all going back home. Why did you want to stay here, Lis?

LIS: You know, Calliope: I liked Italy. The beauty of the cities you showed me captured me, and I want to learn more about these places. I would like to talk with people, to plunge into their traditions.

I want to continue all the things we started together!

But, these days something is missing, my friend.

CALLIOPE: Come on. Tell me! I am "all ears".

LIS: I need to make a comparison.

My God, this doesn't mean that you have to discriminate the good from the bad, the best from the worst.

It's all about information.

Modern society has introduced all of us into "Globalization" and I think it's very important to defend our culture so that it doesn't get swallowed up by this *global-idea* and thus disappear from the face of the Earth; it seems that the most important thing is to know the others.

I have to know how the people of my same age live here in Italy, their points of view, how they grow-up and how they face adulthood.

CALLIOPE: You girl, have asked an interesting question, and it deserves to be answered. Before you participate in a final activity, which will complete your trip here. In all respects, I would like to introduce you to the method, which your peers here use to lay the foundations of their adulthood.

In the building next to us, as you know, there are various classes of the Institute. In a short time, the students of the lyceum will discuss about an important literary critic, Romano Luperini, about a topic which deeply affects me: the dialogue with the dead. I understand that it

may seem gloomy, and you are right! But the answer you are looking for comes from them, the dead, as a constitutive part of the Past.

These people think that it is necessary to know the Past of their civilization so as to be able to deal with what life has in store for them in the future. In the Past we can find all the attributes necessary to plan a better Future. By knowing its own history, a community obtains wisdom, and learns how to avoid the mistakes of the past.

LIS: What does all this mean, Calliope? The future needs novelty, it is made up of novelty!

CALLIOPE: Would novelty exist if things were "already known"?

Everything would be new! There would be no progress!

But now! Come into the classroom and listen!

In the words of an old master: "*Sapere aude!*".

A walk through the meadows of Asphodel

"Classical authors have not only an literary importance but they found a civilization".

More or less with these words Romano Luperini opens his speech dedicated to the theme of the dead from Homer to Dante.

Through a path in diachrony he aims to analyze the topic highlighting, in the first place, the difference between the ancient world and the modern world.

In the ancient world, the poem was composed primarily in order to found a civilization and was therefore especially epic poetry. Less important was the weight that was attributed to lyric poetry, although this does not exclude even a large production (think, in this regard, of the *Liber* of the famous Latin poet *Catullus*).

Lyric poetry, moreover, assumes preponderant value only from the nineteenth century on the basis of one of the greatest exponents of Italian Romanticism, Giacomo Leopardi, who gives to the subjectivity of the self a private dominant dimension. Luperini, moreover, states that in order to give meaning to life you need to ask the basic questions, and through a psychological process, making its own history in relation to the past.

This is what both the individual and the community are called to do.

The strange metamorphosis of Tiresias

A recurring theme in the course of literary history is the analysis of the encounter of all often well living character with that of a dead one. This phenomenon has been discussed from the times of Homer on.

According to Luperini, each culture elaborates a sense of identity by telling itself its own history thus putting itself into a relationship with the past. In fact, literature passes on what should not be forgotten by selecting in time the poetic contents of different authors.

From Homer to Dante, for the classical authors, the encounter with the dead has a fundamental and mythopoeic function, which tends to build a future in relationship to the past. With Homer it will initiate the Greek culture, which will conclude with the desecrating and ironic figure of Lucianus from Samosata.

Both Homer and Luciano treat the theme of the meeting with the seer Tiresias in a different way. In Homer's *Odyssey* the soothsayer tells Odysseus the meaning of life, while in the dialogues of Lucianus he invites him to seize the moment with these words:

"Fra tutte le cose cerca soltanto questo, passa il momento presente adattandoti al meglio, ridendo di tutto e non prendendo nulla sul serio" (Among all things seek only this, the present adapting yourself as best you can, laughing of everything and not taking anything seriously.)

Lucianus, *Necyomantia*, 21

However, Lucianus's words lack that sense of "black" melancholy, that characterizes Giacomo Leopardi, who represents the dead as silent beings burdened by a strong physical torpor that makes them insensitive and completely estranged from the world of the living: in *Paralipomeni*, like in the *Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie* (Dialogue of Federich Ruysch and his mummies), the dead are "voices of nothing", because they don't communicate values, memories or emotions.

In the concept of the universe of Leopardi the after-world of the dead is still apparently that of the ancients, but the dead show a net break with the world of the living and have become meaningless figures. In fact, it is with the poet from Recanati that modern literature begins: in modern times death is not able to answer the need for existential significance and so, just as in Leopardi's texts, death speaks no longer.

Insights on Homeric catabasis

The encounter with the dead in the canto XI from *Odyssey* is without any doubt composed of more parts, showing different sources and next superimposing. Nevertheless, in its different parts, it shows an own basic coherence. The discordances in the content let the mythopoetic shade intact, which links strictly the public sort to the private destinies both to the framework itself and the single episodes of the play.

In contrast with the Homeric tradition, in which the dead are not allowed to dialogue, because they aren't gifted with any emotions or thoughts at all, here the unnatural encounter takes place by a shamanic libation which not only gives them the word, but the ability to spread the truth:

“E quando là le famose larve dei morti/ avrai supplicato, un montone sacrifica/ e una pecora nera volgondone all'Erebo il capo/ e volgi te stesso al cospetto del fiume:/ anime spesse vedrai apparire dei morti”. (Afterword you will have begged there the famous shadows of the dead, make a sacrifice a ram and a black sheep turning its head to Erebus and turn yourself towards the river: thick souls of the dead will appear to you)

Odissea X, vv. 526-530

Each encounter, in which the dead, telling the past life, reveal the sense to Ulysses, transforms into a particular attention to the generational range.

In fact, the first soul which Odysseus recognizes in Hades is the one of Elpenor who invokes a sense of mingling among the living, a burial that the descendants can see and recognize in order to preserve the memory:

“ma bruciami, ornato dell'armi che avevo,/ e un tumolo innalza sull'ido del mare/ grigio: che giunga anche ai posteri il nome/ di quest'uomo infelice”. (But burn me together with the weapons I had, and lift a tomb on the grey sea: let my name, the name of this unhappy man, arrive to the descendants too)

Odissea XI, vv. 75-78.

The continuity in which the Homeric dead are interested, does not consider the individual, but a meaningful part of the values of a community. So that the sort of humanity is always integrated in an universe of signs that shares both to the mortals and to the gods, thanks to which we are able to build a circularity of the meaning between the living and the dead.

In an analogy with the XXIV chapter of Biblical Genesis in which the servant Arram is sent by Abraham to find a wife for his son Isaac, the divine sign designating the chosen one can be found, according to Tiresias, Ulysses will be able to see the sign in order to put an end to the hostility of Poseidon and finally return to Ithaca (Odyssey XI compares vv. 133-183).

Even in the encounter with his mother, it is Anticlea herself who becomes the symbol of the coexistence between a private feeling and an important social interest, until now bypassed and left aside in a way that is altogether too modern. As the daughter of Romanticism a large number of twentieth century critics stressed the "private" part of the interview, the feelings between mother and son.

However, we cannot ignore the emotional and personal involvement of the final part of the meeting:

“Perchè, madre, svanisci, sebbene/ io brami di stringerti a me, così/ che anche nell'Ade abbracciati possiamo/ di questo triste gemente colloquio godere?”. (Why are you disappearing, mother, even if I crave to hold you tight, so as, even in Hades, we can be glad of this sad and moaning encounter, by staying embraced?)

Odissea XI, vv. 208-211.

Odysseus shows strongly his desire to verify the words of Tiresias regarding the royal privilege of Laertes and Telemachus, and the faithfulness of Penelope (Odyssey XI compares vv.180-190).

The episode focuses on a structure of a sequence of parallelisms in which the perspective of social hierarchies and political power are never neglected: Laertes sleeps with servants, Telemachus feasts with the important people of the city, and Penelope, who cries every night, allowing no-one to usurp the throne of Ulysses.

“Father and son”

In the VI book of Eneide, the son of Venus and Anchises get off Cuma, an ancient Greek colony, where the oracle of Sibyl, the prophetess, lies.

This one is deeply in love with Apollo and suggests the hero to invoke mercy of God whose temple lies in a place near the cave. Aeneas, after invoking Phoebus, asks the prophetess to take him to Hades to meet the father Anchises.

Sibyl shows Aeneas the difficulty of the task and warns him that he cannot obtain what he wishes before placing some symbolic actions after which he will be allowed to enter the Hell with the help of his guide.

After overcoming the imposed actions, Aeneas can start his own *descensio ad Inferos*. After going past the vestibule and being carried by Caronte over the Stige's swamp, he will meet some souls, including the one frown and hostile of Dido, who killed herself precisely because of him (*compares infra*). Then, he will reach the coveted Anchises who, after the firsts crying words shared with the son, will calm him about the destiny of his descent and the Roman future.

So, In this book (Eneide VI), the encounter with the dead marks not only a generational deal, but also the transmission of an hegemony and a power able to link myth to history. In fact, Virgil's production differs from Odyssey, in which we can find only a succession of generations that founds a mythology and at the same time a sense of community based on social and political relations.

Just in this renewed prospective the hero undertakes an after-life trip searching for not a fortune-teller, but his own father (*compares Odyssey XI*). Moreover, Anchises himself will reveal Aeneas what future deserves to him and his descendants, not his mother, as it happened in *Odyssey XI*. So, the announcement of future glory is evident in a continuity between patrilineal generations.

Besides, the novelty of Anchises' prophecy consists of a political omen in which there are important historical references.

The private feelings of Enea (the love for his father, the remorse for the suicide of Dido) become part of a common historical frame and political project.

The appearance itself a "aversa" (adverse) and "inimica" (inimical) Dido (vv. 469 and 472) goes beyond the personal vicissitude and alludes to the Carthaginian revenge and to a conflict which will cover with blood the Mediterranean for over a century.

Is there a love to dying for?

By quoting the fast apparition of Dido's soul in the book of the dead from *Aeneid* (*cf. supra*) we have marked how the frowning spirit of the suicide queen engineers into Aeneas a strong regret.

However, it is worth focusing a moment on this tormented love story and on its tragic reveals, usually considered to be precursors of the proverbial hostility between Rome and Carthage.

In the Virgilian play, Aeneas arrives with the fleet of Trojan exiles near the Punic city at the behest of the goddess Juno, who, after having persuaded Aeolus, sets off a storm on the hero and his companions. To welcome Aeneas, in the city dear to Juno, the queen will be Dido, exiled from Tyre and the virtuous Sichaeus' widow.

An overwhelming passion begins between the two, by the will of the goddess Venus, which is destined to a tragic outcome, since Fate does not allow the fusion of the two peoples by a marriage. The hero begins to prepare secretly the start thinking in this way to weaken Dido's inevitable pain of separation.

But the queen guesses that and Fate confirms that the preparations are full-swinging for departure: she spent the last night in a sleepless restlessness.

So at the sunrise, after some long night suffering, Dido sees the vacuum port and the leaving ships. Then she curses Aeneas and his descendants, hoping that an eternal hatred divides forever the two peoples. The suffering love of Dido, which makes her similar to a "cerva da freccia piagata (deer wounded by an arrow)", will find peace at last in a painful and self-induced death, after a slow agony.

It is perhaps for this reason that his brief appearance, now as a spirit from shadow, in *Aeneid* VI is so touching: instead Aeneas that was appeared insensitive in *Aeneid* IV shows his very strong love for Dido, although they can't join in marriage pact against the wishes of Fate.

If he could, he would have gladly stopped on the shores of Carthage, but as he sadly says, "la legge dei numi [...] con la sua forza mi urgeva -the law of the gods [...] urged me with his strength-" (*Aeneid* VI, 461-463).

What emerges from that is a deeply pessimistic view of human existence: the two unfortunate lovers are configured as unaware of their destiny and manipulated like puppets by the gods to achieve some purposes which, however they exist, are characterized as inscrutable.

On a closer inspection there is a truly tragic perspective, whose echoes can still be marked in a contemporary artistic and literary production (*cf. infra*, in this regard, the considerations raised-up on the play "Paladini di Francia -Paladins of France-").

Never stopping to the appearance

Dante also wants to write a poem inspired by the ancient ones, and takes as his privileged model the Aeneid of Virgil. An epic perspective, therefore, crosses the Comedy. This time it is, however, a new Christian epic.

In fact, Dante's journey explicitly recalls not only to Aeneas' journey in Hades, but also what Paul did in the third heaven, or even, according to medieval legends, hell itself. Classical and medieval sources are then taken to find a new legitimacy to the theme of the meeting with the dead.

Indeed, this latter is taken as the structure of the design of a new Christian civilization which can recover even the vital instances of the ancient and pagan past and to select both from the history and the present episodes and characters that foresee a future of possible salvation.

With Dante, the encounter with the dead, therefore, stop being a single episode and also becomes the structural basis of the narrative and of an entire religious, ethical and political project.

In this sense, it is essential to speak of polysemy: in fact, the *Commedia* has different levels of reading and you can focus on the literal, the allegorical, moral or analogical, that is the spiritual, meaning.

A reading in a symbolic key of Dante's text makes extensive use of two rhetorical devices that enable us to understand the hidden messages of the text: the figure and allegory. Although at a first glance, they appear to be similar rhetorical trickeries, a more careful analysis shows profound differences.

In fact, allegory is defined as the translation of an abstract and timeless concept in a concrete image that refers to a code known both to the writer and the reader: for example, in this regard, the famous forest of Inferno, allegory of the sinful conditions of life in which man can lose himself in self-destruction.

In contrast, the figure is in fact built on a character or a historical event. A true story becomes a figure of another one when it can be interpreted as foreshadowing of what is to be fulfilled in the future.

Such a pleasant reading is typical of the medieval Christian world: in this perspective, for example, the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt foreshadows Christ's redemption and absolution from all sin.

We can find a clear example of it in *Purgatory II* (vv. 46-48) in which the souls, arrived on the beach in front of the mountain of Purgatory, sing unanimously the Psalm 113, *In exitu Israel*, a clear reference to eternal salvation that awaits man after the painful purgatorial purification.

So, according to the figural conception, the entire earthly life is a figure of eternal destiny.

Dante in his *Commedia*, however, introduces an important new perspective taking as a privileged point of view, no longer that of the land but of the afterlife.

In this way, all the author discovers, about the afterlife, is but the full realization of the facts and individuals whose earthly life was foreshadowing of what is now lead.

A great scholar of the Comedy figures was the German critic E. Auerbach, who has clearly shown that each occurrence of Dante's entire narrative isn't accidental at all, but designed in every detail to provide valuable information concerning the fate of humanity and not just the private life of Dante or individual historical events.

All otherworldly meetings symbolize the steps that everyman, in this case played by the pilgrim, must face. Each time you come across historical individuals representing not only the manners and customs of their times, but also the eternal and universal truths, since each of them retains an extraordinary realistic wealth.

In this way it is created a very close and vital bond between concrete and abstract, singular and collective, private and public.

Thanks to figural interpretation we can understand how the world of the dead conceived by Dante is a kind of open book on the values and the true meaning of earthly life, but also the saving plan where the history of all humanity finds its complete fulfillment.

On the secluded beach of Purgatory

Previously, we reported the second canto of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (see above). Guardian of the kingdom otherworldly 'middle' is Cato the Uticensis, a complex figure, on which it is appropriate to reflect for a while.

Historically, he is a well-known political figure, described as having sum righteousness, incorruptible and impartial and perhaps for this reason hated by many influential men of the time. Great supporter of Pompeo, he paid for his loyalty with his own life and he decided to kill himself while he was in Utica, because he was being chased by the soldiers of Caesar.

In the *Commedia*, as already mentioned, we find him as the protagonist of the first two cantos of the *Purgatorio* and even guardian of that kingdom, even if, as suicide, we expect him to share the terrible vegetable fate reserved to Pier delle Vigne in *Inferno XIII* and, in general, to the violent against themselves.

The choice of Dante, apparently incomprehensible, is actually fully justified if we analyze the reasons for the suicide of Cato himself, which occurred in 46 a.C in Utica.

The latter in fact chose to end his life as an act of extreme *virtus*, rather than give up the political freedom that now Caesar had reserved for the supporters of Pompeio.

In Purgatorio (vv. 70-75), Virgil himself indicates clearly the ethical impulse that motivated the suicide:

Now may it please thee to vouchsafe his coming/ He seeketh his liberty which is so dear/ as knoweth he who life for her refuses/ thou know'st it; since for her to thee not bitter/ was death in Utica, where thou didst leave/ the vesture that will shine so, the great day./

Precisely because of the keyword, liberty, we can understand why Cato, instead of Hell, is found to be the guardian of Purgatory, that is the afterlife where souls are purified and they find freedom from sin.

Using as an interpretative model the Auerbach's figural thesis (see above) we can see in the image of historical Cato traits of *figura futurorum*, that is the political anticipation of the libertarian backing that will assume purely moral traits in its otherworldly size and, therefore, eternal.

In fact, according to Auerbach, the historical Cato is the 'figure' who gave up life in the name of individual liberty, while in Purgatory he appears, as unveiled or fulfilled figure, as the emblem of freedom *tout court*, that is the special power given to man to choose how to act through the use of free will and thus to save themselves - even dying - from eternal damnation.

An unworldly journey

What emerges from Dante, through the three over world kingdoms, is one of the most famous journeys that world literature has ever passed down to us.

Even the protagonist himself is awarded of the exceptional of the fact and wondering deeply about the personal virtue which allows him to carry out such an undertaking.

This point, halfway to understanding the overall logic of the Dante's comedy, has been addressed in the comedy many times until resolved carefully.

The chant that has been introduced the above theme is Inferno II.

In this Dante is at the piece of the "diletto monte" (Inferno I v. 77) and he's going to start his descent ad Inferos, when he asks to his guide, what's the reason for him to do this journey.

The Florentine poet fears to face progress: he is afraid he hasn't got the possibility that has been granted him.

He knows that those who went before in making a similar expedition were a wonderful moral structure and so he considers himself unworthy to press down their footsteps. The two characters are Enea and S. Paolo.

The first is a Trojan hero, after the journey in the hell, where his father predicted him his destiny, he will found the city of Rome, *urbe* that will expand until to conquer the most of the western world and will host the church Christiana.

The second is Saint Paolo, thanks to his experience he will preach correctly "God's volition", carrying a great contribution to the Christian cause.

In the light of what it's easy to understand the motion of humility that causes the alienation of the protagonist Dante: he asks himself how it is possible that to him, an "ordinary" human, though poet (and so he is able to play a fundamental narrative function) is given the opportunity to make such an undertaking.

The focus of the anguished question is to answer the question dealt with the same poet. Virgil responds to Dante reporting the words of the angelic Beatrice. She had in fact referred to Virgil that the reason for which Dante could have access to the otherworldly realms would be the love felt for him by the woman and the intercession of the Virgin Mary. She is not mentioned explicitly, but the reference is clear: "'Donna è gentil nel ciel che si compiange'" (Inf. II, v. 94).

That love is a crucial issue of Comedy and the entire Christian thought. It is not easy for earthly love, but a transcendent, unconditional divine feeling, sometimes not fully understood by the limited human mind.

The only reason, therefore, for which Dante can have this journey is the divine grace: in the story Virgil, Beatrice, Dante intervene noting that, since losing the right way, does not need any special merit to be helped. (see Inferno II, v. 72)

Several times the author focuses on the contrast between the possibility of human and faith: he believes that the soul of a mortal cannot in any way decipher the complex divine thought. In part XI of the poem is said that the human mind and common sense cannot fully understand the inner world of the city of Dite, because the crimes are too violent.

Ulysses lies in canto XXVI, eighth chasm of the eighth circle, the one where the fraudulent advisers serving the eternal punishment. A lead to death will be hubris, excessive power given to human reason and knowledge: as soon as he departed, "Circe" immediately drove off at a time of unexplored lands, driven by the insatiable thirst for knowledge. Go past the Pillars of Hercules, a limit beyond which man would never have to push, continue for another five months this "folle volo" (Inf. XXVI, v. 125).

After this long journey, Ulysses will come with a handful of men at the foot of the purgatorial mountain, but will die sucked into a vortex. This shows that the mere knowledge and human virtue can't bring eternal happiness to the individual, but rather that this opinion can be extremely harmful.

Only faith in God's grace can thus make such an important journey lawful, but that, according to the conception of Dante and Christian, can be done indiscriminately by every human being.

I Am No One

The emblem of the man who defies his fate and limits under the innate desire to learn and discover is well represented by Ulysses in the canto XXVI of Dante's Hell.

Dante's Ulysses has as his predecessor Ulysses by Homer, from which, however, he was inspired just in part, not having him direct access to the Greek language and therefore to the Odyssey.

Every preface contains the main features of a poem and the first canto of Odyssey begins with "Andra mai Ennepe, Mousa, polytropon ..." (Odyssey, Book I, v.1) where the first word is "Andra" which means "man." So Homer does not want to put Ulysses on a heroic level, but rather wants him to embody any man, to be compared to anyone. In this way Ulysses takes the status of everyman.

Odyssey doesn't describe only the many adventures and difficulties that Ulysses has to face during his travelling, but also deals with the changes that occur in him. In fact, during his journey the protagonist learns many things, changes his way of seeing the world and is changed both physically and in the mind, improving all his many qualities. From this point Odyssey can be somehow considered a "Bildungsroman", and can also be interpreted as a large metaphor of human existence. Odyssey is part of the literary cycle of the "Nostoi" that is "the return". The poem tells the long journey of Odysseus back to his homeland after the Trojan War; the hero has been twenty years away from home and feels a great nostalgia for his land: this is a feeling often found in the poem. In fact, the Homeric hero refuses any lasting love relationship with women of divine origin (Circe, Calypso) because the desire to return home is above any other desire. But Ulysses is often forced to wait longer before he can return to Ithaca, because of the folly of his companions destined to turn into tragedy, as when they kill the sacred cattle of the god Sun.

"And Zeus thundered and threw lightning on the ship:
it all turned on itself, struck by Zeus with a thunderbolt
and was filled with sulfurous smoke: fell out mates
and like crows around the black ship
were wave prey: the god denied them the way back! "

(Odyssey, Book XII, v. 415-420)

In the preface we find another word worthy of note: 'polytropon'. The adjective means 'versatile', or more precisely 'the person who can turn his mind to the adversities of life', that expresses the ability to adapt. In fact, cunning, intelligence, versatility are the most important qualities of Ulysses, through which he is able to save himself from the many dangers occurring during his Journey. In the poem indeed, the circumstances during which he gives evidence of his wit are innumerable: his cunning is evident when he hides his identity to the Cyclops Polyphemus; besides, during the encounter with Nausicaa, in which his attitude towards the

royal girl is a studied mix of humility, adulation and courtesy, the artifice that allows him to safely listen to the song of the sirens is a result of his clever and reflective mind.

For the period of his journey Odysseus stays away from his homeland, driven by the desire to know, he takes a thousand adventures, often the cause of the difficulties he is forced to face. In the end, however, the desire to return home always manages to prevail on him.

The columns of Ulysses

"When I depart 'from Circe [...] neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my old father, nor' the due affection [...] could overcome within me the desire I 'had to make experience of the world and the human vices and value, but I put forth on the high open sea with a ship, and that small company by which I never was deserted. "

(Inferno XXVI, vv. 90-102)

With these words, Ulysses motivates his journey to an undetermined destination that certainly goes beyond the limits granted to man. For this reason he is in Hell, having blemished of 'hubris', the sin comparable to the Christian arrogance. In particular, the hubris that characterizes Ulysses consists in crossing the Pillars of Hercules, which symbolize the limit imposed on human knowledge. Just this desire for knowledge characterizes Dante and Ulysses in the same way and is the reason for both their journeys. Nevertheless, there is a meaningful and substantial difference: the journey of Odysseus leads the hero to be guilty of impiety of his own volition and without remorse, while the experience of Dante, the poet, does not lead to commit any sin as his journey is wanted by the Grace of God (see the contents of the second canto of the Inferno).

In fact, while Ulysses informs about his guilt in Hell, after having seen the mountain of Purgatory "a mountain, dim from distance, and it seemed to me so high. As I had not any," Dante continues his journey without suffering any punishment, also thanks to his humility. And it is this virtue, consisting of not ignoring the human potential and thus accepting the limits imposed by Divine Grace, which will preserve him from eternal flames. In conclusion, then, Dante finds a way to satisfy the desire for knowledge and at the same time to save himself from damnation: being a believer, he relies on God, who not only saves him, but also gives him the knowledge he denied to Ulysses, who being too bold, did not control his impiety.

The Lord is calling me to get on the mountain₁

It had just struck one and hunger began to be felt.
We had been walking in Florence all morning admiring its artistic beauty: we had already admired its most important squares, such as Piazza del Duomo, towered by the wonderful dome

by Brunelleschi, and Piazza della Signoria, and in the afternoon we had visited the Giardino di Boboli and the Galleria dell'Accademia, but now it was time to go to eat.

The Italian boys had booked a table in a tavern in the city centre.

While I was enjoying a typical dish of the city, "Fiorentina", a delicious and tender beefsteak, I noticed that inside the room almost everyone, even some of the waiters, had turned to watch television and hear the news. Intrigued, I asked for explanation to our Italian friends who told me that a few hours before Pope Benedict XVI had given up the papacy.

I was very impressed by the news even if I do not live in Italy, moreover the Pope's influence was felt in my country, in addition to the news, the figure of the Pontifex Maximus is also present in the history and literature books of all the world .

I had already known of other cases of papal abdication thanks to my studies. I knew that the first Bishops of Rome who had given up the papacy had been Clement I, Pontiano, Silverio, John XVIII and Benedict IX. But the historical sources do not testify with certainty the methods of their abdication. This is because the reasons for their choices were due to force majeure. For example, the first three were forced to this decision for sentences issued by the emperors of the time, as regards John XVIII there is no certain information, while Pope Benedict IX gave the tiara for money.

The two subsequent cases, namely those of Celestine V and Gregory XII, are more interesting than the previous ones, also for the large amount of information provided by the writers of the time. In fact, the figure of Pope Celestine V became very famous also because of his presence in Dante's Divine Comedy: according to the most common interpretation, the great poet of the fourteenth century would place him in the anti-hell, including the slothful, those who did never act in life neither in good nor bad, nor ever dared to have a 'mind of their own, but always limited themselves to adapt to that of the strongest. The Pope himself is described as "the one who made through cowardice the great refusal".

Regarding Gregory XII, historical sources testify that he reigned during the years of the Great Western Schism, or the period when more than one pope was in charge and the Church was internally divided. To restore unity to the Church, which was inevitably losing its integrity, following the ecumenical Council of Constance, he left the papal robe with the promise that the other popes, Benedict XIII and John XXIII, not officially recognized, were deposed.

The last abdication, of Gregory XII, took place in 1415 more than six hundred years ago.

It is comprehensible, therefore, that the loss of the power of Benedict XVI is arousing sensation throughout the world. You hear about the incident from every form of information, and important writers and modern philosophers have expressed their views in the world.

Pope Benedict XVI was elected Pope on April 19 of 2005 and since then he has had to face various problems and scandals that saw, as a protagonist, the Church, such as cases of pedophilia committed by priests against minors, corruption within the Church, as well as the

opposition to the legalization of marriages between same-sex couples, abortion, contraception and the use of stem cells. These issues were also common to the popes who preceded him, but recently, because of the evolution of our society, they are emphasized. According to Ratzinger's words, it seems that the reason for his withdrawal was due to the physical, mental and spiritual helplessness in carrying out this important task. However, there are questions about the truth of that reasoning. Lately, in addition to the scandals mentioned above, there are others which make us think, for example, the case Vatileaks, risen last year: during the first months of 2012 a series of documents relating to internal and external dealings of the Holy See had been revealed outside the confines of the Vatican and that had brought to surface the power struggles that were inside. Besides it also caused a sensation the fact that the State Department of the United States has added for the first time the Vatican to the list of countries to be monitored for suspected money laundering. To this regard, can be connected the strange problem of money transactions made by the IOR, the Vatican bank, which has transferred large sums of money from nine Italian banks to new deposits in Germany.

It is difficult to understand what the real causes of abandonment were, because, being present news, new hypotheses about the causes of this choice still continue to rise and it is difficult to reach a conclusion. The fact is that everyone has his own idea. Basically there are those who take the gesture as an act of great wisdom and humanity and those who see it as a break with the fundamental dogmas of the Church. The first, also emphasize the maturity of the Pope compared to his predecessors, as in the case of John Paul II, who continued to govern even when he was no longer able to properly perform his duties.

In fact, the decision made by Ratzinger is absolutely legal according to Canon Law, the only code of law to which the official Shepherd of World Christianity is subject; this latter expressly allows the action in the canon 332 paragraph 2. Despite this, some believe that such an action is not morally right, because that power is given to the Pope directly by the Holy Spirit and for this he must accomplish his task with the utmost care. These are the same problems arisen at the time of Celestine V, a hermit without governmental ability, elected Pope without his expressed wish. Aware of his limitations he had repeatedly expressed the desire to return to his hermitage and give way to someone more competent. In the light of this it is easy to understand why after five months he abdicated quoting as the cause, his physical and spiritual weakness. Despite this choice had been long meditated by the Pope, many people at that time, could not understand it and share it, and, of that as mentioned above, there is a testimony in the Divine Comedy, where the gesture is interpreted by Dante as deeply unfair for the fact that the Pope is 'chosen by God' and, above all, because this action had facilitated the ascent to the throne of Boniface VIII.

Other important writers over the years, valued the gesture of the Pope in a way diametrically opposed to Alighieri: a few years later the same Petrarch will evaluate "his work as

that of a high and free spirit, he did not know impositions, a spirit truly divine"³. This suggests that many tend to compare the recent situation to the abdication of Celestine V, and wonder if the act of abdication will be interpreted positively or not by critics in the coming years. I wonder if Dante today would place this Pope in hell or would rather reserve for him a position of more respect.

1-Pope Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, February 24. 2013.

2 - Commercial Canto III, vv. 59-60.

3 - Francesco Petrarca, *De Vita solitaria*.

Policy: a constant state of becoming

Today sipping a cappuccino at the bar I was able to understand, thanks to the climate of the elections that will take place in short, that there are many political ideologies, very different from each other, and that young people are often in conflict with the elderly because of their ideas rooted in the past.

The political idealism is a concept that was born in a time when, for the first time, a group of men decided to meet in a community and elect a leader, in order to ensure the common good, from that moment on various forms of government have been developing. The first to outline their characteristics and their respective degenerations is the greek philosopher Aristotle, that in his "Politics" identifies three main forms, such as monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Any degeneration that each of these forms of government presents (respectively tyranny, oligarchy, and demagoguery) can be connected, according to Aristotle, to an excessive willingness from the part of the ruling class, only to satisfy their own needs, without any regard of the common good. As it can be easily noticed, the political thought of the philosopher is extremely actual, in fact a lot of famous authors of the Middle Ages, as Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio, will refer to this school of thought in order to highlight the degeneration of the customs of their own society, advocating a return to the values of the classical world. In fact, Dante, in his "Monarchy", outlines a decline in political and ecclesiastical institutions considered by himself the origin of the ethical degradation of society. Besides he analyzes the imperial institution, proving the legitimacy of his power, the importance of his role and the independence from the Church and identifying in Arrigo VII at the time of his arrival in Italy, the emperor suited to give an end to the vacancy of the Empire and become the arbiter of Italian affairs, a topic also ratified by the roman coronation, which formalized the imperial power spread to the whole Christianity, from which it is possible to observe the will of the poet to come back to the values mentioned before. The fall of the hopes placed in the sovereign, who died in 1313, dismissed any possibility of concrete historical realization of the political design imagined by Dante, but it did not change his conviction of the necessity of cooperation and full sovereignty of the Church and the Empire.

In the opinion of Petrarch, by contrast, Dante's project was a sort of utopia, because it is linked to an already passed reality, the poet from Arezzo in fact proposed the idea of a unitary state, however, supported by a republic. In this regard, Petrarch wrote the song "My Italy", the poem CXXVIII of his *Canzoniere*, while he was in Parma where a war for the conquest of the city between Gonzaga and Este, was breaking out. Both sides made use of the aid of mercenary troops, aspect extremely criticized by Petrarch, who, in his song, urges Italian gentlemen to lay off the mercenaries and the Lords to ally with each other in order to establish a republic like the one in ancient Rome, not seen as a "cradle" of the Empire and the Church, but as a civilization rich in virtue, moral strength and values closely related to the classical world.

Giovanni Boccaccio follows the footsteps of Dante and Petrarch, situating his *Decameron* in the extremely current frame of the black plague, with the aim of outlining the framework of a society whose values, already plunged into a crisis by the upheavals of the economy, are undermined by the devastating effects of the epidemic. The author presents a return of the ten young protagonist to the courtly values of a now passed feudal society, opposed to the shameless bourgeois society, which, freed from the weight of all morality, pursues only its own personal ends.

The theme of morality in the political context is also extensively discussed by Machiavelli in his book "Prince". In this he outlines a completely new concept concerning the system of values that a head of state is expected to adopt. According to the author a "prince" must have as his only purpose to ensure the good of the state, and he can use all the means at its disposal, regardless of the possible moral repercussions. By doing so he introduces a doctrine by which the political aspect is entirely divorced from the moral, provided it is guaranteed the common good.

The concept of "common good" is then taken up and reinterpreted by many Enlightenment philosophers, such as Cesare Beccaria, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Charles de Secondat, better known as the Baron of Montesquieu. The Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria in "On Crimes and Punishments", a contractualistic treaty, he relates to the school of thought of the Dutch Baruch Spinoza, arguing that the state has the only responsibility to ensure the happiness of the citizen and protect him from any harassment or violence. The broader contribution that Beccaria has given to contemporary society is certainly the theory of the abolition of the death penalty, which is contained in the quoted text. Contractarian is also the vision of Jean-Jacques Rousseau expressed in the "Social Pact" in which the author shows the idea that men joining themselves in a community, stipulating a sort of contract, in order to ensure the survival. By doing so everyone would put the common good before the self-interest. Then the community would have entrusted to a government the administration of the company and, if it had somehow hindered the survival of the citizen or had deprived him of happiness, thus violating the contract, this would have had the right to rebel. This idea, interpreted according to the

historical context in which he was to be inserted, that is the France of 1750, can be considered as a theoretical justification for a revolution, since the French political system at the time was getting more and more stressed and dictatorial.

Another important contribution was given by the French Enlightenment Baron de Montesquieu who, in the "Esprit des Lois," speculated about the system of separation of powers between the various organs of the state. All these theories have a steep concrete follow-up: people will begin to demand their rights, the absolute French monarchy will fall down and the United States of America will get independence, becoming the world power we know today.

In the twentieth century politics is gradually transforming itself, have grown out a multitude of different systems to manage public affairs. In addition to the monarchies of the century the first bourgeois democracies and, at the same time, the first experiments in the practical application of socialism, most of which resulted in oppressive systems, will develop.

In recent years the policy has begun to include as a topic the so-called civil society, made up of opinion movements that seek to remove it from the abstraction that has always been confined to: politics is global and is emerging as a state in constant evolution of social and economic relations.



I was in Italy with some teachers and some colleagues from my school. There I've stayed at my friend's house Mattias. He showed me the surroundings like Pistoia, Florence and San Marcelo. Also he showed me his school which is more different than my school.





There I met some nice teenagers. I liked the Italian food more than all Italian pizza but I don't like the pasta. There I felt so good and it was a very interesting experience. I can't wait to go back there!

And now I must travel to Ireland to meet our friends there



Section H Ireland

Memories

The sun almost rises and a wind of memories is spreading. I remember those good times spent in Dublin. I can remember every feeling I had, for all the world as if it happened yesterday, not a year ago.

When I arrived I was so tired and sleepy, but the fresh irish air brought me to life, and gave me now emotions. I was in foreign country and a lot of question where turning around in my head:

- Where I will stay?
- Who is the girl that is hosting me?
- Will I get on with her?
- Will I know to speak with her?
- Will her family be nice with me?

And every minute that flew past was making me more restless. But then, a blond girl with a big smile came to me and said:

“Hello! I’m Allison, and I’m glad to see you. Let’s go home, my mom is waiting to meet you!”

After I’ve met her nice mom we’ve got into the car. The way to home was very long, but beautiful too. They told me about their family, their customs, their lives. At home I’ve met the rest of the family, which was a large one, and a girl who was housed by Allison too, Joanna. Allison’s sisters, Charlotte and Lorna, were kind to me.

I still can feel the smell of the mornings in Ireland: the smell of pancakes with a glass of apple juice, and Coco and Casper, the dogs, playing next to me. Then, it continued a day full of fun with all the people.

We’ve visited, we’ve laughed, we’ve walked and we’ve had the best time ever. I’ve eaten new food, that I tried to cook at my home, because the Irish food is just the most delicious!

I take a hundred of photos, some for my mother, some for facebook, some just for my soul. And I bought necklaces, T-shirts, jeans, gifts, and so on.

But the days went by, and we had to say: Goodbye! I come back to my home, knowing that I have more sisters then I had had when I went there: Allison, Charlotte, Lorna and Joanna.

In the first day back to Romania, I’ve got on facebook. Lorna noticed me and said: “Your Irish mom says hello!” imagine how I felt.

I felt beloved. And that was the most beautiful feeling I’ve ever had.

When the night comes, and I’m sleepless, I always think about the next time when I will go there. I miss you, Ireland!

So what did I do in Ireland? Let my diary speak!



Flying into Dublin we see a huge bay, 2 huge red and white striped chimneys and a big harbour. There are small hills and areas of farmland. The city appears as field upon field of suburban housing that spread and spread across the land. We go to the school and we meet our Irish hosts.

Today we went into the city to see Dublin. We met the Lord Mayor of Dublin. He has a beautiful big house. He was very nice and talked with each of us alone and then altogether. He told us we are always welcome in Dublin. He is a Green Party politician and has helped set up the Dublin Bikes scheme similar to other cities. It works very well in Dublin. We see many of the bikes around the city.

We visited the Houses of the Oireachtas: the parliament of Ireland. In the Dail the politicians were discussing the financial position of Greece. There is time to listen before we go to see the Seanad chamber and hear about history. There is a flag of an Irish regiment in the American Civil war. Many years ago, President Kennedy of the USA presented the flag to Ireland. This was because of the many Irish people who went to live in America and the many fought in the wars. Many built the railroads and then the skyscrapers. Others joined the police. Today they work in all sorts of jobs. It is a surprise that Ireland has a population of less than 5 million people. It is very small.

When we leave the building we see another school group. They are girls of about 15 years old and all the students wear long wine-red skirts right down to the floor! They come from the city of Limerick and there all the girls in all the schools wear these long skirts. It is a kind of a tradition now - it is not what the schools say they must do. It is a tradition among the girls but only in that one city.

When we leave we see a big demonstration coming up to parliament. It is very noisy as they sing and shout but it is not violent. They are students training to be teachers. They protest that there are no jobs for them and if they do get a job then they will be paid much less than teachers are paid today.

Last night we had a big dinner and party at the school. Some of the Irish students played their Irish instruments and sang some sad songs. They sing and talk in the Irish language. It is strange. All the street signs and notices are in the Irish language first and then English. The Parliament we visited is called by an Irish name. But almost no one in the streets talks in Irish. Everyone learns Irish at school from 4 years old to 18. Many people can speak it but not many do this. Maybe it is because English is so common in the world but I think most Irish people speak

English anyway. History may explain it.

Today we visited the city again. We went with the Irish students to do a treasure hunt. We had to follow clues which took us all around the city. Some of us visited the National Museum. There is a lot of huge but delicate gold jewelry: Ireland must have been rich long ago. There was a huge ancient dugout canoe preserved very well in the bog of Ireland. There was a lot about Vikings in Ireland long ago: they started the city of Dublin and attacked all those monks. In Trinity College, the University in the centre of the city, we saw the Book of Kells, an ancient manuscript written by monks. Irish monks worked in the conversion of the people of Europe in the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire.

We did a science safari around the College. We saw where the age of the earth was calculated in the seventeenth century by Archbishop James Ussher. Reading about the human generations in the bible, he calculated that the earth started in 4004 BC. He gets good grades for calculation but scientists now think it is not a good idea to use the bible for arithmetic. According to science, the universe seems to be about 14 billion years old.

We heard about Hamilton, a fantastic mathematician who invented a new kind of algebra. What! Not even more maths? But this maths is used for those great computer graphics in movies and video games. Cool! We saw where Ireland's Nobel prize winner in Science worked. Walton was first to show in an experiment that Einstein's equation, $E = m c^2$, works just the way Einstein said it did. It's the most famous equation of all. He used a particle accelerator: the great grandma of the CERN particle accelerator so important in the news at this time.

It was at the public communication of science meeting, the Euro Science Forum in Dublin in 2012, that the Director General of CERN, Rolf Dieter Heuer announced that CERN had found good evidence for the existence of the Higgs Boson; an important part of the scientific theory of the Universe. That was great news for science heads and the rest of us: they think they know what they are doing!

Dublin is a UNESCO world city of literature (part of the Creative Cities Network). Four Nobel Prizes for Literature have been awarded to writers associated with Dublin: playwright George Bernard Shaw, poets W.B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney, and the literary giant Samuel Beckett. But perhaps more famous than any of these are Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*), Oscar Wilde (as a gay man in England in the nineteenth century), Bram Stoker (*Dracula*) and possibly the most influential of all James Joyce (*Ulysses*).

Joyce's *Ulysses* tells the story of Leopold Bloom passing through (as flaneur and everyman) Dublin during an ordinary day, 16 June 1904. It sets up a series of parallels between its characters and those in the ancient Greek poem *The Odyssey* (Latinised as *Ulysses*). It is a very influential work in literature with a forensic focus on human thought processes. Bloom acts as Odysseus and Stephen Dedalus as Telemachus his son. The final famous chapter associates Molly Bloom, Leopold's wife as Penelope, wife of Odysseus.

The 16 June is celebrated all over the world but especially in Dublin as Bloomsday. Many wear 1904 style dress or eat and drink in sympathy with sections of the book such as "Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crust crumbs, fried hen cods' roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang. . ."

We hear that the building boom and bust has left Ireland with bad economics. Too many houses were built, too many people were given lots of money by the banks to buy houses at prices which were way too high and in places where no one would really want to live. You may work in Dublin but you can't afford a house there so you must buy a house out in the country and commute to your job. Now the economy slumps you lose your job or your pay is cut. You find it hard to pay back the money you borrowed and the house you borrowed the money to buy is now worth a lot less than the amount you borrowed to pay for it.

So many people have little money and are trapped in houses they don't want to live in. Many people have become unemployed, especially the young but also those with families. Many are emigrating to Australia, Canada, the UK and elsewhere. Forced emigration is an Irish tradition broken by the boom. It became then an option for those who hoped for new experiences. Now it is common again as people are driven by unemployment and lack of opportunity.

In schools and in all public services there are cutbacks, pay cuts, early retirements and changes in work conditions. It is called austerity and many people think it does not work. If no one has money then they cannot spend. If they cannot spend then how can the economy grow? This applies to each state but also to the family of states.

However, many older people in jobs have grown up children or in College and have paid for their family homes. For them it is not so bad. Their lifestyle (not so high) has not changed much. There are College fees now but not big. Most students from Dublin stay at home when they go to College.

During the boom many people came to Ireland to work and to live. There were very many people from Poland, Latvia and Lithuania but also from Asia: China, the Philippines, India and Pakistan. People have also come from Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Many Polish people have moved away but very many remain and will make their lives in Ireland. There are also very many people from all over the EU who come to live and work in Dublin for a time. It feels exciting to live here.

On the buses and in the streets we hear many languages. In the city there are now many different types of restaurants and food shops. That is interesting. Most people welcome the new Irish but there are many cases of casual racism. Many immigrants say they are shouted at in the street. Some are physically attacked. It is hard to understand. Why can't people see what is obvious. If we hope our people are treated well in other countries then we must treat the people who come here very well.

In 2013 Ireland has set up The Gathering - a festival to welcome back to visit the people who have left home to work and live elsewhere. Some people say it is a scam designed to lure back emigrants to take their money from them but most people think it is a good idea. It may bring back life to some of the small towns and villages where many young people have left.

Today we go on a tour with all the students and teachers. Glendalough is full of atmosphere. Surrounded by hills, walks lead around two small lakes to where monks long ago built a settlement with churches and a huge round stone tower. There is magic in this place especially in the mist. Later we arrive at Newgrange, a prehistoric monument and burial mound just north of the River Boyne. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was built about 3200 BC so it is older than the Egyptian pyramids. It's so eerie to walk into the tomb and feel the ghosts of the ancient past. There are many ancient ruins across Ireland.

We are told that every year at the winter solstice (21 to 22 December) a small group of people is selected by lotto to be in the inner burial chamber at sunrise. The rays of the sun shine in directly through a channel in the huge mound to light up the chamber deep inside. Of course in Ireland you can be lucky and see the sunrise. But sometimes it is not possible. The mound was built with knowledge of the patterns of astronomy. It celebrates the return of spring and renewal each year.

We were told about the 17th of March: St. Patrick's, which is the saint of Ireland. The day is celebrated around the world including America. On the day there is usually a big parade in many of the cities, which have bands, dancers and many more things. Many people dress in

Green and drink Guinness or do something in Ireland. Also a huge amount of people travel to Ireland to come and see it for themselves and feel the atmosphere even if they have nothing to do with Ireland. It is a great day to bring people closer together.

Some students went to Belfast to visit the Titanic museum, which was pretty interesting. Some of the exhibits were really amazing and brought the event to life. You don't realise until you read about it how big a disaster it was and how many lives it effected, people from many countries including Ireland and England. It gets me thinking about disasters that happen everyday and how it effects so many people like the Madrid and London bombs.

I went with the Irish students on a day trip to London. It was an educational trip to the science museum, although we did get to shop. We got the first flight in the morning and last back in the evening. After arriving into Gatwick everyone was excited for the day ahead. It ended up being a really sunny and hot day and the experience was great. We went to the Science museum in the morning where I learnt about things like the history of medicine to solar energy and steam engines.

Afterwards we headed to Oxford Street by public transport, which was quite something with 60 people. Walking down Oxford Street was nearly overwhelming, with so many more people than in Ireland. You get to realise how small you actually are and that you are nothing really, a speck of dust on earth. Another thing is the diverse characters there are living in the world and the lives everyone lives, from businessmen, to street cleaners and homeless people everyone is unique.

PART III – “NOSTOS Longing for home”

Section A - Nostalgia

Nostalgia hits me

Great news. My French friends are to visit Portugal. Oh how I long for home at that news. It has been amazing to travel through the project lands with so many friends made and remembered but when I think of home I long to return. There's no place like home.

Last night I woke up about three times. Something was affecting my sleep and it was not a pea -- I'm no princess! I looked back all those old memories: my grandfather laughing with that red face like Santa Claus; the picnics by the river with my family, etc -- well, all those things...

All these thoughts brought me good memories, but, at the same time, they made me sad: I miss my childhood and the child happiness I had those days. Everything *was* so simple!... Oh well, enough of these things that get me down!

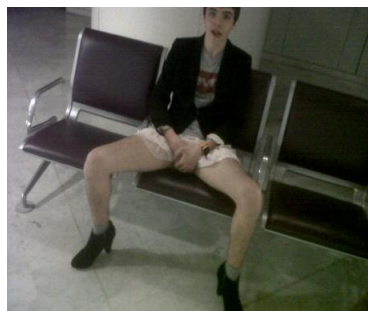
So what did my French friends do on their visit?

Section B - Away at home

Trip in Portugal

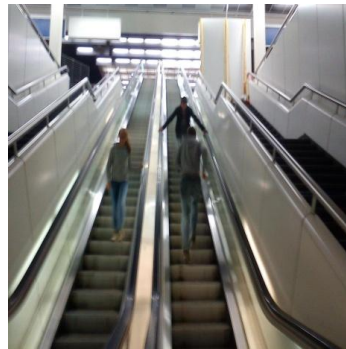


First, we caught the train to Paris in the late afternoon. We used the bus and the metro to finally arrived in the evening in the Orly Airport. We had to wait all the night because our flight for Lisbon was in the morning. We tried to sleep but we couldn't. We had a lot of fun. Right there you can see :



Quentin disguised as a "woman": he used clothes of the girls.

The airport was almost empty and there were just us with the people who work there. We were telling jokes, we visited the airport and met strange people. Only few of us slept.



The plane for Lisbon was over 2 hours late so we left lunch and had waited. We were very tired because we didn't sleep a lot.



We arrived in Lisbon Airport, we waited for our suitcases. We took the metro to reach our hotel. The road until the hotel was long and difficult because we were tired and our suitcases were heavy.

We couldn't take a shower because we had no time. We were just allowed to change our shirts. We went shopping and eat at Vasco de Gama Mall.





That night we went to the city center. We took the yellow bus: we liked it because they were originals.



There was a great atmosphere. Most of us ate at MacDonal'd's. We came back to the hotel. We slept after a very long day.

Meet a new city

We left the hotel in the morning: we visited the city center



We visited a museum.



We visited a Monastery



We visited the Tower of Belem



After this we went again to the Mall , we ate and we came back at the hotel. We went out at night another time in the center town. The sunday we went to a big church where there was a mass, we stayed only 5 minutes.

After that we tried to find the way to a castle but the teachers seems to be lost. Mr Philippe Lamère found the car of his dreams. We climbed a lot of stairs



After that we had a magnificent view of the city of Lisbon.



We also visited a castle



Mathieu made his love declaration to Blanche



We met peacocks who were making a lot of noise.



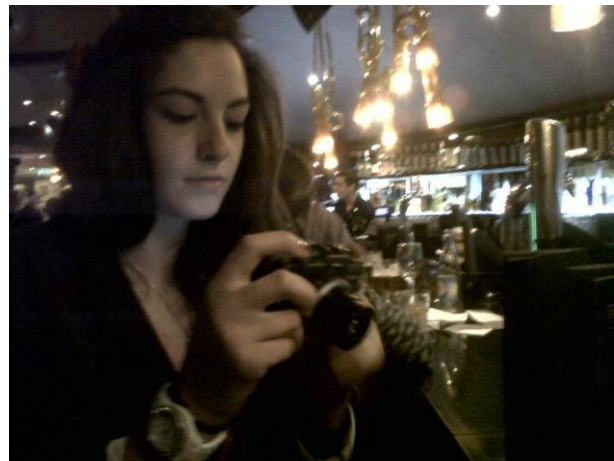
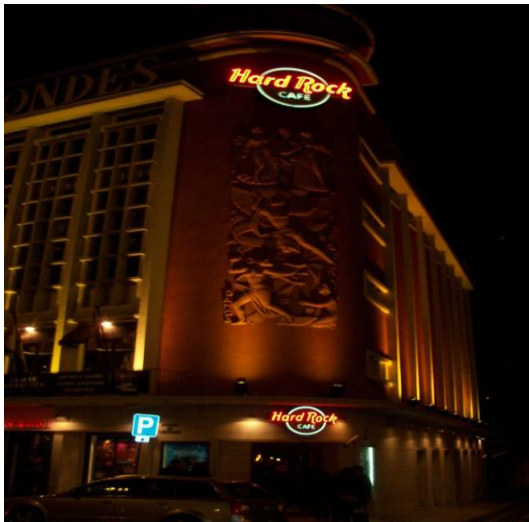
We tasted a Portuguese cake called « *Pasteis de Natas* »



We went one last time to Lisbon's Mall



In the evening, we went again to the city center. We went to the *Hard Rock Café* and *Starbucks Coffee*



Run to the North

In the morning and took the train to Porto. We stopped in Porto to eat: we ate Kebabs and Pizza. We waited for the train to Vila Praia and when it arrived we took it. We had fun: some played card, sang, slept, talked and watched a movie .

When we arrived it was raining and we were very well welcomed by the the Portuguese pupils and teachers.

We discovered our appartements and we put our suitcases. We immediatly went out with the portuguese who showed us their town. We saw the beach, and William and Quentin took off their clothes to dive in the water even if it was very cold.



We went to a supermarket to buy some food. We went back to our apartment and the night we ate in a restaurant. We enjoyed it ! Before going back to the appartements we went see the beach in the night.



Vila Praia de Âncora

The portuguese took us to the Vila Praia's Town Hall. We met the mayor: he was very nice and very welcoming. He gave a speech in Portuguese and congratulated our teachers Mr Lamère and Janin: a teacher translated it in french and english for us. They offered us a small flag and a keychain. There was white wine, Porto and cupcakes.



Then we visited a large swimming-pool and their school. We had lunch in the school's canteen. In the afternoon we took a bus to visit a small town called « Caminha » We went back to the appartements and in the evening we went to a restaurant with the Potuguese's students. We ate very well and had a lot of fun.

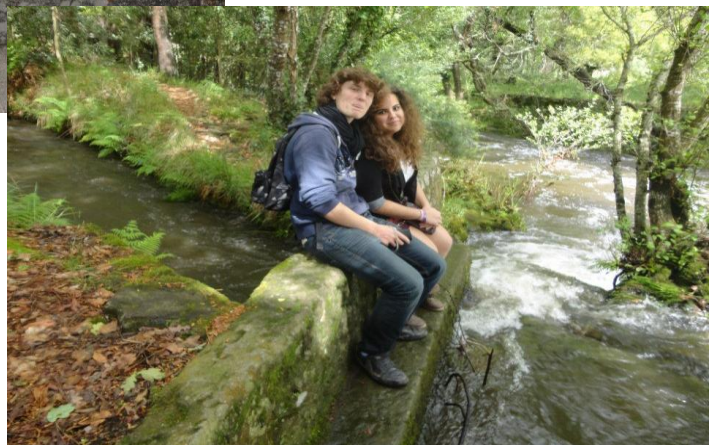


Next day

In the morning our correspondents came looking for us, some were even bringing their parents with them. It was a special day, students had no school because it was the national holiday of Portugal. In a place near our apartment, there was a band who were playing music: that put a lot of good atmosphere. Some of us went to see the beach and then have been to a coffee shop where we had a lot of fun. Then, it was lunchtime so everybody went with their correspondent, in their home, to eat.



The afternoon, some of us visited a big monument and had a beautiful view of Vaninha. We all went shopping in Vaninha's Mall



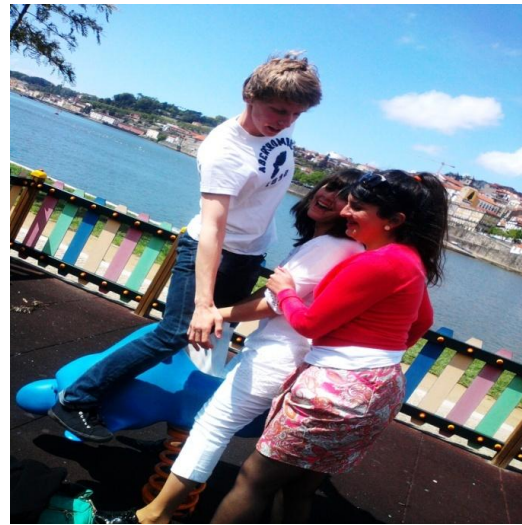
We came back to see our teachers and our friends in the appartements. Then we all went to a restaurant where we ate a lot.

Last know Porto

This day, we went to PORTO, a big Portuguese City. We took the train and we spend our time there all the day. When we arrived we all ate at MacDonal'd's. Then we walked a lot, we visited the city, we crossed a big bridge. The view of Porto was very beautiful



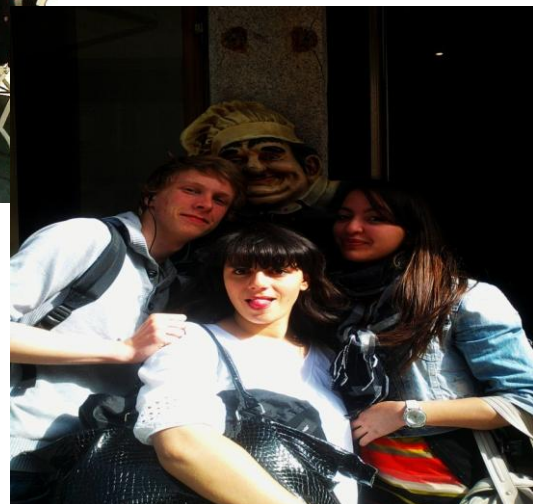
We stopped in a small park near the water: we had fun.



Then we sat on a terrace for a drink.

We went to Vila Praia and we were tired. In the night, the teachers allowed us to stay longer with the Portuguese. We had a lot of fun. We told them « GoodBye», we were very sad to leave them.

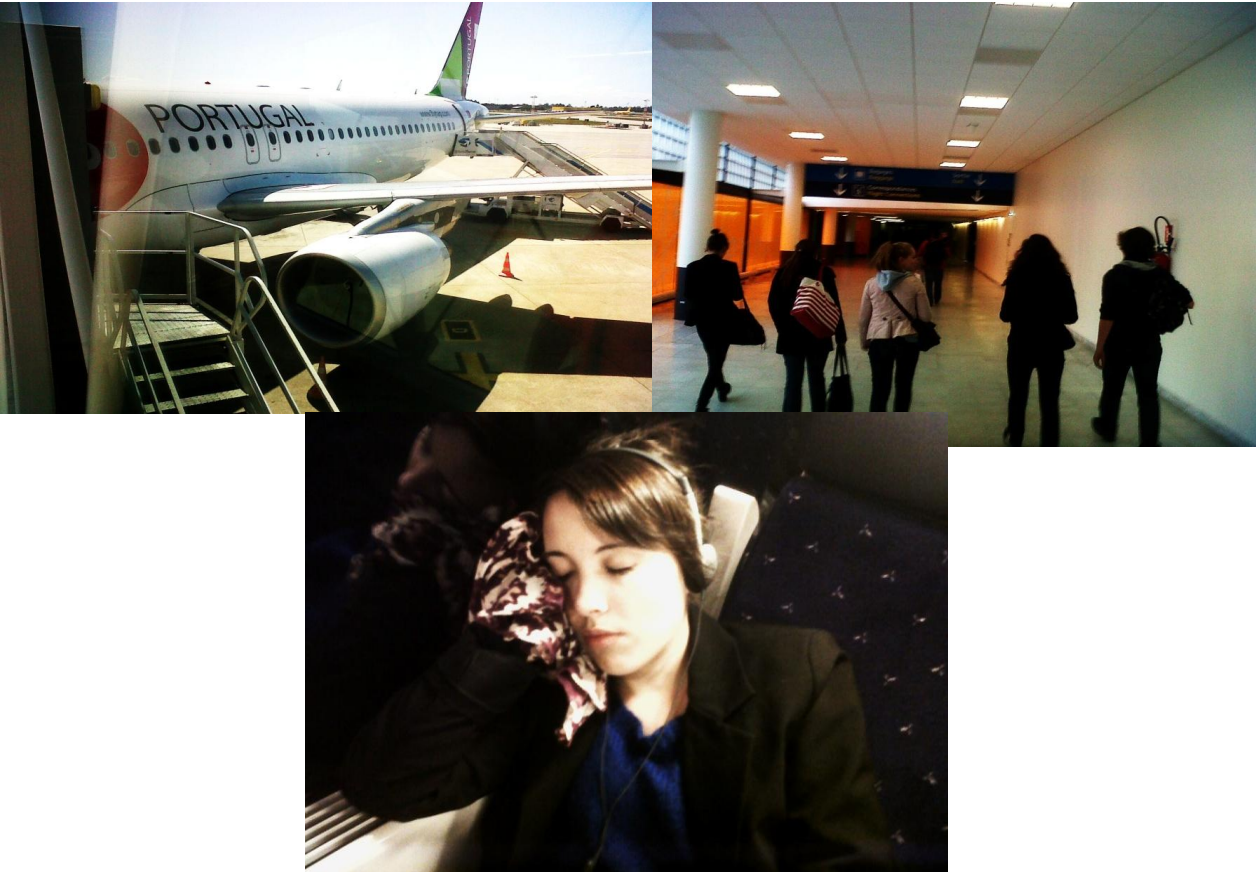
It was the last day in Portugal, few of the pupils went to say a last goodbye. We left them, we were very happy to have met them. We waited for the train to Porto with our heavy suitcases.



In the train we were talking about our memories of this travel. We stopped in Porto to eat at the Kebab. We took the metro to reach the Airport. We waited for the flight to Paris and finally took it.



We arrived to Paris Airport. We took back our suitcases. We were back in France!
We were very tired, we waited for the train to Amiens in the train-station



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