

Our impressions of the international meeting in Turkey.

School year 2012/2013 started with *innovations* in our school life. Daugavpils Saskanas school entered the Comenius project "The Voices from the Land".

And so, we – pupils of Form 8 - Vita, Inga, Evelīna decided to participate in the project; wrote a cover letter and passed the interview. We were so excited to hear the news that we had been approved for the trip to Turkey.

Before the trip we had been assigned important duties - prepare a presentation about Latvia for the participants of the project. Besides, we thought about the image of Saskanas school in the eyes of the participants and chose school's motto "In active school be active and creative".

As it turned out the motto of Daugavpils was an exact match – "Daugavpils is a city of opportunities" – and every town resident knows it.

We even didn't forget about the treatment for the project participants: Latvian black bread, honey and in Latvia produced candy - "Gotiņa".

On November 5, 2012 at 7:25 the train took us to Riga, then from Riga's airport we went to Istanbul by plane and from Istanbul to the capital of Turkey – Ankara. It took us three more hours to get from Ankara to our final destination – the town of Kirshehir. In Kirshehir we stayed in host families, so we were both, excited and a bit nervous, because we had to spend a whole week in the host family. But the fuss was unnecessary since we have been received very hospitably and cordially.

The project activities started on Tuesday. We had an opportunity to take part in a group work. All the participants had to create a composition from the materials which were available in the park and to present it to the guest lecture from the USA Eric and to other participants. Later this day also there were lectures and workshops.

Wednesday appeared very interesting as it was devoted to presentations of countries and schools-participants. We, aware of the fact that we were Latvia's "visiting card", put our whole soul into the story about our colourful country, about our school and our town. Judging by feedback from participants Latvian black bread seemed very tasty for everyone.

Later this day participants presented the project logo and songs we composed by ourselves.

However, the greatest surprise was the opportunity to attend the real lessons in a Turkish school!

It should be noted that the Turkish students observed our activities with interest.

We visited Capadoccia, historical region in Central Anatolia. First, we visited ancient underground city – a large complex of man-made caves and tunnels which were built or expanded from existing structures for use as refuges - where we travelled through an underground maze accompanied by guide. Then we watched breathtaking ancient frescos made during the Byzantine Empire.

Later in the city of Uçhisar Vita demonstrated her pottery skills in ceramics studio. A visit to a museum, where they learned about the Muslim tradition, was also very exciting and educative.

During our visit every day we could hear a Muslim prayer in countless mosques. But the participants were able to attend the oldest mosque in Turkey - Cacabey Mosque dating from 1272, which was originally built as an astrological observatory.

We enjoyed the beautiful sights of Turkey, so unusual to our eyes - hills, strange buildings, thermal baths.

What is a trip without bringing some souvenirs back? So, we visited local shops to enjoy a delicious exotic fragrance, whirl of spices, nuts, fruit and vegetable odor. Turkish dairy products were especially tasty. Souvenirs also looked very colourful and shop owners were very helpful.

During the week, we became great friends with the project participants and the moment of saying goodbye to each other brought tears to the eyes and everyone was trying to capture the beautiful moments in photographs.

We became very close to the guest family and here in Latvian we will remember the warm reception for a long time. We will try to create for Turkish children as hearty atmosphere as we felt all 7 days.

Vivid memories about project events will remain in our memory for many years to come. With many participants we still maintain contacts through the Internet and now we have more friends in the world.

Thanks to all the participants for the invaluable experience we obtained in the project!





