



Erasmus+



WAS UNS BEWEGT

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1. Short summary:

a.) European Parliament:

There are three European Parliaments in whole Europe, that are in the city of Luxembourg, Brussels and Strasbourg. We were able to visit the one in Strasbourg through the Erasmus Project "Was uns bewegt" in December 2016. The European Parliament is the directly elected parliamentary institution of the European Union. It exercises the legislative function of the EU, together with the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. The 751 members of the Parliament represent the second-largest democratic electorate in the world. It has been elected every five years since 1979. There are 28 member states in the Parliament. The most members are from Germany with a percentage of 12.8%, the second most from France with a percentage of 9.9% and the third most from Italy with a percentage of 9.7%. Only 2.4% of the members are from Austria. The current President of the European Parliament is Antonio Tajani, who was elected in January 2017.

Neither the European Parliament nor the Council have the power of legislative initiative, which means they don't have the power to propose a new law. The Parliament can amend and reject legislation, but to make a proposal for legislation, it needs the Commission to draft a bill before anything can become law.

b.) Council of Europe:

The Council of Europe was founded by 10 members with the Treaty of London in 1949. Only seven years later, Austria joined the council, Germany in 1959 and Finland in 1989. It's a regional intergovernmental organization which headquarters are in France, in Strasbourg. French and English are the two official languages but the committee of Ministers, the parliamentary assembly and the congress also use Italian, German, Russian and Turkish for some of their work. The Council of Europe has 47-member states, which covers approximately 820 million people. The Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland from Norway carries the responsibility for strategic management. The 47 ministers of foreign affairs meet once a year and their duty is, to discuss European problems on an equal footing, to find collective responses to all challenges and to make decisions. The Ministers' Deputies are the permanent diplomatic representatives of the Council of Europe and meet weekly. They work in seven rapporteur groups in depth to prepare decisions for Committee of Ministers

without debate, but they have no decision-making power. The European Council has an annual Budget of half a billion euros. It is an international organization whose stated aim is to uphold human rights, democracy, rule of law in Europe and promote European culture.

c.) European Court of Human rights:

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is an international court set up in 1959. Since it has been set up, the ECHR has to deal with very different problems, than they had 50 years ago.

It rules on individual or state applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. This Convention was opened for signature in Rome on 4th November 1950 and came into force in 1953. This was a very special moment for the world's history, as it was the first instrument to give effect to certain of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Through this convention, they become very binding too.

There have been 13 judges serving the ECHR since 1959. They have served as Presidents of the ECHR. The presidents are elected for a three year term by the plenary Court, which is composed of 47 national judges.

In 50 years, the Court has delivered more than 10 000 judgements, that were binding in the countries concerned.

Asylum is not written as a right in the convention and Refugees can only bring charges against a violation of Articles of the Convention.

The European Court of Human Rights is recognized everywhere in the world because of its architecture, which was designed by the British architect Lord Richard Rogers in 1994.

2.) Shared practice and experience:

- ***Stay in regular contact with your friends from Austria, Finland, Germany and Italy:***

During my exchange in Finland and the following time I tried to keep in touch with the people I met in Strasbourg from the Erasmus project through social media, by creating a

Facebook group and a Whats App group.

In that Facebook group which is called “WAS UNS BEWEGT” where the students and teachers can share the situation in their country. When I was in Finland we had to write some articles about the immigration in Traiskirchen and an interview with Jutta Kivistö

We have three Whats App groups.

One is called “WUB spring 2017” where the Austrian- Finish exchange students and two finish teachers which are also part of the project. We shared our pictures and meetings.

The second group is called “Strasbourg squad” where all the students from the project are included. In this group, we shared our experiences from the exchange and ask about the situations in each country.

And the third group includes the Austrian- Finish exchange students, one finish teacher and the refugees who we met. We used that group to plan our meetings with the refugees and talk about what they are interested in.

- ***Document practices and experiences:***

Was uns bewegt-working

Task 1

In 2016 Austria expected about 85.000 asylum seekers and had 42.073 applications for asylum but only 36.030 of them were accepted. The most refugees are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. There is a refugee camp in Traiskirchen since 1955 for 1.800 refugees but currently there are 4.500. In 2015 Slovakia assumed 500 refugees from Austria, because Austria didn't have enough space. Some politicians are concerned about the safety of the refugees because they started to deal with drugs and they came into conflicts with other asylum seekers. The charge of one refugee per year is 10.724 Euros.

Young asylum seekers have the right to go to public schools and some teachers volunteer to offer a German course for them. In the different communities, some people also volunteer to offer some activities for their leisure time to integrate them in our culture.

Sources:

<http://derstandard.at/2000055148547/Soziologe-Oesterreich-zog-aus-Fluechtlingskrise-falsche-Lehren>

<http://diepresse.com/home/innenpolitik/5100067/Fluechtlinge-kosten-zwei-Milliarden-Euro>

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traiskirchen>

Task 2

We heard that you were one of the founders of this organization which helps asylum seekers and we wondered what inspired you to support the asylum seekers?

What does this organization do exactly?

Of which country do you the have most refugees?

Why is the financial support from Veikkaus?

How many asylum seekers do you have in your organization?

How many employees do you have in that organization?

In which language do you communicate or do you have translators?

Interview Jutta Kivistö

TUTUKSI is getting to know each other

We interviewed Jutta Kivistö at the beginning of May. We are taking part in an Erasmus project called "Was uns bewegt" which is a project financed by the EU. Many youngsters from Europe belong to this project that is dealing and working with the refugee situation. That's why we went to see Jutta Kivistö, an activist who is one of the founders of Turvapaikanhakijat ry. We had some tea and cookies and talked about her job and the

refugee situation. Turvapaikanhakijat ry. is an organization that is trying to help asylum seekers and immigrants to integrate in our community.

Currently millions of refugees live in Europe. Dealing with the refugee crisis is one of the biggest challenges of our time. It's not only giving them a place to stay, it's about giving them a chance for a fresh start, a new life in countries that are more different to their own than we can imagine. Far away their home they must get used to another way of life.

Without people who help them integrate, this is a task that is nearly impossible. But luckily volunteers all around the world stand up for these people and help them. And we the students that are taking part in the "Was uns bewegt" project try to do our part as well.

Before she and her friend Susanna started the project Jutta Kivistö was studying art. After that she was working for Elisa for 10 years. She quit her job, and went to work for community café where a lot of asylum seekers came and hung out. She realized that she wanted to make a difference and help others in need, so she gathered some volunteers and started Turvapaikanhakijat ry. with her friend.

The organization is helping refugees and asylum seekers in 14 cities in Finland. Right now, there are about 670 asylum seekers involved in the project. In the organization only Jutta and the other founder Susanna are getting paid for their job. Other people involved are volunteers. In Turvapaikanhakijat ry. there is a project called "TUTUKSI". The name comes from the idea of getting to know each other and other cultures.

What they basically do is that they help asylum seekers and refugees to integrate to the community by searching them a group that shares the same interests. Those groups can be for example some football teams, cooking groups or art groups. There are many choices and the staff makes the decisions based on their interests and wishes. Many groups are willing to take and help the asylum seekers voluntarily but some groups are called and asked by the organization. Turvapaikanhakijat ry. advertise themselves on Facebook and look for groups and volunteers.

When a person gets to go to a new group, often one volunteer goes with them, so they don't have to go alone and they feel more comfortable.

All in all, the work Turvapaikanhakijat ry. organization is doing is one of the most important things you can do to help refugees and asylum seekers in the first place. Talking to *Jutta*

inspired and motivated us even more to keep doing the help we are already doing. Thank you, Jutta, for giving us this opportunity!

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Photos: Natalie Heindl

- ***Status quo during the Strasbourg meeting in Dec. 2016:***

Before Strasbourg I did not know much about the refugee situations in Austria and the other countries. I was not really interested in the refugee crises. But the Project Erasmus aroused my interest for the different situations of the countries.

We had a lot of informing presentation about the crises in the countries and about what every school is doing for the refugees. Furthermore, I gained a lot of knowledge.

I think it was a good idea to inform us students about the European parliament, European court of human rights and the council of Europe before we visited them. It was interesting to see and get a guided tour of all the functions from the different European facilities.

I have never been to Strasbourg before that is the reason why it was so interesting and exciting for me to do all the sightseeing. I was fascinated by the atmosphere of the city during the Christmas time with all the little boots and the Christmas lights.

When I came to Strasbourg I did not know any students of the other countries so my teacher decided to put us all in mixed rooms. In every room was one student from Austria, one from Italy, one from Finland and one from Germany. I think that was a great idea because I got to know the pupil better from the other countries and we talked a lot with each other.

- ***Status quo when starting the exchange in spring 2017:***

I am on an exchange in Helsinki, Finland for three and a half months. At first it was very exciting, but also weird because I have never been in Finland before and everything was new. New family, unknown language, new friends, new culture, unknown landscape, new

school, new traditions, new climate, new city. I knew my exchanges partner already from Strasbourg even though, it was not that easy at first but after a few days we started to get to know us better and better. She introduced me to her Friends in school and invited some to her place. And now almost one month later I get along very well with everyone. In the school in Finland which I visit are some exchange students from other countries like Germany, France and Zimbabwe. It is nice to have friends who know how you feel, to be in an unknown country where you do not know anything about it. Finish people seemed at first really shy, not really sociable and kept a distance but when I started talking to them and made the first step it showed that they all are incredible people, very nice and funny. At first it was really weird and unaccustomed to hear the Finnish language all the time, but now I got already used to it and sometimes I even understand some words now, because I am attending a Finnish course in school. Nevertheless, I do not think that I will ever use Finnish in my life again. My host family is adorable, they treat me like a family member and not just like some guest. I could not wish for a better one. I love to spend time with them. My situation is kind of special because the parents of my exchange partner are divorced, that means I have two homes. Most of the time I am at my host sister's dad's and his girlfriend's place. It is a very nice house with two floors my host sister and we have the whole second floor for us with a living room, a bathroom and two bedrooms. Sometimes we are also sleeping at her mum's place but I do not have my own room, I sleep in one of the rooms of my host sister's two sisters or next to my exchange partner in the same room. When I sleep at my host mum's place, which is located in Helsinki city near my school that is the reason why it does not take long for me to get to my school or to go in the city shopping or to meet some of my friends. In opposite to my host dad's place it takes me twenty minutes to get to my school in Helsinki, because his house is in Espoo (next city to Helsinki). Furthermore, there is one of the biggest shopping centers near my host dad's place which is called "Sello". It takes me just five minutes with the bus to get there. Sometimes I go also shopping for food, together with my host family to that shopping center. I really like the stores there.

It was also easy to get used to the public transport, because everything is so well regulated, and you get easily and quickly at the same time to the different places. One main aspect which I noticed immediately and still blows my mind are the prices for food, public transports, clothes and things which you need for your everyday life. Everything is so much

more expensive than in Austria, but I have to get along with it. One good aspect about the stores is that they are open up late and even on Sundays they are not closed like in Austria.

I like Helsinki it is a very beautiful city. I like the different kind of architecture and the different colored buildings but, while it is snowing here, the city looks monotonous and muddy and dirty because of all the cars driving through the streets, and all the people walking through the town. In the surroundings of Helsinki, it is the complete opposite. The snows stays on the ground for a longer time and it is always beautiful and sparkling white in exception of the streets. The houses in the surroundings are very colorful and I really like the architecture. Moreover, the center of the city where the railways station is situated, is different to the other part of Helsinki. The architecture of every building is kind of old, but also modern and each of them has its own style.

The school which I am attending in Helsinki is called "Oulunkylän Yhteiskoulu". The school system is different compared to my school in Austria. The teachers have their own classes and the students have to go to the different rooms, compared to Austria we students have our own classes and the teachers come to us. The breaks between the lessons are longer and the lunch break takes even 45 minutes, but each lesson has 75 minutes. In addition, the school offers a warm lunch. I think I am going to miss the warm lunch in my school when I return to Austria and my old habits.

- ***Status quo when finishing the exchange***

On the seventh of June, the exchange will take its end. During my exchange, I gained a lot of new knowledge, self-confident and I got more independent than I was before that exchange. I tried finnish food and finnish habits like going to the sauna, sailing and visiting the summer/winter cottages. One of my favorite trips which I did with my host family was sailing. We had a lot of fun and had the best weather for it. My host family has their own sailing boat, we were sailing for three days we visited small islands, went there to the saunas and went swimming in the freezing lake. It was great to get all the new experiences during my exchange and to intergrade myself, in the for me unknown culture and new habits.

The weather was most of the time not really awesome. It was gloomy and gray. I could have noticed that the climate in Finland is different than in Austria, the spring started in May.

Earlier in the year it was always snowing or raining and it seemed like that the winter is never going to end. At least at the ending of my exchange it has been a nice and spring weather as I know it from Austria, we could even wear T-Shirts outside without freezing.

The school system seemed at first quite complicated, but after a few weeks I got used to it and I enjoyed it to attend the lessons in school. Furthermore, it was absolutely unfamiliar to hear the Finnish language all the time around me but I got used to it and sometimes I even understand some words, because I attended a Finnish course in school. One teacher in the school, volunteer to teach us, exchange students and some refugees the Finnish language. The school provided books for us, so that we could do some exercises together. I noticed pretty fast that Finnish must be one of the hardest languages, but I was very excited to learn some phrases even if I knew that I am never going to use it again in my life.

My host family is like my second family I could have never wished for a better one. I get so well along with my host sister. We got really close, and have the same interests, we even planned that we will visit each other in the next summer. I am going to miss them all so much and can not wait to see them after a long time again. I am looking forward to the time when my exchange partner is spending her three months at my place in Austria...

Project with the concerning refugees in Austria

Not only during our long-term exchange in Finland (Helsinki) we concentrated on working with the refugees by having several activities with them, but also now in Austria, after our staying in Helsinki, we are continuing to work with the asylum seekers, especially the ones from our school.

Already before we joined the Erasmus project, we knew some of the asylum seekers in our school because we met them in our courses like maths, biology and physics. They have always been really nice to us and we could see that they put effort in integrating themselves in our class. In our municipality, there is an event once a year called "Fest der Begegnung", which allows the citizens of Gratwein-Straßengel to get to know refugees living in the surroundings. They also have the opportunity to gain insight into their culture, traditions and the local specialities. The first time me and my school colleagues participated at the "Fest der Begegnung" with some of our teachers, was in 2016. We met two of our classmates,

Moschtaba and Popal and they held presentations about their experiences in their home countries and in Austria after their escape. All the refugees prepared some of their local specialities, and everyone had the chance to taste anything they wanted. The main focus of the event “Fest der Bewegung” in 2016 was sportive activities.

The already mentioned event took place in 2017 again. This time the main focus was food, games, traditional clothing and presentations. Just like on 2016 the asylum seekers prepared some of their local dishes again, but Austrian specialities were served. Again, everybody could eat whatever they wanted. In another room, which was located next to the meeting room, we could play games. The refugees prepared typical games of their home countries, me and my school colleagues brought games called “Mikado” and “Skipo”, which are Austrian. Since two of the finish exchange students were currently on their exchange here, they presented two card games called “Ristiseiska” and “Kolme Homoa”. We could play whatever we liked and the ones that brought the game with them were responsible to explain the game and teach us the rules. It was a really nice experience to play games from Afghanistan or Syria. After those games, some Austrians and some of the asylum seekers organized a fashion show. Austrian women presented the traditional “Dirndl”, and the Austrian men the traditional “Lederhosen”. Of course, every other country presented their traditional clothing very proudly. Furthermore, one of the refugees of our school called Anas, from Syria, had a fascinating and touching presentation about escape routes. Just like the previous year the mayor of Gratwein-Straßengel had a short speech at the very beginning to welcome all the participants and to start the event.



Fest der Begegnung:
Anas presentation about flight



Fest der Begegnung:
Invitation

The following month we got the opportunity to interview Astrid Schatz, an integration commissioner, which means that she is responsible for the integration of the refugees in our

community. I gained a lot of new knowledge and it was very interesting to hear about her work and experience in that area. Astrid helps the asylum seekers who contact her to fill in important papers which are mostly written in German, because they might not be able to understand everything. Her office is located next to the so called "Kostnix-Laden", where asylum seekers get things what they need for their daily lives for free. In addition, she is looking for volunteers who can help the refugees. These volunteers can provide skies or prams or other things which are needed for them. Moreover, they can get furniture, like wardrobes, chairs and desks. The integration commissioner also helps to find jobs for them, because it is very complicated. The asylum seekers are not allowed to earn more than 110 euros per month, and they are only allowed to work in the municipality. They can do jobs like building up stages for small concerts, cutting hedges, cleaning up the mess after a football match, mowing the lawn, painting walls and renovating in our primary and secondary modern schools.

Astrid Schatz told us that there is no special education for that job, it is more or less learning by doing. It is not only hard work and a lot of organization but it also affects her emotionally, because many of her clients are not allowed to stay in Austria since some of them get negative decisions. Nevertheless, she puts a lot of effort in her work and we have the feeling that she really loves what she is doing.



In the office of Astrid Schatz during the interview

One of our project was the ZEBRA workshop, which presented us one man and one woman who work for ZEBRA. We have done the workshop in our school in Rein, during our school lessons for four hours for two days. ZEBRA is a non-profit organization which was founded in 1986 in Graz. ZEBRA has an interdisciplinary offer that addresses different levels (legal,

social, political, medical, psychotherapeutic and psychiatric). Audiences are especially Asylum seekers and Convention refugees, Torture victims, traumatized person, migrant workers and their family members. Zebra is also a Department for Migration-Specific Legal Issues and they are free, freely accessible and supported by interpreters.

ZEBRA explained us two different definitions: 1) asylum seekers, 2) Refugees / Asylum-entitled. Ad 1) Persons applying for refugee status and are currently in the process, i. about their application yet has been decided.

Ad 2) have asylum from the Austrian state within the meaning of the Geneva Convention received awarded.

Then we spoke about the different life situations of the asylum seekers in Austria. They are accommodated in special accommodations for refugees. Often the accommodations are empty gym halls, old schools, old and empty hotels or only in some tents. The asylum seekers have often to wait long time for the examination and so most of them are really bored, because it is also really difficult for them to get an employment opportunities and so they are often the whole time at home and do nothing. But they have a chance to do some volunteer work, like landscaping, take care of parking, leisure and sports facilities and maybe they can get a service check can earn a little bit money. A lot of them are also scared about their other family members, which are still in their home countries and maybe surrounded by war.

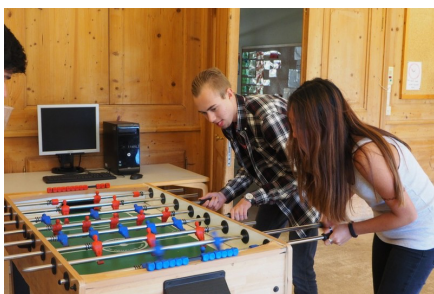
Then, our presenters, told us some numbers, data and facts about refugees. Nowadays there are sixty-five million people on a flight on the whole world. In Austria, the most people who want an asylum came from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. In our federal state, Styria, we have now 8.825 asylum seekers housed in this special accommodation. Most of the accommodations are accessible with the public transport, so the asylum seekers do not need an own car. They also told us, that the turkey, Lebanon and Pakistan housed the most refugees. But also, Ethiopia and Sudan host a lot of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. The most people fled, because of War, armed conflicts, terror Personal Pursuit Attacks on the civilian population: missing or murdered relatives Forced recruitment and forced marriage No / insufficient medical care No educational opportunities for children and adolescents Lack of food supply.

At last point we learned how to organize a project with asylum seekers and how we can get a support by money from the state. In small groups, we started to fill in one of these

application lists. My group decided to organize a football tournament in Gratkorn with the asylum seekers from our school.

My classmates and I were also in Rothleiten, it is a little village between Graz and Bruck/Mur. In Rothleiten there is a kind of a UMF-Quartier (Unbegleitete-Minderjährige-Flüchtlinge = Unaccompanied minor refugees) with the name "Welcome"-Quartier. Currently there are about forty unaccompanied minor refugees who live in an old and empty castle in the countryside of Rothleiten. Some of them attend also our school and we see them sometimes. At the "Welcome"-Quartier they get help from social workers, who worked for caritas. Also, they get all the things they need like food and drink, clothes and pocket money.

We went there on Monday the sixteen, October 2017 after school together with our teachers, by car. At Rothleiten the unaccompanied minor refugees prepared for us drinks and a lot to eat, which they have cooked. We ate the traditional food "Bolani". "Bolani" is a flat-bread from Afghanistan, baked or fried with a vegetable filling. I ate a lot of it, because it was so good and I tried to cook it at home but it was not as good as the refugees cooked it. After the perfect meal we played tabletop football, listened to music and tattled about the champions league or the last football-league games in Italy, Germany, England and Spain, because some of the asylum seekers are interested in football like me. We talked also about a lot of other current things in live. We were there for the whole afternoon and we really enjoyed it. Before I went to sleep I was really thankful for the wonderful day in Rothleiten.



Playing games with the refugees
in their home



flat-bread from Afghanistan,
baked or fried with a vegetable

- ***Diary during the exchange***

One of the best experiences of my life was my exchange in Finland, which was from the fifteenth of February to the seventh of June. I got the possibility to take part at a project which was sponsored by the European Union. The project is a part of the Erasmus project and it's called „Was uns Bewegt“ and it is occupying with the refugee crisis in Europe and the immigration in some countries. In Finland I was really lucky because I lived with such a nice family, with which I did so many things.

When we went back to the city we visited some museums in Helsinki with some other exchange students and some teachers from our school. I think the first one we visited is called Kiasma, a modern art museum. The statues and paintings that were there, were really cool and so interesting. Another museum we visited was the Ateneum, where they exhibited so much about the Finnish history. It was really interesting because Finland is only 100 years old so it's a lot about the Russian and Swedish history too.

- ***Personal report in form of an essay***

“Tell your own story/experience as a student short term migrant”

I have been taking part at the Erasmus „Was uns Bewegt“ project and one part of this project was a long-term stay in one of the three countries, Finland, Germany or Italy. I chose to stay for three months, from February to June, in Helsinki Finland. My exchange partner is not taking part at the „Was uns Bewegt“ project, but she is a part of the Erasmus project and she spends also 3 months at my place in Austria.

My long-term exchange started on the 28th of February. I was really excited to get to know an unknown culture, new language, new school, new friends, new family. I knew that I have two friends from Austria who are participating in the same project and they are already there in Finland. Who are going to be all the time of my exchange on my side and having the same new experience as I am going to have. I was at first also a little bit afraid if I will get along with my host family and how they are. I just knew my exchange partner from the meeting in Strasbourg but I have not really spent time with her that I could get to know her before my exchange. I was hoping and wishing the whole time that my host family is going to be a nice family. That I get the opportunity to get to know them, to get a part of the family and get along with them. When I got off the plane my host sister, her sister and her dad were

already waiting for me and welcomed me with open arms and hugged me. All my uncertainties were all of a sudden blown away and I could not wait to get to know them. My exchange partner showed me at first the house as we arrived at the house. I liked my room it was not that big but still very cute and comfortable. My host family gave me a little bit time to rest. Afterwards we had a nice dinner together and talked a lot. In the first days, I could not realise that I am going to stay in Finland for more than three months. At first it felt like I am on vacation and not on a long-term exchange but after a few weeks I started realising that I am going to stay for quite long time and I will be apart from my old habits, my school, friends and family. However, I was very excited about the new experiences which I am going to make, to get to know the culture of Finland and to get to know people.

Before I started my journey to Finland, I heard some stereotypes about Finland from the people who I told that I am going to make a long-term exchange. My Grandmother told me that finnish people love to go to saunas and almost every house has a sauna included. I did not think that this could be true until I proved myself wrong. Most of the finns really love to go to saunas, and even apartments have an included sauna. I was surprised. But I also noticed that for example my host family loves to go in a sauna when they visit their summer/winter cottages. There are two different kinds of saunas which I tried, one is called "smoke sauna" and the other one is a normal steam sauna, as I know it from Austria. I enjoyed going to the saunas especially if you heat yourself up in the sauna and to take after a quick bath in the cold sea and change again to the sauna. It is really refreshing. Another stereotype was that finnish people are very shy, calm and they are dictated. The first few days I relay thought that, it is true because all of the friends of my exchange partner seems kind of shy and very calm. But when I made the first step and started a conversation with them, it needed a little while but then they started to open up and talked quiet a lot. I was surprised how nice and incredible funny they are. I thought that most of the finns must have blonde or red hair and their skin colour is very light. I mean there are maybe more blonde people than in Austria but they are also mixed and have brown and dark brown hair. The skin colour is also not always very light. So, I was again proved from the opposite.

I had some imaginations before I started my long-term exchange in Finland. I hoped that everyone would treat me nicely and that I get along with my new friends. Furthermore, I hoped that I would not have problems with my host family. I would have loved to see

reindeers and the polar lights (finnish: arora) in Lapland but that dream sadly did not come true. I am so happy about the great and incredible humans who I met and who I got friends with. It was great that I had the opportunity to get to know also some other exchange students from different countries like Germany, Italy, France and Zimbabwe. To share their experiences from their exchange and to talk to someone who has the same feelings, to stay a long time away from home and to get in a new culture with a new family and new friends. Although the most important thing came true. Travelling. I am so honored that I even got the chance to make that exchange. I am sure that I will never forget this experience and it will always have a special place in my heart. I did not only see Helsinki, I got the chance to explore Tallinn, Estonia for one day, one time. It was very exciting to see a new city and the Tallinn Old Town is such a beautiful city. It is right next to the ocean and when you are on the very top you have a beautiful view all over the rest of the city and the ocean and the harbor. My mother and my father decided to visit me for one week, they arrived on Mother's Day, and it was a beautiful gift for my mother and me. We decided to go to Tallinn all together and we took a friend with us. It was a very lovely experience. It made me really happy that they visited me even though I would have seen them just one month later. It was also an advantage for them, because in that way they had the chance to explore a new city. With our family we also decided to go to the small island called "Suomenlinna". It is an inhabited small sea fortress which is built on six islands. It was a very interesting place, since we do not have anything like that in Austria.

Lucky me, I got the chance to go to Bray and Dublin in Ireland too, it was a planned trip though, since my Austrian school – BG Rein – plans to do this trip with all the sixth graders every year. I have been there for a week and saw all my friends again, which made me really happy. Travelling really makes me happy and I do hope that I will get the chance to travel many times in my further future.

My friends and I had a lot of happy moments, probably my whole exchange is a whole big happy moment. We laughed and had fun all the time and we did a lot of activities. We went to the cinema, we ate a lot of delicious food, we shopped very much, we met new people, we cooked Austrian food for our families, we had the honor to join Wanhat, the Finnish prom, and the graduation of the third graders, we made many new friends etc. Most of my friends went to the same school as me which made it very easy to talk to them and meet them. I also had friends outside of school.

I have to admit that I pretty much liked everything about my exchange. There are absolutely no things that bothered me. Everybody was nice to me and helped me where they could. The only thing I did not like that much was, that I was sick for about three days. What was a bit exhausting is, that we had to learn everything we missed in our Austrian school. In our summer holidays we studied all the time, especially the languages like Latin and French were very hard to study, because we did not have a teacher who taught us the things, we had to learn them by ourselves. But honestly it was definitely worth it. I would do it again, but maybe not in this school year, since I have got my graduation next year and this year we do a lot of work and it would not be very helpful to miss all of it this short time before graduating. I did not have any special expectations or wishes when I came here, I just hoped that everybody would be nice to me and help me out if I needed anything. That clearly came true. I wished to make many new friends, which I did indeed. I hope that I will not be forgotten that quick in their school and I hope that I will stay friends with them for a very long time, and that I will meet them again in either Finland, Austria or even another country. I truly believe that my host sister is a friend for life, and that even after decades we will be visiting each other. She is like my real sister, just from other parents.

Interview with a social worker from Caritas in Luxembourg

During our stay in Luxembourg, on our fifth day, we got the opportunity to meet a social worker from Caritas and interviewed him. His name was Malik and he works for Caritas since 2003. At the beginning, he gave some information about what he is doing and after that we started to ask some questions.

Student: Which nations of refugees are there in Luxembourg?

Malik: All together there are 45 different nationalities of the migrants, but the majority comes from Syria, Irak, Afghanistan. Before the winter, we had many migrants from the Balkan, but most of them have to go back to their home countries.

Student: How many homes have you got?

Malik: There are twelve foyers and the houses have the capability of 50 beds up to 300 beds. All in all, 1500 beds are available but currently two thirds are occupied.

Student: Are there private or bigger refugee homes?

Malik: Well, not exactly but the citizens of Luxembourg can provide them apartments or houses. The social workers are responsible to ask the hirer if they provided the apartment

to refugees for a lower price, than they would offer to the inhabitants.

Student: How many unaccompanied minors do you have?

Malik: In the foyer, my colleague and me are responsible for, there are about fifty minors without parents. I am sorry I don't know about the other foyers.

Student: Are the children allowed to attend school?

Malik: Basically, they are allowed but at the age of seventeen, they don't have to attend school anymore. Though, they have to attend courses like french, math's and science, which are provided in their foyers.

Student: Do they get food or do they cook themselves?

Malik: They can't cook in their houses by themselves, even though they have multiple kitchen in their foyers. I don't know why but the ministry does not want them to cook. There are two or three houses out of twelve, in which they are allowed to cook by themselves. They get the food provided and trucks bring it to their foyers but it is more expensive than in the supermarkets. We also try to give them the food which comes from their county if they ask for it, but we can not assure it.

Student: Do refugees get the possibility to work?

Malik: Yes, but they are only allowed to do small jobs like painting etc.

Student: How much money do they get?

Malik: First of all, it depends on their age. Adults get 25 euros per month, while minors only get twelve to twenty euros. If they get the positive decision, they get 100 euros for medicine, doctor visits and tickets, but hey have to calculate everything on their own.

Student: Do the inhabitants of Luxembourg accept the refugees in public?

Malik: Well this is a very difficult question. Do you think that people in Austria accept the refugees?

Student: More or less I think. It depends on the person:

Malik: See, I think it is the exact same in Luxembourg. I also think it depends on the education, the origin and the background of each person.

Student: Thank you that you took your time to answer our questions.

Malik: Well thank YOU, that you are so interested in the situation oft he refugees and our work, because you are the future. I wish you good luck for your further education. Merci beaucoup pour votre attention!

MERCI!!

