

Literature in education. First meeting in Cyprus.

The six participating groups in the Erasmus programme, Literature in Education, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, and Poland, have been preparing for their first meeting for months. At last we met for the first time in the beginning of November in Cyprus, as it had already been planned. When all the partners arrived at our island, we went to meet them at their hotel. We felt so intimate like knowing each other for years. After a glass of wine and some nice Greek music, we were feeling like friends. We were looking forward to working together.

On the fourth of November our friends arrived at our school, the Second Regional High School of Nicosia early in the morning. The day began with a traditional Cyprus breakfast and some sweets. Then our guests went around the school for a short tour which ended in the Music Room. There, the twelve students of our school who take part in the Erasmus Club, had prepared a welcoming reception, based on the poem 'ITHACA' of the famous Greek poet Kavafis. Through the lines of his famous poem, we set out for our trip to both literature and Europe. After the students' short but wonderful presentation, the six groups of the Erasmus club continued their works in the library, about the planning of the whole programme.

In the evening, we went out to a traditional Greek restaurant called 'taverna' to taste Greek food or 'meze', dance and have fun. We were sure that our international friends would love it, and they would also have fun. After a while we were all dancing and enjoying ourselves with some fine Cyprus wine in the rhythms of the world famous musical instrument 'bouzouki'. The night was lovely and nobody wanted it to finish. But.....

The next day the six countries met again at our school. There was an excellent exhibition of traditional products, photos and sweets. A violin was playing live and soon we were all, teachers and students, dancing around the school yard.

Later, we went to work in the school library again, as there was a lot of work to be done. The six groups had to organise the meetings to come, share responsibilities for each member of the club etc.

At about one o'clock, we went by bus to a nearby traditional village, called 'Ficardu', where we admired the architecture of some old houses, the local museum, and walked through its picturesque old streets. The day finished with lunch in a village close to this, called Gourri.

The school vice principal and I arranged to meet our guests early in the morning at their hotel, Cleopatra. After meeting each other, we set off by bus for Limassol, the second largest town of Cyprus. There, we visited the ruins of the ancient kingdom of Curion, and the castle of Colossi. After a short break for coffee, we headed for the Harob Mills Museum and finally we reached our final visiting sight, the Limassol Marina, where we enjoyed a relaxing walk along the seaside and the Marina's beautiful shops and restaurants. By noon we returned back to Nicosia.

On the last day, in the afternoon we travelled to Larnaka. We were about to spend a lovely afternoon with our friends by the sea. The only group which had already returned home was the Spanish one. As soon as we arrived in Larnaka, we first visited the medieval church of St Lazarus. After we admired the exceptional architecture of the church we went down to the tomb of St Lazarus which is situated in the basement of the church. The priest also gave us some more interesting information about the life of Saint Lazarus and also about the church.

Our next stop was the Medieval Castle of Larnaka, on the northern edge of the coastal road. We walked through the different rooms and visited several collections of pottery and weapons which were exhibited in the castle. It was almost sunset and we couldn't stop taking photos of the unique view from the top of the castle.

We continued our visit in Larnaka, with a short walk along the coastal road of the town. We had so many things to share, like same problems, experiences, etc. We have known each other for a few days, but they were enough to make us feel like good friends. We took many photos of all the great moments we had had together, and we were sure that these moments would stay in our cameras and in our hearts for ever!!!

Our visit was coming to the end, and we decided to have a coffee before returning back to Nicosia. The only group that would go back with us was that of

Italy. The rest would stay in Larnaka because they were flying home in the morning. At about 7.30 we got on the bus to Nicosia. The first part of our programme,came to the end and although we had a lot of work to do we were feeling so happy because we had made so many good friends from many different parts of the world!! Besides, the road to Ithaca is very long!!