

DISCOVER EU: FROM **EAST TO WEST**

NEWSLETTER



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НАЦИОНАЛНА АГЕНЦИЈА
ЗА ЕВРОПСКИ ОБРАЗОВНИ
ПРОГРАМИ И МОБИЛНОСТ

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

DiscoverEU: From East to West is an Erasmus+ project that offers young people with fewer opportunities aged 18 the opportunity to have a short-term travel experience across Europe by train, bus or other sustainable means of transport (green travel). It also aims to equip young people with knowledge, life skills and competences of value to them, to foster connections and intercultural dialogue and a sense of belonging among young people in the European Union.

WHO WE ARE: Atlantis

Atlantis ESC is a non-governmental organization for education, sport and culture. Our mission is promotion of personal and professional development among young people, in order to help them to reach their successful future through non-formal education.

ROUTE:

Day 1 Tetovo - Sofia

Day 2 Sofia

Day 3 Sofia - Bucharest

Day 4 Bucharest

Day 5 Bucharest (Brasov)

Day 6 Bucharest

Day 7 Bucharest - Ruse - Sofia

Day 8 Sofia - Tetovo





SOFIA



WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT THE CITY?

Frosina: The similarities in the culture with ours, peoples understanding and patience, churches that are incredibly beautiful and meaningful.

Bojan: The locals were very nice, hospitable and communicative people.

Aleksandra: Shopping malls and little Russian church.

Martin: Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and National Historical Museum.

Radmila: There were many impressive things in Sofia, but the thing that impressed me the most were the buildings, which were beautifully constructed.



HOW DOES THIS CITY COMPARE TO YOUR HOME?

Frosina: I noticed how people in the restaurants and the cafes are so patient and there is no rush for orders and tables, which is not a situation in our town and country.

Bojan: Slang speech and way of everyday life.

Aleksandra: Sofia is larger and more developed than Tetovo.

Martin: Similarity with our cuisine and traditional dishes.

Radmila: Sofia is significantly larger than Tetovo and has more modern buildings and wider boulevards, while Tetovo has a more compact urban structure.



WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM TALKING TO LOCALS AND EXPLORING?

Frosina: I learned about the importance of family, food, and traditions in daily lives of the locals.

Bojan: We learned about importance of St. Alexander Nevsky cathedral for the locals.

Aleksandra: I learned about Bulgaria's history, diverse architecture, and cultural influences from Thracian, Roman, Ottoman, and Soviet eras.

Martin: I learned about St. Alexander Nevsky, its height, and the investment in its construction.

Radmila: I learned that people are very welcoming and proud of their history.



Interview with locals

 **SOFIA**

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THIS CITY?

I love Sofia's because it is my hometown with unique mix of history, nature, and urban life, with Vitosha Mountain always in the background.

WHAT IS A TRADITION OR CUSTOM UNIQUE TO YOUR CITY OR REGION?

Every 1st of March, we celebrate Baba Marta by exchanging Martenitsa bracelets for health and luck.

WHAT IS A HIDDEN GEM IN THIS CITY THAT MOST TOURISTS DON'T KNOW ABOUT?

The Red Flat, a time capsule museum that recreates life in a typical Bulgarian home from the 1980s.

HOW DO PEOPLE HERE CONTRIBUTE TO PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT?

Many locals use public transport, bikes, and reusable bags, and there are growing initiatives for urban gardening and recycling.



WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT LIVING IN THIS CITY?

The traffic jam and air pollution, especially in winter, can be quite frustrating.

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS, AND WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE?

I celebrate with family with traditional food, and sometimes attending events. My favorite is 3rd March, Bulgaria's Liberation Day.

WHAT IS ONE PLACE IN YOUR CITY YOU THINK EVERY VISITOR SHOULD SEE?

The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, a symbol of Sofia and one of the largest Orthodox cathedrals in the Balkans.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE IN YOUR CITY?

Air pollution caused by traffic, old heating systems, and winter smog remains a major issue.





BUCHAREST



WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT THE CITY?

Frosina: The mix of historical and modern influences, especially in architecture and traditions.

Bojan: The Parliament was definitely the most interesting part of the visit to Bucharest.

Aleksandra: Therme of Bucharest and charming Old Town with all restaurants and cafés.

Martin: Triumph of Arch and Palace of the Parliament.

Radmila: The contrast between the grandiosity of the Palace of the Parliament and the charming, more intimate vibe of the Old Town is fascinating for me.



HOW DOES THIS CITY COMPARE TO YOUR HOME?

Frosina: While Bucharest is a major political and economic hub, Tetovo is more community-oriented and known for its universities and cultural diversity.

Bojan: Similarity of food choices.

Aleksandra: Bucharest is Romania's bustling capital, while Tetovo is a culturally rich town.

Martin: Bucharest is much larger and more modern than Tetovo, with bustling streets and grand architecture.

Radmila: Bucharest has a mix of old and new architecture, as well as notable communist buildings, while Tetovo is more distinct with its oriental and Balkan architecture.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM TALKING TO LOCALS AND EXPLORING?

Frosina: Public transport is cheap but not always reliable, people prefer taxis or Bolt.

Bojan: We learned a lot interesting facts about Parliament.

Aleksandra: From Bucharest, you can learn about Romania's history, communist-era architecture, and vibrant modern culture.

Martin: I learned that the Parliament was built using materials from all over Romania.

Radmila: I discovered how the city blends old and new, with locals valuing both history and modern development.



Palace of Parliament

📍 BUCHAREST

Visiting the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest was an unforgettable experience! I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of DiscoverEU: From East to West and to witness one of the most impressive buildings in the world.

Our guided tour lasted just one hour, and yet we barely scratched the surface, seeing only 5-6% of this grandiose palace! Everything about it is monumental: the sheer size, the lavish decorations, and the incredible craftsmanship. It is the second-largest administrative building in the world, after the Pentagon, covering 365,000 square meters.

What amazed me the most is that all materials used in its construction wood, marble, crystal, and more, came from Romania. The palace's carpets alone are massive, with some being woven directly inside the rooms because they were too big to move! The curtains weigh around 250 kg each, and the crystal chandeliers of which there are over 480 add to the palace's breathtaking beauty.

This visit truly showed me the richness of Romania's heritage and history. A huge thank you to DiscoverEU for making this experience possible!

FROSINA VIDOJESKA





BRASOV



WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT THE CITY?

Frosina: Very calm city with a lots of good and kind people, quiet place with lovely atmosphere.

Bojan: The city center of Brasov was very beautiful, many beautiful churches and buildings.

Aleksandra: The cute little streets with old buildings and all the cozy cafés.

Martin: Black Church and Council Square.

Radmila: Brasov truly impressed me with its stunning natural surroundings and well-preserved medieval charm.



HOW DOES THIS CITY COMPARE TO YOUR HOME?

Frosina: Braşov has a well-preserved medieval old town, with cobblestone streets and Gothic- style buildings. Tetovo has more Ottoman and Balkan-style architecture.

Bojan: Historic areas and structures.

Aleksandra: It's way more stylish and clean, and the vibe is super chill. Also, the shopping options are way better.

Martin: There are more churches than in my city.

Radmila: Similar to Tetovo, Brasov is surrounded by mountains and has a beautiful landscape. The city also has a mixed ethnic composition.



WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM TALKING TO LOCALS AND EXPLORING?

Frosina: The pace of life is slower compared to Bucharest, making it feel more relaxed.

Bojan: We expanded our knowledge and interests regarding historical building.

Aleksandra: People here are really nice, and they love their city. Also, they have the best handmade souvenirs.

Martin: We expanded our knowledge and interests regarding historical buildings.

Radmila: I learned how much locals appreciate nature and their medieval heritage.





RUSE



WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT THE CITY?

Frosina: All the architecture and the traditional style of living there, good traditional food.

Bojan: It was nice to see the Danube river flowing along the border, there were also beautiful buildings.

Aleksandra: Ruse is most impressive for its elegant Austro-Hungarian architecture, earning it the nickname "Little Vienna."

Martin: Ruse's Historic Architecture and Danube River Embankment.

Radmila: Ruse impressed me with its beautiful architecture, particularly the neoclassical and baroque-style buildings that give the city a charming, almost European feel.



HOW DOES THIS CITY COMPARE TO YOUR HOME?

Frosina: Ruse is an important transport hub due to its Danube port, while Tetovo is more of an educational and cultural center.

Bojan: That river flows through both cities, but the Danube is much bigger.

Aleksandra: Ruse is a grand Danube city with elegant Austro-Hungarian architecture, while Tetovo is a smaller, diverse city known for its Ottoman heritage.

Martin: Ruse is a cozier and more laid-back city.

Radmila: Ruse has a similar population to Tetovo, but is known for its European-influenced architecture.



WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM TALKING TO LOCALS AND EXPLORING?

Frosina: People call it "Little Vienna" because of its beautiful architecture and locals are friendly.

Bojan: We found out about Monument of liberty, Lipnik Forest Park and Eco Museum

Aleksandra: I learned about Bulgaria's rich trade history, elegant European architecture, and cultural influences from the Danube region.

Martin: Locals prefer to engage in sports activities near the Danube River.

Radmila: I noticed how peaceful and charming the city is. Locals enjoy a slower pace of life and love spending time by the Danube River.



TESTIMONIALS

This journey through Bulgaria and Romania has given me a deeper understanding of Eastern European culture and lifestyle. I was fascinated by the blend of historical landmarks and modern urban life, as well as the warmth and hospitality of the locals. The experience changed my perception of the region, showing me its resilience, rich traditions, and vibrant communities. Overall, this trip has broadened my perspective on how culture and history shape everyday life in different parts of Europe.



FROSINA VIDOJESKA



BOJAN JOVANOVSKI

Through this journey across Bulgaria and Romania, I gained a deeper understanding of the local life and culture, particularly when it comes to Romanian cuisine. My knowledge of historical artifacts grew, and I also had the chance to experience the character of the locals. I was truly amazed by the hospitality we received and the stunning architecture as churches, cathedrals, libraries and administrative buildings all of which left a lasting impression on me. It was also my first time traveling by train and using the metro, which made the experience even more exciting and memorable.



This journey through Bulgaria and Romania has enriched my understanding of Eastern European culture and way of life. I was captivated by the fusion of ancient history and contemporary living, alongside the genuine warmth and friendliness of the people. The experience transformed my view of the region, revealing its enduring spirit, deep-rooted traditions, and lively communities. In the end, this trip expanded my perspective on how culture and history influence daily life in various parts of Europe.



**ALEKSANDRA
MARTINOVSKA**



MARTIN STOJANOSKI

This journey has been eye-opening, giving me a deeper understanding of the region's rich culture. The history is felt everywhere, shaped by diverse influences and traditions. What stood out most was how much people value family, community, and respect for the past. Daily life mixes old and new, with festivals, folk art, and music playing a big role. There's also a strong connection to nature, balancing tradition with modern life. This trip showed me the strength of Eastern European culture and how beautifully it blends the past with the present.

Traveling through Bulgaria and Romania has been an eye-opening experience, broadening my perspective on Eastern European culture and daily life. Before embarking on this journey, my knowledge of these countries was primarily shaped by history books, travel guides, and occasional media portrayals. However, experiencing these places firsthand allowed me to see beyond the stereotypes and immerse myself in the rich traditions, resilient communities, and evolving modern landscapes of these nations. One of the most striking aspects of my journey was the contrast between historical preservation and contemporary development.



RADMILA RISTOSKA



Thank you for your attention



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