

I will never forget the time I went to Austria to participate in a youth exchange in an astonishing place called Klaffer am Hochficht. One cannot help but be impressed by the natural beauty of this region and the marvelous variety of attractions offered. The moment I arrived in Austria I was immediately struck by the picturesque scenery provided by the shining snow and the frozen lakes. The fresh, pine-scented air conquered my senses and in that moment I knew that not only the project was about to be the delightful part of this project.

Last winter I had the amazing opportunity to take part in one of the most educative yet fun Erasmus+ youth exchange, "Avoid the hate". The aim of this project was to teach the participants, through the workshops, activities and games, how to recognize racism or radicalization, to understand what are the dangers that are raised by them and to promote tolerance.

I might say that in this project I have developed numerous competences and learnt various new things by participating in the activities about the given topic. Therefore, I had the possibility to express my opinions and answers in front of the other participants. Most of them even became good friends of mine that I had the pleasure to go on a truly educative journey with, where I had to express myself in another language. Some of the foreign participants even taught me some words or expressions in their languages. I am glad that I am still in touch with most of them!

One of the best parts of this youth exchange was when we had the possibility to get in contact with the Austrian community as well. We were split in teams where we shared stories where we saw or even experienced racism or discrimination. By the end of the day, we picked the most suggestive stories and went to Linz, a very beautiful town in Austria, where we narrated the stories to some nice Austrian citizens. We also prepared some drawings and crafts to attract the dwellers. By doing this activity I had to overcome my social anxiety and also my awareness for tolerance in general increased.

I also loved the intercultural nights. Learning in a non-formal way about other countries and their traditions such as food and dances or to follow the presentations about their cultures was a truly interesting activity for me. Needless to say, I also loved to present my country and to talk with other participants about Romania's traditions. All those nights were the perfect combination of education and fun that I have ever encountered.

To sum up, I am extremely grateful due to the fact that I had the possibility to assist to this youth exchange. By the time I went back home, I left Austria with wonderful yet educative memories, memorable experiences and new friends that helped me to develop as an individual even more. I became more tolerant with the people around me, knowing how to express myself and take in consideration every opinion that I hear. Not only that, as an individual I became more confident in myself, ready to be a part of a future generation that wants change and a better future.

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