

Crossing borders

The Erasmus+ project



This week is all about exploring new horizons. Five different countries uniting over the borders in Europe. The main goal for this week is to get knowledge about studying and working in other countries. The plans for this week is for instance to visit an international company and hopefully get more information about the advantages of working and living in such an international city as Roermond. Hopefully we'll get an interesting week, and beside all the work get to know new people with different nationalities as well as have a lot of fun.

Meeting the Mayor

First day in Roermond we got to meet Rianne Donders, the mayor of the city. She gave a presentation about the situation and how Roermond has grown to be an international city. Roermond have become an international city because of its location. It is located between both Germany and Belgium. She talked about how the location of Roermond affects the companies will to settle their business here. Roermond is an attractive city to settle a business because of that, and they can reach out to three different countries, even though they are only placed in one. She also spoke about combining people, for example the Solar festival, where people get together over music.

Bayer

The second day in Roermond began with a bus tour to Nunhem, where the big international company, Bayer, is located. The company with almost 117 000 employees and seed production in 23 countries is a great place to meet and work with people from different nationalities. Despite living far away from the family, the guide who was from China, told us that the Job were very instructive.

We were divided into groups for the guided Tour at Bayer. The tour was educational and interesting. They taught us how they produce their seeds and what they do to make the vegetables as good as possible. That was very interesting and also that they worked with people who didn't speak the same languages was interesting as well. To make the vegetables as good as possible, they have many procedures so that the "weak" and infected seeds get thrown away. They also did research about the DNA of the seeds so the vegetables got the best genes.

There are a lot of Dutch people working there of course, but also people from Belgium and Germany. Besides the workers from the neighboring countries, there are also workers from the U.S, Italy and China etc. They also plan to expand their business in Asia and Latin America, because they stand for the smallest amount of sales right now. The full year sales of Bayer 2015 was €46.3 Billion. It is a great place to work if you want to meet new people from other countries with different backgrounds. Your language skills will definitely improve and you'll also learn about other cultures.

Venlo

The Thursday's trip was to Venlo, where we visited the Fontys university. It was a short introduction in one of the classrooms and after that a teacher from the university had a "lecture" about stereotypes and different cultures, and how they sometimes may clash. She explained the differences between the way of educating in Asia and Europe. The European teachers are more friendly and not like a higher hierarchy, like in Asia. We learned that stereotypes can only be broken down by talking and interacting with people from other cultures. Everyone is their own person and individuals, that's why stereotypes are wrong. You can't google how a person from a specific country behave, because we are all different despite our nationality.

A student from the university had a lecture about daring to cross borders to work or study. The Fontys University is a very international school with a lot of people from all around the world. He also spoke about how the fear of moving to another country affects the urbanization. People rather move to the big cities in their own country, even though there are good job opportunities on the other side of the border. Another thing he said was that the location of the Limburg province is an advantage for the people living there, because the border to Germany is only 3 kilometers away. Instead of moving to a big city as Amsterdam, where there are many jobs, they look at the other side of the border and search for jobs there.

The disadvantages of firms getting more international is that some people are very narrow when it comes to new things. For example the brand Mekkafoods had to change their name to Pure ingredients, because people associated the name Mekkafoods with terrorists. Pure ingredients is a company that produce Halal-food and their biggest customer group is Islamic people. Because of all the civil unrest in the world right now, especially in Syria, people are scared of things they consider abnormal.

This week and all the visits to international places have been very educational and amusing. Except getting to know new people we have also learned a lot and know got a bigger perspective of the world. We also have gotten a more positive opinion about study and work abroad.