

ERASMUS+

JOURNAL

VOLOS 23/4 – 27/4/2018



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

First Part

Students' Diary

In this part of the journal students describe their experiences during the fifth transnational meeting which took place in Volos from the 23rd of April until the 27th.



MONDAY 23rd of APRIL

“Monday was our first day in the school. We met the other Erasmus students and the greek teacher, Helen, gave us a necklace with our names and our flags in the library with a bag that it gets a Volos map, a cap and biscuits.

After that, we went to the town hall and there, they showed us a video where it explains the Argos' history and why it is important for Volos. It was very interesting.

Then, we went for a walk in the port. It was very sunny and the landscape was very beautiful with the sea and the ships. A woman explains us things like the mythology of the mountain Pelio.



When we arrived at the school, my host family was waiting for me to have lunch. We ate rice with chicken and it had a sauce that it was taste delicious. The family was very nice with me and I told them typical Spanish things like dances and food and they told me typical Greek things. I knew Alexandra's cousin and her aunts, they were very nice with me too.

In the afternoon, we went for a walk at the beach and we met with the other Erasmus Spanish girls and their Greek girls. We had fun. For dinner, we ate gyros with tzatziki, I loved it.

At ten o'clock, Alexandra's mother took us home and I took a shower. I talked to her a little bit but we slept early because we were very tired. She's very kind.

Carmen, Spain.”



TUESDAY 24th of APRIL

"On Tuesday we started the day normally, we went to school and there we had some lessons. After 3 or 4 lessons we had to go to gym, because a Greek PE teacher showed us their volleyball female team, but it was fully in greek so we did not understand anything, but it was good experience. We had some lessons in school and then the Greek students prepared and then showed some traditional greek dances, and then we tried to dance them too. Some of us were good in that but me not, but it was fun, and really nice how everyone trying, and trying to discover something new about Greek history and everything, and after the Greek traditional dances we had last 2 lessons and than we left school and had a good time with families. Me and Mike after school went home for lunch and then we went outside for coffee and after that we went to Battle Net that is building where you pay some money and you can play there games. It was a good day, but whole week here was really good.

Richard, Czech Republic"



WEDNESDAY 25th of APRIL

"Our week was turning out very good because we met a lot of new, friendly and kind people, but Wednesday was very especial.

On Wednesday we left school at eight o'clock and then we traveled to Makrinitza. When we arrived it was about half past eight so we, before we went to the ecotourism workshop, ate a little snack. At nine o'clock the workshop began and it was very interesting because we discovered a lot of things about the history of the house where the workshop was held and other things about Greek plants and their contributes to our health. After that we did a tour around the village where we discovered beautiful views and bought some souvenirs for our families and friends. Then we went hiking in the mountain from Makrinitza to Stagiates village that was quite difficult because there was no path but also fun because we spent some good time together. When the trip was over just the students came back to school.



In the afternoon all the students went to the beach where they spent all the time in the sea talking to each other.

At night we went to dinner together and then, before going home to sleep, all of us went for a walk near the beach to have another awesome moment of conviviality.

Helena, Portugal"



THURSDAY 26th of APRIL

“On Thursday we had a wonderful experience here in Greece. We went on a school trip to Meteora. Meteora are a rock formation in central Greece hosting one of the largest and most precipitously built complexes of Eastern Orthodox monasteries, second in importance only to Mount Athos. The six monasteries are built on natural pillars and they dominate the local area. It is located near the town of Kalambaka.



For us Hungarian children it was fascinating. We started our journey early in the morning, we travelled for two hours and we arrived at about eleven o'clock. First we watched a 3D movie about Meteora in the Digital Projection Centre of Meteora's History and Culture. After that we visited the monastery of st. Stephen. The place, the view and the atmosphere of the area was amazing. After visiting Meteora we got on the bus and left for Trikala. We had lunch there, the restaurant was in a fort. We took nice pictures in the garden of the restaurant. After a long and beautiful day we left for home at about five o'clock and arrived at school at seven o'clock. In the evening we went to play bowling with local and foreign children. We had a great fun together. We had a day full of nice moments.

Anna, Hungary”



FRIDAY 27th of APRIL

“Many times in our lives we take part in important programmes, like this Erasmus which is my favorite so far as we had the opportunity to meet new people from different countries, such as Portugal, Spain, Hungary and Czech Republic.

Friday was the last day of our programme. It was a normal school day where kids had the chance to attend lessons by teachers from all countries. There were lessons from a Hungarian teacher who taught us some things about the capital of the country Budapest, from a Portuguese teacher who taught us history. At the end of our school day we played many sports, such as football, basketball and volleyball so i think that that was great because children had the chance to be united all together. In the afternoon there was a party at the gym of our school where i believe all kids had a very good time. Finally this programme provides us many things useful for our life. Hosting a child from another country gave us the chance to learn his/her habits, civilization and information about his/her country.

Thomaela, Greece”



Second Part

Interviews

In this part of the journal, you can read interviews by professionals connected to the subjects of History, Geography and Civics.

Spanish team

1) Interview with Hilario Paredes - Politician

1) What level of education do you need for this job?

There is no minimum level of education required for this job. Nevertheless, it is important to communicate well, to be fluent, to understand electoral processes behind elections and a lot of general information about society is an asset to connect with people.

2) What qualifications are required?

No qualifications are required for this job.

3) What kind of salary do you make (high / average/ low)?

Zero. Escaños en Blanco, which could be translated as "Blank Seats", is not really a common political party. It is what we call a "tool party". Our idea is that blank votes should be represented in Parliaments. Since this possibility is not included in our electoral system, we participate in elections with a simple commitment: if we ever get a seat, this will be left blank. And of course, we will renounce to any wages, money or subventions that may correspond to us for that seat.

This is just the contrary common politicians and political parties do when they get a seat.

4) At what age do you retire from the job?

There is no age of retirement: when you want, when people stop voting you, or when you die.

5) What's the social status of the profession within your society?

It depends on the people. In general, politicians are badly considered nowadays. And this is one of the reasons why Escaños en Blanco is created: to protest against bad politicians and bad politics, and give the people a tool to protest democratically, on the Election Day.

6) Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

Not really in my party. We work in assemblies, and we assume that we are there as an instrument. Names are not important. The most important thing is the idea, and providing people a way to protest democratically.



7) How popular is this profession with women/ men?

Well, maybe I'm being a little gender-biased here, but I would say that men are more inclined to participate, being included in the electoral ballots and providing their signatures and personal info, so we can run for the elections. Women are more reluctant to provide personal information and become public individuals. But let me be clear on this: maybe it is just a personal impression, since I have no empirical data to confirm this point. Anyway, there are always women willing to work for the party when needed. This is the situation in the Autonomous Community of Murcia.

8) How much time do you sacrifice for your job (including your free time)?

A lot, especially during election periods. You have to prepare documentation, present it to electoral organisms, contact different people, prepare the lists that will appear on the ballots, hit the streets to collect people's signatures... On Election Day, you go to polling stations to check that everything is running smoothly, that your ballots are there so people can vote you, that there are no irregularities...

9) What are your working hours? Briefly describe your everyday routine at work.

I don't have any routine. This work is some kind of NGO, so I devote the free time I can provide when it is needed. And, since we didn't get any seat in the last elections, I don't really have a routine to follow. If I had got a seat, it would have been the same, since it would have been left blank and I would have continued with my regular job as a teacher.

10) How many days of holiday do you get?

I don't really get any holidays from this job.

11) Who influenced you to choose this profession?

Bad politicians, haha... Well, I think that commitment is important in our society. If you consider something is not fair, or that it could be better, you have to fight to improve it. You cannot remain passive, just complaining about how bad everything is, and doing nothing... Probably my uncle taught and transmitted this idea to me.

12) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

For me, the best thing is the relationship with people. Hitting the streets and realize that Escaños en Blanco is more and more known... And, of course, the impression of being working to improve Spanish electoral system and increase democracy awareness. The main disadvantage is to address all the difficulties the electoral system present for small parties. It seems the biggest parties have agreed to limit small parties' possibilities to get parliamentary representation. And, if what those small parties are trying to achieve is to take some seats away from bad politicians, you can imagine that they are not going to pave our way.

13) If you could change one thing in your work, what would it be?

I would change Spanish electoral system, so that blank ballots get parliamentary representation in the form of blank seats. If we get that, Escaños en Blanco would have achieved its objective, and it will disappear. And this would mean that we have improved democracy in Spain.

2) Interview with Alfonso Angel Alcazar Espin - history teacher

1) What level of education do you need for this job?

For teaching to types of knowledge are necessary. First, your area of expertise which in my case is history; to teach history you need to know about history. I have studied a bachelor's degree of Art history, a Master of Archaeology and a degree of geography and history. And second, you need a specific certification to become a teacher. Besides, in my school it is necessary to have at least a B2 level of English.

However, these documents are nothing if you do not have patience, and a certain ability for improvisation. When you are a teacher anything can happen,

and you have to know how to help and solve problems. That is the super power of teachers.



2) What qualifications are required?

As I mentioned above, knowledge is not everything in this job. A good teacher should have a close relationship with the students, but at the same time he or she must be inflexible with certain behaviors. Following these two principles teachers should be able to transmit knowledge and also civic values.

3) What kind of salary do you make (high / average/ low)?

This is a funny question. I think everybody wants to earn more money than they do, but I am happy with my current salary. I can afford a comfortable lifestyle and I work in an exciting job. I think I cannot complain.

4) At what age do you retire from the job?

This is another interesting question. Spain, as Greece, is suffering from an economic recession, and most of the population is elderly. For this reason, and because I am one of the youngest in my department, I will retire at 67, although most of my colleagues will do it at 65.

5)What's the social status of the profession within your society?

In my society being a teacher is not a recognized profession. Fifty years ago the teacher, the doctor and the priest were the most important people in every town. Nowadays the situation has changed a lot, and more and more people question the decisions and the work of teachers, especially parents. This makes us feel helpless sometimes. I hope society will value the difficulties of our work in the future.

6)Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

Being a teacher in Spain is not like any other business, teachers can not earn more or less money because we work for the government. Our success consists in making our students good citizens, providing them with the knowledge they will need for their future lives. From my point of view, I

climb the ladder of success if a discouraged student recovers the desire to study because of my classes. That way I feel the most successful man in the world.

7) How popular is this profession with women/ men?

I am really popular, everybody wants to be my friend. People are always saying "I want to have a teacher as a friend, please be my friend, I will give you all my money." It is the price to pay for being a teacher.

8) How much time do you sacrifice for your job (including your free time)?

It depends on the time of the year. Usually I try to do all my work in the morning, but during exams week I am working 24 hours a day. It is very demanding, but on the other hand my summer is long and relaxed.

9) What are your working hours? Briefly describe your everyday routine at work.

-I usually get up at seven o'clock, I have breakfast and a shower, and drive 45 minutes to work.

-Every day I have a different schedule distribution, but normally I teach five or six hours in different levels, and usually one of them is in English.

-After the two first lessons I have a 20 minutes break, during which I have a coffee and a snack. I go on teaching two more lessons and then there is another break of 15 minutes. In this one I have a sandwich and I get ready for the last two lessons.

-My days are pretty similar, but with children every day is a new adventure with new challenges and also challenges.

10) How many days of holiday do you get?

This is the question that every teacher hates. People think that teachers have huge holidays but this is not true. I have holidays on august (31 days), Christmas (15 days), and Easter (7 days). Therefore, If I do not count the weekends, I have 40 days of holiday a year. It is not as much as people think, but it is better than most jobs.

11) Who influenced you to choose this profession?

Some of my professors at university, who could make a gifted student push beyond even his or her highest expectations. Some of them were inspiring professors who encouraged me to pursue my lifelong interest in history. So, in some ways I want to be like them.

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements a teacher can do is inspire someone in the next generation to become a teacher.

12) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

Teaching is a profession where you can really make a difference in a person's life, and this is a nice advantage, since there is not a lot of jobs where you can change the way someone thinks or teach them important values.

On the disadvantages side, teachers do not always get the support they need from the administration, which makes our work difficult sometimes. Besides, sometimes our

performance, our decisions and our professionalism are questioned by the families of the children we teach, making us feel insecure about our position as guides of those children.

13) If you could change one thing in your work, what would it be?

I would improve the education system. From my point of view, the number of students per classroom should be reduced. In this way, each student could receive a personalized education according to his or her specific needs and interests. I am convinced that this is the best way to improve teaching.



3) Interview with Consuelo Ayllon Molina - geography teacher

- 1) What level of education do you need for this job?

You need a University degree in the corresponding area of expertise, in my case Geography and History; apart from that, a specialisation Master or Course to become a teacher is needed (this is compulsory if you want to work as a teacher in Spain). I have also made some specialisation courses related to Archaeology and different periods of the Spanish history.

- 2) What qualifications are required?

In general, as I mentioned before, the University degree and the specialisation Master or Course are required. Also, some schools request further qualifications, such as a B2 level of English, or any other language.

- 3) What kind of salary do you make (high / average/ low)?

Not as much as I would like, but I suppose it is the same for everybody... Now, seriously, I would say average, at least enough to live comfortably.

- 4) At what age do you retire from the job?

Traditionally, it was at 65 in Spain. The law turned it into 67 some years ago due to the economic crisis and welfare cutbacks. But I prefer not to think about that. Game rules are constantly changing in our world, and we don't know if, say, this retirement age will be extended to 70, for example, in the next ten years.

- 5) What's the social status of the profession within your society?

I think it deserves much more recognition. At least as much as footballers and tennis players get.

- 6) Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

Ladder is too short in the teaching field. The main aim for me is to succeed in forming empathic and assertive teenagers and responsible citizens.

- 7) How popular is this profession with women/ men?

In Primary School there are much more women than men, but this gender gap is reduced in Secondary School. I would say it is almost 50/50 at Secondary levels.

- 1) How much time do you sacrifice for your job (including your free time)?

A lot, mainly during evaluation periods. There is much work to do apart from the 24 hours we have to be at school, and this workload is mainly addressed in the afternoon or at the weekends.

- 2) What are your working hours? Briefly describe your everyday routine at work.

I get up at about half past six. I have breakfast and a shower and then I prepare my lessons of the day and I drive to school. Classes start at 8.30 h and finish at 14.35 h, with two short breaks in the middle. Once a week, we must be on duty during breaks.

3) How many days of holiday do you get?

31 days in August, 15 in Christmas and 10 in Easter. People tend to think that we are also on holidays in July, but this is not really true, since we devote part of this month to paperwork and we must be available upon the Education Administration's request.

4) Who influenced you to choose this profession?

My Latin teacher, who was an amazing man, and my tutor at the Qualifying Course for Teachers. Before that, I didn't know if I would like teaching, but being with real students, giving real classes, made me realize that I could really enjoy teaching. They were both wonderful people and dedicated teachers, and I still remember them as models to be imitated.

5) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

On the one hand, among the advantages, to be in contact with young people: I think it is the perfect way to remain young. Another one is the feeling that you are contributing to a better society. Okay, you don't get that impression many times, but in a very deep place of your heart you know that is true. And I think that, in the end, it is the main reason why natural-born teachers decide to start this demanding career.

On the other, as far as the disadvantages are concerned, sometimes we are misunderstood by students and their parents, which can be really frustrating. At least I find it very disappointing. And it can be very difficult not to take home some work or concerns.

6) If you could change one thing in your work, what would it be?

I would extend work hours at school, even if only a small amount of them, so we can get paid for our extra work and this can be recognised. Also, I would reduce the number of students per classroom, so we can better address their needs and interests, providing a much more tailored education to them. Some classes are too crowded and, in this case, you have to get too professorial and hold firmly the reins of the class.



Czech team

1) Interview with Romana Žatecká - Politician



On the 25th of March we conducted an interview with the mayor of our city – *Mgr. Romana Žatecká*. She invited us to the city hall and offered us some of her valuable time to give us an insight into the nature of her work.

We were surprised right from the beginning, when the answer to our first question was that there is no needed education, only the compulsory 9-year school attendance. What is important and necessary is for people to elect you. Therefore, unlike in the past, today the opportunity for both women and men to become a mayor are evenly matched.

A mayor has the privilege of setting the rules and deciding what could or could not be built within the city. However, the municipal council must agree with her to start

building it and there is a lot to go through before the project can be realized. Our mayor wished she could find a way to speed up this process.

She must tend to her work day and night. Every day, Mrs. *Žatecká* comes to her office at about 7.30 or 8 am. She checks her mail (including e-mail). On average, she gets about mails daily. Later, she has a schedule full of meetings, because she is also a member of the regional council, she travels to *Liberec* a lot. Not only in the mailbox, but also outside of the office (on the way home) people talk to her, ask questions, complain or thank for resolving issues. A mayor must not only care about themselves, but mainly about others.

As a mayor, she does not need to ask for permission to take a leave of absence. Nevertheless, thanks to her busy schedule, she needs to plan her absence quite a while before she leaves.

We also learnt that she considers the position of the mayor to be the peak of her career. She does not plan to stay a mayor for the rest of her life and wants to try new things as well. The salary of a mayor is given by the government and depends on the number of citizens within their village, town or city. Therefore, the bigger the number of people, the bigger the salary. Her average salary is approximately 70 000 Czech crowns (2 800 €). The average salary is given by the government.

In the foreseeable future, Mrs. *Žatecká* plans on building an outdoor swimming pool, which she sees appealing for our city and also reconstructing the theatre in our city,



2) Interview with Mr. Lessage - Cartographer



On 11th of April the students of School *Klíč* interviewed Mr. *Lessage*, who works as a cartographer, which means his job includes making of maps. In the modern point of view, this is seen more as a “geo-IT”, where data is stored on an external server and is later used to produce both paper and software maps. Maps used to be paper only, but even though they are online now, their form has not changed much. One of the differences is that they are more detailed and adaptable to specific user needs. Mr. *Lessage* never thought he would end up working as a cartographer.

As it is in most areas, advanced technology gave way to great development in the map-making profession. Some websites even allowed any user to edit and create new maps in otherwise unexplored areas. There are some huge companies providing clients with free of charge map applications, which makes it very difficult for smaller business to survive. Therefore, these smaller cartography companies try to come up with something new. For instance, the company where Mr. *Lessage* works tries to map various places and record whether they are accessible for handicapped people or not. And not only accessible, they also measure the width of entrances and exits, ways of getting in and out of the building, etc. Thanks to this information, local council can then be aware of any obstacles and discuss ways to eliminate them. Updating the maps happens automatically online. We mostly update our maps due to data collected from the _____(katastrál)_____ or flight photos.

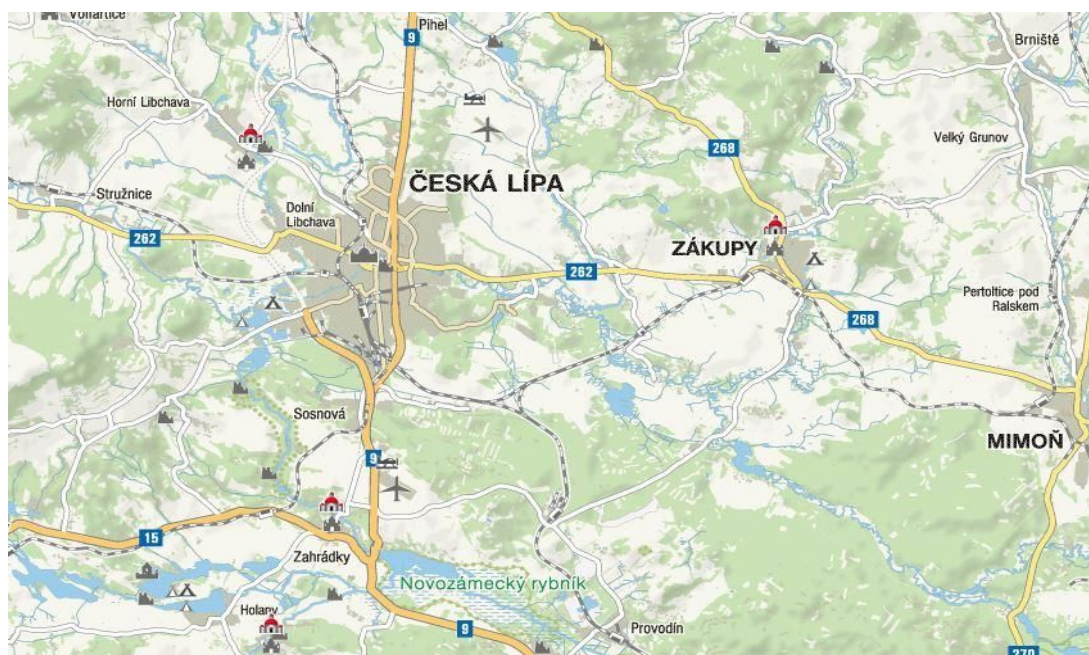
There are, of course, schools focusing on teaching cartography and are a great way to master this line of work. “A person, who does cartography, should graduate from one of such schools,” Mr. *Lessage* adds: “however, I believe there is no special education needed to get employed in the

business.” Even though he emphasizes the importance of proper education, he also says that an average person can succeed as a cartographer.

It has been 17 years since Mr. *Lessage* started in what is now one of three companies doing cartography in the Czech Republic. He works approximately 8 hours a day, but he used to work 12 back then, when there were no online maps. He starts his shift at 8am and ends it at 4pm. Most of his work takes place in the office, but he also works outdoors.

There are 3 employees in the company (used to be 9). The average salary of Mr. *Lessage* is as high as the overall average salary in the Czech Republic. He has the normal 20 days of holidays and 99% of the time he works inside the Czech Republic. Despite being a very small company, they have potential in the volume of data they can store and produce as well as in the data being up to date. The company’s biggest fear is a potential loss of data. That is why they use several storage devices to be able to retrieve the data in such a case.

The gender ratio of employees in the cartography area is balanced and the opportunities are the same for both. The oldest known form of cartography, Mr. *Lessage* says, included cartographers walking on foot and making notes of what they saw. They then tried to guess the distance of the noted object. It was the Greek philosopher Tolémájos, who used the basics of cartography and through his work gave rise to the system of coordinates. This process has obviously developed and is not done this way anymore. Firstly, there are the photos taken by planes and secondly, there are the documents in the _____(katastrál)_____. Also, there are men walking around with precise measuring devices and they map the exact borders of _____(pozemky)_____. Even today, laser devices can map areas in 3D and then transfer this data to a computer. “Perhaps 3D modelling is the future of cartography.” Mr. *Lessage* summarizes.



Hungarian team

Interview with the Mayor of Téglás - Politician

1. What qualification are required to do this job?

For my job it isn't necessary to get a qualification, but I think it is good to have a university or college degree.

2. What kind of salary do you make?

My salary is about 2000 Euros.

3. What's the social status of your profession within the society?

It is not easy to decide, because the mayor is the first person of the town. Based on the opinion, attitude or reactions of the local people, I can get to know how I do my work. But I can't be good for everyone.

4. Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

For a mayor there are two possibilities for promotion. One is, many mayors become a member of the Parliament or work as an under-society. The other is, if a mayor is re-elected by the local people, it means he/she works well.

5. How popular is this profession with men/women?

This work is more popular in the world of men. You have to work long hours and take an extra burden. A man can leave his family behind easier than a woman.

6. What are your working hours?

In theory I work eight hours, but I would rather say that, my working time is flexible. A mayor is a mayor in the afternoons, at weekends or during the national holidays too.

7. Briefly describe your daily routine at work!

I check my emails and letters every morning. Then I discuss the daily tasks with my colleagues.

8. How many days of holiday do you get?

I get about 36 days every year, but I never take all of them.

9. What influenced you to choose this profession?

It is not only an occupation for me, but it is a profession. I have always wanted to serve the society since my childhood.

10. What are the pros and cons of your job?

The advantages are that I know many people, I have relations with the leaders of other institutions, mayors of other towns and twin-towns. The disadvantages are, I can't spend enough time with my family and there is always somebody, who is not satisfied when we make decisions.

11.If you could change one thing in your job, what would it be?

If I could change something is that, I would give more work or task to my colleagues.



Portuguese team

1) Interview with Pedro Passos Coelho - Politician



Pedro Passos Coelho, was Prime Minister of Portugal from 21 June 2011 to 26 November 2015. He won the general elections of 2015 but didn't manage to form government. He was also the President of the Social Democratic Party and of the Social Democratic Youth.

Which political figure from the past inspires you the most?

In the recent past maybe Nelson Mandela. He became a true leader in the most adverse circumstances. He has spent an important part of his life in jail because of his political ideas and because he was black in the South African apartheid violent regime. Consequently, he became the most powerful symbol of the fight and resistance against this regime. Despite of this facts and after his release from prison in the final days of the Apartheid's regime, he used his strong personal story to fight for a peaceful and free society, devoid of resentment or bitterness. He aimed to give his example to build up a new society without any kind of political or racial dominance over any one's life. As President he gave indeed the best example of humility and national reconciliation spirit we can imagine, showing that is possible to inspire people to recognize that every life must be lived with equal dignity and that is important to built non-discriminatory institutions to support an inclusive society.

To what extent does the previous exercise of a profession, in your case a teacher and a manager, contributes to a good performance in the political area?

I suppose that in politics it is important to have the best connection with reality as possible. For politicians are not political scientists, looking at political reality in a distant way as an object of study, the direct knowledge of people's problems and aspirations is a matter of priority. Politicians who are mostly engaged in an ideological perspective loses easily the common sense. They are so committed with their ideological viewpoints of social and economic transformation that they forgot reality as it is. The world doesn't change by governmental decree overnight, and politicians who want to be part of social transformation must rely on strong values but also on realism and non-dogmatic solutions founded in open ideas. Politician who have their one lives out of politics are in average best connected with

reality than others and so they are well prepared to adopt a reformist perspective that considers reality before idealistic assumptions.

Does working for a better country offset the sacrifice of personal life, often necessary in this area?

Sometimes politics absorbs an important part of our personal life and becomes so intense that collides against normality and stability in family environment. So, you are right. Only the sense of duty and the idea of helping other people's life to achieve better standards can offset our own life problems related with the political involvement that we share.

What advice would you give to a young person who wants to intervene in the political area?

I do not like to give advice even when someone asks for. But I would like to express one concern of mine about being a politician. Unfortunately, it is usual nowadays that politicians want to be pleasant and nice at all cost. Of course, I don't think that politician must be unpleasant or unpopular, but sometimes they must have the courage to say or defend unpopular things and solutions. It is more important to be a self-respected politician than a pleasant or popular one. So, that's a wish more than an advice.

What importance do you attach to the Erasmus program in the training of young Europeans?

Erasmus is one of the most important achievements when one considers the process of building a European spirit among young people. European Union is a complex composition of different nations and countries, with common values and common history. But it is also true that this sentiment is easily perceived from outside Europe than inside. That's why we are not yet a political community with a common destiny. And it is wise not to accelerate the process in an artificial way when we have in mind the radicalism and the populism that is fuelling the national debate in several European countries. I believe that young people, born in peaceful times and in the context of programs as Erasmus, can be the most powerful element of a future European identity that can preserve and combine the national identities we all treasure in a future destiny we can build together.

2) Interview with João Ribeiro da Silva - tourist information officer



João Ribeiro da Silva is the main responsible for the service of guiding that the municipal council of Vila Real provides to the tourists who want to know Vila Real, its history and culture. Just after answering this interview he became the Director of the Northern Delegation of the Secretary of State for Culture in Portugal.

What importance do you attach to historical and heritage tourism?

Historical and heritage tourism are very important in various contexts: it's a vehicle for the knowledge of the importance of our own country and people; it's an attraction for who visits us; and it can be a way to fund its maintenance and improvement. To a country that is known by its beaches and sun, to have a heritage that shows that we are so ancient is a privilege.

Is it possible to have a profession with a future in this area in Portugal?

I think so. The tourism in Portugal is heterogenic, everything is nearby, the entrance fees in monuments and other landmarks and historic places is often very affordable, and Portuguese people like to host tourists, therefore there's a bright future for historical and heritage tourism.

What are the main skills to guide tourists through the history of a locality?

First of all, knowledge. The more a tourist guide knows about the places he's going to guide a visit, the better. Second, being nice and happy. Good feelings are easily transmitted, and a nice visit is much better than a rigid one. A smile is the best "icebreaker". A good sense of humor is also important. One thing that I usually do is trying to know something about the group(s) I host, in order to search for some points of contact, some resemblances, between history, people, dates, reigns, something that can create a bond between the places from where tourists come and the place they are visiting.

What satisfies you most when you guide people through the history and heritage of Vila Real?

When tourists have fun, enjoy the visit, interact with me. If I can reach that, the knowledge flows even without them noticing it.

What advice would you give to young person who wants to take up this professional field?

To study the most they can. Knowledge is the base for everything. They can be funny, friendly, but if they don't know the answers to basic questions, or if they lie about some facts and it's noticed, it ruins everything.

The more they know about the subject of the visit they're guiding the more comfortable they will feel to start introducing small stories, parallel to what really matters.

Greek team

1) Interview with Dorothea Kolyndrini - Politician



Mrs. Kolyndrini is the Deputy Regional Governor of Magnesia. She was born in Volos on 25/1/1973, she is married and mother of two children. Being a Deputy Regional Governor means that she orders the collection of the revenue of the region and decides on the allocation of the budget appropriations, she signs contracts concluded by the region, she recommends working groups and project management teams from regional council members, regional officials, public sector employees or individuals to study and process regional issues, defining how to organize and how to operate and she also sets up collective bodies where constitution is not delegated by law.

She is a philologist, a graduate of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens.

1) What level of education do you need for this job?

If you want to get involved in politics you need to be good at communicative skills first of all. Having a university degree really helps because you have to get informed all the time and you need to understand how the laws and the legal system works.

2) What qualifications are required?

Other than being really committed to what you do, you have to be honest and truthful to the people who supported you, you have to be hard working and ready to sacrifice all your free time. Also you need to be patient and flexible whenever needed. If you don't love politics you shouldn't get involved at all.

3) What kind of salary do you make (high / average/ low)?

The salary i make is minimum compared to the energy and the hours you devote to this profession. My previous job as a teacher has a higher salary than what i do now.

4) At what age do you retire from the job?

Usually the retirement age of a politician is when you get tired of it. But our profession has a peculiarity, as we are getting older, the knowledge together with experience help us to become better.

5) What's the social status of the profession within your society?

Being a politician in Greece nowadays is not a very popular profession. People question your motives a lot and challenge your intentions. you need to have a very strong stomach to tolerate all this criticism.

6) Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

Success is something that I think comes with the years and with the accumulation of experience and knowledge. And of course it has to do with each person's character. If you don't have integrity there is no way you will be successful simply because voters will turn their backs at you.

7) How popular is this profession with women/ men?

Even though there are more women voters than men it is sad that we have such a small number of women politicians in Greece.

8) How much time do you sacrifice for your job (including your free time)?

There are days when you don't get to see your own family at all.

9) What are your working hours? Briefly describe your everyday routine at work.

I get to my office and get informed of what needs to be done during the day (visits to neighbouring towns and villages, decisions that need to be made, meeting with the press e.t.c)

10) How many days of holiday do you get?

None. I try to combine visits to the nearby islands for business purposes with few days of rest.

11) Who influenced you to choose this profession?

I just followed my instinct in 2003. No-one influenced me to choose this profession. I wanted to do it and as the years went by i began to like it a lot.

12) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

First of all the fact that you feel you can make a change in people's lives. There is a wide range of choices and there is no routine. You always learn new things and communication with people makes you smile. On the negative side i would have to say that the time i miss with friends and family make me question myself a lot about the choice i have made.

13) If you could change one thing in your work, what would it be?

I wouldn't change a thing.



2) Interview with Melina Kostidi - tour guide



"My name is Melina Kostidi and i am an official tour guide in Volos. I am a graduate of the Department of History, Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Thessaly and i have an MA in "Eighteenth Century Studies" from King's College in London. Since 2013 I have been working as a tour guide in Volos mainly working with schools and educational groups. I speak English and Italian fluently"

1) What level of education do you need for this job?

If somebody wants to be a tour guide she/he needs to graduate from a university first particularly a department of Archaeology and of course be fluent in at least 2 foreign languages. Then you need to acquire a license by the Ministry of Culture if you want to work at museums and archaeological sites

2) What qualifications are required?

Other than the education level and the fluency in foreign languages, you need to love what you do, be patient especially if you have large groups and have a clear voice.

3) What kind of salary do you make (high / average/ low)?

The salary I make from my profession is at an average level as this profession is mainly seasonal depending on tourism and school trips which usually take place in spring. It is not permanent, i work as a free lancer.

4) At what age do you retire from the job?

Usually the retirement age of a tour guide is 65 years. But our profession has a peculiarity, as we are getting older, the knowledge together with experience help us to become better.

5) What's the social status of the profession within your society?

Crisis over the last decade has dramatically increased the need of people for make money whether they have the necessary qualifications or not. Many people work as tour guides without having the license needed.

6) Is it easy to climb the ladder of success in your line of work?

Success is something that I think comes with the years and with the accumulation of experience and knowledge. Our profession is very competitive and is becoming popular too since tourism in Greece is rising.

7) How popular is this profession with women/ men?

Usually more women than men choose to become tour guides. Perhaps this is because women can manage more easily the fields of communication.

8) How much time do you sacrifice for your job (including your free time)?

There are many times when I need to spend hours guiding groups one after the other nonstop. It depends on the occasion and the frequency of the work. I have a flexible working schedule.

9) What are your working hours? Briefly describe your everyday routine at work.

I try to work during Monday to Friday after i have come to an agreement with the group about which areas or places they want me to cover. It could just be a thematical guide in a museum or something broader like sights of a whole city.

10) How many days of holiday do you get?

My holidays consist of the Christmas Holidays, the Easter Holidays and some weeks in winter when school trips are rare. During the summer i am busy with tourists.

11) Who influenced you to choose this profession?

From a young age I was listening to my mum telling me stories from Greek History because she is a teacher of Ancient Greek. So my parents noticed my interest and advised me to pursue a career in Archaeology.

12) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

First of all there is a wide range of choices and there is no routine. You always learn new things and communication with people makes you smile. On the negative side I would put the element of anxiety since you work as a freelancer.

13) If you could change one thing in your work, what would it be?

I would probably change this stress that you feel for not being sure if you have to work the next day or not.

