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# My Journey

2025

**Pioara Ilinca**

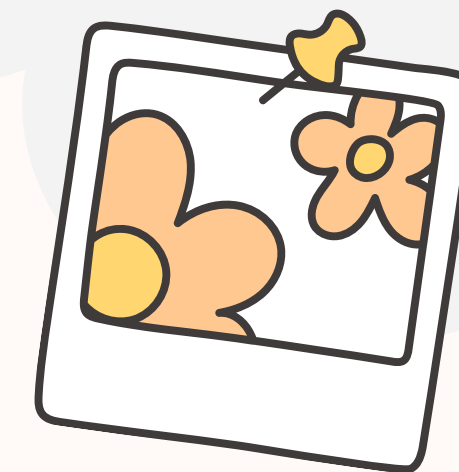
**Volunteer at ZONA INTEGRARE EUROPEANA**





# Hello, I'm Ilinca Pioara

During my Erasmus project in Turkey, I gained valuable experience by working in a multicultural team and participating in various educational workshops. I improved my communication skills through daily interactions with international students and local organizers. The project focused on cultural exchange, teamwork, gamification in education and developing practical solutions to real-world issues. I learned how to adapt to new environments, manage tasks under deadlines, and appreciate different perspectives. This experience helped me grow both personally and professionally, and it gave me a deeper understanding of collaboration, responsibility, and cultural awareness.



# FIRST DAY



My first day in the Erasmus project in Turkey was truly unforgettable. After arriving in Istanbul, I met the Turkish team who welcomed us with warm smiles and open hearts. Although we came from different countries, we immediately connected through our shared curiosity and excitement. The Turkish team introduced us to the country's rich history, customs, and traditions during an engaging cultural orientation. They prepared a traditional Turkish dance to greet us with and we also prepared with games about Europe, presentation and we shared some important things about Romanian culture. I learned about traditional food, famous landmarks, and the importance of hospitality in Turkish culture.

Also we tested our creativity in a traditional Turkish art workshop. I enjoyed it very much. Later that day, we visited the Istanbul Aquarium, one of the largest in the world. It was a fascinating experience—walking through underwater tunnels and seeing a wide variety of sea creatures from different parts of the world. The visit was both fun and educational, giving us a chance to bond as a group while exploring something new together. This day marked a perfect start to what I knew would be a life-changing experience.



# SECOND DAY

Our second day in the Erasmus project in Turkey was filled with unforgettable experiences and meaningful cultural moments. We began the morning with a visit to the iconic Maiden's Tower, a legendary structure located on a small islet in the Bosphorus. Surrounded by the beauty of the sea and the history of Istanbul, we listened to fascinating stories about the tower's past and took many pictures to capture the stunning views.

After that, we visited the Kite Museum, which was both educational and fun. We learned about the cultural importance of kites in Turkey and how they have been used for centuries in festivals and celebrations. The museum staff guided us through a hands-on kite-making workshop, where we built and decorated our own kites. It was a great opportunity to express creativity and work together as a team.

Later in the afternoon, we went to Çamlica Hill, one of the highest points in Istanbul. From the top, the panoramic view of the city took our breath away. We enjoyed some relaxing moments there, taking in the peaceful atmosphere and discussing the differences and similarities between our cultures.

To finish off this beautiful day, we gathered in the evening to play traditional Turkish games. It was a fun and interactive way to learn more about Turkish customs, and we all laughed and bonded while trying new things. These games helped break any remaining barriers between participants and created a joyful, inclusive environment.

This day was not only full of sightseeing and learning, but also helped strengthen our friendships and gave us a deeper appreciation for Turkish culture.





# THIRD DAY

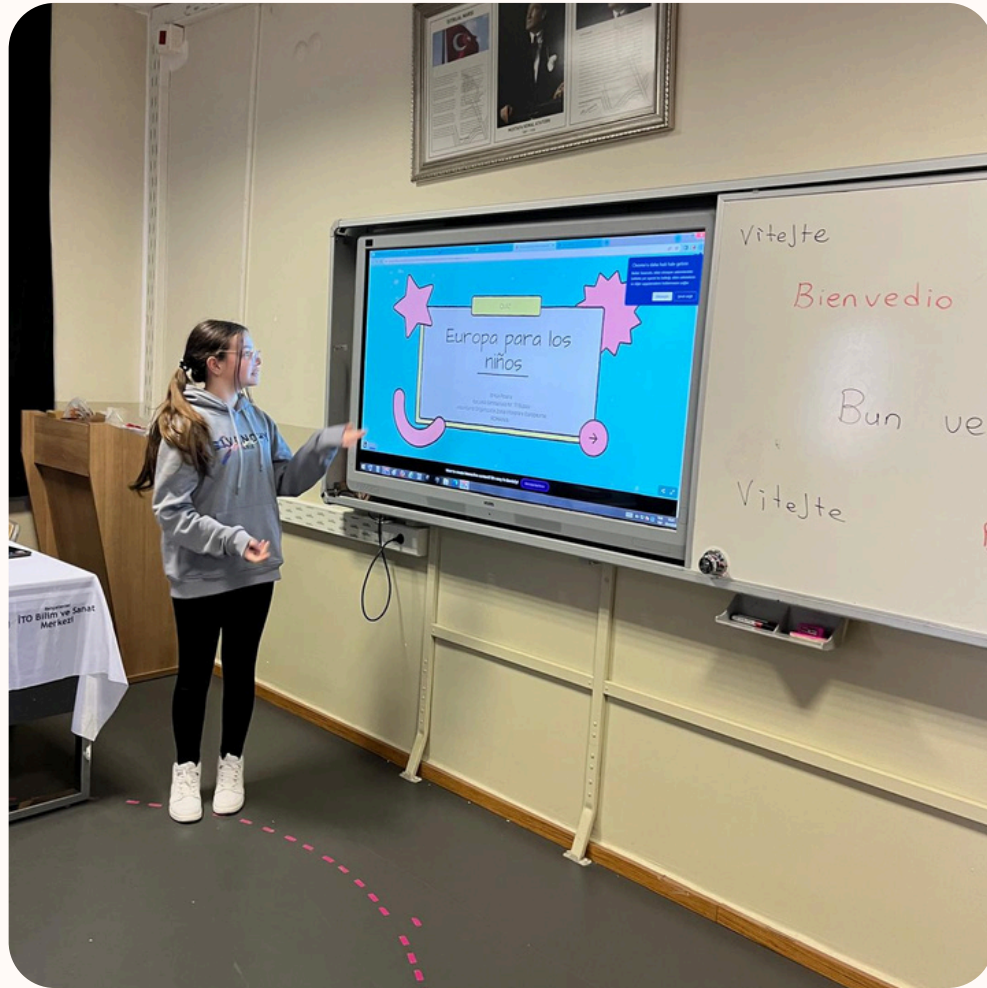
The third day of our Erasmus experience in Turkey was both educational and culturally enriching. In the morning, we had the unique opportunity to join different classes to observe how the Turkish educational system works. We were warmly welcomed by the teachers and students, and we had the chance to see how lessons are structured, how teachers interact with students, and what kind of teaching methods they use. It was interesting to compare their approach to education with that of our own countries. I noticed that the teachers placed a strong emphasis on participation and practical examples, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment. This part of the day gave me valuable insight into how education is shaped by culture and tradition.

After lunch, we were invited to take part in a cultural tour of Istanbul, which turned out to be one of the highlights of the whole program. Our first stop was the magnificent Sultanahmet Mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque, where we admired the impressive Ottoman architecture and intricate tilework. The peaceful atmosphere inside made the experience even more memorable.

Next, we visited the mysterious Basilica Cistern, an underground wonder filled with history and beauty. Walking through the dimly lit columns and seeing the famous Medusa heads was like stepping into another world. Our guide shared fascinating stories about its origins and purpose during the Byzantine Empire.

We then continued our journey through Istanbul's rich history by exploring two of its most famous markets: the Grand Bazaar and the Spice Bazaar. The Grand Bazaar, with its endless alleys and colorful shops, was a true maze of treasures—filled with handmade carpets, ceramics, jewelry, and souvenirs. The Spice Bazaar, on the other hand, delighted our senses with its vibrant colors and exotic smells. It was a great place to learn about Turkish spices, teas, and traditional sweets.

This day allowed us not only to dive deeper into Turkish culture but also to connect history, tradition, and daily life in a way that only traveling can offer. I ended the day feeling inspired and grateful for the chance to experience so much in such a short time.



# FOURTH DAY



✨ The fourth day of our Erasmus experience in Turkey began with an evaluation session. We reflected on the past few days, sharing our thoughts, feedback, and the personal growth we had already experienced. It was a great opportunity to hear different perspectives and realize how much we had learned, not only about Turkish culture but also about ourselves and teamwork.

After the evaluation, we took part in a very exciting activity: a treasure hunt game. Divided into teams, we had to solve clues, complete tasks, and explore different parts of the area to find hidden items. It was a fun and engaging way to build teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills, while also enjoying some friendly competition.

In the afternoon, we visited two fascinating places: the Koç Museum and Miniaturk. The Koç Museum, dedicated to the history of transport, industry, and communication, impressed us with its rich collection of vehicles and machinery. Later, at Miniaturk, we discovered detailed miniature models of Turkey's most iconic landmarks, offering us a unique view of the country's architectural and historical heritage. This day was both interactive and educational, leaving us with lasting memories.







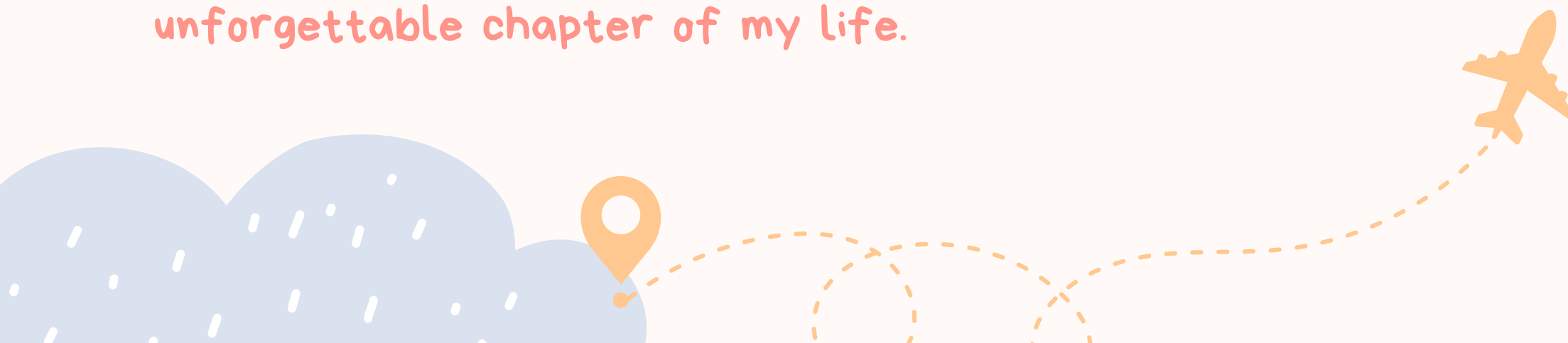
# FIFTH DAY



The final day of our Erasmus experience in Turkey was also the most emotional. In the morning, we took part in a creative and collaborative activity where we worked in mixed-country groups to design our own digital games, using the tools and skills we had learned throughout the week. It was inspiring to see how each team brought together different ideas and cultures to build something fun and meaningful. After developing the games, all the teams had the chance to play them in order, celebrating each other's creativity and teamwork.

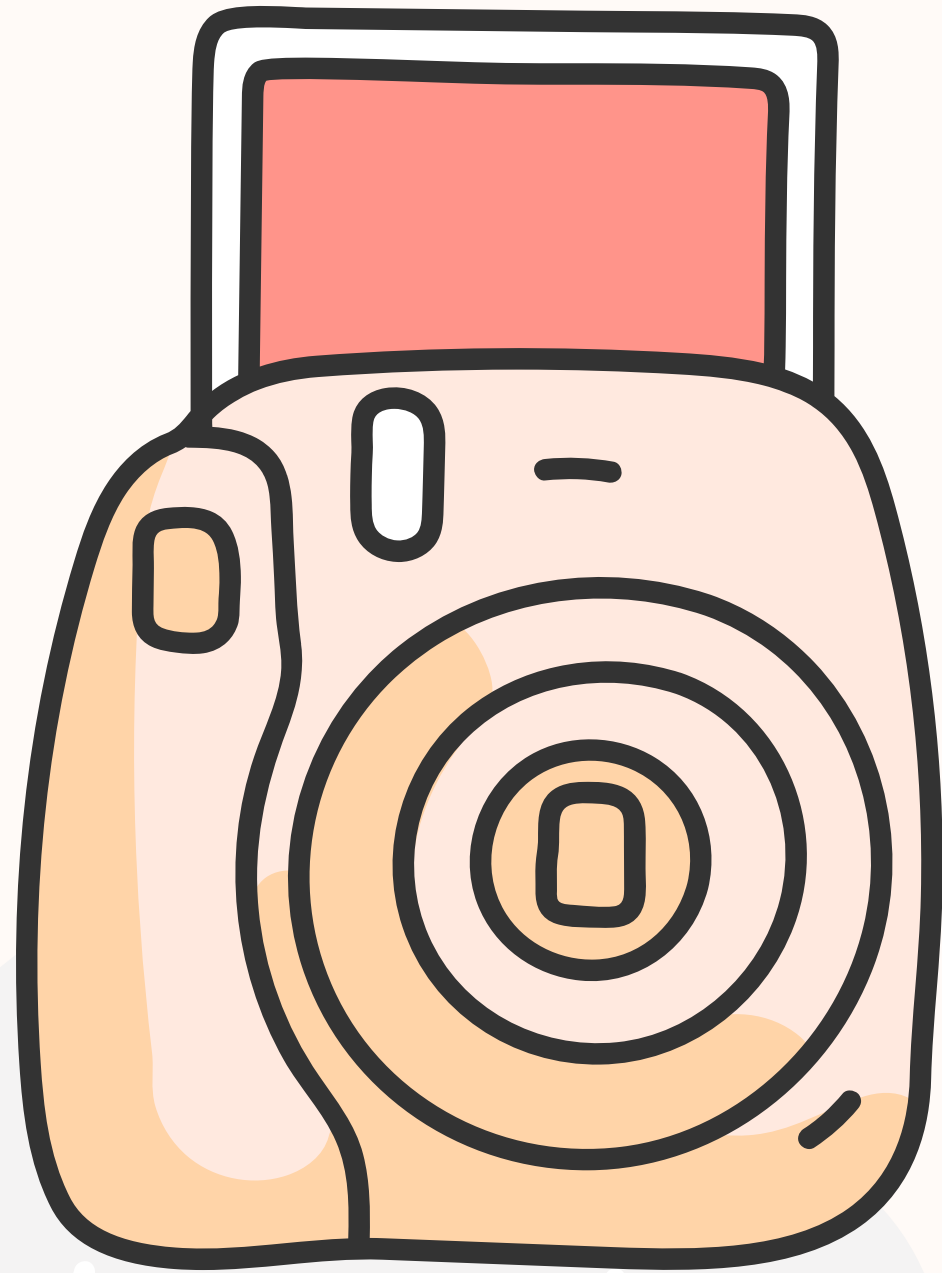
After lunch, we gathered for a touching moment: we listened to a heartfelt speech from the principal of the school we had visited earlier. His kind words about unity, friendship, and intercultural exchange truly moved us all. Then followed the certificate ceremony, where we each received a diploma as recognition of our participation. It was a proud and bittersweet moment.

In the evening, we shared a farewell dinner filled with laughter, memories, and even a few tears. Saying goodbye to our new friends was not easy, but we promised to keep in touch and stay connected beyond this project. This Erasmus journey was more than just an educational experience—it was the most beautiful and unforgettable chapter of my life. ✨





# IN THE END



My Erasmus+ experience in Turkey, part of the Create Future Gaming project, was one of the most enriching and unforgettable experiences of my life. The project focused on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and gamification, and throughout the week I learned not only about Turkish culture, but also how education can become more engaging and innovative through games and technology.









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