



Figure 1: Helmut Schmidt Airport Hamburg

The Erasmus trip to Malta kicked off bright and early in the morning at 6 a.m. on 17 February 2024 with the journey to Helmut Schmidt Airport in Hamburg (Figure 1). The flight left Hamburg on time, so we arrived at Frankfurt Airport nice and early. We had to catch the connecting flight to Malta, but despite arriving early in Frankfurt, we had to take a bus from the plane to the terminal. Unfortunately, the bus stop for the flight to Malta was a long way from the gate. After a bit of a journey, though, we made it to the boarding gate for Malta on time.

The transport from the airport in Malta to San Gwan, where my host family lives, was well organised by the EC Malta language school. My host family was the Cessar family, consisting of Mary, Alex and their son William. Mary is seventy-two years old and a very friendly woman with amazing cooking skills. Her husband Alex is also very friendly and invited me to watch his favourite football team Liverpool on TV with him as soon as I arrived. He is seventy-four and retired. When he was working, he was a self-employed butcher. After a walk into the centre of San Giljan (Figure 2) and a visit to the school building (Figure 3), the first day was over for me. Apart from me, there was another girl from Venezuela staying with the host family.



Figure 2: San Giljan



Figure 3: EC-School in San Giljan;

Source: www.maltadvice.com/en/ec-malta/; Date 2024.04.05

On Sunday we had a great breakfast and lots of chats. Mary and Alex also recommended that I should visit the capital city of Malta Valletta. So after breakfast, I set off to explore Valletta. I walked to San Giljan and took a vintage bus to Valletta (Figure 4). The centre of Valletta is very historic (Figure 5; Figure 6; Figure 7) and the church of St. John is very famous (Figure 8). The construction only took four years, but it took over 100 years to fully furnish the interior. The artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio drew one of his incredible sketches in the church. "The Beheading of St John the Baptist" is an oil painting by the Italian artist. Andrea Pomella says the work is widely recognised as Caravaggio's masterpiece and "one of the most important works of Western painting".



Figure 4: Vintage bus from San Gijian to Valletta



Figure 5: Triton Fountain

The customised marble floor is a real highlight of the church (Figure 10). I spent almost 5 hours in Valletta before I decided to walk from Valletta back to San Giljan. During the 10 km walk I saw some impressive things, hidden treasures (Figure 9) and innovative building technology (Figure 11, Figure 12). In the evening, I went to the school's welcome event for all new students and got to know many people.



Figure 6: View from Valletta to Senglea



Figure 8: St. John's Co-Cathedral



Figure 10: Customised marble floor



Figure 7: Valletta Fortress

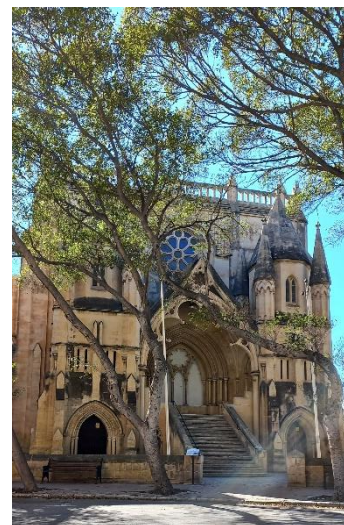


Figure 9: Robert Samut Hall



Figure 11: Outside installation



Figure 12: Gas installation

Monday morning starts with an online meeting at 7:40 a.m. from the school. Unfortunately, we can't ask questions during the meeting and the submitted plans were valid for everyone so we had to figure out which bank to go to.

I think, I was in B bank, but when I got to school, it was too early. They said I was late, so I had to apologise to the teacher and my classmates. After the first lesson and a quick lunch break, we had the intensive lesson. From then on, the rest of the week saw normal lessons starting at 9 a.m. and intensive lessons at 1 p.m.

To improve my English skills and get to know the country better, I tried to explore Malta on foot and by bus, as well as at school events. I booked a guided excursion with the topic "EC Malta's 3 Cities by night Tour" to the towns of Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua (Figure 13, Figure 14). I also visited the towns of Mdina and il-Bahar on my own.



Figure 13: Basilica of the Nativity of Mary, Senglea



Figure 14: Fort St. Angelo, Senglea



Figure 15: City gate Mdina

Mdina was the capital city of the island until 1571 and the old town is really well-known. The settlement of Mdina date back to the Bronze Age, when the hill was a good place to live due to its strategically favourable location. In 2020, only 244 people were still living in Mdina (Figure 15, Figure 16).

After a great week, I left Malta, a bit too early on 24 February by plane.

To sum up, an Erasmus-funded language study trip is a great way to brush up on your English, explore different cultures and get to know people from all over the world. In my class there were great classmates from France, Italy, Portugal, Brazil and Venezuela. I also have to say that one week is definitely a very short time, perhaps too short.

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Buxtehude, April 2024



Figure 16: Fortress Mdina