

In this Reportage I intend to talk about my experiences during the Trip to Sicily I took part in thanks to the Erasmus +.

We start at the airport where nothing of note happened and we got on the plane without issues.



Due to the different air pressure that is on airplanes my ears started to hurt massively (I have been on planes a dozen of times but only this time it got so bad it became physically painful) and also I could barely hear. It unfortunately stayed that way for around a day or two after the plane trip too.

Thankfully our bus was already at the airport when we landed, so we swiftly proceeded to our second ride and everything also was pretty unremarkable for that ride. (I did however have to be the one speaking to the bus driver as I was the only person in the group that spoke italian)



When we arrived at the hotel, we got to eat dinner and were assigned our rooms.



The cushions didn't have nearly enough stuffing and were uncomfortable as a result, but everything else about it was pretty nice. I ended up spending a good part of my time here since truthfully, there wasn't much to do in Pozzo di Gotto, there aren't really any places to hang out other than the beach (that was far away) so I mostly just sat on my bed watching serieses on my tablet in my free time for the entirety of the trip.

The morning after we were shown a presentation detailing things we might want to know for our stay here, but I mostly tuned it out due to being about behavior in italy in general which I was already familiar with. We did however go to a bar after and got to have a Granita, which was delicious and since the food was definitely the highlight of the trip for me, I will make sure to talk about every single thing I got the opportunity to taste.



They let us pick what flavor of Granita we wanted so I went with chocolate. The bread that came with it was too sweet and took forever to eat and there was a bit too much cream on top of the granita for my taste, but all that I will easily look past due to just how good the actual granita tasted, definitely a personal favorite from the trip.



For lunch we got to have the first of many Tomato sauce pasta with Parmesan. That is not a complaint though, as this dish is also a personal favorite, with the already tasty pasta being topped with delicious cheese; safe to say, this dish never failed to put a smile on my face. Even though we ate it multiple times across the trip, for the sake of avoiding repetition, I'll only review this one.

Dinner our first proper day there however, was one of the worst meals I had.



Only part of it that was remotely edible for me was the underwhelming sausages that came with it, so I ended up feasting on the scrumptious bread they offered there instead, it was like pizza crust, which made it a delight to eat.



At the start of the third day I was greeted by the place I would be working at for the remainder of my stay here:
Ritratti photography.



The place was a simple office with printing machines and two computers where I stayed for a majority of my working time, but also had a backroom to take pictures that I never really interacted with for my work .



At lunch I got to eat burger and fries, which were quite nice, the fries were pretty much perfect (though the lack of any kind of condiment for them was quite sad), but the burger, while still good, was a bit too tough,



Dinner (had at the same place as the day before) however was once again underwhelming, albeit less bad than the day before. The potatoes and sauce were significantly better than the meat that was just mushy and didn't taste that good.



The dessert (it was a cake / bread hybrid) was alright, if a bit unremarkable

Lunch the next day was Pasta once again but this time with Pesto!



Despite appearances (can't see it as well in the picture but the pasta is a greenish yellow) it was actually incredibly tasty! I can't say with confidence if it is better than regular tomato sauce pasta since I had pasta with Pesto 3 times on this trip and all 3 varied in quality, but I can say that the one in the picture, thanks to the added parmesan was an absolute delight

Second part of lunch was unfortunately, not nearly as good.

The omelette was more potato than egg so it just tasted like bland potatoes. It wasn't bad per say, but I will say it was also not good; It tasted like absolutely nothing remarkable except for its hard mushy texture which I didn't like. I bet army rations taste like this.



That day I actually had myself a little adventure on my way to the supermarket and found two monuments dedicated to the fallen victims during wars (as can be gathered by the writing on the plaques)





And also found the Minor Basilica of Saint Sebastian. Admittedly finding it caught me off guard because I was just wandering around while trying to get back to the hotel and casually stumbled upon this honestly stunning piece of architecture that features murals of other saints and two statues around the perimeter. I unfortunately didn't get the chance to see inside, but I'm sure it looked pretty inside as well.



Dinner was the first pizza we had during this trip! (going this long in Italy and only now having eaten a pizza was downright criminal behavior in my opinion but better late than never I suppose)

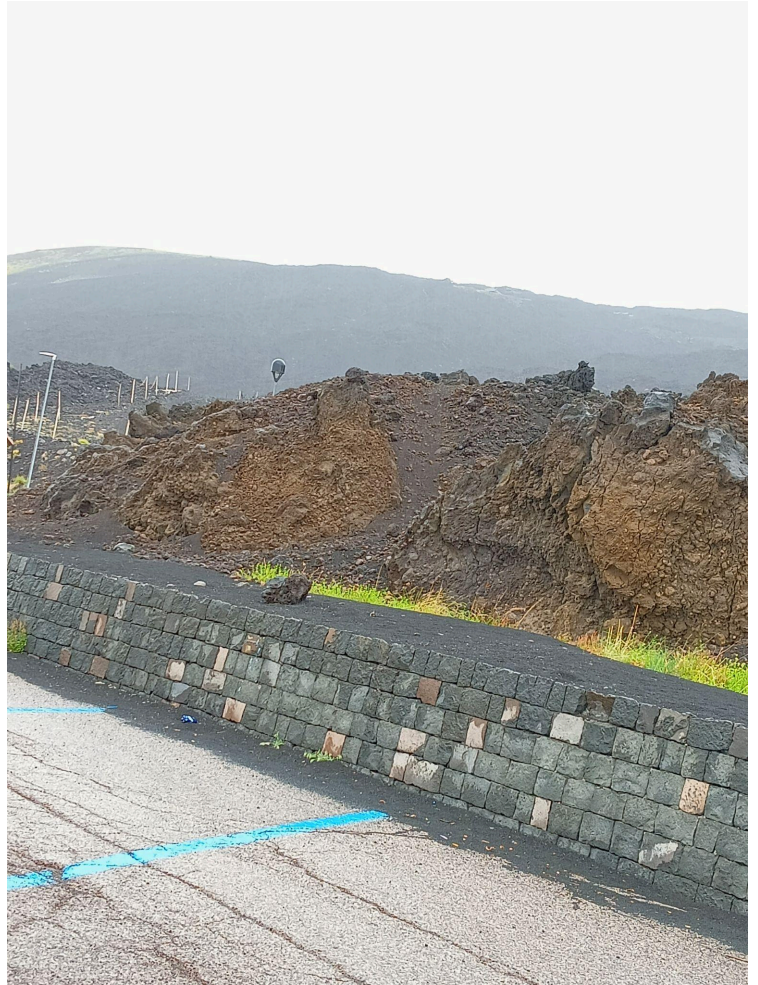


The pizza itself was ok, one of the worse pizzas I've had in Italy but still ok. It was topped with wurstel, some other meat similar to that and a mysterious white yellowish thing that I don't know nor wish to know, (I promptly removed it from the pizza before eating it). The fries were good, better than the pizza if I gotta be honest.



As a treat for myself, I got myself some gocciolo cookies. Now let me just say here and now is that these cookies are what dreams are made of, these have always been one of my favorite treats since I was young due to their sheer goodness and I can confidently say that getting the chance to eat these was one of my reasons for agreeing to join the Erasmus. Perfect texture and absolutely delicious, these made for the perfect treat in between meals. I brought 2 and a half packs home and honestly I could have brought 10 and it wouldn't have been enough, that's how much I love them.

This brings us to our first Saturday in Sicily. Now we had a trip to the Etna volcano planned, which we did go to, however we didn't actually get to see anything as it was raining an absurd amount and it was stupidly cold out. I was honestly glad for this as I have never really understood the appeal of visiting these kinds of places, so I thank the rain for saving me the annoying walk I wouldn't have enjoyed. The sight of the ash on the ground was actually pretty cool but absolutely not worth the long bus ride. The picture is the only one I was able to take, but it's lameness speaks volumes to how boring and honestly annoying this visit to the Etna was.



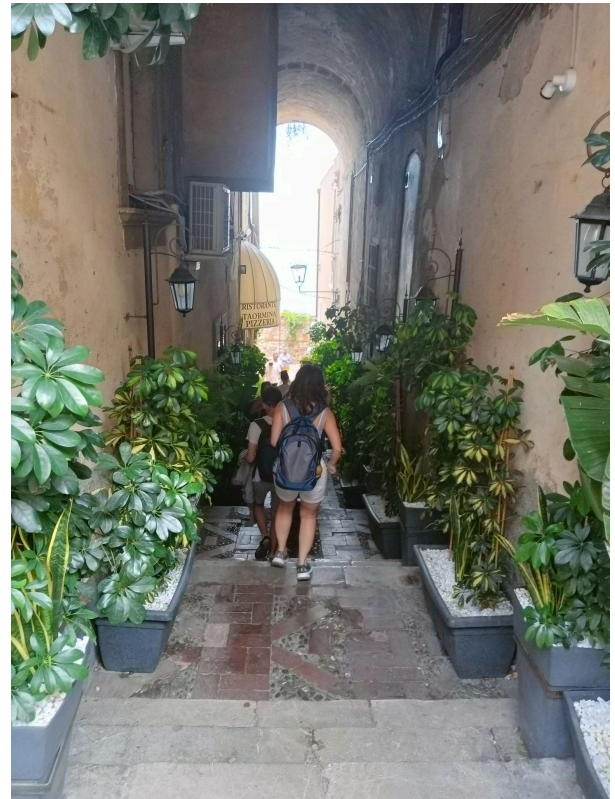
On a more positive note, the rain did stop by the time we got to our next tourist spot for this trip; Taormina.

Taormina is a massive and incredibly popular shopping street that regularly sees foreign visitors. Although I also don't really get the excitement for visiting such a place as everything costs way more than it realistically should, I will admit it has pretty sights.

I don't really have much to say other than "it looked pretty" since it's mythos is lost on me as someone



that doesn't really care for this kind of stuff, the streets connecting it's different parts were stunning though.



I didn't buy a single souvenir while I was there because as someone born and raised in Italy I don't really feel the need to get something like that of my motherland. I did however get myself some lunch that I ended up regretting the purchase of.

Good looking as this pizza may be, it was a massive disappointment taste wise. The crust felt a bit too much like a cookie and the mozzarella was not good enough, especially for 11 euros. I have eaten better and cheaper pizza on this trip. It pains my Italian heart to know there is Pizza this average being sold at restaurants in my homeland.



My Dad had recommended I try a Sicilian Cannoli, so I ended up getting one while I was there, that was also underwhelming and overpriced, however as I have eaten another Sicilian Cannoli while I was in Italy, I can say that I think Sicilian Cannolis just aren't very good. They are definitely not bad, the pastry dough is actually pretty good, but the filling is not nearly as good. I have had significantly better sweets than this.



The sight of the sea from Taormina was honestly stunning in its beauty and I am afraid pictures do not do it justice. It filled me with excitement to finally go to the sea the day after.



Dinner as always wasn't that good, with it being the most average sausages ever cooked (if Poland has one strength over Italy, it's that they prepare significantly tastier meat in Poland). But at least since we're still eating dinner at the same place (Pangourmet) I still have my trusty bread to keep my stomach fed.



Lunch the day after was lasagna, much to my delight. Both the pasta sheets and the ragú inside were super good and the parmesan on top (I am convinced you can add cheese to most anything that isn't a sweet to make it better)

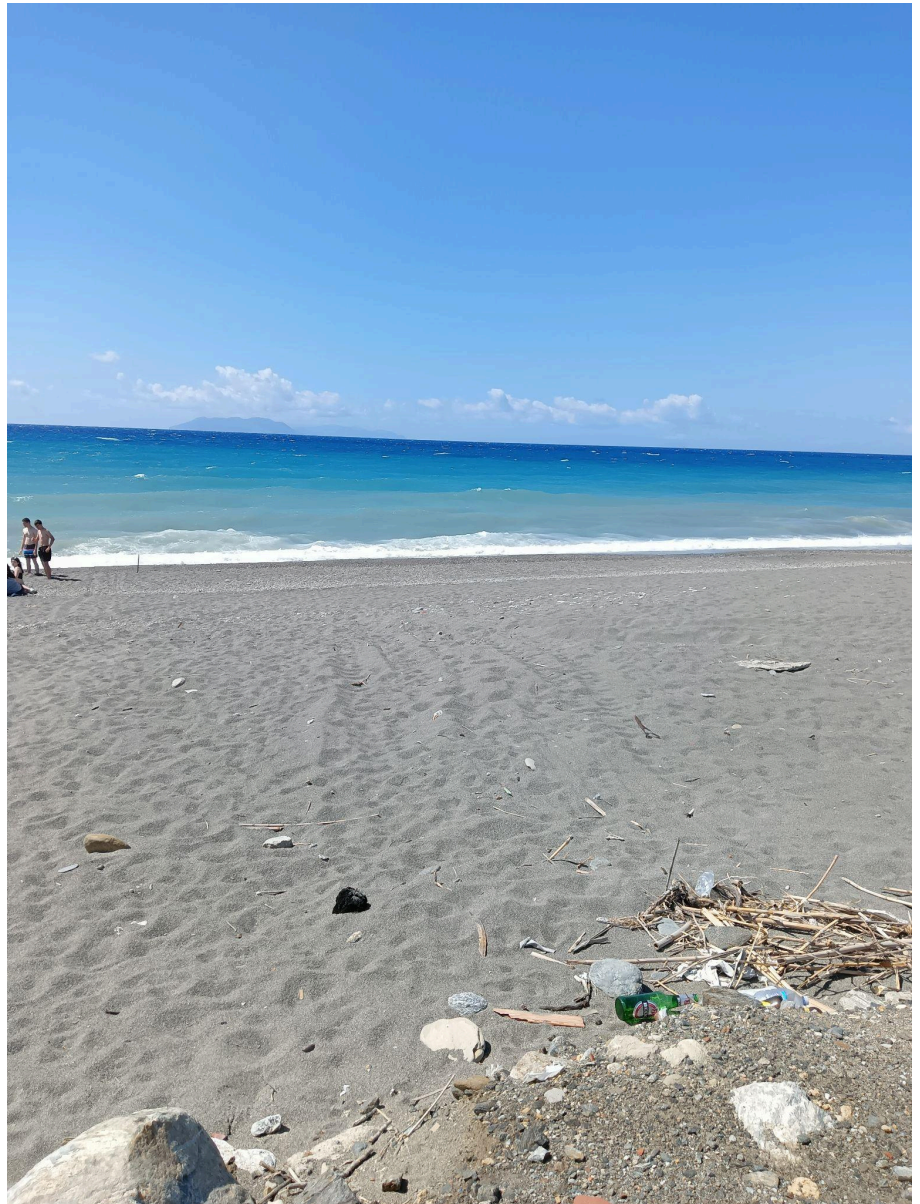
It also served as a good way of giving me energy for the journey I had ahead of me: going to the beach.

(I had another lasagna at a different time during our stay in Sicily, but it was made of actual pasta and not pasta sheets so it was way too heavy and hard to eat, this one was significantly better)

At the start of it I was yet unaware of just how long the walk would be so I made the foolish mistake of wearing a pair of sandals that hurt my foot when I walked cause I figured "the beach can't be that far away I'll be fine!" the walk was over 40 minutes long. Halfway through the journey I started regretting everything but at least I got to see some cows on the way I guess.



By the time we got to the beach it was physically painful to walk due to the injury I got due to walking for that long with those sandals (Injury that still has not fully healed by the time I am writing this mind you.) But the sight of the water immediately put my mind in an euphoric state. Upon closer inspection of the water I discovered the waves were really high and strong making it somewhat dangerous to swim in them and the water was dirty. After a nearly an hour long walk with sandals that hurt my feet so bad that was not nearly enough to stop me from entering the water and swimming for the next hour and a half. It felt so exciting and refreshing even though I have had significantly better beach experiences than this one; also to note I was the only one swimming (as I would later learn it was because I'm pretty sure I'm one of the only 3 people that even knew how to swim) but I will admit I really enjoyed the feeling I had of being the only one brave enough in the group to swim in such waters.



The walk back was even more hellish than the original one due to me being even more tired now and by the time I reached the hotel I could no longer feel my feet, but I wouldn't say I regret going to the beach that day (I WOULD however, regret going to the beach the next time).

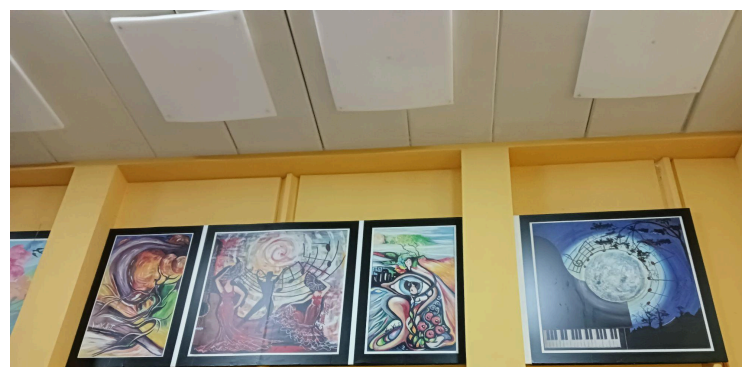


Dinner that day was mostly disappointing once again. It was a giant sandwich with mushrooms (I think? I wouldn't know, whatever they were, I removed all the ones I could from it) Prosciutto, mozzarella and mayonnaise inside. The problem being this sandwich had so much mozzarella in it it drowned out any other condiment inside it to the point the mozzarella was the only thing I could taste. It wasn't terrible, as far as dinners I had here go, it was one of the better ones, which I guess speaks to my dislike for the place despite their amazing bread.

We did get dessert this time as well, in the form of a piece of chocolate cake that was simple but really good, and it got my mind off the painfully mediocre sandwich I had just eaten so it gets bonus points.



For work the day after, I had a different task than usual, since the photographer that works there decided to bring us along for a photo shoot he had for a middle school in the area. His task was to take group pictures of all the classes and I was impressed seeing how fast he set everything up and how well he was able to coordinate the students into a proper position without being rude or overly demanding, me and my work partner simply helped with setting up the lights and keeping track of progress but it was still an insightful experience that I am glad I had. The school also had a lot of paintings hung up on the auditorium which were a very pretty decoration.



This day easily had the best food, as we started with lunch that consisted of some absolutely delicious meat and perfectly crunchy fries. It made me wish we got to eat at the hotel more, but I'm not seriously gonna complain that I got to eat at restaurants almost every day for 2 weeks for free.



Dinner though, was definitely the best meal I got to have on the trip (which we had the pleasure of having twice across the entire trip) which was Pizza at Unni Manci. This was definitely my favorite restaurant we went to , because these pizzas were genuinely incredible. We got to eat a variety of types of pizzas, out of which all of the ones I tried were very good. We started with a margherita with mushrooms on top, the mushrooms did nothing but decrease the quality of the dish, but the margherita itself was so good it was still very enjoyable even with them.

Then we got to the Margherita and god it was so good. Every bite was a delight, this was definitely the best thing I ate on the trip, it was cooked to the perfection and the mozzarella on top was delicious. I wish I got to eat this more often and if it wasn't for the fact that we had all our meals already planned I definitely would have come back here on my own time to eat this pizza again.



We then had four cheese pizza, whose biggest strength and weakness was its cheese; the cheese on top was definitely good but I will admit there was so much of it on top it genuinely overwhelms the senses when you try to eat it.

Lastly we had margherita with wurstels on top of it. The wurstel actually tasted good unlike the mushrooms so it was essentially just extra margherita with an added condiment, which didn't make it either better or worse. I obviously used the opportunity and ate 9 whole slices counting all pizza types.





Cutlets were also one of the meals I had most often so I will also only talk about them once even though I had many good ones and bad ones. In this case this was one of the bad ones, it was so breaded it was genuinely hard to eat, but at least the taste wasn't awful and the fries were very good.

Skipping forward a couple of days forward since I only had food I already talked about, for lunch I had which was a thick piece of meat with potatoes. The potatoes were pretty good and I also had ketchup and mayonnaise to make them even better, and the meat was also very tasty, I am a bit disappointed I didn't get to eat it all since it's hard to get all the meat while only using a fork and a knife, if it was up to me I would have probably just eaten it with my hands, but I didn't want to make a fool of myself in front of the others so I just ate with cutlery like everyone else.



That night we had a Street food tour where we tried some traditional sicilian food! Starting off with Arancini, which are fried rice balls.

These were definitely the highlight of the tour, I guess it's a little disappointing starting off on the best, but I don't really mind. These are absolutely delicious!! They had an incredibly tasty ragú filling inside that just made you want more and more of it, I definitely would have gotten more of these if I had the chance.



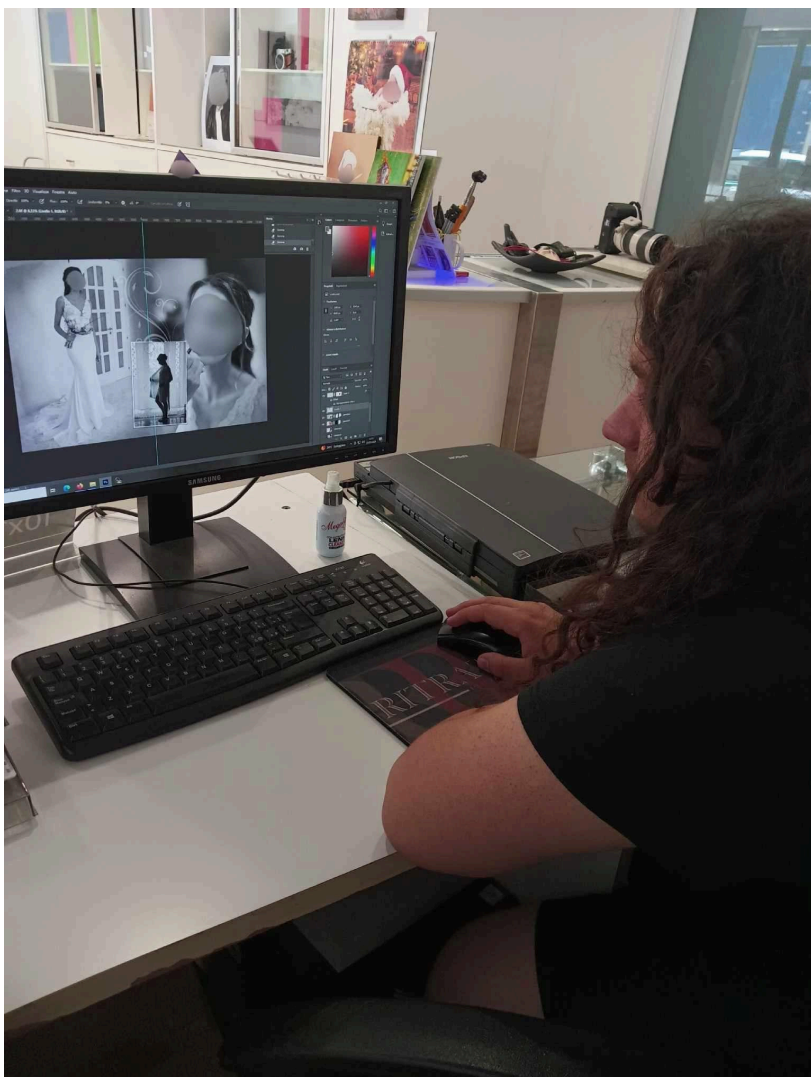
Next up was Focaccia Messinese, which was less good. The cheese on top was very good and I would definitely say this was pretty good was it not for the tomatoes on top. I don't really like tomatoes so they just made the focaccia worse. It was still a good meal. just not a very good one.

After that was a Panella. This one was not good. The fritters inside which are supposed to be its main appeal just taste bad, but at least the panino is good and it's small so you eat through it quick. Without a doubt the worst thing on this street food tour.



Lastly we got to have Cassata, a traditional Italian sponge cake. (and also the cannoli was there, I already tried them and I think they're average)

The Cassata was actually surprisingly nice, seeing as I don't normally like fruit. But the green exterior had a super nice flavour and the sponge cake part inside was also nice! Definitely wish I got more of these.



As a little break from all the food talk, I'm gonna talk about my experience working! Our task was to put together images for a wedding album (faces blurred for privacy reasons)

This was kind of my ideal kind of work since the similar stuff I do at school is easily my favorite part of the curriculum. Since this was mostly work me and my work mate could do on our own we didn't talk to the lady that also worked there on computers much but for the little talking I did with her she was incredibly nice and I'd be glad to have

someone like her as a coworker in the future.

The second to the last dinner I had (last was Unni Mancini pizza much to my delight, but I already talked about the food there so I'll avoid talking about it twice) was chicken meat with potatoes, which was even better than the other similar meal I had, which is an impressive feat considering that one was already really good.

The chicken was super juicy and every bite was amazing and the potatoes were also awesome and the oil on them was tasty and were very good to have to break up the process of eating the meat to keep it from feeling stale.



After 2 long weeks in Sicily it was finally time to come back to Poland. We had to get up at 4 in the morning to be in time for our flight (even if we ended up waiting quite a bit at the airport).

The start of the bus ride was pretty funny because one of the dudes forgot their praktyka papers at the hotel, but that was the only thing of note that happened during the entire trip back.

Overall I think I quite enjoyed the Erasmus and my experiences with it were all mostly positive and I am glad it helped me gain confidence in talking to others. I don't think I would've joined the Erasmus if we weren't going to Italy, since going back to my motherland was one of my main reasons for going; but I am very glad I got to have this experience.

