

A travel piece by the French Student Delegation

This is a travel piece that anchors our emotions.

We are part of the French Student Delegation composed of 12 students (Ina Belishta, Jordana Juste, Laura Bagage, Louis Ruchon, Maelie Douillard, Manon Colombo, Marina Perdigao, Marion Guilbert, Mathis Navard, Olympe Challot, Richy Diakabou Oby, Zakariya Boutassoufra) who travelled to Salamanca to attend the third EC2U Forum.

This is where the trip begins.

First day: October 27th

The first morning, we couldn't wait any longer to visit the city. Salamanca is one of the most beautiful cities we had ever seen. The cathedrals, the *Universidad Pontificia* and the gold-like walls were a pleasure for the eyes! At around 11 o'clock, we met the entire EC2U Student Delegation in front of *Colegio Arzobispo Fonseca*, and went to the multi-sport complex to play sports together and get to know each other. The teams included people from each university, so we got to know everyone by playing soccer, padel and archery. For the latter sport, our instructor was one of the best archers in the country, who plays for the national team. It was really nice to learn how to do archery with someone so passionate about it!

For lunch, we went to a beautiful restaurant and had a wonderful time speaking with the Italian, German and Romanian students. It was so funny to see all of us at the same table: some of us were speaking German, some Italian, some were talking in English, in Romanian or in French. Many of us speak more than two languages, which helped us understand the many multi-lingual conversations.

Before dinner, a city-tour was organised by the university of Salamanca. For the first time, we got to meet the teachers who were participating in the Forum and talked with them a little bit. It was very interesting to learn more about the city and to find the "frog"! There is a saying that if you see the "frog" on the university wall, one will be successful in their studies. We all found it, which was a "relief" for the whole French delegation!

In the evening we went for *patatas bravas* in one of the best restaurants in the city. We spent the night talking and having fun with everyone. On our way home, we bought some churros, and ate them sat in the *Plaza Major*, which was the best way possible to end the day.

Second day: October 28th

After the Forum opening with a conference on "How to Enhance EC2U links between education and research", we visited the university, which is a museum in itself. The library, the classrooms and even the corridors were amazing. It looked a

little bit as if we were in Hogwarts (but the Spanish version)! We, then, visited the *Universidad Pontificia* and went on the roof to see the view. It was stunning: with the sun and the blue sky, Salamanca couldn't have been prettier. In the afternoon, there were conferences on different EC2U research works. It was really interesting to learn about various subjects such as ageing in the city, cancer research, menopause, etc. Afterwards, the students met to prepare the debate on « the future of campuses » that was going to be held on the following day. We talked about green nudges, student-teacher relationships, modern facilities and much more! It was very interesting to exchange views on these diverse topics, coming from different universities. We regret we didn't have more time to work together on these subjects! Two other conferences took place during the afternoon: "Virtual Institute for Health and Wellbeing Public Conferences" and "Virtual Institute for Sustainable Cities and Communities Public Conference".

In the evening, a karaoke was planned, but the place was too small and the restaurant was not vegetarian-friendly, so we went to eat elsewhere before coming back to sing. Some of us got one of the biggest *pintes* we'd ever seen, though we managed to finish them! Some of us went to a nightclub afterwards to have fun together!

Third Day: October 29th

On our last day, we woke up early to walk around the city. We visited the *Palacio de Monterrey*, which has a beautiful view of the cathedral(s) and the city. We also learnt more about the Spanish royal family, which was really interesting. After that, we assisted a Public Conference on "How to assess the impact of European universities?". Before lunch, we went to the city hall to listen to the Mayor of Salamanca. The most interesting part were the exchanges on the future of the alliance. We got to see what each delegation expects from this alliance and it was really enriching.

Lunch was amazing! One of our teachers recommended we try the place. We all thanked her! They set a table in a private room, just for us. We had a wonderful time eating *tapas*, *tortillas* and other traditional Spanish dishes. After lunch, we took a moment to reflect on the Forum with the entire French delegation. It was nice to speak about the Forum and to see what could be improved for the following editions. Overall, everyone was very pleased with the week. The students debate took place at the end of the afternoon. For about an hour, the students spoke in front of teachers and staff and gave an overview of what had been discussed the day before about "the future of campuses". That way, the debate wasn't only by students and for students, but also for teachers and delegates of the different universities.

In the evening a gala was organised. It was a shame that the teachers, staff, and students were not together during the dinner. We didn't get the chance to talk to

the teachers about the week or any other relevant subjects. But the dinner was very nice, and we laughed a lot!

To conclude our trip, we can say that we had a lot of fun, we learnt new things concerning the EC2U Alliance and we got to meet a lot of foreign students and exchange our different cultures. Pavia is looking forward to hosting the EC2U FORUM 4!