



PRESS RELEASE

Erasmus+ KA155 “The journey, not the arrival matters”

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From October 2024 to March 2025, the *Institut za poticanje mladih* successfully implemented two inclusive mobility activities as part of the KA155 DiscoverEU project “*The Journey, Not the Arrival Matters*.” This initiative, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, aimed to empower eight high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds through two transformative 10-day train journeys across Europe.

The first mobility, titled “*Life is a combination of magic and pasta*”, took place from **9 to 18 November 2024**. Four participants (three boys and one girl) explored the culinary and cultural diversity of **Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Italy**. The second activity, named “*Make the Perfect Blend*”, was organized between **18 and 27 February 2025**, engaging four girls in a journey through **Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, and Austria**. Both groups were led by **Mateo Papić**, an experienced traveler and youth worker who has visited 74 countries worldwide and serves as a dedicated mentor within the organization.

These activities were not just about sightseeing; they were powerful educational experiences. Through visits to cities, museums, cultural institutions, and local communities, participants developed critical **intercultural understanding, digital skills, language competences**, and a **stronger sense of European identity**. The young travelers were involved in planning their itineraries using digital tools, managing budgets, and communicating in foreign languages – a unique opportunity for self-directed learning and active citizenship.

Most importantly, the participants were selected from backgrounds involving **socio-economic challenges, educational barriers, and geographical isolation**. Residing in the Dom učenika Sušak in Rijeka and coming from smaller towns and rural areas of Istria, Lika, Gorski kotar, and Karlovac County, these students rarely had access to international mobility opportunities. This project helped bridge that gap, offering a rare chance for these young people to explore the continent and their own capabilities.

The **project preparation** included intercultural and linguistic workshops, digital skills training, safety briefings, and reflection sessions. During the travels, the accompanying person ensured logistical and emotional support, while participants contributed actively to content creation via blogs, photos, and social media. Daily reports were shared through the official channels of Institut za poticanje mladih and its partners.

The impact was clear: participants returned more confident, motivated, and inspired. They reported improvements in communication skills, teamwork, cultural empathy, and a reinforced belief in their ability to thrive in unfamiliar environments. As a culmination of their efforts, all participants received the **Youthpass Certificate**, recognizing their non-formal learning outcomes within the eight key competence areas.

The activities were carried out in collaboration with local partners including:

Dom učenika Sušak

Gimnazija Andrije Mohorovičića Rijeka

Prometna škola Rijeka

Građevinska tehnička škola Rijeka

Škola za primijenjenu umjetnost i dizajn Rijeka

These institutions played a crucial role in nominating, preparing, and following up with participants, thus ensuring long-term learning impact and reintegration into their local environments.

As part of the project's **sustainability and dissemination strategy**, presentations were held in schools and dormitories, and two short videos (one per activity) were produced and shared through social media and the project website. The young participants also became ambassadors of the initiative by speaking publicly about their experience during events organized by Dom učenika Sušak and Institut za poticanje mladih.

This DiscoverEU inclusion action showcased how **travel can be a powerful educational tool**, helping young people gain critical life skills, overcome limitations, and envision a broader, more inclusive Europe. The project embodied the essence of its title — *“The Journey, Not the Arrival Matters”* — by focusing on the process of exploration, growth, and connection.

The Institut za poticanje mladih remains committed to advocating for accessible youth mobility, and is already working on follow-up activities and opportunities for new groups of young people to embark on similar learning adventures.

For more information and updates, visit <http://iyp-croatia.com/travel-diary> or follow @iypcroatia on social media.

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