



ONE WEEK IN TÜBINGEN

By Sarah Kyzilas



FROM 30TH OF JULY TO 06TH OF AUGUST
EUROPEAN EDUCATION WEEK 2023

European Education Week 2023

Student Project

**'Personal and professional impact of staying
abroad as a future teacher'.**

For reasons of privacy, the first names of people appearing in this story have been replaced by initials only.

Sunday 30th of July

I woke up early that morning. After Dad had dropped me off at the Gare du Midi, I boarded my first train, which was to take me first to Cologne. Once I arrived in Cologne, I tried to find the platform for my second train, which was to take me to Mannheim. As I waited at the station, the notice boards warned passengers that the Mannheim-bound train was going to be fifteen or twenty minutes late, due to a bridge collapse somewhere on the line. I began to stress and wondered whether I'd be able to catch my next two connections on time. Fortunately, the train finally showed up and I got on without wasting any more time. The journey between Mannheim and Stuttgart was the shortest of my trip. At around 1pm, I boarded the last train; the one that would take me to my final destination: Tübingen.

Suitcase in hand, I left the station and wandered around the city. As this was my first visit to southern Germany, I wondered what kind of city Tübingen was. As I crossed the bridge over the Neckar, I was amazed by the cleanliness of the streets, the colourful houses, and the lush greenery. I had a feeling I was going to like Tübingen. Moreover, I can say that I was lucky, because the elements seemed to work together

to give me a good first impression of this city. Indeed, while it had been raining up until then, the sun came out as soon as I stepped off the train. And everyone knows that the sun, and the brightness that accompanies it, changes a city.

I'd still like to share one or two things about this beautiful city that surprised me a little: the pedestrian crossings and the length of the traffic lights. As far as the former are concerned, I can certify that I have never seen such pedestrian crossings before today. In fact, in Belgium, for example, pedestrian crossings are represented by parallel white lines, which wasn't the most common thing in Tübingen. In Tübingen, pedestrian crossings are made up of two opposing lines of small white rectangles. I would learn later in my stay that this type of pedestrian crossing is only visible near a traffic light. Otherwise, the parallel white lines take over. Now, about the duration of traffic lights, I'd like to say that it's impossible to cross a street without running. Explain to me how I'm supposed to do otherwise when the green light only lasts a blink of an eye?

When I finished my stroll around the city, I headed for the youth hostel where I'd be staying this week. It was on the threshold of the hostel that I met P. Meeting' isn't the most appropriate turn of phrase, given that we'd bumped into each other many times before at university, P. and I

being in the same class. But getting to know her really was a nice surprise. I spent the rest of the afternoon with P., wandering the streets of Tübingen's historic centre. We bought a bubble tea that wasn't quite to my taste – nothing like Boba's in Brussels – and we passed a DM, a shop like the Di you can find in Belgium, to stock up on water. On the way back to the hostel, we met M., V., W., O., and V., two Greeks and three French people respectively. The first couldn't believe it when I told them I understood and spoke Greek, while P. and I were delighted to be able to speak French with the second. Telling you all this makes me think that I forgot to mention a moment of misunderstanding that occurred when checking in at the hostel reception. While we were waiting for the receptionist to explain how to get to the rooms, we were quite surprised to see that the receptionist expected us to communicate with him in German. He didn't speak a word of English. What an uncomfortable situation... However, P. managed this moment of misunderstanding as well as she could and enabled us to obtain all the information about our accommodation.

Getting back to the present, after our respective discussions with the Greeks and the French, P. and I decided to sit for a few minutes on a bench below the hostel to admire the part of the Neckar we were near. It was very pleasant.

In the evening, all the international students were invited to an equally international dinner. At my table, I met three South Africans, two Frenchwomen and a German. We all chatted very well together, even if the ambient noise and my loss of voice made communication more difficult. I had a most enlightening conversation with W., a South African, about her country's education system. I was also delighted to describe the Belgian system to her.

To finish talking about my first day on German territory, I'd like to say that at dinner, the food I was given to taste was good, if a little nauseating. C. and I agreed on this point. At this stage, I was wondering whether I was really going to enjoy the food in this country. I'll have my answer in a few days.

Monday 31st of July

In the morning, P. and I went down to the hostel cafeteria to have breakfast. It was passable. We then left for the university. We had to complete some paperwork and attend a welcome seminar given by the week's organisers, D., and A.

When we arrived at the university, we were given a small folder containing a map of the city, a Bic with the university's logo on it, a pack of Haribo sweets and a list of the best things to do in Tübingen as a welcome gift. The students were then divided into three groups, according to the course they had chosen for the week. The course I had signed up for was none other than '[Affectivity in Teaching and Learning](#)' by A. Dania. This course was simply super enriching! Both from the point of view of the material covered and the very human-centred vision that could be found in the lessons. A very simple example of how the human side came to the fore during this course is none other than the introduction of the [Secret Friend](#). To explain what this activity consists of, I need you to imagine a class of around 12 students. At the beginning of the week, each student receives a piece of paper with the name of one of their peers on it. The student has to keep the friend's identity secret, and, throughout the week, they have to do something nice to please their Secret Friend, without the friend

noticing. At the end of the week, the identity of the Secret Friend is revealed. Isn't that a fine example of humanity and kindness? Here's an idea for an activity that I'm sure I'll be initiating in my class.

Talking of ideas for activities, the Secret Friend is not the only one I'm planning to take up as part of my job as a primary school teacher. Let me explain. Throughout the various sessions run by A., the other students and I were able to try our hand at a variety of role-plays relating to emotions, emotional and social learning, feelings of belonging and social ties. We were also able to initiate debates around the above themes. Each time, the classes began with a short theoretical basis, then A. launched us into an activity, different each time, so that we could put into practice the theory we had just been introduced to. I never once got bored during these sessions.

In the early afternoon we had a lecture on the education system in Germany, or should I say the education system in Tübingen. I stand corrected as the German education system is quite complex in the sense that the 16 districts all have a different system of education. So, in Tübingen, children can go to kindergarten but it's not compulsory. Primary school starts when children are 6 years old. It continues until they are 10. When pupils are 11, they enter secondary school, which lasts until they are 18. Secondary education offers students a wide range of choices:

- Hauptschule = middle school (grade 5-10). This concerns 6% of the students. It's the less 'promising' choice of studies.
- Realschule: this school concerns 35% of the students. There, we can find a mix between strong and less strong students.

- Gemeinschaftsschule: this concerns 13% of the students.
- A-Levels = Gymnasium = upper-level secondary school (grade 5-12). This concerns 44% of the students.

All children with a disability have the chance to go to a regular school. A special school exists for these children too. It is called: Education centre for children with special needs.

In Germany, the system is based on points and reports to fill in.



Another conference, held later in the week, added a few more details about the German education system, including the much-appreciated idea that there is always a summing-up phase at the end of each lesson. In addition, differentiation is also widely used in the country's schools, which is a point in common with the education system in the French-speaking part of Belgium.

The lecturer also talked about the different options for following a course of study related to education. These options are as follows:

- University - divided into Bachelor education and Master education. The bachelor's degree lasts 3 years. The students chose 3 subjects. The master's degree lasts 2 years. The students chose 2 subjects and can add a third one. Teacher training is supposed to last 1.5 years but that's too optimistic. The government is trying to guide people to do the master.
- School-based teacher training
- Lifelong professional development

The day ended with a guided tour of the city. Our guide was extremely enthusiastic and taught us a lot about this student city. We learnt that

a very popular school was opening its doors to anyone who applied before the end of September. When I say 'anyone', I mean any international student. It was enough to make us dream a little. Unfortunately, when we arrived in front of the establishment in question, the guide informed us that we couldn't visit the inside today. What a shame... we could have had a little idea of where our next Erasmus place would be. Joking aside, we also got to see the town hall – a few days later, a student in our group found a photo of the town hall, dating from the Second World War, showing Hitler giving a speech, probably as propaganda. I liked it best when the guide told us that she had been married there – as well as the castle overlooking the town. It was this castle that was our last stop of the day.

P. and I then went to eat at a burger restaurant. The burger itself wasn't that great but the potatoes were excellent.

Tuesday 01st of August

Today, P. and I had breakfast with the Italians. W. also joined us a moment later. Everyone then headed off to the university for the first lesson of the day.

In the early afternoon, we were invited to a lecture on photography. The lecturer was none other than one of the girls I had the honour to meet during the international dinner. The talk in question was quite interesting, particularly when the members of the audience were invited to comment on the two photos chosen beforehand. It was a pure moment of intercultural exchange.

A short [gondola cruise](#) followed the conference. The cruise was enjoyable, and the organisers of the week provided a few snacks for us. The German chocolate I was able to taste at the time was quite good, I must admit. During our cruise, we met some adorable ducks and B., a student in the group, even tried her hand at paddling. She told us that moving the gondola forward is more complicated than it looks.

In the evening, all the students were invited to a ['beergarten'](#) held on the terrace of a restaurant, offering customers a breathtaking view of the Neckar. As I don't like alcohol, I ordered a hot chocolate – which I didn't like at all. However, I didn't really have time to complain about the terrible taste of this drink, because M., the Greek girl who will always be close to my heart, came to talk to me, which brightened up my evening considerably.

With P., C., and L., I left the restaurant to grab a bite to eat. P. had spotted a rather nice place called the [Veggie Box](#), which sold some very appetising vegetarian food. Once we got there, we had a pretty good time and, for the anecdote, if we'd come to this restaurant even a day later, we wouldn't have been able to taste anything as the manager was closing today. An announcement which saddened us to no end. During the meal, the four of us had a very good discussion about education.

Wednesday 02nd of August

I spent the day in [Stuttgart](#). On the train, I chatted with C., a very interesting German student, as well as with M. and V. It was with the two of them that I had planned to spend the day.

Arriving in Stuttgart, we followed A. and D. to the city's history museum. At first glance, the museum seemed quite interesting, as it was interactive, but at the end I was a little disappointed. In fact, the information provided, which was only in German, did not follow any chronological order. M. and I agreed on this point. Speaking of M., she was having a painful period and had to leave us just after our visit to the museum. I'd still like to thank K., M., and C. for taking the time to translate for us at several points in the museum. It was with them, among others, that I went to eat in a typically German restaurant, both in terms of decoration and taste. Although initially rather sceptical, I ordered some [ravioli](#), which greatly reconciled me with German food.

Once I'd had my fill, I separated from most of my companions. Only E. and V. stayed with me. We'd planned to take the bus to visit [Solitude Castle](#), twenty minutes from the town centre. However, E. wasn't really feeling up to it, so he didn't come with us in the end.

On the bus, I got to know V. a little better. We had a most interesting conversation about feminism and education in Greece. What I particularly liked about our conversation was how multilingual it was. In fact, we were constantly switching back and forth between English, Greek and, eventually, French. What an intense cerebral exercise ^^

When we arrived at the castle, we asked about the guided tour. We'd read on the website that it was only available in German. However, we were taking a 'nothing ventured, nothing gained' approach. After taking a good ten minutes to find the actual entrance to the castle, we went to the reception desk and asked our question. The receptionist used the same words as on the website but invited us to discuss the question directly with the guide herself.

The guided tour didn't start for another thirty minutes, so V. and I decided to take a stroll around the castle and, more specifically, its gardens. Our multilingual conversation resumed merrily, and the thirty minutes flew by in no time.

The moment of truth came when we met the guide. She asked us if we spoke German and we replied that we didn't, not really. After glancing around and behind us, she came closer and told us: "As there don't seem to be any other visitors for this time slot, I suggest we take the guided tour in English". We were delighted to hear this, and when we thanked her, the guide informed us that she hated talking to walls. If the visitors didn't understand a word she was saying, her job was meaningless.

What a wonderful visit it was to Solitude Castle. With an exceptional guide who is passionate about her work, a magnificent setting, and a very special history, what's not to love about such a visit? Thanks to her, we were able to understand the history of the castle down to the last detail. I'm referring in particular to the last room. Without a guide, V. and I would never have noticed the artist's intention to create a room adjacent to the royal couple's bedroom, depicting the rising and setting of the sun. The flowers - in full bloom or curled up on themselves, facing each other in the room - bear witness to this.

I'd like to sincerely thank our guide for this visit and V. for sticking to his original word about visiting this castle. I was all the happier when I heard that the others had spent their afternoon in town, doing 'nothing'. In the words of my dear friend, "I don't come to a new city to sit on a café terrace or go shopping. I prefer to visit."

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Before telling you about our reunion with the others, I must explain what V. and I did once we were back in the centre of Stuttgart. First, we went to a souvenir shop to buy some ... souvenirs. I picked up a magnet. We then went into a small Asian café selling bubble teas. I bought myself one, while V. was happy to order a grape coffee. It was in this café that I learned that V. was familiar with Studio Ghibli's animation movies.

With our glasses in hand, we met up with the others at [Schlossplatz](#). Or, should I say, it was on this square that K. found us. O., V., W., E., F., and C. told us about their relaxing afternoon, while V. and I told them about our private guided tour in English. We agreed to do a bit of shopping before catching the train back to Tübingen. It was during this shopping session that I took O. aside to ask her a few more questions about her very good friend V. As you may have guessed, V. is my Secret Friend. But shhhh, it's a... secret! 😊

When we arrived at Stuttgart station, we learned that our train had been delayed. We were tired, but remained in a good mood, chatting together. This good mood didn't fade in the slightest when we boarded the train. It was on the return journey that F. suggested we go partying the next day in a nightclub he knew well.

Thursday 03rd of August

Today's classes were very interesting and interactive, not to change anything. At the end of the course, P. and I got together to take a stroll around the city.

And that brings us to the evening of Thursday the 03rd of August. If you remember what I said yesterday, F. had offered to take us to a

nightclub. In the meantime, however, M. had informed me that the club in question, called Kuck Kuck, wasn't as great as F. seemed to think it was. M. suggested I go for a drink with him and the Italian girls instead. I told him I'd come after I'd changed. The misunderstanding began when I bumped into O., V., V., and M. on the ground floor of the hostel. They all asked me if I was 'coming too'. I said 'yes', thinking they meant the bar where M. and the girls were currently hanging out. I went to change and met M. and Co. at the bus stop. It was only when I realised that we were moving away from the centre that something clicked. The group I was with wasn't going to the bar but to [Kuck Kuck](#). I hurriedly sent a message to M. to warn him of the misunderstanding.

But since I was already a long way from the centre, I decided to have some fun with the people in my field of vision. F. led us up a small hill to the club whose good music he had so extolled. When we got there, however, there weren't many people around. We could choose our own music, but the atmosphere wasn't really at its peak... That's what I think is a shame about nightclubs; the atmosphere doesn't really start until around midnight...

To relieve the boredom, M. and I decided to play table tennis - we'd spotted a table outside the building. As it was occupied, we asked the players if we could play a game. I don't think they really understood us, as M. and I didn't get a chance to play against each other. Besides, it was too dark to be at 100% capacity.

A little disappointed, we re-entered the club and set our sights on a babyfoot table. It was here that M. and I gave free rein to our competitive spirit. We played three games against the members of our group and were ready to play a fourth if other people hadn't expressed

an interest in playing too. I have to say I was a bit frustrated not to have won any of the three games. Nevertheless, the evolution in our game was not negligible and should be noted as well.

We left the hill and its nightclub a few minutes later, after I had ordered still water which was served to me sparkling...

I'd like to conclude this evening by sharing a most unusual anecdote: as we were getting bored on the dance floor, I took an interest in the various books – in rather poor condition, I might add – on a shelf behind us. The book I found was in French and had the following title: '[La femme aux melons](#)'. M. wanted to learn to read a few words from this book and I improvised myself as a French teacher. While we were absorbed in our little lesson, V. took the book out of our hands and began to read it as if he were a native speaker. We were stunned. I questioned him about the meaning of the words he had just recited and fell even further back in my chair when he was able to explain them. The funniest part of the story was the pose V. assumed when reading the book and the way he called himself [Albert Rami](#). He actually meant 'Albert Camus', that famous 20th century French writer. We all burst out laughing – at least those of us who actually had the reference.

Friday 04th of August

After class, P., V., L., and I set off in search of all the purchases that would make up the collective gift for the teachers and the week's organisers. Transporting the gifts was not the easiest thing we did today, especially with the national rain that caught us in the middle of the

journey home. V., with whom I stayed a little longer because we wanted to develop some pictures, can testify to the fact that we were wet and freezing to the bone as we desperately tried to get back to the hostel.

When we arrived home, V. and I split up and went back to our respective rooms. I dried off and changed into dry clothes before helping P. wrap all the presents. I then welcomed M. for a short interview about the education systems in our respective countries. The interview lasted around 19 minutes and can be summed up as follows:

S: How would you sum up the education system in Greece?

M: Let's start with kindergarten. Kindergarten is mandatory and lasts for [two years](#). Children who attend are aged between 4 and 6. Children then go on to primary school, which lasts 6 years. Children attending this school are aged between 6 and 12. In primary school, a teacher is responsible for core subjects such as Greek, English, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, history, geography, [workshops]. In addition, there are other teachers responsible for secondary subjects such as art, music, [drama](#), gymnastics, and foreign languages. There are 4 foreign languages that can be chosen in the last two years of primary school: German, French, Spanish and Italian; while English is taught from the first year of primary school and all pupils must learn it without exception. Each lesson lasts 45 minutes, except for language lessons, which last just 20 minutes. School starts at 08:30am and finishes at [01:30pm](#).

S: School only lasts until 01.30pm? So, you don't have afternoon classes?

M: No, in the afternoon the pupils go home and have activities outside the classroom.

S: So, extra-curricular activities?

M: Yes, that's right. What else can I tell you about primary school? Oh yes! We have two types of primary school. On the one hand, we have so-called 'special' schools for pupils with... disabilities...

S: with heavy disabilities?

M: These are heavy learning disabilities in particular. Then there are the regular primary schools. A few years ago, we also had so-called 'experimental' primary schools.

S: What did they consist of?

M: Teachers who had a PhD to their credit could teach using innovative, new, and unusual practices; practices, in short, that were at an experimental stage to see if ... if ...

S: To see whether or not these methods work in the long term?

M: That's it! As far as textbooks are concerned, those used in primary schools are all state textbooks. In addition, all the schools work with the same books. There's no selection based on whether you're studying in a public school or a private one.

S: What can you tell me about the exams?

M: We don't have any exams.

S: No exams?

M: No, pupils don't take any exams in primary school. There are a few tests during the semesters, but that's it.

S: But how do you organise student assessment?

M: We have so-called 'continuous' assessments [= progression check]. The school year is divided into terms and at the beginning of each term, teachers keep a sheet of paper on which grades from A to C are recorded for each pupil – A being the best grade and C the worst. From the 5th year upwards, grades are recorded using numbers from 1 to 10. Every three months, there is a progression test. For the first two classes of primary, this is a so-called 'descriptive' assessment: the teachers say things about the pupils' behaviour, their progress in adapting to learning, etc. For the third and fourth grades, the letter grading system – A, B or C – appears. And as mentioned above, from the 5th year of primary school onwards, marks are given using numbers from 1 to 10.

S: And students have to score 5 out of 10 to pass?

M: Yes, but all the pupils get marks above 5, in primary, of course. As for our holidays now, our summer holidays last 3 months – June, July, August and... We start school at the beginning of September, on 10 September. And that's understandable, as it's too hot at the beginning of June to teach. Our Christmas holidays last two weeks. We have an Easter celebration during spring, which also lasts two weeks. Then there are the national celebrations and, of course, in February-March, we have Carnival, which lasts 3 days.

S: Oh okay, only 3 days? And don't you have a week or two off in October-November?

M: No, but we do have national celebrations, which last a day or so.

S: I see. In Belgium, we have two months of summer holidays, but two weeks in October-November, two weeks in December, two weeks at Carnival and two weeks at Easter. So, you could say that we have more or less the same number of holidays in our two countries. It's just the distribution that's different.

M: Okay, interesting. We can also talk about Junior High School and High School.

S: This refers to the secondary school curriculum, doesn't it?

M: That's it, then. When children finish primary school, they go to Junior High School. It's mandatory to go there. Students can choose between several options. Students can go to an Experimental Junior High School, similar to the primary school of the same name. They can also go to an 'elite' school. To get into this school, students have to pass exams. If they obtain a specific score, perhaps 90/100, they are accepted into the school in question. It's very complicated to get into these elite schools. Then there is general secondary education. In these secondary schools, a teacher is responsible for a single subject – which is different from primary school.

S: Do the teachers come to the class or do the students have to travel from class to class?

M: It's the teachers who change classes each time.

S: It's different from Belgium, where it's the students who change classroom almost every hour.

M: Oh, is it like university, more or less?

S: That's the majority, although there are a few exceptions. And how many years does a Junior High School last?

M: 3 years, from age 12 to 15. Continuous assessment is based on points from 0 to 20. In terms of courses, students learn Modern Greek, Ancient Greek, history, literature, drama – tragedy and comedy. They also learn the Iliad and the Odyssey, mathematics – algebra and geometry in particular – physics, chemistry, biology, geography, English, German, French, etc. – in short, any language they choose to learn. Gymnastics, art, music, ICT, and robotics are also on the programme. In the final year of lower secondary school [to use the name for Belgium] students have to take part in a kind of workshop to help them choose a career they want to follow. And, of course, in both primary and secondary school, there's the next subject: political and social science. Then we have 'High School' – the equivalent of upper secondary school in Belgium – which lasts 3 years but is not obligatory.

S: Oh, really? So compulsory education ends at 15?

M: Yes, at the age of 15. In upper secondary education, there are three types of school: the experimental school, the general school and... the school if you want to become a plumber, electrician, ...

S: It's a bit more technical?

M: That's it, a technical school. All three schools last 3 years. In the final year of High School, students sit examinations with a view to their entrance to university or a more technical college. These exams are called "Panhellenic exams". During upper secondary school, students choose their major. There are 4 different streams: humanities, economics, medicine, and science. Based on their major, students can

enter a university specific to their major. Economics' is the simplest of the four streams. In upper secondary education, all students have courses in common – the so-called general courses – regardless of their major. These courses are general literature, languages, mathematics, physics, and basic chemistry. During the panhellenic exams, students are examined on the 4 subjects they have taken during their study programme. Each orientation is tested on languages. And then you go to university. All secondary school lessons last 45 minutes and classes start at 08:30am and finish at 2pm.

S: Classes don't last as long as they do in Belgium – in this country they last from 8am to 04.30pm, most of the time. But I suppose students have to do homework after school in addition to their lessons?

M: In fact, students are, in a way, forced to take private lessons in addition to classes in order to be able to pass exams, which are very complicated. In Greece, you have to... you have to learn everything by heart. Even maths, physics, and chemistry. The aim is not so much to understand the meaning of what you're studying, but to study as much as possible and by heart, to learn an effective methodology for solving more and more exercises, which become more and more difficult as the years go by. So, there's a huge gap between secondary school and university when it comes to certain subjects, such as mathematics. Students don't understand the real meaning behind mathematics, even though that's precisely what's expected of them at university. And let's talk about the most important thing of all: if you want to become a teacher, you can enrol at a university dedicated to teaching, no matter which stream you come from.

→ The information underlined in green and highlighted in bold highlights the differences with the Belgian education system.

When the interview was over, M., P., and I welcomed a fourth person to our humble room: V. I didn't really have any more questions about the Greek education system, but as the saying goes, the more the merrier. When we were all complete, M. taught me several Greek dances. I remembered a few dance steps that A., a good friend of mine in Brussels, had taught me three or four years ago.

In the evening, I went for a drink with M. We talked for a long time and, somewhere in the evening, other students joined us. As we couldn't really hear what the person in front of us was saying and the music wasn't quite to our taste, we decided to go back to the hostel. When we decided to do this, it was almost midnight. However, we'd been wanting to dance to some good music for a few days. On leaving the bar, we found the perfect spot: the Church's piazza. We danced to French, Greek, and English music. It was a memorable moment. O., V., M., F., V., and I went home afterwards, without staying too long. Well, I say that, but that's without counting the magnificent pendozali – a Greek dance from Crete generally reserved for men – that M. performed for us. Watching my friend dance, I swore to myself that one day I would learn this dance too.

Saturday 05th of August

I had my last lessons in the morning. It was during these that the identity of the Secret Friends was revealed. What a moment of pure emotion. All the students sat in a circle and said a kind word about

their Secret Friend. It was the height of goodwill. To end the morning on a happy note, A. took us into the main hall of the building and taught us a few dance steps typical of the region in Greece she was preparing to visit next week. When classes finished for the other two groups, all the students in them joined us.

Once the dance had been learnt, A. and D. gave a short speech to round off the week. It was at this point that P., other students and I presented the gifts to each teacher, not forgetting the two organisers mentioned above.

In the evening, we had a final international dinner at the place where the 'beergarten' had taken place. The name of the restaurant was Neckarmüller. I'd like to point out that I had to do some grocery shopping before dinner, so I arrived at the restaurant a little late. Granted, the food wasn't the most delicious, so the fact that it was a little cold by the time I arrived isn't a real problem. On the other hand, I'd like to say a huge thank you to W. and A. who gave me two roses.

After dinner, I decided to go for a drink with a group of students. I was finally able to order a strawberry mojito and the little snacks we were served were pretty good. The waitress who brought us everything was Greek. Following the example of M. and V., who communicated with the waitress in Greek, I chatted to her in the same language. The waitress was adorable! One thing I can say about this week, without any hesitation, is that I was able to practise my Greek again. In fact, it had been a good year since I'd had the chance to have a real conversation in Greek.

During the evening, the Italian women at my table suggested a most amusing game. It consisted of saying numbers from 1 to 20 and, at each

turn, changing one number for another word of your choice. You can imagine that after two rounds, we were already getting confused ^^ And, of course, when one of the players got it wrong, they had to make a (kind) dare.

A round of applause for C., who brought us to tears of laughter every time she had to perform a dare.

Sunday 06th of August

Last morning in Tübingen. P. and I went downstairs for breakfast, and we were happy to bump into familiar faces. There's no denying it, but endings, whatever the event, bring with them a very special atmosphere.

That morning I also found out that there was work going on, on the train line between Tübingen and Stuttgart. To avoid any incidents, I went to the station to ask about the best way to get to Stuttgart, given the current transport conditions. The friendly ticket agent explained that there was a replacement bus between the two cities. I serenely returned to the hostel. On the way I bumped into C., C., B., and I., who offered to take me out for a drink before the last three left. I gladly accepted and went to the hostel to collect my suitcase. There I met P. again and asked her to join us for a drink. She said she'd be delighted to come if she wasn't already waiting for her companion, with whom she was planning to have a bite to eat. We hugged and said goodbye to each other – P. was the only person in the camp I left with a light heart, knowing full well that we would be seeing each other again in September.

In the café where I met the girls, I tasted an Iced Chocolate that was less bitter than the one I'd had a few days earlier.

When it was time for C., B., and I. to leave, I stayed with C., and we left the café to buy a sweet. We set our sights on a bakery just across the road from where we were standing. As the desserts looked appetising, we took two and divided them between us. I preferred their crumble to the second dessert, though, and particularly enjoyed the chat I had with C. C. accompanied me to the station and soon I was on my bus, which signed the end of my journey to the German city of Tübingen.

The return journey - or should I say journeys - went off without a hitch. During the two-hour journey from Mannheim to Cologne, I had plenty of time to reflect on those eight days, which were so enriching for me, both humanly and professionally speaking. I'm convinced that if I hadn't had the opportunity to take part in this European Education Week, I would have been a different teacher. I say this not least because all the interactive activities provided as part of the 'Affectivity in Teaching and Learning' course have given me lots of ideas for how these activities could be transposed into my future classroom.

I'd like to conclude this account of my adventures in Tübingen by thanking all the kind souls who crossed my path during the week and with whom I was able to chat, whatever the subject. A huge thank you also to the organisers of this week, without whom this wonderful adventure would never have taken place.