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Short-term mobility of pupils, A diary

Day 1

Tuesday May 30th

We arrived to the meeting point still tired and sleepy. Despite that none of us showed up late so we were able to leave on schedule. The ride went smoothly and we ended up talking through all of it. Because of the smooth ride we ended up being at the airport about an hour before our gate even opened but after some waiting we managed to check in our bags and made it all the way to the security check. The only thing that awaited us after that was even more waiting. Our plane arrived about 15 minutes late but other than that there were no trouble. The flight itself was pretty short and we landed at the Schiphol Airport in no time. There we quickly picked up our luggage, none of which got lost, and made our way to the train station. Thanks to the convenient railway system we found ourselves arriving at the Amsterdam Zentraal station in the blink of an eye. Despite having some trouble figuring out how the local trams work we managed to board one and we headed for our hostel. There we finally took a moment to lay down and maybe unpack our bags a little. But not after long we had been on our feet again because we had a meeting at the Cygnus Gymnasium in about an hour and we wanted to grab some snacks before that. The walk to the school was about 30 minutes long and that's when we really got to see the city for the first time. After the short tour and the anticipated snack break we decided to head for the school. There we met with the wonderful staff and also the students who were more than welcoming. We even ended up talking for over 2 hours. During these 2 hours we, among other things, discussed our schedule for Wednesday and also got a little tour of the school. After this first meeting we headed back to our hostel where we gathered our remaining strength reserved for getting some proper food. We went and got some burgers that were recommended to us by one of the students. After that we just slowly but surely made our way back through some beautiful looking streets and alleys. We went to sleep slightly earlier than we would normally in order to make up for our sleep deficit.

Day 2

Wednesday May 31st

This was our first day of school. Adam had to get up a bit earlier because his first lesson chemistry which started about two hours sooner. Šárka, Ema and Dan headed for their first lessons at about 9:30. Šárka joined Adam at Math B, which is more algebra oriented, while Ema and Dan took a lesson in Latin. Then, because the Dutch class got canceled, we all joined the NLT lesson. As we learned there, NLT stands for something like nature, technology and science. After that our ways split again. Šárka, Ema and Dan visited the Greek and Geography lessons while Adam enjoyed his 2 free periods. After that he joined an Economics class and then 2 hours of Physics. The others spent their last three lessons learning Art history, History and Culture and religion. After this exhausting school day we bid farewell to our Dutch peers and made our way back to the hostel. After a little break we went searching for something to eat for dinner. We settled on a kebab and on our way back to our place we

explored the beauties of the local Oosterpark. After arriving back we just chose our schedule for the next day and quickly fell asleep.

Day 3

Thursday June 1st

The day started a bit hectically because we slept in a little and had to make our way to the school fairly hastily. Despite that we made it to the Art history lesson on time and were able to enjoy the entire lecture on Italian Renaissance in English. After that we partook in a Latin lecture where we translated some antique texts. And then the magic happened. Well more like the Music lesson happened. We just spent the entire two hours listening to the Dutch students playing songs, one of which was even their own. Then we joined the Societal studies class where the students discussed some of the countries issues. After that our next lesson was Culture and religion. There some of the students held a presentation about an interview they had with a famous Dutch imam. During the break that followed Lara, one of the Dutch students showed us some great Dutch foods we could buy in a grocery store. Then we were supposed to have History but since that class was cancelled we joined a Dutch lesson. As this was our final lesson we had a bunch of free time so we decided to visit the city center. There we saw many different channels, the oldest house, the Red district and the main square itself. And we of course visited some shops. We bought some food on our way back and arrived to the hostel just around 8 pm. We again discussed our plans for the next day, ate the food we bought and then did some schoolwork. We were feeling somewhat tired so nothing but sleep awaited us after that.

Day 4

Friday June 2nd

The day started off a bit weird because to our first lesson, Philosophy, only three people showed up. So we had a nice talk with the teacher who even knew a bit of Czech and then joined the Geography class where we had the opportunity to share our thoughts on the placement of Czechia on the country classification system. After that we decided to take the Biology class, unfortunately the students there were working on their own projects and so we decided to do the same. Then came History. There we learned about the second Dutch king, Willem I. After that Adam and Šárka had a free period and so they joined some of the Dutch students on a trip to Albert Heijn. During that Ema and Dan learned Latin. During that period we also got our own Cygnus hoodies from the school janitor, Jerry. After that we all got to see how the student council there works. After the meeting we got to see how the English lessons look and we found out that they're vastly different from the ones we have at home. This lesson in particular they were doing mock job interviews with the teacher. The last lesson was Math A where the students also had their own work. When we got back to the hostel, everyone got to their own work. But in the evening we went out to a nice pub in which we spent a nice couple of hours talking. On our way back we grabbed a falafel for dinner which proved as an extremely bad choice because of its horrendous taste. When we finally finished it the only thing we were able to do was going to sleep.

Day 5

Saturday June 3rd

This day we were finally able to make up a little for our sleep deficit. That doesn't mean we woke up tremendously late though. That was because we had to say goodbye to our teachers who were already leaving. After bidding them farewell it was around noon so we quickly grabbed some of our most needed belongings and set off for The Hague. We took the train from Amsterdam Zentraal and after about an hour long ride we arrived at the station near the city center. We walked a bit through the city but it was not after long when we started feeling hungry. So we stopped for our first real meal in a restaurant since we arrived to the Netherlands. When we finished our meal we ventured through the city visiting the royal gardens and palace, the international court and finally we took a tram to the beach. After our little meet with the Baltic sea we headed back towards the train station but before that we still had to see some of the embassies that are in The Hague and of course the royal stables. After we successfully got back to our hostel we held a little movie night during which we all slowly but surely fell asleep.

Day 6

Sunday June 4th

We once again decided to wake up a bit later but that didn't really matter this day because we weren't going anywhere far away. That's because we wanted to visit the zoo in Amsterdam by the name of Artis. We spent around three hours there observing the various animals but the ones we found the most intriguing were the monkeys and the butterflies in the botanical pavilion. After seeing all the different animals and greeting our friend Lara, we set out on our quest to find some food. We got some fries and then waited a while until it was time for us to go to the cinema. We watched The Guardians of the Galaxy and one of the Dutch students, Camey, even joined us too. After the movie ended we met up with Lara again and sat for a while in a pub on the Rembrandt square. We got to talk a lot and really got to know each other. It was already around 10 pm when we were finally ready to go back to the hostel. We bid farewell to our two friends and departed on our journey back through evening Amsterdam. When we arrived to our rooms we just quickly hopped in our beds and fell asleep.

Day 7

Monday June 5th

This morning was fairly similar to our very first one in Amsterdam. Adam once again had Chemistry for the first two periods so he went to school earlier than the others. They were supposed to have Latin but it was unfortunately last minute cancelled. Our next lesson was English but because the students were taking a test during this particular one we didn't go there either. Next up was PE towards which we were very much looking so because we were interested in the different sports Dutch kids play. The lesson took place at a football stadium that's about 20 minutes away from the school so we followed some students who were using the public transport to get there. The entire lesson students were allowed to choose between different sports. For example Kazisvĕt VI., z boží vůle král and Adam played football and field hockey while Ema tried out volleyball. When we returned we took Philosophy where the students were presenting some less known philosophers who spoke on the issue of man and machine. Upon returning back to our rooms we had a little study

and work session that prolonged until late night. We were too exhausted to do anything but that so we just fell asleep.

Day 8

Tuesday June 6th

Our first lesson on this day was Dutch. The topic was once again speeches so we simply took the opportunity to listen to some Dutch. After that we split up again. Adam and Šárka decided to go for Physics but the class turned out to be Chemistry whereas Ema and Dan learned a bit of Latin. We all then met again during Greek. We discussed the differences between Greek and Latin and the teacher even promised to give the next lesson on Thursday in English. Our last lesson was societal studies during which the students did their own work. We left school a bit earlier, around 3 pm to go to the Van Gogh museum. There we saw many of the artists famous works among which were for example the Potato Eaters and the Sunflowers. We spent around three hours there and then on our way back we just grabbed some food at a supermarket and returned to our rooms.

Day 9

Wednesday June 7th

This day was completely different from the other school days because there was no school, at least for us. That was because we decided to go to the Rijksmuseum. Our visit started at 10:30 am and we were there all the way until the expositions closed which was at 5 pm. We didn't even manage to properly scrutinize it all because only the first half of the first floor took us 2.5 hours to go through. We once again saw many famous works of art, unfortunately the most well known one, The Night Watch, was undergoing some research so there was some machine observing the painting the whole time. That meant that we couldn't even get a proper view of it. After finishing the tour we were craving some food so we stopped at the nearest place we could find pizza and burgers. When we stuffed our stomachs to the fullest we headed back to the hostel. There we caught up on some schoolwork and soon went to sleep.

Day 10

Thursday June 8th

We started the day off by skipping a class because our first lesson was supposed to be Culture and Religion in which the students were taking a test on Islam. Then we split up for longer lessons. Dan attended a class with his favorite teacher, Philosophy. Šárka and Ema learned some song during Music and Adam discussed some train problems in Economics. Our next lesson was English but since there was a test taking place there too we didn't go. Instead we went to Oostpark with a few Dutch students. When we returned Dan and Ema left for Latin while Šárka and Adam enjoyed a free period. We met again at Sociology where the students discussed some issues they have with the way the final tests work. After that followed only the beforehand promised lesson of Greek. When school ended, we split up again. Šárka met up with a friend she made last time she was in Amsterdam. The rest of us went to the market at Waterlooplein. We spent the rest of the afternoon there and when we met up with Šárka again we went to a café for something to drink and then did a bit of grocery

shopping. Upon returning to our rooms we just ate our dinner and finished some schoolwork and went to sleep.

Day 11

Friday June 9th

Our first lesson on the last school day was Economics. It was a two hours long one but after the first period Dan and Adam left for Chemistry whereas the girls stayed at Economics. After that all of us took History. History was followed by Social studies for Adam and Šárka and Latin for Ema and Dan. Next period for all of us was English, in which we tried to write some poems. And our very last lesson on Cygnus Gymnasium was Math B for Šárka, Ema and Adam, whereas Dan took his final Latin lesson. When we all met again after school we rushed back home to prepare for the picnic the Dutch students prepared for us in Oostpark. When we got there nearly all the people we talked with were there and everyone brought some iconic national food with them. In the park we just talked and played various Czech and Dutch games. We even taught some of our Dutch friends polka. But after what felt like just a little while most of our friends had to go and so we said our goodbyes, which couldn't do without a bit of tears, and went for a little walk with the few who stayed. Around 9 pm we had to excuse ourselves as well, because we wanted to be fresh for the departure day, and then we made our way back to the hostel. There we talked for a bit, packed all the things we knew we wouldn't need tomorrow morning and went to sleep.

Day 12

Saturday June 10th

Despite it being Saturday today, we couldn't sleep in. That was because we had to leave the hostel before 10 am unless we wanted to get charged for an extra day. But because we still had quite some time before our plane was leaving we made plans to visit the city center one last time, just to do some sightseeing, souvenir shopping and to just generally enjoy our few final hours in Amsterdam. So we took a tram to the Amsterdam Zentraal train station and stored our luggage in one of the nearby shops that offered such services. After that we just wandered through the beautiful streets occasionally stumbling across some souvenir shops. The three hours we reserved for these activities went by in a flash and we soon had to make our way back to pick up our suitcases and hop on a train to the airport. The airport fortunately wasn't very busy that day so we made it through all the check-ins and security checks fairly quickly. And after waiting for a few more hours our plane arrived and so we said our final goodbyes to Amsterdam and the Netherlands. When we arrived back in Czechia a driver was already waiting for us. Our trip ended around 9 pm when we all safely got home. We were equal parts exhausted and incredibly energized by all the awesome experiences we had during the last 12 days, but I believe I speak for all of us when I say it was nice to lay in our own beds for a change. But who knows, maybe we'll return some day.