



Songs in Europe

Torgau, 15th – 20th April 2015

Germany



Wednesday 15th April 2015

In the evening, we arrived to **Torgau** (Saxony-Germany) after guiding two hours from the Airport of Berlín-Schönefeld. At the hotel we were received by Ellen, hostess of the German group, along with the Slovak and Turkish groups that had arrived before. The English group arrived later.

Thursday 16th April 2015

In the next morning, after breakfast, we drove to Naturpark Dübener Heide (<http://www.naturpark-duebener-heide.com/dh/english/index.html>) in **Bad Düben**. We met there with other members of the organization and the boss, Thomas Klepe, who gave us a welcome talk. Then, Ellen reviewed the activities that she and her group of volunteers had been working for the German action. The rest of participants introduced on a quick round. Later, we visited the Naturpark centre.

When we returned to Bad Schmiedeber we expected a wonderful selection of cakes with coffee in the city center.

About 13.00h, after a short lunch, we started to **Bad Schmiedeberg**, where a hiking path with two drawn carriages took place. We sang hiking and other songs accompanied by the different instruments that each group provided to the activity, such as, accordion, fiddle, castanets, ...

In the afternoon we returned to Torgau where we had the last activity of the day. We had a guided tour lead by German participants around the Renaissance city center, one of the best examples of German Renaissance. Among the views highlighted the Evangelist Church of Saint Maria, where we receive information about Martin Luther and his wife, buried in this church, and Johan Walther, famous German composer and singer ecclesiastic in Torgau.; Hartenfels Castle (XV century - XVI) of Renaissance, Gothic and Baroque styles; and the Markt Platz, the city center.

On the way to the square, one of the narrow streets around the castle, we met a local elderly woman who proudly showed us the 2 basement of her house, which was common for the style of houses in the area near the castle. She explained us that the reason for these basements was defensive.

Finally, we came back to the hotel for dinner. After we danced and sang traditional song from the different countries.



Friday 17th April 2015

The second day, after breakfast, we drove to Gräfenhainichen. There we went to a chapel where we were given a brief history of the city and, in particular, about the religious composer of the town Paul Gerhardt, who wrote (with Martin Luther) some melodies to many of the most important hymns that are part of the great heritage of world Christianity, even some of them turned into popular songs.

In the chapel we had the opportunity to perform for the local German singing group Dübener Heide Verein eV (<http://www.paul-gerhardt-gesellschaft.de/index.php>). In return they sang for us. For our part, the participants the Spanish and Slovak groups sang together in their languages the Ave Maria Virgin of Fátima.

Later on, we drove to Ferropolis (<http://www.ferropolis.de>), an open and old mine with huge industrial machines from the mid-twentieth century, which now is converted a museum outdoor and site of one of the most renewed German festivals of music and opera. In 2005 the museum was integrated into the "European Route of Industrial Heritage". Today the huge machinery, measuring up to 30 meters high, 120 meters long and up to 1980 tonnes, have been preserved as part of the festival site, with alternative uses: scenes, bar-restaurants and VIP areas. We had a guided tour around the grounds, and even got up and walked around one of the machines, called Gemini. Then we ate at the site restaurant.

Later on, Ellen showed us her videos from session of the actions in Turkey and Slovakia. Then we continue with the next activity which consisted of recording a video on Gemini machine. With different instruments all together sang different songs, mainly those we had already learnt previous projects.

After recording, we came to the room where we had a little lunch while Ellen continued showing videos of the British and Spanish actions, and a public performance that she did with a German group and some of her volunteers at a local festival.

At the end of the videos, we went back to the hotel and then to a typical and charming restaurant "Herr Käthe" in Torgau. During dinner, the British group started singing spontaneously, which led to each group singing some traditional from their countries.



Saturday 18th April 2015

The next morning, we took the train instead of the car to travel to Leipzig. We arrived to the Central Station 45' later where we were greeted warmly by participants of the German group. There we had free time to lunch and do shopping before catching the underground towards the city centre. When we got to the subway station we were in the Markt Platz, very close to our next visit: the Thomas Church (<https://www.thomaskirche.org/r-bauwerk.html>), where we could listen to the performances of the famous Choir Thomaner (<http://www.thomanerchor.de/de/53/p1/aktuell.html>) and part of the Gewandhaus orchestra (<http://www.gewandhausorchester.de/gewandhaus-orchestra>), with compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach.

After the amazing performance we had a little guided tour accompanied by several German participants. We visited the Leipzig Opera and the main shopping streets and enjoyed the stunning buildings. We also had some free time to walk and shopping before heading to "Kartoffelhaus" (<http://www.kartoffelhaus-leipzig.de>), ie, "the house of the potato", a well-known restaurant of German food.

Then, we went back to the Central Station to get the train back to Torgau.



Sunday 19th April 2015

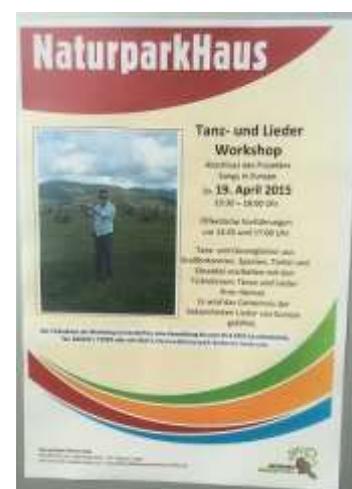
Sunday was our last day of the action. After breakfast we drove to the offices of Naturpark Bad Duben, where we were greeted by Ellen. This day was the workshops' day. Each partner should make a performance to the other partners and make them participate, so for this reason, before starting the workshops, each country was assigned a room to practise their performance. It was a sunny day, so we did the workshops outside.

After practising, workshops were started in the next order: Slovakia, UK, Turkey, Spain and Germany. Each country presented a pair o songs and/or dances. For our part, the Spanish group showed the song and dance the Jota "El Redoble" and a short workshop of castanets.

After the first round of workshops, we had a break followed by a visit to the castle that was next to the center, which also included a brief tour of a peculiar watermill, the only one preserved in Germany, which was restored and relocated from the river. Then we were offered options to tour the city or take a short break and free time.

Después de la primera ronda de talleres, tuvimos un descanso seguido de una visita al castillo que había al lado del centro, que incluyó también un breve recorrido por un peculiar molino de agua, único conservado en Alemania, que fue restaurado y trasladado fuera de río. A continuación, se nos ofrecieron las opciones de hacer un recorrido por la ciudad o de hacer un pequeño descanso y tiempo libre.

Una vez que todo el mundo regresó al centro, hicimos una última ronda de canto y baile antes de recibir nuestros certificados. En este taller, cada grupo cantó una canción junto con el resto de participantes, acabando con la última actividad del proyecto alemán: cantar todos juntos, cada uno en su idioma, el Himno Europeo u Oda a la Alegría. Finalmente, el presidente del Naturpark nos dio a cada uno de los integrantes el certificado de participación.





Hacia las 18h00 partimos hacia Torgau, donde a las 19h00 tuvimos la cena de despedida con Ellen, que estaba visiblemente emocionada por el final del proyecto, no sin acabar cantando un par de canciones de despedida entre abrazos.



Monday, 20th April 2015

Este día los diferentes grupos fuimos abandonando el hotel. Por nuestra parte, nos dirigimos hacia Berlín donde tomamos el vuelo de vuelta a Madrid.

Fin de la convivencia en Alemania y momento de reflexión y recuerdo sobre las actividades que se han desarrollado en el programa, con intercambios culturales que

nos ha permitido conocer a gente nueva y reunirnos con otros compañeros que ya habían participado en proyectos anteriores; y con los que esperamos volver a reunirnos todos en el futuro.

Este proyecto ha sido financiado con el apoyo de la Comisión Europea.

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