Lithuania visit 2023

On Sunday 26th February, we arrived in Riga, Latvia. Riga, Latvia's capital, is set on the Baltic Sea at the mouth of the River Daugava, from there we travelled to Šiauliai, Lithuania. Šiauliai is the fourth largest city in Lithuania. It's name derives from the word *Saulė*, which is a Lithuanian word for Sun. It is named after a Sun Battle that took place nearby.

Šiauliai

Šiauliai was frequently ravaged by fire, and it sustained heavy damage in both World War I and II. Although, little of the historic old city remains, the reconstructed 1634 Church of SS. Peter and Paul serves as a focal point of the historic district. After World War II, Šiauliai was rebuilt and re-emerged as an industrial centre, producing leather goods. Šiauliai has now grown into a thriving metropolis, with a good collection of restaurants, some excellent museums and cultural attractions.

The official language of Lithuania is Lithuanian. Russian, Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and other languages are spoken in the larger cities.

Education

The purpose of this mobility was to visit a local arts school; Šiauliai Saulius Sondeckis Arts Gymnasium. The school is an advanced state art school, based on a culture of agreement and values in the community, effectively implementing the content of education in modern educational environments.

On arrival, we were warmly welcomed and given a tour of the incredible school.

We were amazed to see the creative and different art and music lessons being taught. What stood strong from walking around the school, was their passion for art and music. We also saw the importance they put on internationalism which is integrated into the school's curriculum and policy.

Similar to us, they have many exchange programmes and international partnerships in place with many schools from around the globe. These projects were showcased throughout the school, displaying their trophies and flags which showed their past and present eTwinning work.

Educational visits

Over the few days, we worked together, where we visited many digital art museums. These visits provided us with an insight into different technology and software to aid in teaching digital creativity. We very much enjoyed experiencing digital art and gaining an insight into the projects the school has created, using different technology.

We visited Mo Museum in Vilnius. This museum holds one of the largest private art collections in Lithuania, the MO Museum Collection consists of artworks dating from the 1960s to this day. Here, we got to learn how analyse a piece of art and carried out activities based on the method of visual thinking.

We took part in 3D printing at the Šiauliai Tourism Information Centre, where we learned how to use 3D printing pens. 3D pens work by heating plastic filament and extruding it through a narrow tip. As the plastic cools and hardens, it can be used to draw three-dimensional objects. 3D pens are often used for prototyping and model-making, as they allows children to quickly create complex shapes.

Our Focus- Digital creativity

Our visit to the school focussed on digital creativity and art. Loreta focussed our attention on upskilling staff and pupils in learning how to develop creative thinking skills, including creating within a digital context. We believe this visit was invaluable, it provided a better understanding of creative thinking techniques, increased opportunities for professional development, and has helped adopt collaborative and innovative practices.