

ERA Spring

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NA Baja – Behind the Scenes!

OC point of view



What's the best lesson you've learnt from running this event?

One of the biggest lessons that we've learned while organising the National Assembly was how essential clear communication is within the team. We realized that even small changes can make big differences while organizing an event this scale for our Network as a whole. We also learned the importance of flexibility, being adaptable to quick changes and feedback from the participants helped us a lot throughout the event itself, we had to adapt to quick changes and requests, which made us realize that mutual respect and understanding within the OC are key to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Would you do it all again? If you could change one thing about it, what would it be?

Overall, we believe that it was a valuable experience for all of us and we are proud of what we have achieved together. However, if we could start again we would approach certain things differently, but at the same time it showed us how important it is to have quick reorganization and decision making skills, while still considering the well-being and overall enjoyment of the participants at the event itself. In the end, we believe that we adapted as much as possible and ensured the event ran as smoothly as possible, even if the OC had some struggles within the team in the beginning.





What was something unexpected that happened? How did you handle it?

There were a few moments when parts of the programmes didn't go as planned, including the last minute cancellation of the social programme venue for Saturday. However, thanks to the quick reactions of the team from ESN LUPS and with the support of the National Board, afterall we managed to find a solution. This situation reminded us of how important it is to stay solution orientated, while keeping the participants' experience in mind.

Any funny backstage OC information you would like to share?

Of course, behind the scenes there were a lot of chaotic moments from the very beginning of the event. Looking back, these were the memories that made the experience even more memorable and special for us. One of our favourite stories is how we tried to leave Baja three times, but kept forgetting things and had to turn back each time. We saw the goodbye sign at least 3 times and it felt like Baja didn't want to let go of us.

How would you describe the event in one word or sentence?

Challenging, but rewarding.

Any message for the Network?

As a team looking back, we encourage everyone to communicate openly and support each other when needed. Organizing an event like this is never easy, but having people who are willing to take responsibility makes a huge difference.

We would also like to take a moment to appreciate the work of everyone who contributed to making this event happen, especially our Main Head of OC, the Vice Head of OC, the OC Coordinators and all the Volunteers who supported us throughout the event.

Despite the challenges, it is always worth it for the Network, everyone's dedication was essential behind the scenes.





EGM Report

by Gréta Seres

Between April 16 and 19, the delegation of ESN Hungary had the chance to experience the pomalo lifestyle at the Erasmus Generation Meeting Split 2026. As a local coordinator, I had never imagined attending such a large ESN event, but there I was, so I wanted to make the most of every moment.

For one long weekend, the seaside city of Split was filled with laughter and conversations in countless different languages. The salty air of the Mediterranean Sea, combined with the ancient ruins that give the city centre its distinctive beige colour, made the setting of the largest student-led conference truly unforgettable.

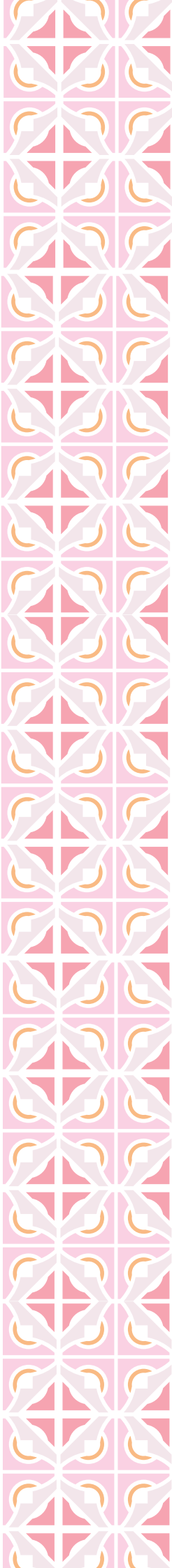
The Flag Parade was magical; it truly lived up to the hype. Seeing all the different flags, hearing iconic songs from countries like Italy and Greece, and singing random Hungarian hits such as “Mizu” created a unique atmosphere. We were all individuals with our own cultures and traditions, yet at the same time part of something bigger: the Erasmus Generation. Glitter, face paint, shouting, dancing, and encouraging one another created an overwhelming sense of unity and pride.



The Opening Ceremony that followed was the perfect continuation of the afternoon, with traditional Croatian dances and engaging round-table discussions.

Before the decadent Dalmatian dinner, we watched the sunset from a hidden beach. Seeing the sea always warms my heart, especially because I do not experience it often. During dinner, the live performance made us feel as if we were attending a huge Croatian wedding celebration.





The next morning, exhausted after dancing late into the night, we attended the first plenaries and sessions. Throughout the weekend, the focus remained on the skills that international mobility and volunteering can provide. That day, I learned how diplomacy can foster international cooperation during a session led by the wonderful Martina Bo. Later, Francesca Linardi held a thought-provoking session on how to make events safer and more inclusive for all participants. Lunch at the canteen was gulyás (or at least a Croatian interpretation of it) served with fried nakedli-like pasta. It was culture shock at its finest. Moments like these remind you that immersing yourself in the daily life of another country always teaches you something new. Even if it is a bit traumatising for my Hungarian tastebuds. Before the evening's social programme – yet another party, because Split likes to go crazy, apparently – we had the chance to admire the city centre glowing in golden light.

On the third day, even more exhausted from dancing and long conversations in the smoking area the night before, we attended another series of sessions. First, I joined a session about green travel. Very fitting, considering that FlixBus has me in a chokehold. (Travelling 28 hours by bus from Paris to EGM was totally worth it, by the way.) Shoutout to the SET project and to all the volunteers working to promote sustainable mobility and environmental awareness. My final session was probably the most useful of the entire weekend. Hazal Sude Satkin explained how volunteering and international experiences can be transformed into valuable professional skills and compelling career stories. Who knew that skills gained in ESN could be so valuable? I will definitely use what I learned in my future job interviews. Between my two sessions, I even found time to go to the beach and swim in the sea. The water was freezing, but I am a simple woman: if I see water, I go in.

The Mamma Mia 2 themed night was another huge success, and I absolutely loved the dress codes throughout the weekend. Once again, we stayed out far longer than expected and ended the night sitting on the beach, looking at the stars and talking about life.





By the last day, waking up in the morning had become a real challenge for all of us. My lovely delegation leader – and roommate – was understandably frustrated by our inability to get ready on time. She was right, for the record, but what can a sleep-deprived girl do? Somehow, we still managed to arrive at the plenaries on time and enthusiastically cheer for both the Hungarian delegation and our region, CEP. Italy remained the loudest delegation throughout the event, with speaker backpacks blasting “Sarà perché ti amo”, instantly creating a party atmosphere.

We also had the chance to witness Torino winning Erasmus Destination of the Year. Every destination presented looked incredible, and honestly, I would gladly spend a semester in any of them. The Closing Ceremony was emotional for many of us, as we listened to speeches from volunteers who had dedicated enormous amounts of time and energy to organising both EGM and other ESN activities in general. We felt deeply grateful to the organisers, the volunteers, and everyone who made EGM possible.

At the Last Dance, we promised ourselves we would leave by 1 a.m. Naturally, we ended up dancing and singing until 4 in the morning, right until the very end of the party. It was a euphoric experience I will never forget.

During this long weekend, I experienced so many wonderful things and formed new friendships along the way. I learned valuable lessons about skills and mobility and I met incredible people. I shared beautiful moments with the Hungarian delegation; with dedicated volunteers I had not met before. I also got to talk to Hungarian volunteers from other European sections, and I reconnected with lovely people I had met at CEP last autumn. I am beyond grateful for having experienced all this magic, and I left EGM Split with a heart full of joy and memories I will carry with me for a very long time.



MEP visit and behind the scenes of the EU

The trip to Brussels was one of the best-organized trips I have ever taken part in. We were treated with so much care and attention, far beyond what I expected. We visited the European Parliament as guests of Zoltán Tarr, a Hungarian representative in the European Parliament. Unfortunately, he was unavailable during our visit, but his colleagues welcomed us warmly and were there for us throughout the program.

Before the trip, we received all necessary tickets, timetables, programs, and even travel insurance. Everything was fully arranged for us, so we did not have to worry about anything.

We had a guide, Tamás, who accompanied us from the airport, travelled with us, organized everything, and was always available whenever we needed help. Dorka, our National Vice-President, was our delegation leader, and she also did a wonderful job throughout the trip.

From the airport, a private bus took us directly to the Parliament building. Entering the Parliament was quite a lengthy process, as receiving our name tags and going through security checks took some time, but it was absolutely worth it. We had the opportunity to enter one of the plenary rooms, try out the microphones, and experience a glimpse of the everyday life of a representative.

Afterwards, we had lunch in the Parliament's cafeteria among political workers and staff members. We could choose from two different menus, along with side dishes and a variety of desserts.



Later, we moved to another building where we had discussions with policy makers and could ask them questions freely. We learned a lot about the decision-making processes within the European Union, the sanctions currently affecting Hungarian students and private universities, and the measures being taken regarding issues such as credit accreditation and the English language skills of professors. I also had the opportunity to ask a question about the relationship between the ESN International Board and local ESN sections, as well as their communication and cooperation.

Before dinner, we had some free time. After checking into the hostel and receiving our room cards, our ESN group decided to explore the city on our own, while others joined a guided city tour led by Tamás. We tried Belgian chocolates, visited the main square, saw the famous Manneken Pis statue, and explored many other parts of the city. Some of us also enjoyed Belgian waffles and fries.

In the evening, we had dinner at a restaurant with delicious food, where we also had the chance to engage in personal conversations with the assistants and coworkers of Zoltán Tarr.

The next day, some of us participated in a podcast series with Eszter Lakatos, where they talked about our initiative and Erasmus experiences. Afterwards, we also received a thorough explanation of how the European Parliament functions and had the chance to listen live to ongoing plenary discussions. Afterwards, we visited the International ESN office, where we spent time with the International President and learned more about the international level of ESN and other mobility programs.

After finishing the official programs, we had some more free time to explore the city before boarding the bus back to the airport at 6 p.m. and heading home.

Overall, the trip was not only an incredible opportunity to gain insight into how the European Union functions, how decisions are made, and how policies are formulated, but also a wonderful chance to connect with people from other ESN sections. I feel truly honoured and grateful to have been able to participate in this experience.

Five Things You Should Never Forget at Home Before a National Assembly

A National Assembly is not just another weekend trip. It's a magical combination of official meetings, endless coffee breaks, group photos, networking, dancing until 3 AM, and somehow surviving on very little sleep. Whether it's your first NA or your tenth, there are a few things every true ESNER should always bring along.

Here are five absolutely essential things you should never leave at home before heading to a National Assembly.

1. Your Section's ESN Flag

Let's be honest: if your section flag doesn't appear in at least 20 photos during the weekend, did your section even attend? Your section's ESN flag is more than just a piece of fabric — it's your identity, your pride, and your delegation's main character during every group picture. Bonus points if your flag survives the whole weekend without being lost or swapped.

2. Your Section Mascot

Every legendary section has one. Maybe it's a stuffed animal, a rubber duck, or a suspiciously old plush banana with a name and personality. Mascots are not just objects — they are respected members of the delegation.

They travel, party, network, and somehow end up in everyone's Instagram stories. Forgetting your mascot at home is basically denying them their social life.





3. A Portable Charger

You may think your phone battery can survive the weekend. It cannot.

Between taking photos, checking schedules, posting stories, answering “Where are you?” messages, and trying to find your section after the social programme, your battery will disappear faster than snacks at a coffee break. A portable charger is not an accessory at an NA. It is a survival tool.

4. Your “I’ll Only Stay for One Drink” Energy

Every ESNER says it. Nobody means it.

National Assemblies have a special power: suddenly it’s 2 AM, you’re discussing mobility projects with someone from another city, and you still have a session at 9 in the morning. Bringing good energy, openness, and a little bit of spontaneity is part of the experience.

Just remember: hydration and coffee are your best friends.

5. Your Ability to Function on Three Hours of Sleep

No one truly knows how ESNERs survive National Assemblies. One moment you are seriously discussing agenda points and strategic plans, and a few hours later you are singing karaoke with people you met the same day.

Sleep becomes more of a suggestion than a necessity. Yet somehow, everyone still shows up the next morning looking surprisingly alive, holding a coffee and pretending everything is completely under control.

At the end of the day, National Assemblies are about much more than meetings and agendas. They’re about people, memories, inside jokes, and feeling part of the amazing ESN community. So pack your bags carefully, double-check your essentials, and see you at the next NA — hopefully with your flag, your mascot, and at least 12% battery left.



Speak Out – National Policy Dialogue

The National Phase of the Speak Out project, organised by ESN Hungary, took place on the 21st of March 2026. The event was organised in collaboration with JEF Hungary, with the aim of actively involving young people in national and European decision-making processes and increasing their understanding of policymaking.

The activity took place at Corvinus University of Budapest and brought together youth participants, representatives of youth organisations, and policymakers. The programme began with interactive warm-up activities focusing on topics such as freedom of speech to encourage engagement and critical thinking.

This was followed by a European Parliament simulation facilitated by JEF Hungary, allowing participants to experience decision-making processes firsthand. After a networking lunch, the afternoon programme featured a panel discussion, followed by an interactive workshop where participants translated discussions into concrete policy recommendations. The event concluded with an informal dinner nearby, fostering networking and continued dialogue.

The stakeholders and policymakers involved in the activity included Rodrigo Ballester, Ministerial Commissioner for the Internationalisation of Hungarian Higher Education and Research, and Bálint Koós, Vice President for External Affairs of HÖÖK (National Union of Students in Hungary). In addition, JEF Hungary contributed as a partner organisation by facilitating the European Parliament simulation and providing expertise on youth participation in democratic processes. Their involvement was central to the activity, as they not only shared their professional perspectives but also engaged directly with participants during the panel discussion and question round.

The Participants interacted with the stakeholders through the European Parliament simulation, the workshop session, and the panel discussion. During the workshop sessions, several stakeholders and invited guests were actively present, walking around between groups, observing discussions, and engaging informally with participants. During the panel discussion, participants also had the chance to ask direct questions to the invited speakers about youth representation, policymaking, and current issues such as the Erasmus+ situation in Hungary. Altogether, this created an open and engaging environment where young people could voice their concerns and gain practical insights from decision-makers.



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED READING!
THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS PROJECT.

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