



PARAGON
EUROPE

REALISING EXCELLENCE

INTERNSHIPS AND MOBILITY CREDENTIALS REPORT

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COMPANY PROFILE



Introduction to Paragon Europe

Paragon Europe is an innovative, international EU affairs, advisory and compliance company with head offices in Malta and Brussels. From its inception, Paragon Europe has striven to realise excellence by competing with cutting edge peers in the ultra-competitive market of EU funding.

With over twelve years of operational experience, our multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary team has developed the right expertise to carry out project activities to the highest standards. With an average annual participation in over 350 EU projects and with a success rate comparable to the topmost European Universities, Paragon Europe has established itself with global and European credentials in the field of research and innovation projects.

Paragon Europe works with both private and public organisations, NGOs, universities, educational institutes and agencies offering various services related to European funded programmes such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus Plus, VETPRO, Youth Workers, COSME, PON/POR and more. We assist these organisations with the sourcing and implementation of EU funded projects and tailor our services to each individual requirement ensuring positive results every time. Besides advising public and private organisations on EU funding, Paragon staff also assist good organisations to become great through business and financial advice.



REALISING EXCELLENCE

Unique Approach to Realising Excellence

Paragon Europe aims to realise excellence for its clients in matters linked to social development, education, training and economic development through social and cultural activities, services and products. The unique approach Paragon employs means that it brings added value to participation in EU funding programmes and projects directed towards curriculum development, community development, capacity building and social and economic development in territories, regions and communities. This project participation is the result of excellent networks built over eleven years in which Paragon Europe participates regularly and has the honour to occasionally lead.

Paragon Europe has a unique strategy intimately linked to its corporate social responsibility which strives to optimise investment opportunities available to prospective public and private clients. Moreover, Paragon aims to assist its clientele in transforming these funding opportunities into concrete realities whilst simultaneously ensuring that these funds translate into benefits for the community in which our clients operate.

Through its leading role in EU affairs, Paragon Europe fulfils the corporate social responsibility aspect of its fundamental mission by ensuring that extensive stakeholder engagement in the community is realised through these funding opportunities, thus improving the communities we and our clients operate in.

Our Philosophy

Our service philosophy is based on assisting our clients to become better organisations through our range of services and products.

This is achieved through various activities including, but not limited to, provision of direct advice at the territorial or regional level, provision of individual and group training, capacity building, coaching and mentoring. Our various 'READINESS PACKAGES' aim to give added value to the services we offer thus allowing our philosophy to become a reality.

Our Past and Future Ambitions

Founded in 2004 by Anton and Nadia Theuma with the vision of assisting local and regional authorities in sourcing EU funding opportunities and in the implementation of EU funded projects, Paragon Europe has grown consistently and today employs more than 50 specialised personnel in ensuring that excellence is realised on behalf of all our esteemed clientele.

Paragon Europe's ambition is to contribute, both in Malta and Europe, to the objectives of the EU Social Agenda and the "headline targets" of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The projects implemented by Paragon Europe are focused on the following areas:

- Education and Training
- Sustainable Development and Environment (energy, transport, water etc.)
- Cultural Heritage and Tourism
- Social Inclusion
- ICT - Information and Communication Technologies
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship

In 2015, the company embarked on an expansion programme aimed at opening 10 offices in the EU and beyond by the year 2020.

SERVICES AND MOBILITY PROGRAMMES



Since 2006, Paragon Europe has been managing a successful Internship programme through various EU mobility projects, working with both private and public organisations, NGOs, universities, higher educational institutes and agencies, offering various services related to European funded programmes such as Erasmus Plus, Staff Mobility, Youth Workers, PON and POR, and more.

Track Record

Currently, Paragon Europe is working with 326 higher educational and vocational institutions from 27 EU member states. In the past 3 years, Paragon Europe has hosted over 4,500 students from European countries and beyond. Paragon Europe has a network of 4,000 Maltese organisations who regularly host our interns.

Commitment to Training and Employment

Paragon Europe is committed to the implementation of the Europe 2020 and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs policies. It is therefore devoted to the employment of youths through its quality internship programme. In an ongoing longitudinal study that the company conducts, we have found that annually approximately 150 interns are offered a job on completion of their internship programme, with 50 of these actually accepting a job offer with Maltese companies in Malta or Maltese-owned companies overseas.

Paragon and its affiliates have also benefitted from such an initiative and today has already employed 9 persons who have started their career as interns in Malta through our internship programme.

The Internship Team

Paragon Europe's Internship team is composed of 25 dedicated personnel including an Internship Team Manager; a Marketing Team who are responsible for engaging institutions; a Placement Team responsible for matching placements to host organisations, students' welfare and wellbeing; an Administration and Finance Team dealing with preparation of learning agreements, certifications and financial matters; and a Maintenance and Housekeeping Team responsible for the management of properties where students are hosted, day to day maintenance and cleaning of apartments. This team is supported by a back office team of trainers and tutors in addition to IT personnel.

Paragon Europe strongly believes in team performance and invests heavily in the training of its personnel. In 2015, Paragon Europe invested **160 hours of training** for its Internship Team and will continue with this trend in 2016. Moreover the Internship Manager and Team leaders are currently undergoing coaching sessions so as to continue their professional and personal development.

The Malta Internship Programme

One of the pillars of Paragon Europe is the Internship programme. Since its inception, Paragon Europe aimed at providing interns with a sound, appropriate and tailor made internship programme which includes a holistic offer through the provision of:

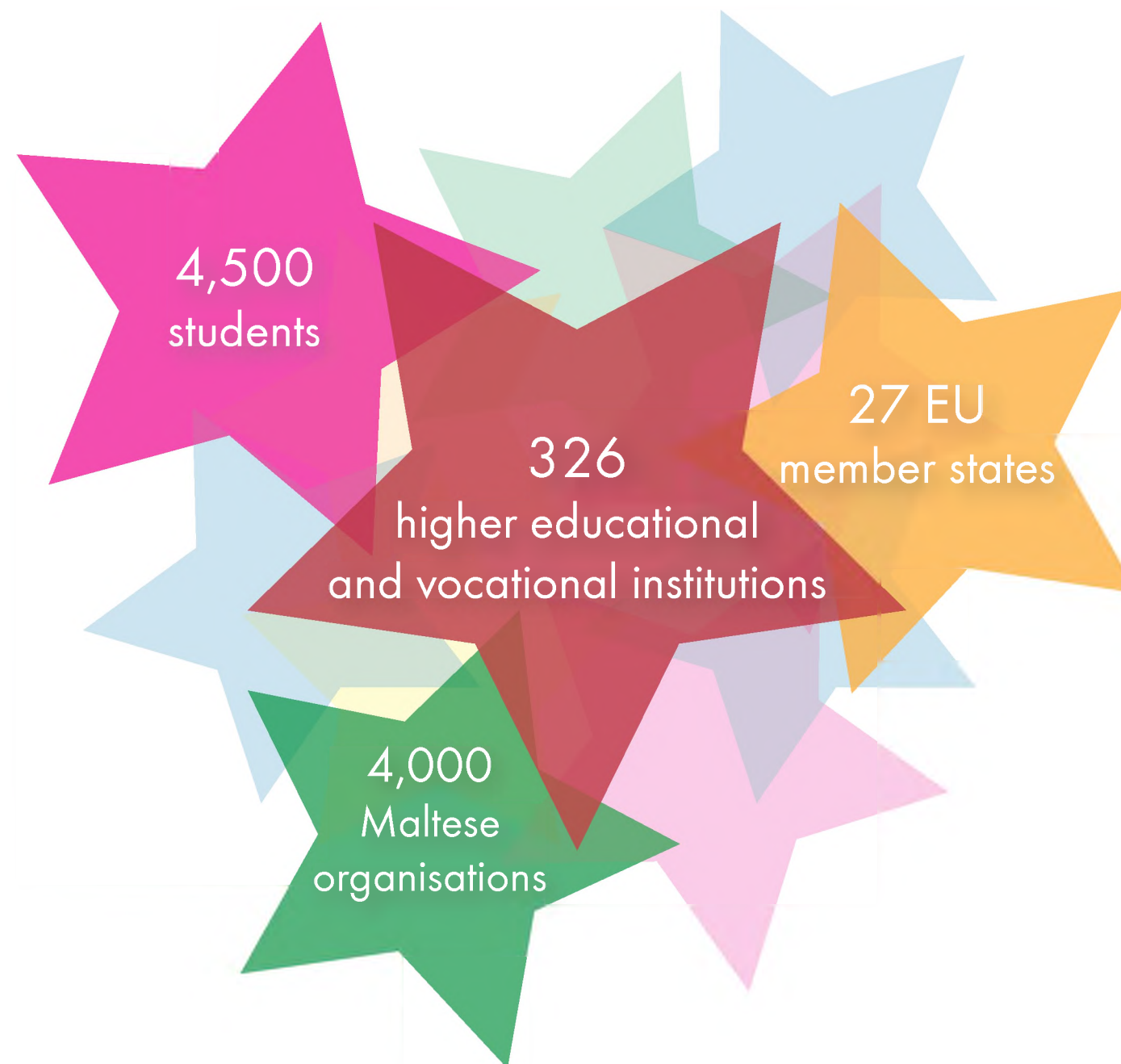
- A work placement in matched organisations with a dedicated work programme aimed to suit the needs and requirements of the student and with certification provided on completion;
- Mentoring on site;
- Accommodation in shared apartments, host families or hotels (as may be requested by the sending organisation);

Moreover, students are also offered additional services of language training through external providers and a social and cultural programme to experience the rich and diverse historical and cultural environment of Malta.

The Brussels Internship Programme

In 2015, Paragon Europe through its affiliate 5 Senses Ltd, started with its Internship offer in Brussels. Given that the prices of accommodation and services in Brussels are higher than those in Malta, the total cost for the internship programme offer for Brussels is higher.

To date, Paragon Europe has a total of 750 possible work placements for students wishing to conduct their work placement in Brussels.



Student Mobility - Erasmus Plus

Our organisation continuously strives to find the best work placements for students aged 17 and over to obtain the most appropriate hands-on experience during their stay in Malta. Interns get the opportunity to put theory into practice, improve skills at an actual workplace and gain invaluable personal and professional experience.

Work placements are offered in any sector of the economy since we work with 4,000 local partner companies who host our interns. Placement durations can be tailored to suit the individual from 3 weeks up to 1 year. Mentors may be provided to accompany the student at the work placement and weekly monitoring is guaranteed.

Youth Guarantee

Youth Guarantee is an ambitious mobility programme which aims to tackle unemployment amongst young persons. This programme supports the professional development of youth workers, through the implementation of activities such as transnational and international seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits etc. or job shadowing/observation periods abroad by various educational partner institutions.

The target is to create a strong synergy between the participant and the host-company, in order to increase hiring possibilities. With its experience in the field of intermediation, Paragon Europe gives its contribution to make Youth Guarantee a fruitful and successful mobility programme. Some Youth Guarantee projects carried out by Paragon Europe in collaboration with some of the best European formative centres include:

- Rural Academy DGR 2747 Regione Veneto
- Tourism Hospitality Assistant DGR 2747 Regione Veneto
- Graphic Designer DGR 2125 Regione Veneto
- Web Designer DGR 2125 Regione Veneto



PON and POR

PON and POR are national and regional mobility programmes aiming to give students the opportunity to have work experiences in different regions or in different countries. Higher Education Institutions select their 15 best students and 2 accompanying teachers and give them the chance to carry out a professional experience related to their academic background. Projects can be promoted by the government (PON) or by regions (POR).

Over the last years, Paragon Europe hosted hundreds of students through these mobility programmes. Students came mostly from South Italian Regions, such as Puglia, where the number of Institutions which apply for PON and POR is growing. The Anti-corruption Ministry (whose judgement is crucial in the field of mobility programmes) established that Paragon Europe has all the credentials to host students that obtain a scholarship through PON and POR. We were given 100% on evaluation of our proposals by schools, which consequently chose Paragon Europe as an international partner, starting a satisfying and long-lasting relationship of collaboration.

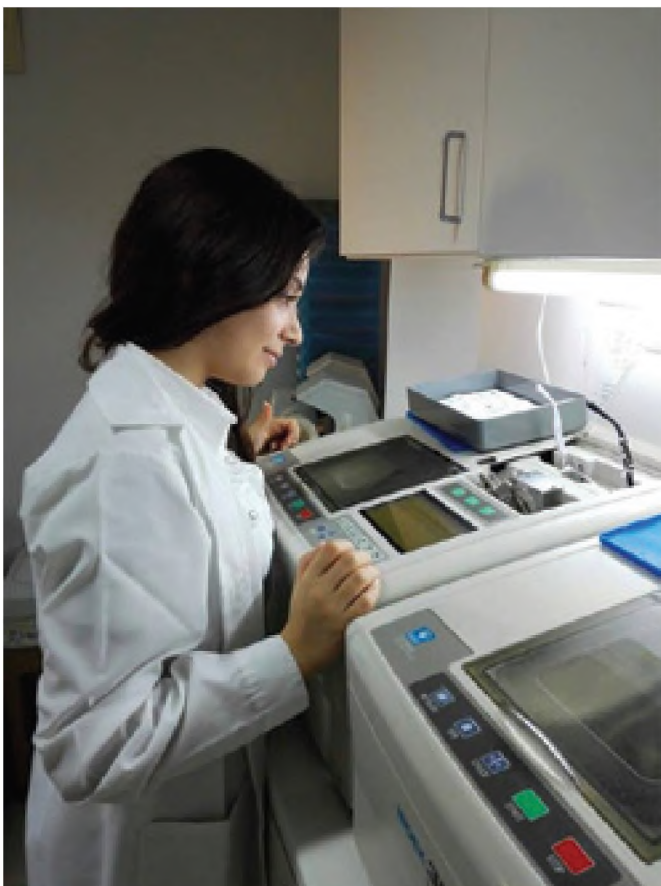
Below you can find exemplifying titles of some of the PON and POR projects that Paragon Europe carried out in collaboration with Italian Vocational Schools:

- Mobilità interregionale e transnazionale “Manutentori di apparati elettrici, elettronici, meccanici”
- Mobilità interregionale e transnazionale “Fashion and design”

Staff Mobility and Professional Training - Erasmus Plus

Paragon Europe hosts a large number of academic staff mobility for our partner institutions from all over Europe. Rectors, deans, teachers, international officers and lecturers have all visited our shores and spent a number of days in Malta for a professional experience. We ensure that our visiting academic staff have a unique experience whilst they are in Malta.

Staff mobility programmes are geared towards the professional development of adult education staff in



the form of a job shadowing/observation period abroad in a relevant organisation and/or participation in structured training courses or events.

Paragon Europe can provide the following Staff Mobility Services:

- Job shadowing
- Visits to companies
- Training courses
- Sociocultural programmes
- Other services on request

Training

Paragon Europe offers a range of training courses that can be customised to individual or group requirements as part of personal and professional development. Our courses are offered at vocational, academic and professional levels. We also provide coaching and mentoring to professionals who are seeking to grow in their careers.

At Paragon, we believe that personal and professional development are lifelong processes. Training provides means for people to assess their skills and qualities, consider their aims in life and set goals in order to realise and maximise their potential. It is not enough to train the workforce, training the trainer is also crucial and gives individuals the practical platform skills and the confidence needed to succeed.

Some training courses include, but are not limited to:

- Leadership Skills in Management
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Project Management
- EU Fund Management
- Environment and Efficiency
- Team Building
- Creativity and Idea Generation
- Director Training
- Human Resource Development
- and others



ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF



Accommodation

Paragon Europe offers 3 different types of lodging which includes a selection of self-catering apartments for individuals or groups with room sharing options, homestays at local families and hotel accommodation on bed and breakfast, half or full board basis.

Our self-catering accommodation consists of a fully equipped kitchen, living and dining area as well as spacious bedrooms. Amenities include WIFI, TV, washing machine, iron and ironing board among other facilities as well as maintenance and weekly maid services. Apart from providing all the necessary comforts to make your stay a pleasant one, our self-catering accommodation is close to all amenities such as shops and bus stops adding convenience for students and staff alike.

Transport

On arrival at the Malta International Airport, a taxi will pick up students and/or staff to take them to the chosen accommodation.

English and/or Maltese Language Lessons

Malta is one of Europe's leading EFL (English as a Foreign Language) destinations since English is the official language of the Maltese Islands and is the principal business language making Malta the ideal location to improve English skills and practice it every day.

Our English Language courses are provided in collaboration with certified English Schools locally. We offer day classes, afternoon/evening classes, classes outdoors in central areas where situational English can be practiced, classes at the students' own apartments and last but not least the opportunity to take English lessons on the weekend.

Courses are based on 20 sessions of 1 hour each and a Paragon Europe certificate will be presented on completion.

For those wishing to learn an additional language, we also offer tuition in Maltese and other languages carried out by certified teachers.

Sociocultural Tours

Malta has a rich and vibrant culture that merges 7,000 years of history with a modern lifestyle. For a truly unforgettable experience, Paragon Europe can provide an extensive social and cultural programme which allows our students to fully experience the beauty of the Maltese Islands.

THE PARAGON INTERNSHIPS AND MOBILITY TEAM



Paragon Europe prides itself in having a multidisciplinary, international and multilingual team of project personnel who are experts in their fields and who together work to achieve the best project results for Paragon Europe, its affiliates and their clients. The main pillars of the team are:



Mr. Edwin Ward, Chairman has 35 years of experience in the successful creation and implementation of major corporate brands as well as in the utilisation of innovation as an enabler for strengthening brands and business performance. He is a serving CEO and Chairman within the Ogilvy Group. He has considerable experience in the corporate governance of boards and serves on the Policy Committee of ecoDa in Brussels and as Communications Director at the Institute of Directors. He has collaborated with Paragon for more than 10 years and is currently overseeing Paragon's expansion programme 2015-2020.



Dr. Anthony Theuma, CEO and Director is the leading expert in innovation and smart specialisation. He has a Doctorate Degree in Knowledge Economy and participated and managed various EU co-funded projects. He has also provided assistance to clients seeking business advice, EU funding and investor funding. Dr. Theuma advises public and private organisations on Innovation and Entrepreneurship and is involved at an EU level on Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Smart Specialisation. He is an appointed Smart Specialisation Expert by DG Regio and was also instrumental in the setting up of the SME Instrument programme.



Dr. Nadia Theuma, Executive Director is a leading expert in project management at Paragon and has been personally overseeing Paragon's growing portfolio of internal and client projects. She possesses a Doctorate in the development, marketing and management of cultural and sustainable tourism. Dr. Theuma has consolidated experience in project management especially linked to regional branding and development. She is an international speaker in these subjects as well as an established author in the field. She has served as board member on government boards and within international academic and research networks. She is increasingly in demand by various European regions and Commonwealth countries with the aim to offer assistance in the aforementioned areas. She is also an expert with DG Growth on sustainable tourism.



Mr. Darryl Grima, General Manager has over 20 years of experience in marketing and branding and managing organisations. His background is in the achievement of profitable business growth through the creation and execution of successful strategies. He is responsible for the overall activities of the company, motivating and training staff and for fostering new business relations in Malta.



Ms. Suzannah Zrinzo holds an Honours Degree in Marketing and works as Communications and Marketing Manager at Paragon Europe. Ms. Zrinzo has over 10 years of experience in market research, branding, integrated marketing communications and public relations and has been instrumental in assisting clients achieve significant growth through the introduction of new products and services and improved revenues through competitor analysis.



Mr. Hubert Montesin is the Internship Team Manager. He has over 15 years of experience in sales, marketing and operations in Malta, Libya and Morocco. He is in charge of the day-to-day management of the Internship office in Malta and Brussels and he is also responsible for Client Relationship Management with vocational schools and institutions.



Ms. Luiza Bandiu is the Senior Internship Executive. She has a bachelor and master degree in Marketing and Foreign Trade and brings 13 years of experience in the fields of sales and marketing. She is responsible for the internship programme in Malta and together with the team, handle students and staff mobility training with over 326 partner institutions.



Ms. Amanda Borg leads the Internship placements and administration team. She has a diploma from the Institute of Tourism Studies in hospitality Management and has an extensive experience within the hotel business. She is responsible for placing students in Maltese host companies and for monitoring their progress whilst in Malta. She is also responsible for increasing the database of Internship vacancies available in Malta.

STUDENT, STAFF AND INSTITUTION TESTIMONIALS



“Very pleased with their practice...”

Thank you for your help and cooperation with us. Our students came back from Malta very pleased with their practice. They will recommend Paragon Europe towards the academic community as well as to other students. I hope there will be more students next willing to visit your beautiful country. We will see in a few months.

AGNIESZKA FEDECZKO-IGNASIAK
Teacher, Hipolit Cegielski State College of Higher Education
Gniezno, Poland

“Very kind and helpful...”

I’ve been in Malta only for a week. I can say we have had a good experience with Paragon. Each of them has been very kind and helpful with the teachers and with the students.

Teacher MONTERISI,
Italy

“Lots of new friends and skills ...”

My name is Michaela. I am student from Slovakia. During my internship I was working in Paragon Europe. It was a very good experience for me. I was working like a secretary but my work was very interesting, because I was working on lots of different tasks and I was still in contact with other students. Therefore I have lots of new friends and skills now. My free time in Malta was great too. Malta is a very beautiful island. I visited lots of interesting places and beaches with my friends. I never forget this summer in sunny Malta and I know that I will come back in future.

MICHAELA SEVCIKOVA
Student

“Work experience was very good ...”

During these three months I had really good time on in Malta. Basically work experience was very good, working in such a big company as DHL was for me new experience and I met there so many amazing people. Life in Malta is a bit different but I think everybody will find here something interesting.

MAREK ZATKO
Student

“Thank you for your support and help ...”

I can’t find words to thank you and Paragon Europe enough for this wonderful summer... Thank you for the support and help that Paragon gave us when we needed it. Now, after more than one month, I still miss Malta. I want to also thank you for making me and Kristina live with the most wonderful persons I’ve ever met in our apartment.

ANET MANNANEEA,
Student, Faculty of Design,
Euroakadeemia, Tallinn, Estonia

“I’ve faced work situations that have contributed enrich my experience...”

I’ve been in Malta for two weeks, during which I’ve met several people and I’ve faced work situations that have contributed enrich my experience. Teachers and students faced some problems but they have been solved thanks to cooperation with Paragon.

Teacher TOMMASELLI,
Italy

“I am grateful for your services...”

My personal experience, both as beneficiary and as head of the Erasmus+ Office at the University of Petrosani, with your company, it’s a happy one. We are partners from 2009 within Erasmus program and I believe it’s a fruitful experience for both of our institution. I am grateful for your services regarding the academic staff mobilities, each time my colleagues have seen many interesting institutions and places in Malta. Also, the traineeship placements provided for our students were suitable for each of them and all of them were very satisfied with the skills and knowledge acquired during the Erasmus mobility. Moreover, I appreciate your professionalism, promptitude, and sense of responsibility in solving the unexpected problems. Many thanks to Joseph and Luiza!

CAMELIA BARBU
Ph.D. Lecturer, Head of Erasmus+ Office,
University of Petrosani, Romania

“We enjoyed the hospitality and the well-organized program...”

We are back to work in Amsterdam with a good feeling about recent visit. We enjoyed the hospitality and the well-organized program for us. It was very nice to meet you all. We found the visit informative. In our interview with the students they said to be very happy with Paragon Europe. Students were in a good place. We think they learned a lot. This was very nice to see! Pupils have had a super experience on Malta, and we also saw a personal growth in each on their own way. It was nice to meet you all in the company and how you introduced with enthusiasm and tell interesting stories about Malta.

EVA DE JONGSTE and JOSEE ROELEN
BPV Supervisor Instructors; HMC vocational school for wood, furniture and interior, Amsterdam, Netherlands



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