

Report on Travel Grant Experience – University of Tartu (Estonia)

Period: 28 September – 4 October

Host Institution: University of Tartu – Centre for Science Education

Host Reference: Dr. Regina Soobard



Thanks to the travel grant, I had the opportunity to spend one week in Estonia at the University of Tartu and its Centre for Science Education. My visit took place from 28 September to 4 October and was supervised by Dr. Regina Soobard.

This experience allowed me to engage with the academic and cultural life of Tartu, to present my doctoral research, and to gain new perspectives on science education, both at the university and

school levels. It has been an inspiring period that enriched me personally and professionally.

Academic Activities

During my stay, I visited the University of Tartu and several of its institutions, including the Natural History Museum and the AHHAA Science Centre, which represent important resources for science outreach and education.

I gave a seminar presentation to colleagues and students, in which I introduced the focus of my PhD research in Earth Sciences. In addition, I shared insights into the Italian educational system and the way science subjects are taught in Italy. This moment was very valuable, as it created space for mutual exchange and comparison of experiences.

I also had the possibility to attend courses for future teachers, observing how active learning methods are integrated into teacher training from the very beginning. This confirmed to me how much emphasis is given in Estonia to student engagement and interactive pedagogy.

Another key part of my visit was my meeting with the University of Tartu Youth Academy

(Teaduskool), which works with gifted students. Since I am personally involved in the Italian Earth Science Olympiad, this was particularly meaningful. It gave me new perspectives on how to nurture talented students and to support their growth through extracurricular activities.



A highlight of my visit was the discussion on the Estonian school system and the way geography and Earth sciences are integrated into the curriculum. In Estonia, geography includes a strong Earth science component, and this was explained to me by lecturers from the department.

I also visited a local school, where I met teachers and could better understand their daily challenges, approaches, and practices. These

conversations helped me to see similarities and differences between the Estonian and Italian contexts, especially regarding science education and teacher support.

I also had an interesting discussion with my host, Dr. Regina Soobard, about the preliminary results of my PhD thesis, and she provided me with valuable feedback. Furthermore, I exchanged ideas with a doctoral researcher from her department. Through this discussion, we identified common research interests and laid the foundations for a possible future collaboration.

Beyond the academic program, I had the chance to discover the city of Tartu, a beautiful university town rich in history, culture, and nature. Its green spaces and vibrant student atmosphere made a strong impression on me.

Living for a short period in this environment was not only enriching from a professional point of view but also inspiring on a personal level. I felt motivated and encouraged to pursue new paths, and my confidence in myself has grown thanks to this experience.

I am deeply grateful for the travel grant that made this experience possible. This week in Tartu has opened new perspectives for collaboration, strengthened my professional skills, and inspired me for the next steps of my academic and personal journey.