

Postcard from EMSC 2024

Wonderful memories of my time at the European Mensa Science Camp in the Czech Republic, 2024

By Nikolaj Kaluđerović, Mensa Montenegro

During my exchange program in Texas, I learned about an incredible opportunity—a seven-day Mensa camp in the Czech Republic focused on technology. I heard about this camp from my sister, who is a Mensa member, and I was immediately thrilled. As a passionate enthusiast of programming and 3D printing, I couldn't pass up this opportunity and decided to apply.

As the departure date approached, we began planning the trip. Along with me, two other guys from Montenegro, Pavle Mrdak and Aleksa Đurović, were traveling. We got in touch and agreed to fly together to Belgrade, from where we would continue to the camp by van. Although our flight was delayed by four hours, we used that time to get to know each other better and become friends.

Due to our flight delay, we worried that the transport might leave without us, but the van waited, and despite the unforeseen circumstances, we arrived at the camp on time. Along the way, we befriended peers from Serbia, with whom we shared the journey. Our destination was a small lodge in a beautiful natural setting near the village of Mniha. The surroundings were idyllic, with dense forests, flower-filled meadows, and tranquil lakes.

Upon arrival at the camp, we were greeted by a group of peers from various parts of the world, many of them from the Czech Republic. The atmosphere was warm and exciting. We met our guides and lecturers, and soon we were handed detailed schedules of activities for the week. The plan was well-designed, with a clear timetable for lectures, free time, meals, and project work.

Our first meal at the camp was special—a warm lunch in the canteen featuring traditional Czech dishes. It was a great way to get acquainted with the cuisine of the host country. The accommodation was comfortable and spacious, with two to four people per room.

At the beginning of the week, all participants chose the projects they would work on during the camp. We had a rich selection of topics. Most of the projects were

focused on science and technology, including work with 3D printers, Arduino and Raspberry Pi platforms, and programming. Additionally, there were projects from other fields such as history, geography, and even one dedicated to theatre performance. Each group had four to five members.

I joined a group that chose a project called “Robotics 3.” This project focused on working with the Raspberry Pi platform, and our task was to design and implement something useful and innovative. After much discussion and idea exchange, our group decided to build a weather station that could measure various weather parameters, including wind speed.

Each day of the week was filled with work on this project. In the mornings, we attended lectures and workshops where we learned about different aspects of technology and robotics, and in the afternoons, we spent time in our workshop assembling parts, writing code, and testing our weather station. There were moments of frustration when things didn’t work as expected, but also immense joy when we solved problems and saw our station successfully measuring weather parameters.

Every day at the camp was filled with excitement, learning, and exploring new technologies. The camp gathered around eighty young people from different parts of the world. While we shared similar interests, we brought diverse ideas and perspectives. This combination created an incredible atmosphere of creativity and collaboration.

One of the most memorable experiences during the camp was working in the workshop late at night. One evening, as we neared the completion of our project, we decided to stay late to test all the station’s functionalities. While others rested, we worked under the glow of lamps, carefully checking every detail to ensure everything was ready for the presentation. It was an unforgettable experience of teamwork and dedication that brought our group even closer.

On the final day of the camp, it was time to present our projects. All participants gathered in the main hall, where each group had the opportunity to showcase their work. Our group proudly presented our weather station. We explained how we built various components, how our wind speed measurement system worked, and how we used Raspberry Pi to process data and display results. The

presentation was successful, and the audience, including lecturers and other participants, was impressed by our work.

After a week filled with work, learning, and socializing, it was time to say goodbye. Everyone was sad to part ways with the other participants, with whom we had bonded through shared projects and activities. We left with promises to stay in touch and a sense of satisfaction with all that we had accomplished together.

After the Mensa camp ended, we decided to take the opportunity to visit Prague. Pavle, Aleksa, and I headed to this beautiful city, which immediately captivated us with its unique atmosphere. Our first stop was the National Museum, a magnificent building at the top of Wenceslas Square. The museum impressed us with its rich collection of artifacts and fascinating exhibitions that took us through Czech history and culture.

After exploring the museum, we headed to the Old Town Square (*Staroměstské náměstí*), the heart of Prague. Surrounded by beautiful buildings and churches reminiscent of times past, the square was enchanting. We admired the Gothic spires of the Church of Our Lady before Týn and took photos in front of the famous Astronomical Clock, which was truly mesmerizing. Walking along cobblestone streets and through colourful squares was a true delight.

The journey home was filled with reflections on everything we had experienced—from working on our project at the camp to exploring Prague. The week was incredible, filled with learning, friendships, and adventures. As we travelled back, we all agreed that this trip was one of those lifetime memories.

The entire week was not just about learning and work but also about forming new friendships and creating unforgettable experiences. The camp was an incredibly inspiring and well-organized event that combined a love of technology with the opportunity to meet people from around the world in a beautiful setting.