



Focus on the LAND OF SILVER

Rocio Sanchez Rueda is an Argentinian-born Spaniard, who is doing European Solidarity Corps volunteering in Leszno, Poland. She has a studying experience in Initial Education and meanwhile she was working in an Early Childhood Center, which as she describes is a



similar to a nursery school, created to guarantee the healthy growth and development of children from 45 days to 4 years in situations of social vulnerability.

“There is provided support and assistance to families to facilitate the process of raising and developing children, creating conditions for active participation that strengthen intra-family ties and covering the basic elements for the satisfaction of physiological, affective, psychomotor, and play, recreation and socialization; for the healthy development of children and their environment”.-She says

Last year Rocio temporarily abandoned her studies due to her transfer to Spain, where part of her family lives. One of the reason of her immigration is economy and way more opportunities in Europe.

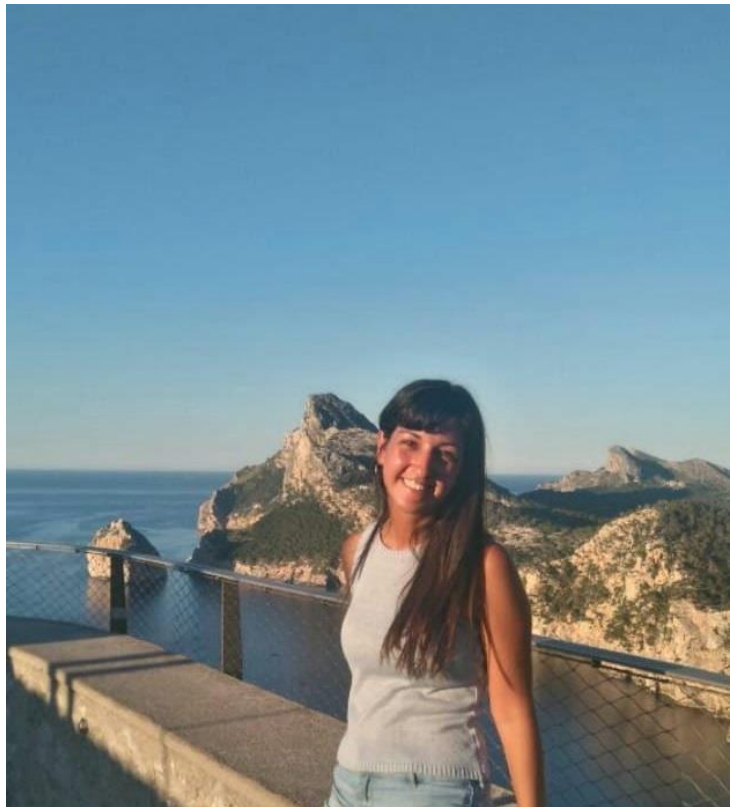
“In Europe, there is no inflation and it is more likely not to be a currency devaluation, makes it much easier to think about the future

and being able to save money. It is also easier to get a job and get to know the world.”

As she says she was motivated to do a volunteering abroad to continue growing, acquire more knowledge, experience, learn about its culture and its cities.

“This would give me the possibility of living with people who are in the same situation as me: people who love meeting people and visiting new places.”

We asked Rocio about the life in Argentina. According to her, unemployment, poverty and a poor distribution of wealth are some of the main problems there, since the earnings of a standard citizen do not cover the cost of a basic food basket, this inevitably leads to crime and insecurity, accompanied by drug use and trafficking. She thinks that this is one of the biggest taboos in Argentina, not because it is



not talked about, but because the characters that run this industry have power and impunity, generating fear and promoting corruption in the streets and in the system.

Poverty and social insecurity leads many children in Argentina to work in order to support their families.

The racism and intolerance based on religion and culture is not a big deal there.

“It should be noted that we have one of the most prestigious universities: The University of Buenos Aires (UBA) where not only Argentines from various provinces choose to study, but also many foreigners from different parts of the world. This is one of the reasons why racism and violence based on religion/culture background is not one of our biggest problems.”

But femicide is a big challenge facing the country since a woman is killed every 12 hours.

Regarding the environment, Rocio says that Argentine has fertile lands, it is a rich in flora, fauna and minerals. But, in turn, this diversity and positive aspects as natural resources are exploited quite often by



interests of private entities. An example is soybeans that are in high demand and exported at great cost, but the used methods are harmful not only to the land, but also to the environment and climate. The same occurs in the case of the intentional burning of forests,

the destruction of mountain ranges or mountains in order to build motorways and buildings.

Argentina has been forged from a mixture of cultures of different ethnic groups, mainly European immigrants, who raised to what it is now the country. In this way European traditions are combined with Native Americans ones.

“It is a country with incredible cultural and artistic activity, which has worldwide recognition in disciplines such as theater, painting,

sculpture, music or literature. One of the main attractions in Argentina, especially in the city of Buenos Aires, is Tango. A sensual dance and musical genre that has gained international fame for its attractive way of being”-Rocio says proudly.

As for Sports, Football is another great passions of Argentines. Buenos Aires is the city with the most soccer stadiums in the world. However, despite the fame of football, the native sport of Argentina is the duck, which was the national sport for some years. It is a horse competition invented by the gauchos in which teams have to put a kind of ball with handles inside a hoop.

When it comes to gastronomy, the recipes are influenced by Creole, Italian and Spanish cuisines. The main course is the barbecue, consisting of several pieces of roast meat. Where the idea is to get together friends or family to share unique moments. Another tradition is to meet family every 29th of each month and eat gnocchi.



Argentina is famous for its Mate, which is the typical infusion made with yerba and hot water. Going to the home of a family member or friend and putting the kettle to prepare mate is the most normal thing there.

“A mate is not just a simple infusion, it is the need to share with others, to invite, to dialogue, to respect, to laugh”-Rocio explains

As regards to the cultural shocks Rocio says that she has experienced some of them.

“Some manners are different, such as customs, the way of driving or even greeting; in Argentina we usually kiss or even hug and kiss, no matter if it is your friend, your brother or a complete stranger, man or woman. The climate is the opposite since when it is cold in Europe, it is hot in Argentina. So it was strange for me to live Christmas in winter. We have a lot of love and respect for our flag. Children in schools hoist it every day. Unfortunately in Argentina learning languages is not a priority. Spanish is spoken throughout the country, although some words or idioms vary according to the region.”-She says.

According to Rocio, there are different perspectives in terms of perception of Europe in Argentine:

Opinion No.1: Some people believe that Europeans have no social conscience, according to what it is happening in the whole world. They think they are better than other continents for being European, and at the same time they are more individualistic.”

Opinion No. 2: Other people believe that Europeans are a good model of society, which has more culture from the writing side and established knowledge. That society works better: They have more technological and scientific advances, the administrative and economic sector is much more reliable and they have more awareness and infrastructures on ecological issues.

“And as for me, traveling allowed her not to be narrow-minded, not to be prejudiced by a country or a continent. We are all human beings, who have to live in different parts of the world with better or worse benefits” - She concludes.