Juvenes Translatores 2025

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Your translation [dansk]

At rejse frem og tilbage

Kæreste Alex

Dejligt at høre, at du tager på interrail! Og du har ret: jeg gjorde det selv for mange år siden, i 1990, for at være præcis, mens jeg studerede.

Prag var et af højdepunkterne. Jeg blev nødt til at sende mit pas afsted på forhånd for at få et særligt visum. Dengang var det alt sammen meget spændende. Nu til dags er jeg så taknemmelig for bare at kunne vifte med mit EU-pas og spadsere igennem grænsekontrollen. Indenfor Schengen ville man selvfølgelig ikke engang opdage, at man havde krydset en grænse, hvis ikke ens mobilselskab mindede en om det.

Det siger vist sig selv, at studerende ikke havde mobiltelefoner i 1990. Hvis man ville reservere en seng på et vandrehjem, blev man nødt til at finde en telefonboks, enten på gaden eller i en bar, og fylde mønter i den (forskellige fra land til land, naturligvis).

For at blive indkvarteret i Prag havde jeg fået navn og adresse på en kvinde som tog imod besøgende, men ikke noget telefonnummer. Så jeg skrev et brev: ja, et fysisk brev, og, før du begynder at fnise, nej, jeg brugte ikke en svanefjer og mit eget blod. Jeg ved, at du synes det er mærkeligt gammeldags, at jeg stadig bruger e-mail, men selv det havde man ikke hørt om dengang.

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Prag lå dengang i et land ved navn Tjekkoslovakiet. Et andet tidligere land, jeg besøgte på min tur, var Vesttyskland, som jeg tog til blot få uger inden Tysklands genforening. Jeg kan huske, at der var en vis ængstelighed i luften. Nogle mente, at det gik for stærkt, mens andre syntes, at det var for vigtigt til at kunne vente.

Der var andre navne, som ikke findes på landkortene i dag. Da jeg voksede op var et helt hjørne af Europa afmærket 'Sovjetunionen'. Men efter Berlinmurens fald i 1989 blev alt forandret. Vi måtte vænne os til navnene på lande, som fra vores vesteuropæiske synspunkt havde været 'skjult' bag jerntæppet.

Så var der Jugoslavien, som engang var et ganske stort land i Sydøsteuropa. I 90'erne, dette monumentale årti, ophørte det med at eksistere, og i stedet dukkede lande op, hvis navne vores oldeforældre ville have kendt.

Ærligt talt, Ally, så er jeg ikke engang så gammel, hvad end du synes, men de forandringer, der er sket i min levetid, har været bemærkelsesværdige, og oftest har de været for det bedste. Det er det vigtigt ikke at glemme. EU er ikke perfekt, men vores kaotiske historie taget i betragtning gør vi det ganske udmærket.

Nå, men nok propaganda, som din far ville sige.

Hav en fantastisk tur med mange eventyr og Ally, min skat, husk, at selvom vi ikke kan vide, hvad fremtiden vil bringe, så lad os altid huske, hvor langt vi er kommet.

Med al min kærlighed,

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Tante M

Juvenes Translatores 2025

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Text to translate [English]

Journeying back and forward

Dearest Alex

Great to hear that you're going interrailing! And you're right: I did it myself back in the day, 1990 to be precise, when I was a student.

Prague was a highlight. I had to send off my passport in advance to get a special visa. At the time it was all very exciting. These days, I'm so grateful to be able to flutter my EU passport and waltz through border control. Of course, if you're in Schengen, you wouldn't even know you've crossed a border except for your phone company pinging you.

No need to tell you that students didn't have mobile phones in 1990. If you wanted to book a bed in a youth hostel, you had to find a payphone, in a street or bar, and pump in coins, different ones for every country, of course.

For my accommodation in Prague, I had the name and address of a lady who took in visitors but no phone number. So I wrote a letter: yes, a physical letter and before you snigger, no I didn't use a swan's feather and my own blood. I know you think I'm quaintly old-fashioned for still using email, but even that was unheard of back then.

Prague, at that time, was in a country called Czechoslovakia. Another ex-country that I visited on my interrail trip was West Germany, just a few weeks before German Reunification. I remember there was a certain apprehension. Some people thought it was happening too quickly, but others felt it was too important to wait.

There were other names now no longer on the map. When I was growing up, a whole swathe of Europe was marked 'USSR'. It was after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, that everything changed. We had to get to grips with the names of countries which, from our vantage point on the western edges of Europe, had been 'hidden' behind the Iron Curtain.

Then there was Yugoslavia, once a considerably sized state in south-east Europe. In the 90s, that momentous decade, it ceased to exist and, in its place, countries emerged with names that our great-grandparents would have known.

Honestly Ally, I'm not even that old, whatever you might think, but the changes in my lifetime have been extraordinary, and largely for the better. It's important we don't lose sight of that. The EU isn't perfect but, given our tumultuous history, we've done pretty well.

Anyway, enough propaganda, as your dad would say.

Have a wonderful trip with many adventures and Ally, my darling, while we can't know exactly what the future has in store for us, let's always remember how far we've come.

All my love,

Auntie M