

My Erasmus Experience Story

I want to start by saying that I am very grateful for this opportunity and not once have I ever regretted going on this exchange program journey.

My Erasmus story started at the start of February in Kavala, a quite small city located in the north of Greece. In the beginning, I was scared and not sure what to expect because I have never done anything like this in my life! Going away from everything that I was used to, leaving my family and friends behind and going into the unknown, and living in an apartment with my friend was something that was way out of my comfort zone.

The first month was full of exploring the city and getting used to the new place and circumstances. I loved the first day at the university– having a look around the place, and meeting the other Erasmus students and lecturers. It was so interesting meeting people from different countries and exchanging each other's experiences. Together we were 17 Erasmus students from Latvia, Germany, Romania, and France. There were also students from the university who were considered as volunteers. They were willing to help us to feel comfortable and make us feel welcomed, which was nice. Also, the lecturers made sure that we feel welcomed and were always ready to help if we got confused with something. Being surrounded by people from different countries made me want to get to know them and listen to their views and beliefs about different topics. Even though I am usually a shy and quiet person, this international environment made me open up! Moreover, having to speak with so many people, made me way more confident with my English-speaking skills.

The lectures were interesting because the lecturers were enthusiastic and energetic. We even had an International Teaching Month, when lecturers from many different countries like Portugal, Austria, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Germany came to our university, gave lectures, and spoke about interesting topics. However, one thing that I learned about Greeks is that they are not that organized and often are not on time.

Of course, we also wanted to use the opportunity to explore a little bit more of Greece and see what else it has for us to offer! We traveled to Thessaloniki, which is the second biggest city in Greece. In April, we also went to Corfu Island and in May we traveled to Athens and Crete Island. The beautiful beaches, sunny weather, and spectacular architecture make me want to go back there and see more of this country!

Thanks to this experience I have made some conclusions – you will not experience any growth if you don't get out of your comfort zone and accept challenges, education quality here in Latvia is at a high level and better than at the university in Greece but still it was interesting to compare what is the study process in Latvia and Greece. I am happy that I went through this Erasmus

experience and I am thankful that our university has such cooperation with other foreign universities such as International Hellenic University in Greece.