



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Erasmus: I am one of the two million who did it!

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet
(<http://europa.eu>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010

ISBN 978-92-79-14063-1

doi 10.2766/50494

© European Union, 2010

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium

Printed on white chlorine-free paper



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Erasmus: I am one of the
two million who did it!

Quotes from Erasmus students

"I realised that the experience made a whole new person of me and that I would never look at the world and Europe, my home, as I did before."

"Everybody is a local, not an outsider."

"These team work exercises proved that when it comes to communication, people with different cultures and religions, coming from countries that have even been enemies in their past history, can sit at the same table and forget about their differences."

"I realised that it was much easier to say 'hello' than to say 'goodbye'."

"This is Erasmus. Nothing is real here. It's a different space-time, like a bubble. Everything has a different value here. Time is limited, friendships are formed within a few minutes and they are of great importance because we all share a similar experience."

"I could make friends in a day, while in Cyprus it would take me years to find a true friend."

"It is true – when you're in Erasmus, you find out a lot about yourself."

"I learned that happiness and grief are very closely related."

"If I look at my experience from a distance, I can say that I would definitely do it one more time, and that apart from (or maybe because of) minor problems along the way, this semester has made me a stronger and more enthusiastic person!"

"Beyond a studying experience, Erasmus is a lot more. For me it is a way to look at the world with new eyes, to feel and discover new emotions and learn what is not written in the notebooks."

"My time with Erasmus is one of the highlights of my life so far and I feel truly lucky to participate in this programme. Too bad you can only do this once, but this can only make you appreciate the experience even more."

"There is nothing like 40 people singing 'Happy Birthday' to a fellow student, each one of them in their own language."

Content

2 | Quotes from Erasmus students

7 | The Erasmus programme

8 | Erasmus for students

Personal experiences

10 |  Stefanie Bakelandt

12 |  Petar Kosev

14 |  Petra Nováková

16 |  Svend Andreas Rothmann Bonde

18 |  Bianca Daniela Blasig


20 |  Tõnno Toompuu

22 |  Peter Murphy

24 |  Eirini Komninou

26 |  Fernando Acosta Martínez


28 |  Marcel Musabimana

30 |  Antonella Perrone

32 |  Yianna Armosti


34 |  Vita Legzdina


36 |  Giedre Pranaityte


38 |  Laurence Kremer


40 |  Gergő Németh


42 |  Kathrine Schembri


44 |  Lotte Dieleman

46 |  Thomas Hörzer


48 |  Joanna Pawelczak


50 |  Mariana Carneiro de Sousa
Pinto da Costa


52 |  Laura Adelina Popa


54 |  Željka Sokolić

56 |  Jozef Majak


58 |  Jenni Silvennoinen

60 |  Caroline Lundin

62 |  Kate Samways

64 |  Hlynur Páll Pálsson

66 |  Mirco Stoffel

68 |  Anders August Kittilsen

70 |  Selami Savkliyildiz

72 | The Erasmus Programme in a nutshell



The Erasmus Programme – a success for more than 22 years

| 7

Erasmus is the EU's flagship education and training programme, enabling around 180 000 students to study and to do work placements abroad each year.

Studies show that a period spent abroad not only enriches a student's life in the academic field but also facilitates the acquisition of intercultural skills, language skills and self-reliance. A cross-border mobility period is a key asset on every CV that enhances the employability and job prospects of graduates.

Few, if any, programmes launched by the European Union have had a similar Europe-wide reach. Most of the European universities in 31 participating countries are currently involved in Erasmus and two million students have participated in study exchanges since the initial launch of the programme in 1987.

The selection of the 2 millionth Erasmus student

The benchmark of the 2 millionth Erasmus student was reached during the academic year 2008/09. To celebrate this landmark achievement, every participating country in the Erasmus programme was requested to nominate students, who participated in an Erasmus mobility period for studies or placements during the year. The Erasmus statistics are collected in each country separately as the Erasmus mobility scheme is decentralised, therefore it is impossible to say whom exactly the 2 millionth really was. Therefore, the European Commission opted to select 31 students, one from each of the participating countries, to represent their respective country as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student. The booklet contains the testimonials of these 31 outstanding students, who have shown their excellence in enriching their academic career by studying or doing a traineeship abroad and are listed by the protocol order.

Experience Europe from a new perspective

Have you ever wanted to get to know a different European culture, study at a foreign university, do a traineeship in an enterprise abroad, make new friends, and learn another language? Then Erasmus may be what you are looking for!

By mid 2009, two million European students have experienced what it means to do an Erasmus term in one of approximately 4 000 higher education institutions in 31 participating countries. These include all the EU member states as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. You can go on a student mobility period abroad both for studies and for a placement lasting from three to twelve months each with a combined total of 24 months.

Erasmus student mobility is open to you if you are enrolled at least in your second year at your home institution in one of the participating European countries while placements may be authorised

from the first year. If you have been selected by your home university, you may be awarded a grant that contributes to the additional costs for living abroad and travelling. But even when a grant has not been awarded the Erasmus period has to be fully recognised by the home institution, or in the case of a placement, at least in the Diploma Supplement issued by the home institution. In all circumstances, tuition fees at the host university will be waived.

To participate in Erasmus student mobility, you should first contact the international office of your home institution. The international office will inform you about possible host institutions and host enterprises, the selection procedure and financial support.

The Erasmus programme promotes the learning of other European languages. Therefore, Erasmus students can benefit from Erasmus Intensive

Language Courses (EILCs) in less widely used and taught languages in the host country. Students with special needs such as disabled ones may get extra funds to cover additional expenses related to their stay abroad.

Mobility for studying abroad differs in certain aspects from the mobility for work placements:

- Student mobility for studies: You can study at partner institutions of your home institution if both institutions have concluded an inter-institutional agreement in your field of study. Erasmus students do not have to pay any fees abroad for tuition and access to library or laboratory facilities. During the academic year 2007/2008, some 162 700 students studied abroad thanks to Erasmus.
- Student mobility for placements: Introduced into Erasmus in 2007, student placements give you access to the world of business in Europe. For

placements, you can go abroad to companies, research or training centres or any organisation including higher education institutions. A placement must be connected with your studies and it can be either optional or an integral part of the studies. During the academic year 2007/2008, some 20 000 students did a placement/traineeship abroad thanks to Erasmus.





Stefanie Bakelandt
2 millionth Erasmus student
Belgium



Erasmus study mobility from Ghent University, Belgium,
to Vilnius Pedagogical University, Lithuania

Coping with courses in Lithuanian

Stefanie Bakelandt is a 21-year old student from the University of Ghent in Belgium. She studied philosophy in Vilnius, Lithuania, as an Erasmus student.

“I’d been dreaming of travelling off the beaten track for years. I leapt at the opportunity to complete part of my course abroad, and with the help from the Erasmus coordinator at my university, I was soon off to Vilnius, of which I knew close to nothing.

I left looking for adventure, and I wasn’t disappointed. My lectures at Vilnius Pedagogical University were all in Lithuanian and I couldn’t grasp the language fast enough to follow them. But this turned into a valuable learning experience for me. I had to take the initiative and communicate directly with the university’s academics. English was sometimes only their third or fourth language, but with my modest Lithuanian, some words of French and German, and plenty of good will and gesturing, we found a solution.

My professors generously found time to tutor me and direct me towards topics I could read up on and write about by myself. With an energy I didn’t know I had, I explored new fields of philosophy.

During my four months in Lithuania I was stunned by the country’s forests and lakes, and fascinated by its history and folklore. I made a lot of friends. And the greatest tribute I can pay to my time there is that I’ve started travelling all over Europe.

My Erasmus experience taught me to act independently. Because of this, I discovered in Vilnius what I was really interested in. Going abroad showed me more than I expected, both about my studies, and about myself.”

Stefanie Bakelandt (Belgium) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she did not go to a common destination, was confronted with courses in Lithuanian, but adjusted and integrated, turning potential failure into success.



Petar Kosev
2 millionth Erasmus student
Bulgaria



Erasmus placement mobility from the Medical University
Varna, Bulgaria, to the University of Bari – Medical School, Italy

Operating in a new territory

25-year old Petar Kosev is studying medicine at the “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” University in Varna, Bulgaria. He trained for six months at the Medical School of the University of Bari in Italy with the support of Erasmus for his student placement (internship).

“Living in Italy has always been a dream of mine, a dream that actually came true this year. To complete our medical degree in Varna, we must take on an internship in a medical institution. The Erasmus programme allowed me to do this at the University of Bari’s clinic, in South-Eastern Italy.

I only found out about the Erasmus programme in my fifth year at university. Our Erasmus coordinator quickly filled me in though. Together we designed an internship that fitted my needs – and hopes – perfectly. I chose where I wanted to work and how long I wanted to stay there. It really felt like I was taking charge of my education.

Working in Bari was marvellous. I met many expert urologists and surgeons who were a great inspiration to me. I also observed Italian medical

practices I wasn’t familiar with before, and assisted in a good many operations – notably in the 1 000th kidney transplant of Bari University Hospital, which led to my photograph appearing in the next day’s newspaper. My activities gave me the opportunity to improve my clinical skills and learn new methods that I am now eager to apply in Bulgaria.

The internship also gave me the chance to learn about local traditions and to get to know Italian people better. The friends I made, Italians and fellow Erasmus students from other countries, were friendly, easy-going people that made me feel right at home. I confess I was surprised by how much they reminded me of people in Bulgaria.

It’s been a wonderful experience and I remain very grateful to the people who made it possible.”

Petar Kosev (Bulgaria) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because he studied in an uncommon subject for Erasmus, integrated into the medical team as intern, and was allowed to take part in surgical procedures.



Petra Nováková
2 millionth Erasmus student
Czech Republic



Erasmus student placement from Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic,
to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium

Securing an extraordinary internship place

22-year old Petra Nováková, studying for a degree in media, journalism and history at Masaryk University in Brno in the Czech Republic, was funded by Erasmus for a six-month placement in the Public Diplomacy Division at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Headquarters in Brussels in 2009.

“My delight at learning I had won this placement was balanced by my worry about how to pay for living in Brussels. Nobody from my university has ever had an Erasmus grant for a placement, but I explored the possibility with our Erasmus coordinator, and was told that it was possible. Erasmus was even flexible enough to allow for the postponement of the placement while I awaited the necessary security clearance from my government.

It was quite an experience to work with people from countries all around the globe and many of the opinion leaders of today’s world. NATO assigned me to help in organising conferences, including one in Strasbourg during the NATO 60th anniversary summit, at which more than 300 students and young profes-

sionals debated the future of NATO with famous journalists, think-tankers, philosophers and politicians, including the new US President Barack Obama.

I also attended meetings and supported multimedia projects by helping to edit videos, create posters, boost social web profiles and launch a new website for a photo competition.

I also improved my language skills, since I hardly ever got to speak in my own language. Those months in Brussels widened my horizons, and changed my priorities and my future plans. What seemed impossible a year ago is now a part of my own experience. This is the way how to discover what is in you and to develop the potential you have.”

Petra Nováková (Czech Republic) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student for managing to get an internship at NATO. As security clearance was required, the Erasmus programme was flexible enough to await the government clearance and to provide Ms. Nováková with a grant in time.



Svend Andreas Rothmann Bonde
2 millionth Erasmus student
Denmark

Cartoon Saloon

Erasmus placement mobility from VIA University College, Denmark,
to Cartoon Saloon, Kilkenny, Ireland

Finding a job in Ireland thanks to Erasmus

25-year old Svend Bonde from VIA University College in Denmark set out for the Cartoon Saloon in Kilkenny, Ireland, for a three-month Erasmus internship.

“On arriving at Cartoon Saloon in Kilkenny, I worked on commercials, cartoons and 2D animation films. One of my proudest achievements is the work I did for a trailer that was used at the Cartoon Movie Festival.

The experience proved a great success both for my own work and for the studio’s. When the internship period was over, Cartoon Saloon offered me a contract and I have been working there happily till this day.”

Svend Bonde (Denmark) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student, because his placement was not in a common study area, and he managed to get a job afterwards at the same company.



JOHANNES
GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT
MAINZ

Bianca Daniela Blasig
2 millionth Erasmus student
Germany



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

Erasmus study mobility from Johannes Gutenberg
University Mainz, Germany, to Trieste University, Italy

Coping as a single mother abroad

27-year old humanities student Bianca Blasig learnt Italian for 10 month in Trieste with the assistance of the Erasmus programme

"I had wanted to take part in the Erasmus exchange programme while I was studying translation at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, but I thought I'd lost my chance when I became pregnant. I applied anyway, and although there was no precedent for single mothers studying abroad with their child, I was accepted at the University of Trieste's department of interpretation and translation.

I found my daughter Joy a state-run nursery school, and I shared a flat with five other students, who provided both of us with lots of support.

In the mornings, after leaving my daughter at the nursery school, I went to translation classes. As I had to pick her up at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, my choice of courses was limited, but I adapted my timetable as best as I could and made great progress in my studies.

Joy and I took advantage of our stay to travel across Italy and to make new friends. I realised how much easier it is to learn a foreign language in everyday life. In addition, I found myself in situations I would not have encountered in Germany. For instance, I attended Silvio Berlusconi's reception for Angela Merkel at their German-Italian summit.

The exchange was positive for me and my daughter. Despite its challenges, I would strongly recommend it to other single parents. If nothing else, the experience has helped me understand problems foreigners may face living in my home country. Only a few days ago, Joy, unexpectedly and without any reason, said to me: 'Mummy, Italy was beautiful, wasn't it?' I could not have said it better myself."

Ms. Bianca Blasig (Germany) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she coped as a single mother during her studies abroad. The Erasmus programmes provides an extra grant for special needs.



Eesti Lennuakadeemia
Estonian Aviation Academy

Tõnno Toompuu
2 millionth Erasmus student
Estonia



Hogeschool van Amsterdam
University of Applied Sciences

Erasmus study mobility from the Estonian Aviation Academy, Estonia
to the Hogeschool van Amsterdam continued with an Erasmus placement to Denim Air, Netherlands

Making a reality of flights of fancy

Tõnno Toompuu, a 23 year-old cadet from the Estonian Aviation Academy, spent three months at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam with the Erasmus programme. He completed his course with brio, and stayed on to work with a Dutch aerospace company.

"I was apprehensive at first about the Erasmus programme because I wasn't interested in the universities we had bilateral agreements with. I wanted to attend the Erasmus programme for aviation management at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA) in the Netherlands. When I discussed the matter with our Erasmus programme coordinator, he encouraged me to establish the contacts with HvA myself. I got in touch, then our institutions got in touch, and a few months later, I was in Amsterdam.

The lectures at HvA were everything I had expected. I particularly enjoyed the project studies and the teamwork involved, which helped me take a more critical view on my own work and realize my strengths and weaknesses. I enjoyed my time there so much that I set about finding a way to stay.

After consulting with my academy, HvA and our Erasmus coordinator, I took on an internship at Denim Air, a Dutch aircraft leaser, where my tutor was a quality manager. My work there brought me into contact with specialists of Denim Air, the Dutch Civil Aviation Authorities and many aviation firms.

When I returned to Estonia, my academy was proud of my work, I was delighted with what I'd learnt and HvA was so satisfied with the exchange, they proposed establishing more regular contacts with the Estonian Aviation Academy. On the whole, I think taking part in the Erasmus programme was the best decision I made during my studies."

Tõnno Toompuu (Estonia) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of his unusual field of study for an Erasmus exchange, and because he set up the bilateral agreements for the two universities himself and found a placement on his own initiative.



Peter Murphy
2 millionth Erasmus student
Ireland



LAHDEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Erasmus study mobility from the National College of Art and Design, Ireland, to Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Design for living abroad

Peter Murphy is a 22 year-old student from the National College of Art and Design in Ireland. He spent five months at Lahti University of Applied Sciences in Finland to take a fresh look at industrial design.

“Positive feedback from previous Erasmus students convinced me to take part in the programme. I looked forward to the independence of living away from home. As my studies focused on design, I travelled to Finland, a country with a great tradition in this area.

I was swept into my new life the day I arrived, with an induction week organised by the college to get the Erasmus students to mix and meet. I made friends who stayed with me throughout the year. I even went travelling with some of them over the holidays.

The programme offered so much more than I had expected. Along with industrial design, I was encouraged to take on courses from other faculties. I developed an interest in furniture design, interior design, photography, Finnish cuisine, culture, language and architecture.

The courses themselves felt so alive. We left our lecture theatres to participate in the design week 2009 in Milan, Italy. We were also commissioned to develop a range of emergency rescue products under the supervision of a young professional designer from Helsinki.

During the five months I lived in Finland, I met people from all around Europe. My exchanges with them taught me more about our continent’s history than anything I had learnt in school. I was stunned by how many languages my fellow Erasmus students spoke.

My studies and my development got a great boost from my Erasmus exchange. It strengthened my practical skills and opened my eyes to a whole new world of art and design.”

Peter Murphy (Ireland) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student as he went to an uncommon destination, and followed an assortment of subjects from different faculties in Finland, providing academic added value.



Eirini Komninou
2 millionth Erasmus student
Greece



Erasmus placement mobility from Technological Educational
Institute of Crete, Greece, to the European Space Agency/Astronomy Centre, Spain

27-year old Eirini Komninou went for her electrical engineering studies with Erasmus from the Technological Educational Institute of Crete to the European Space Agency's Astronomy Centre in Madrid.

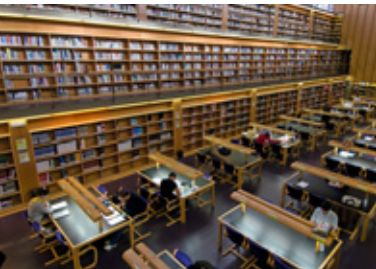
"I was a 4th year undergraduate electrical engineering student when I went to Madrid as a European Space Agency trainee at their European Space Astronomy Centre. I was part of the Science Operations Centre XMM-Newton satellite team, and my main activity was to obtain advanced java programming skills and design an improved parameter graphical user interface for the Remote Interface for Science Analysis (RISA) astrophysical web service.

I learnt a lot about programming in java and I improved my Spanish and my awareness of Spanish culture. But the most important thing was working in an international organisation, with people from Argentina, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Canada, and Norway – and making friends with them.

It wasn't the easiest experience ever. Especially when I had to take care of housing/banking/everyday

life issues in Spanish or to take an hour and a half to get to work because of the bad bus connections, or persuade someone to give me a lift. But these difficulties helped me develop my communication skills, and to become inventive and stronger as a person. So it was one of the most valuable experiences so far. I would totally recommend all university students to take an Erasmus placement before finishing their studies. It's definitely worth it."

Eirini Komninou (Greece) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she managed secure a traineeship at a very unusual placement destination, which gave her a lot of insights for her future professional career.



Fernando Acosta Martínez
2 millionth Erasmus student
Spain



BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

Erasmus study mobility from University of Las Palmas de
Gran Canaria, Spain, to the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary

Pole position for a Spaniard in Budapest

Fernando Acosta Martínez, 24, finished his degree in industrial engineering at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and went with Erasmus to Budapest University of Technology and Economics for nine months.

“For most people, Erasmus means success, fun, opportunity, experience and ‘study abroad’. I think it’s more than that. It helped me develop as a student, a person and now an engineer. Meeting people from all around the world changes you and helps you understand other cultures.

In Budapest, I worked on the final project for my degree, in the hydro-dynamics department, and developed an air intake system for a competition engine in line with Formula Student rules. With the new skills I acquired there in computational fluid dynamics simulations, I also entered the Altran Engineering Academy competition, which rewards new ideas for Formula 1, and my success in that gave me the chance to be the Spanish representative in the international competition which took

place in the ING-Renault F1 team factory in the UK. I knew that just getting that far was already a victory, but in the end my entry was judged as the second best among the candidates from all around the world. My dream is to be a Formula 1 engineer, and without the Erasmus programme I would not be so far along the way to achieving.

My Erasmus period absolutely changed my life for the better. And I was able to improve my English, to meet people and make friends from everywhere, and to learn so much about the countries that I visited. It has been, it is, and it will be unforgettable and I will be Erasmus forever.”

Fernando Acosta Martínez (Spain) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of the unusual destination and because his Erasmus period helped him win the second place at the competition for Formula 1 engineers.



Marcel Musabimana
2 millionth Erasmus student
France



Erasmus placement mobility from the Institut supérieur de promotion industrielle, Châlons-en-Champagne, France, to TOTAL, Brasov, Romania

Feeling inter-cultural dialogue in Brasov

Marcel Musabimana, a 23-year old student at the Institut supérieur de Promotion Industrielle de Châlons-en-Champagne was sponsored by Erasmus to work for three months at Total's facilities in Brasov, Romania.

"My studies in France taught me about management and industry, but left me guessing as to the world I'd work in. So with the support of the Erasmus programme, in the winter of 2009 I took the plane to Brasov, Romania, for an intern position at a Total installation. The differences I had been looking for soon found me. My new co-workers welcomed me warmly, then briskly set me to work. Over the weeks, I began to realize how much I was capable of doing myself. The language barriers also showed me the importance of speaking English in the business world. In an international environment, things don't work if everyone sticks to their own local habits.

My goal was to develop a process to record the temperature during the various stages of grease

manufacture. Litres of coffee and countless sleepless nights were required to complete the project on time. But not all the sleepless nights were dedicated to work.

I'll keep many memories of my outings with the Romanians I grew acquainted to. They showed me a lot about Romania and a great deal about myself. I am happy to have come into contact with a country that is not a rich tourist destination. Many of the Romanians I met were not used to foreigners. I was the first black person some of them had ever seen. Talking with them helped me open up culturally and I think it may at times have been reciprocal."

Marcel Musabimana (France) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because he chose one of the newest Member States as his internship place and because he benefited from the welcome and cultural contacts.



Antonella Perrone
2 millionth Erasmus student
Italy



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Basilicata, Italy,
to the University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Winds of change pleased Antonella

Antonella Perrone finished her degree in aerospace engineering at the Basilicata University in Italy with a stay at the University of Glasgow. She liked it so much she'll be staying there for three more years for her PhD studies.

"When I found out that I could travel to a foreign lab and carry out my master thesis on the area of research of my choice, I could hardly believe it. None of the subjects that were being investigated at the university in Italy where I was studying really sparked my enthusiasm. Erasmus opened the world up to me and I didn't let the opportunity slip. I applied to the Department of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Glasgow to work on computational fluid dynamics. The topic was really hot. It dealt with wind turbines, a promising source of renewable energy, using an analysis technique that is proving increasingly economical.

The goal of the project was to understand in detail how wind flows through rotors. The equipment at our disposal was outstanding. Even the

data we used had been provided by the NASA Ames wind tunnel in California.

I enjoyed my research, maybe a little too much. I think most Erasmus students remember the parties and the places they visited but, to be honest, I spent most of my time in the lab. I have no regrets. It was the hardest I ever worked and I loved it. At the end of six exhausting months, I completed my project and presented my thesis. I'm happy to say it was well received and that my results now constitute a small stone in the mosaic of the Computational Fluid Dynamics group of the University of Glasgow. I graduated with honours at the University of Basilicata... and then returned to my team in Glasgow to start a PhD."

Antonella Perrone (Italy) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of the dedication she demonstrated during her research at the University of Glasgow. Her host institution was impressed by her work up to the point of taking her on for a PhD.



Yianna Armosti
2 millionth Erasmus student
Cyprus



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Cyprus
to the University of Leuven, Belgium

Curing separation anxiety

Yianna Armosti, a 21-year old psychology student from the University of Cyprus in Nicosia, liked her new surroundings at the University of Leuven so much that she prolonged her Erasmus exchange by a semester.

"I arrived at the University of Leuven in Belgium with apprehension about leaving my loved ones and lukewarm feelings about the months ahead of me. I almost cancelled my trip just before I left. But from day one, I met great people from all over the world. In fact I had such a good time that I've actually extended my stay in Leuven by an additional semester.

As the days passed, I grew very fond of my work here, too. Some of the courses in Belgium weren't offered at the University of Cyprus, so I discovered a lot of new aspects of psychology here. I also prepared group projects and presentations in English for the first time. This has given me the chance to improve my language skills and engage in team work.

I'm now only a few days away from my return to Cyprus, and I can't fit my feelings about the Erasmus experience on a piece of paper. I'd like to tell you it was the best year of my life, but that wouldn't say much to you. I can tell you it was a great learning experience. I now speak several foreign languages competently. I've met many people from very different cultures who have shown me a lot about the world and about myself. I've travelled and learnt to organize my life away from my home country... What am I saying? It was just the best year of my life.

A lot of Erasmus students leave with tears in their eyes, feeling really sad that it all ended. I won't. I feel happy that I had the chance to live this and thankful to everybody that gave me this chance."

Yianna Armosti (Cyprus) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because after nearly dropping out before she had begun, she eventually prolonged her stay from six to nine months.



Vita Legzdina
2 millionth Erasmus student
Latvia



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Liepaja, Latvia,
to Anadolu University, Turkey

Turkish delights for Vita

At the age of 21, Vita Legzdina left her home in Latvia to study fine arts at the University of Anadolu in Turkey. She came back five months later after discovering a new home.

“When I boarded the flight to Istanbul, I was in tears. I had no idea what my life was going to be like for the next five months.

But I cheered up when I saw Anadolu University’s Faculty of Fine Arts. There were departments of painting, animation, plastering, glass, design – and lots of light and space in the studios. I met friendly students and inspiring teachers and I picked up many new skills: painting nudes, making stained glass (which couldn’t be learnt at my home university), and learning how to cope when a teacher criticized my works – which turned out to be an edifying experience.

I didn’t just learn in the studio. In Turkey I also understood how much I love my friends and family in Latvia. It was the first time I lived alone, without

my language and traditions, and I feel that helped me find out who I really am.

I met students from Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, France and Germany. We threw parties with Turkish friends. I even started to understand Turkish. I passed my exams with good marks and compliments from my teachers. My friends threw me a goodbye party, and when I boarded the flight back to Riga, again with tears in my eyes, one of my friends hugged me and said ‘You are not a tourist, don’t forget that, Vita!’ And it’s true. Thanks to Erasmus I now have a home in Turkey, too.”

Vita Legzdina (Latvia) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student for her enthusiasm and the smoothness with which she adapted to her new environment and a different culture.



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
MCHSII

Giedre Pranaityte
2 millionth Erasmus student
Lithuania



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Erasmus study mobility from Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
to the University of Bergen, Norway

A diplomatic boost in Bergen

Giedre Pranaityte is not in the habit of giving up on her dreams. At the age of 30, with a successful career on the way, she turned to her alma mater and the Erasmus programme to study international relations.

“After obtaining my master’s degree in English philology at Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania, I started working as a linguist-administrator for the EU Committee of the Regions. The job sparked my enthusiasm for politics and, after two years, I returned to my old university to do a master’s in international relations and diplomacy. I made the most of this course by travelling to the University of Bergen in Norway as an Erasmus student.

My studies got a real boost in Bergen. The lectures on the US Presidency interested me so much that I presented my thesis on the presidency of George W. Bush. It was very well received by the assessors back at my home university. And while studying in Norway, I also published an article in the scientific-analytical bulletin Geopolityka.

The people I met and the things I saw taught me about Norwegian culture. Being a wheelchair-user presented complications for some social activities, but not many. I visited the Bergen Art Museum and the Bergen Aquarium. I frequently enjoyed concerts at the Grieg Hall. I took a boat ride through the fjords and explored Oslo. I also visited the house where Ibsen had lived and have since been preparing an article about the author.

I am grateful for the additional scholarship from the Education Exchanges Support Foundation. This allowed me to focus on my academic objectives in Norway. I doubt my interest in politics would have developed as much if I had been distracted by a part-time job, nor that I would now be applying for a PhD in this field.”

Giedre Pranaityte (Lithuania) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because, despite her physical disability, she energetically pursued her goals and achieved great academic progress during her Erasmus year.



Laurence Kremer
2 millionth Erasmus student
Luxembourg



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Luxembourg
to the University of Education of Heidelberg, Germany

Enjoying valuable teacher training

Laurence Kremer, a 22-year old student teacher from the University of Luxembourg, spent her year with Erasmus absorbing a new culture at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Heidelberg, Germany.

“My course at the University of Luxembourg offered the chance to study at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Heidelberg with an Erasmus scholarship. I took part because I’d heard of this institution’s scientific contributions in the field of educational and social sciences.

The vast range of courses in Heidelberg allowed me to choose classes that fitted my interests and that would prove beneficial to my career as a teacher. The courses were very practical: they taught us to handle complex problems that may occur in the classroom. During my second semester, I worked as an intern in a primary school. I was delighted to teach a class of children of different nationalities. This is valuable experience for a teacher in a multi-cultural country such as Luxembourg.

During my stay, I made good friends from the UK, Switzerland, Ukraine and Colombia. I learnt a lot about their countries just by spending enjoyable evenings with them in Heidelberg. We cooked together, went to bars and watched movies. We also went exploring. The freedom and independence of moving to a foreign country also exposed me to challenges such as looking for an affordable flat, managing my budget, cooking, cleaning and balancing study and fun.

Studying in a foreign country through the Erasmus programme was an enriching experience. It has sharpened my appetite for further travels abroad.”

Laurence Kremer (Luxembourg) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of the multi-layered benefits she obtained – academic, social, cultural and personal – and because of her appreciation of the experiences she lived in Heidelberg for the multicultural nature of her future teaching career in Luxembourg.



Gergő Németh
2 millionth Erasmus student
Hungary



Hanze University Groningen
University of Applied Sciences

Erasmus study and placement mobility from Budapest
Tech – Politechnical Institution, Hungary, to Hanzehogeschool Groningen, Netherlands

Heartfelt gratitude to Groningen

Gergő Németh, 24, an electrical engineering student from Budapest Tech, Hungary, studied biomedical engineering for ten months at the Hanzehogeschool University Groningen in the Netherlands

“My results in Budapest were good so my professors recommended me for an Erasmus scholarship. So in my last year there, I left for the Hanzehogeschool University Groningen in the Netherlands. I went partly because a double degree in a foreign country would improve my recruitment prospects, but also because I was just curious and wanted to see the world.

I enrolled on a biomedical engineering course, though at the time I knew very little on the subject. Luckily, I was allowed to take part in the Erasmus Intensive Programme ‘Human Centred Approaches in Biomedical Engineering’ in the summer before the course started.

The first semester, I grew to feel at home in my new environment. I took part in the university’s

open-door days and educational programs with the friends I met on campus.

In the second semester, I worked on my thesis at the radiology department of Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen. My goal was to characterize non-calcified plaques by Multi Detector Computed Tomography. The project could lead to new ways of tackling coronary artery disease. My work was well received. I received a Dutch and Hungarian BSc degree, and my results were submitted in a scientific abstract to the Annual Conference of Radiological Society of North America.

I’m delighted to have discovered this line of research and am grateful to the Erasmus programme for having made my stay in Groningen possible.”

Gergő Németh (Hungary) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because taking part in an Erasmus intensive programme motivated him to do a study mobility with Erasmus and then a placement.



Kathrine Schembri
2 millionth Erasmus student
Malta



Erasmus placement study from the Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta,
to Hotel Le Royal, Luxembourg

De luxe experience in Luxembourg

Kathrine Schembri, 22, from the Institute of Tourism Studies in Malta, worked for a year at Hotel Le Royal, Luxembourg.

“As a tourism management student I’m naturally interested in the operation of hotels, and when I wanted to do an internship at Hotel Le Royal in Luxembourg the Erasmus programme agreed to help fund it.

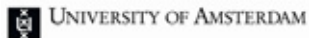
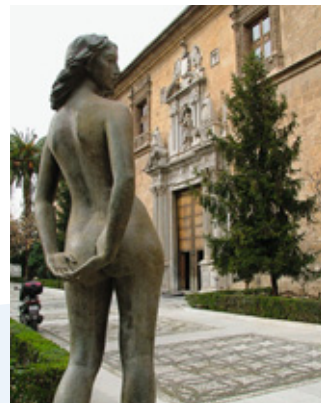
When I arrived in Luxembourg, my French wasn’t good and I was frustrated at the trouble I had expressing myself. I began keeping note of words I didn’t understand so that I could look them up later in the dictionary. I was delighted at the progress I’d made when I first managed to crack a joke in a meeting.

I started at the hotel as a floor manager, leading and motivating the room attendants. I then handled sensitive information in the hotel’s human resources department. I moved to the sales and marketing

department where I sent banqueting offers and set up conferences. And finally I worked at the front desk, answering the phone and checking in guests. It was a great experience that gave me a broader picture of what my future career will entail.

My stay in Luxembourg also taught me a lot about how to deal with pressure in the work environment and how to enjoy life outside it. It has made me a more confident person. I thank the Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta, the Hotel Le Royal, Luxembourg and the Erasmus programme for having made this placement such a success.”

Kathrine Schembri (Malta) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she dealt with obstacles in her way with perseverance and resolution. She was the first Maltese student to work at Hotel Le Royal, she overcame her language difficulties and worked hard during her internship at all her tasks.



Lotte Dieleman
2 millionth Erasmus student
The Netherlands



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
to the University of Granada, Spain

A view from the top

Lotte Dieleman, a 21-year old “European studies” student from the University of Amsterdam, left the Low Countries and climbed her way up to Granada.

“My Erasmus experience in the beautiful city of Granada resembled in many ways a good mountain hike. I left my friends and comfort in the Netherlands because others had told me of the view at the top. When the mountain came into view I started getting cold feet. I had a few rough days at the steep start. But then the sun started shining, the landscape took my breath away and I climbed happy and confident through the clouds. It was five months of new experiences, new friendships, long conversations in Spanish, parties and a new university life.

I was very lucky with my destination. Granada was a city where it is almost impossible not to feel at home. I met two Erasmus companions, and we gleefully explored the city together for five months.

Being in a different environment, I found myself taking on challenges I would never have done at home. I partied with strangers, cut my hair short, went hitchhiking and spent a night on the beach. My home in the Netherlands felt like a completely different world.

The months I spent in Granada were a truly liberating experience that really helped me reflect on myself and the things I wanted in life. Everything seemed more intense. Pain went deeper, but beauty seemed more beautiful as well.

The only advice I can give is to grasp chances like this when they come by in life. Do not hesitate, do not think too much, just do it! Ask those who experienced it themselves, they know I am right. ‘Quien lo probó lo sabe’ as Lope de Vega used to say.”

Lotte Dieleman (Netherlands) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of her description of her Erasmus period in one of the most popular destinations for students.



Thomas Hörzer
2 millionth Erasmus student
Austria



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Graz, Austria,
to the University of Poitiers, France

Yesterday's enemies, today's friends

Erasmus helped Thomas Hörzer on his way from his alma mater in Graz, Austria to the medieval French town of Poitiers, where he studied history for a semester.

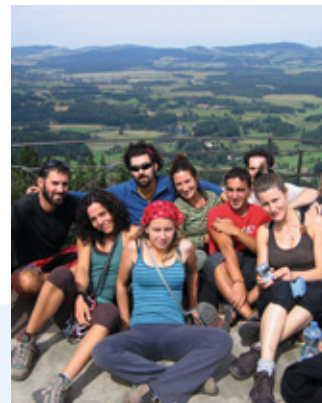
“My Erasmus semester was a rocky ride from start to finish – but what a ride! When I arrived in Poitiers, I didn’t know anyone; I couldn’t speak French and didn’t even have a flat. In fact, I found myself couch surfing at the beginning of my course. My first lecture at the University of Poitiers was another memorable experience. It was called “Spanish History in the first half of the 20th century”. I remember its title so clearly because that’s about all I understood of it.

But things changed fast over the six months I lived in France. My circle of friends spread rapidly across the university campus. The Erasmus bureau helped me find somewhere to live. My French improved rapidly, so following lectures became easier, too. I took on new modules, including a course in French Civilisation, which turned out to

be one of the highlights of my semester. It made a bridge between my studies and the world I woke up in every day.

My warmest memories are those of the times I spent with my Erasmus friends. One night, while I was out with a French student, an American, a Canadian and two Germans, we stopped and realised how lucky we were to be talking together, rather than pointing guns at each other as used to be the trend in Europe until just a couple of generations ago. To me that’s the essence of the Erasmus programme. It’s about getting to know other people and learning from other cultures.

Thomas Hörzer (Austria) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student for his impressive career – starting off as a blue-collar farm worker, attending evening classes to get access to university, and for being a special needs student due to a heart transplantation for which he needs regular check-ups at a close by transplantation centre.



Joanna Pawelczak
2 millionth Erasmus student
Poland



ugr

Universidad
de Granada

Erasmus study mobility from the University of Warsaw, Poland,
to the University of Granada, Spain

From Poland to paella

When Joanna Pawelczak was 23, she left her teacher training studies at the University of Warsaw for the sun, mountains and teachings of Granada. A year full of new challenges, climbing and Spanish.

“Erasmus gave me the opportunity to study at the University of Granada. Curious about this country I didn’t know, I followed an intensive Spanish for a month and bought a cheap flight to my new home.

I struggled at first asking my way, finding a flat and getting a part-time job. No one had told me that in Andalusia people do not pronounce the end of words. But I found a room with a view of the Sierra Nevada, and a group of teenagers to teach English, too.

All my university courses were in Spanish, but the teachers were very understanding, and even lent me their own books. I passed my exams, and my presentation about the Polish educational system provoked plenty of questions from my Spanish colleagues.

I also grew close to the climbing partners I made in Granada. We spent almost every weekend together and made a thousand rock trips across Andalusia and prepared the best paella I have ever eaten. After I returned to Poland I received an email, ‘We’ve found a cheap flight, we’re coming in three weeks to climb Sokoliki, do you have time to go with us?’ Of course I did!

My Erasmus year was enriching. I can now understand Spanish jokes. I am in love with Spain. All that in one year...”

Joanna Pawelczak (Poland) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student for the way in which she tackled the obstacles she faced during her Erasmus year in Granada. She found employment to fund her stay and overcame the language barrier with great independence and optimism.



Mariana Carneiro de Sousa Pinto da Costa
2 millionth Erasmus student
Portugal



Erasmus study mobility from the University of Porto, Portugal to the Università degli Studi di Siena, Italy followed by an Erasmus placement mobility to the Medical University of Warsaw, Poland

Medicine for body and soul

23-year old medicine student Mariana Carneiro de Sousa Pinto da Costa from the University of Porto worked eight months at the Medical University of Warsaw.

“I left for an Erasmus year because I wanted to practise a foreign language and enhance my career prospects. Few Portuguese students choose Poland as a destination, but it appealed to me. I thought, since I was going somewhere outside Portugal, I might as well get to know a truly different culture. With hindsight I’m delighted with my choice.

I left the University of Porto to spend eight months in the English Division of the Medical University of Warsaw. The first thing that struck me when I arrived was the colossal scale of the faculty. Its library had over 250 000 volumes. Its medical facilities included 141 clinics, each equipped with modern, sometimes state-of-the-art equipment. Within this gigantic structure, I went everywhere, practicing surgery, internal medicine, gynaecology and obstetrics and family medicine. My tasks were

quite thrilling. I worked night rounds, communicated with patients and took part in several life-threatening operations.

Although everyone spoke English in our clinic, I took Polish classes at the university. This proved handy in my free time, as I explored the cultural and social life of Warsaw. Life is not very expensive in Poland, even for a Portuguese student. I used to take my friends to museums, restaurants, theatres, even to the opera (something I couldn’t afford back home). My year in Warsaw gave me competences I will value throughout my medical career. It also enriched me on a personal and cultural level. I really recommend studying abroad to any student who has the opportunity.”

Mariana Carneiro de Sousa Pinto da Costa (Portugal) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she did such an amazing job in her Polish medical school, where she worked in so many branches of medicine.



Laura Adelina Popa
2 millionth Erasmus student
Romania



Erasmus study mobility from the Bucharest University of Economics, Romania, to the Istanbul University, Turkey

Why did Laura Popa, a 22-year old management student from the Bucharest University of Economics in Romania, pick Turkey as her Erasmus destination? She says she forgot the reason the second she arrived. She let the country lead her in the experience and just enjoyed the ride.

“My year in Istanbul University offered me opportunities I could never have imagined from my home university in Bucharest. I met the R&D Manager from Arçelik, the biggest company in Turkey. I visited a Mercedes Benz factory and discussed quality issues with their staff. The last, but not the least, due to my research activity in one of my management courses, I was offered the chance to take an interview of a CEO. I interviewed the CEO of the Istanbul subsidiary of Thomson Reuters.

The year turned out to be a great social occasion, too. The Turkish students were welcoming; there were many foreigners and plenty of things to discover in Istanbul.

The trip had its hardships, too. My campus turned out to be 30 km from the city centre. It could be hard work communicating in Turkish. And I sometimes felt isolated from my fellow students due to cultural differences. These bad times built character I guess. I noticed the year I spent in Turkey shifted my perception of myself. It exposed my vulnerabilities and showed me that I'd been a bit hasty concluding which were my strengths. It also helped me identify the values I find important and take steps towards improving myself as a person. Before coming to Istanbul, I was very shy. My stay has made me more self-confident.

My Erasmus experience opened my mind and helped me in my studies. What else could I have expected from it?”

Laura Popa (Romania) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus Student as she grasped the opportunities offered by the Erasmus programme to the fullest and is now an “ambassador for Turkey” in the Students Abroad League.



Univerza v Ljubljani



Željka Sokolić
2 millionth Erasmus student
Slovenia

University
Miguel Hernandez
de Elche

Erasmus study mobility from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
to the University Miguel Hernandez de Elche, Spain

Practical anthropology lessons in Elche

Željka Sokolić left the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, where she is studying anthropology for six months to discover the hidden beauties of Spain in the less-known town of Elche.

"I chose to spend my Erasmus year in Elche, Spain, because I wanted to explore a new culture with people I knew nothing about. Most Erasmus students head for a big European metropolis. I'd seen plenty of cities before. Wherever they were, they all had a similar feeling about them and attracted a lot of travellers. I wanted to discover new experiences on my own.

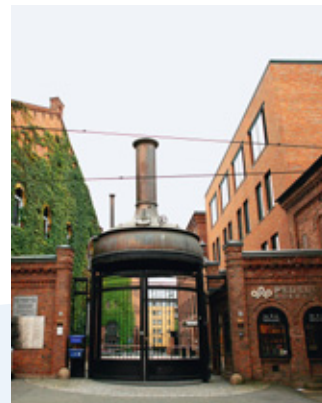
I arrived in Elche in September 2008. After staying some days in a hostel, I found a flat with two other Erasmus students. People at the university were friendly, but there was little special provision for foreign students. We were just thrown into our new environment from the start and, as a consequence, we learnt to swim pretty fast. I rapidly improved my English and Spanish, and started really enjoying my lectures. During holidays and some weekends, I trav-

elled around Spain and learnt a lot about Spanish culture. The six months I spent in Elche made me see the world from a totally different perspective.

During this time, I attended courses in social and cultural anthropology and Spanish language at the University Miguel Hernandez in Elche. I was very pleased with the study curriculum. Courses were presented in a much more practical way than in Slovenia. It made studying more dynamic and kept me interested.

My six-month Erasmus experience fulfilled me both as a person, and as a future anthropologist. It expanded my horizons and made me feel totally integrated in a new environment. I am grateful for having been given this opportunity."

Željka Sokolić (Slovenia) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she opted for the adventure of staying in a town that she knew nothing about – reflecting the true Erasmus spirit.



Jozef Majak
2 millionth Erasmus student
Slovakia



Erasmus study mobility from the Technical University
in Zvolen, Slovakia, to Oslo University College, Norway

Self-discovery in an Oslo kaleidoscope

At the age of 23, Jozef Majak left the Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia, for Oslo University College to learn new aspects of business administration and how to make spaghetti.

“When my friend returned from his Erasmus year and told me about it, I knew that’s what I wanted to do. I was studying business at the Technical University in Zvolen, and wanted to study at Oslo University College, but my university had no previous agreement with them. So I contacted the school personally and was accepted.

When I went to my first lecture there, I froze in fascination. The lecture theatre was full of excited students from Latvia, France, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Romania, Norway, and Slovakia. A real kaleidoscope of cultures! Over time, I started to observe how my own culture and habits seemed less and less natural to me. I spent a lot of time with my new schoolmates. We learnt a lot from each other and, regardless of the situation, had great fun together.

I was warned that the language barrier and the new environment are great challenges every Erasmus student must face. They’re not. They are part of the pleasure. The challenge is to try to cook 1 kg of rice in a half-litre pot, to wash your clothes in a drying machine, or not to miss your mom the first time you make spaghetti Bolognese. These are some of the most important elements of the Erasmus experience. Erasmus doesn’t make your troubles disappear. It teaches you how to handle new ones. It shows you that there is one person in your life on who you can always depend: you.

Since passing my final exams and obtaining my bachelor degree at my home university, I plan on returning to Norway for a few years, and finding a job there in my field of study.”

Jozef Majak (Slovakia) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because he showed great initiative in arranging the bilateral agreement with the Oslo University College himself.



Jenni Silvennoinen
2 millionth Erasmus student
Finland



Erasmus placement mobility from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland, to Imprima Deutschland GmbH, Germany

Gaining a place in the future

59

Jenni Silvennoinen, a 24-year old business student at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, spent a year in a German company, Imprima Deutschland.

“The partnership between the University of Lincoln, United Kingdom, and our home institution in Finland enables all the students accepted for this programme to study at the University of Lincoln for two whole semesters during their third year. In addition to this, we are given the chance to carry out a placement of at least six months anywhere in the world during our fourth year.

Having studied German for many years I decided to develop my language skills further and applied for a 12 month internship at Imprima Deutschland GmbH in Frankfurt. Imprima Group is the financial communications arm of Mercurius Group B.V. and provides communication services to the financial sector.

The main goals I had set for myself and my internship period were to work as hard as I possibly

could and to learn how a real work place functions. In addition to developing the skills that make someone a good employee I wanted to enhance my existing German language skills.

After the placement I feel entirely transformed. Due to the wonderful work place and colleagues and the hard work I did, I feel much better equipped to face the challenges of the international work place. The experience was truly life changing and one of the best decisions one can ever make.”

Jenni Silvennoinen was chosen the 2 000 000th Erasmus student (Finland) because she was such an excellent trainee that the company would like to have her again in the future.



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Caroline Lundin
2 millionth Erasmus student
Sweden

Crab

Cook Robotham Architectural Bureau

Erasmus placement mobility from Lund University, Sweden,
to Crab Studio, United Kingdom

Exploring the architecture of Europe

As part of her architecture course at Lund University in Sweden, 26-year old Caroline Lundin worked six months at Crab Studio, an architecture firm in London.

“I had already done an Erasmus study mobility in Berlin, and was delighted that I could do an Erasmus placement for six months at Crab Studio, the London-based architect firm of Sir Peter Cook – and earn 30 ECTS points as well.

During the placement I shadowed the work of employees, carried out tasks under supervision but also acted at times on my own initiative. The office environment was very welcoming. I almost felt like part of a family. We worked a lot as a team and the atmosphere was friendly and stimulating. I received good learning support from my supervisor and was encouraged to contribute with my ideas concerning design projects. The placement expanded my knowledge on subjects I had previously not studied and developed skills relevant for my future profession. It

provided an important contribution to my studies, as well as my personal development.

I met new friends, improved my English and bonded with people from different cultural backgrounds. The stay made me more enthusiastic about studying abroad.

The work I performed during those six months was well received by the firm and my university. My co-workers seemed appreciative of my efforts and my supervisor gave me a very encouraging commendation regarding my ability to learn and work. The firm even seemed enthusiastic about hiring more interns in the future. And after my placement, I even found a job in London.”

Caroline Lundin (Sweden) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student for winning praise from her university and from the company where she did her placement, and for taking full advantage of the opportunities that Erasmus offered.



Kate Samways
2 millionth Erasmus student
United Kingdom



Erasmus placement mobility from Cardiff University, United Kingdom,
to "2isa" IT Training Centre for Physically Disabled Adults, France, and continued Erasmus study
mobility to Ca' Foscari University in Venice, Italy

Signing up for sign language

From rural France to the bustling Venice art scene, Kate Samways, a 21-year old undergraduate studying to become a language teacher at Cardiff University, spent a year expanding her horizons with Erasmus.

"I started my Erasmus in Millau, a sleepy town in the South of France, as an English language assistant at zisa, an IT institute for physically disabled adults. Having never taught before, I found the experience very stimulating. I learnt the importance of patience and of making the class fun. Marking the final English exams of my trainees and noticing the progress they had made was really inspiring. I got to know many of them very well over the six months I worked at the centre and performed some English and French songs with them at the zisa Christmas meal.

The next six months I spent in Venice, learning Italian and falling in love with the city. I tried out new subjects at the Ca' Foscari University, including Italian linguistics and Italian sign language – that was taught completely in silence and required a lot of patience. I found three partners, who taught me a lot of Italian

and a little about the youth culture in Venice. I also found work as a critic for an internet art magazine and went to see performances, attended after-show parties and interviewed artists – which for a 21-year old student from Cardiff was an exhilarating experience. In my spare time I took singing lessons from a professional opera singer, worked part-time in a lively smoothie bar and sampled the local cuisine.

I think I derived so much from this Erasmus year because I was my own in two places that were so different to my home. I believe the greatest aspect of Erasmus is that it allows you to expand your horizons. The rest just falls into place by itself."

Kate Samways (United Kingdom) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because she integrated well in both places she went to, socially, academically and professionally.



 **LISTAHÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**
• ICELAND ACADEMY OF THE ARTS •

Hlynur Páll Pálsson
2 millionth Erasmus student
Iceland

Royal Scottish Academy
of Music and Drama

Erasmus study mobility from the Iceland Academy of Arts, Iceland,
to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, United Kingdom

Pulling through the financial crisis

Hlynur Pálsson, 32, left Iceland for three months to discover the Scottish way of theatre studies.

“During the last year of my degree in theatre at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, I went abroad for an Erasmus exchange programme to Scotland. I’d heard good things about the Contemporary Performance Practice programme at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. There were some administrative problems with awarding credits there, but after talking with the programme leaders, it was agreed I could validate my year by taking on extra work as an assistant director on a theatre performance. I left for Glasgow with high spirits.

A week after arriving in Scotland, the Icelandic banking system collapsed. I had to be resourceful to live off my Icelandic student loan and the Erasmus grant. I had no means of getting a minor job since my schedule was already full at the institute. I had to collect 30 ECTS credits (ten more than my fellow students), I worked as an assistant director for the show ‘Five’ and took part in out-of-school activities.

The broken economy was not however my greatest worry at the time. My girlfriend and my three-year old daughter had remained in Iceland, and the separation from them was difficult throughout the semester. Fortunately I enjoyed my course and my new surroundings so much that time rattled on and I was soon back with them in Iceland. I had a great time in Glasgow, I met a lot of friends there and I will definitely return to the city, this time with my family.

In hindsight, my exchange program would not have been possible without the Erasmus grant pulling me through the hard financial crisis. My deepest gratitude goes to Alma, the extremely helpful Erasmus coordinator in Iceland, the Erasmus programme as a whole and all the great and wonderful people I got to know in Glasgow.”

Hlynur Pálsson (Iceland) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student due to organising his studies abroad in obtaining sufficient ECTS credits, for not studying in a common Erasmus study field and coping with the financial crisis.



Mirco Stoffel
2 millionth Erasmus student
Liechtenstein

Hilti Ltd.

Erasmus placement mobility from the University of
Liechtenstein to Hilti Ltd. Manchester, United Kingdom

Solving riddles in the drizzle

Mirco Stoffel is a 24-year old student in informatics from the University of Liechtenstein who spent three months working at Hilti in Manchester, UK.

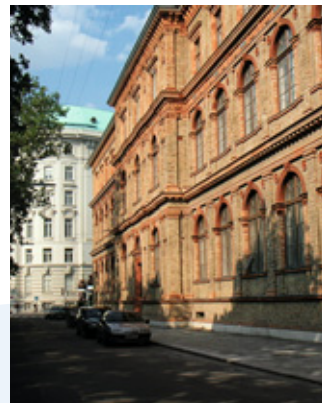
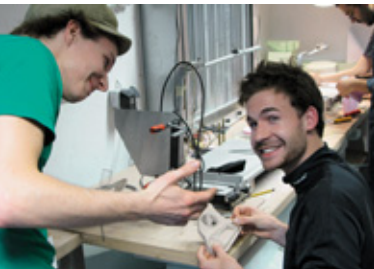
“As part of my studies in Liechtenstein, I had to complete a three-month internship in a private company. Until last year, I didn’t know that the Erasmus programme funded work placements. In fact, I didn’t even know that citizens from countries that weren’t EU members were eligible at all.

I found an IT company in Manchester called Hilti that needed some of the skills I’d acquired at university. I chose the UK because I wanted to improve my English. To be honest, I was expecting Manchester to be an industrial town with a lot of football supporters and drizzle. Instead I found a city bustling with students, foreigners, art galleries and new buildings (I was kind of right about the drizzle though). This was the first of many misconceptions about the world that my internship corrected.

My work was interesting, and fun. I spent most of my time helping clients with hardware and software problems. Each mission came as a new riddle that had to be solved as quickly as possible. It also allowed me (or forced me, depending on how you look at it) to improve my English very rapidly. As the weeks passed by, I was trusted with on-site planning tasks and helped to manage the company’s IT infrastructure expansion.

For me, the Erasmus programme was a great experience. I think people tend to hype it up a little, but if you get the chance to do one, go for it. I can guarantee you won’t regret it.”

Mirco Stoffel (Liechtenstein) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because of the satisfaction his employers expressed with respect to the work he carried out during his placement.



Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

Anders August Kittilsen
2 millionth Erasmus student
Norway

di:angewandte

Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien
University of Applied Arts Vienna

Erasmus study mobility from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway, to the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria

Turning work into a holiday in Austria

Anders August, a 24-year old Norwegian studying industrial design in his master degree at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, did his Erasmus at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna.

“I left Norway in late September – and found the temperature in Vienna was, for me, like a tropical island. The German language was equally exotic. And mountain hiking in the Alps, biking along the Danube, and trying out Austrian beers made my first few months more like a holiday.

The teaching methods in Vienna were very novel for me. In the industrial design course, students from all years worked together on projects, in groups of three or four students. In this way the younger students learn from the more experienced ones.

The Erasmus coordinator in Vienna was very helpful, and made my Erasmus stay very much easier. And the students were much more appealing than the university itself. I quickly teamed up with two extraor-

dinary guys from my design class. And as time went on I made more friends, and did some pretty cool projects at the university, including an electric motorcycle and a Mountain Safety project. I even got myself a job as a skiing instructor in a small place called Obergurgel, and taught Austrians, Germans, Dutch and many others the Norwegian Telemark skiing technique, which was really a lot of fun.

All in all, I was very happy with my stay abroad. I learned a lot about people, teamwork, other cultures, of course Austrian culture. I got a lot of new ideas, some good friends and most important – it was fun!”

Anders August Kittilsen (Norway) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because he made himself so popular at his host university that many students there now want to go to his home university. The host coordinator describes it the “August-mania”.



Selami Savkliyildiz
2 millionth Erasmus student
Turkey



Erasmus study mobility from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey,
to the University of Macerata, Italy

Culture in a gondola

Selami Savkliyildiz, a 23-year old language teacher student from Ondokuz Mayıs University in Turkey spent a semester at the University of Macerata, Italy

"I went to the Università Degli Studi Di Macerata in Italy for one semester to study cross-cultural psychology. My lectures examined other cultures to overcome prejudices. Our Italian professors were brilliant. They inspired me in my studies and have been influential in the goals I have set myself since.

Not all the lessons about different cultures came from what my professors taught me, though. Socialising with students of different countries, religions, and ethnic backgrounds taught me a lot about the world I live in. It challenged many stereotypes I didn't even realise I'd adopted. I learnt that people from all cultures have a lot to share and can study together for their mutual benefit. Erasmus grew to mean tolerance for me.

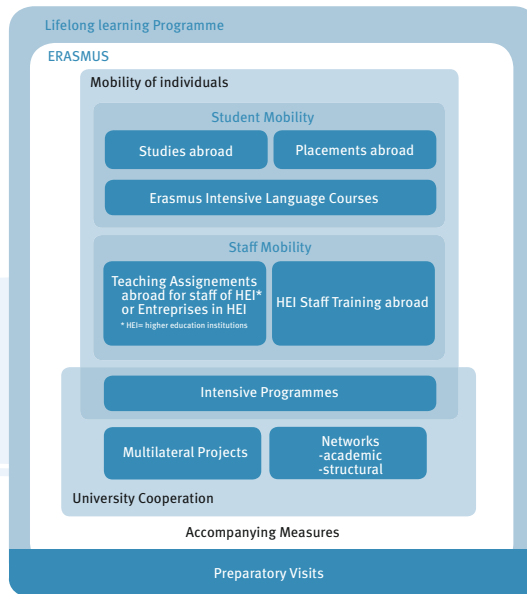
The student dormitory I lived in was a cross-road of such intercultural mixing. I joined the Spanish students' fiestas and spent time with my warm-

hearted Polish neighbours. My group of friends also went out for Halloween together. We painted our faces and haunted the streets of Macerata to give candy to Italian children. Together with my girlfriend, who managed to get an Erasmus placement at the same time with me, I saw the sun rise over Florence, screamed on top of the tower at Pisa, and enjoyed a gondola trip through the canals of Venice.

My Erasmus term also helped my personal development. It taught me to speak another language, to manage my money, and be a better student. I've since worked harder on my academic performance and have a clearer view of where I'm going with my studies. In a word, it broadened my thoughts and let me look ahead from a different perspective. The whole experience was a great and unforgettable adventure."

Selami Savkliyildiz (Turkey) was selected as the 2 000 000th Erasmus student because he managed to organise the Erasmus grant for both himself and his girlfriend in the same town – Erasmus with love.

The Erasmus Programme in a nutshell



How to obtain EU publications

Publications for sale:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- from your bookseller by quoting the title, publisher and/or ISBN number;
- by contacting one of our sales agents directly. You can obtain their contact details on the Internet (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>) or by sending a fax to +352 2929-42758.

Free publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- at the European Commission's representations or delegations. You can obtain their contact details on the Internet (<http://ec.europa.eu>) or by sending a fax to +352 2929-42758.

European Commission

Erasmus: I am one of the two million who did it!

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2010 — 76 pp. — 17,5 × 12,0 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-14063-1

doi: 10.2766/50494



NC-31-09-226-EN-C

For further information, please visit the following website
of the Erasmus programme:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus>

ISBN 978-92-79-14063-1



9 789279 140631



Publications Office