My Erasmus experience

I have always wanted to participate in the Erasmus program, since I strongly believed that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I thought that this program would give me a chance to take an active role in seeing how people in a different country live and study. I have to say that I was not disappointed at all and now I am a person who gained a lot of unexpected experiences and unforgettable memories. Due to the Erasmus program I feel like I became part of another culture and became richer than I was before.

When I was thinking of my reciever university, I was definitely thinking of a place where the culture, habits and people are so different from Europe. In this way I decided to apply to Yalova University in Turkey. I was so curious of the rich history of this country, the people;s mentality, the education system and the colorful culture and religion. I wanted to experience the real life in Turkey. I have to mention that when my first semester was coming to the end, I was passionate to extend my Erasmus stay in Turkey because of the great experiences I have gained.

Yalova is a very small and calmed down place, near to Istanbul. It means that the city is located on the seaside and you can go to Istanbul by direct boat within one hour. The location is perfect since once you travel to Istanbul from Budapest by plane, then you can easily navigate yourself to get to this place. It’s a students’ city full of cafes for young people. It is also very safe and easy to get from one place to another. It is also a very safe place where the life is going on even though there were some political problems in the past. The prices in the city are reasonable, generally cheaper than Budapest. The only thing that was not so convenient is the accommodation. The host university does not provide place to stay so you have to find and choose a private dormitory which costs a bit higher when compared to the expected services and facilities. In my case, I shared a very small room with one turkish girl and as time passed we became very good friends despite the language barriers. Except the dormitory’s conditions, the atmosphere was very friendly and the staff was extremly kind and caring.

The turkish people in general have a warm attitude toward others, they are very friendly and helpful, both in the university and in the local community. They hardly speak english but with their kind attitude they will be on your side once they see that you need some help. The administration of the university was very caring toward me. They were so happy that I came to their university as an Erasmus student. Unfortunately, in the past years there were very less foreign students like me, thanks to the bad reputation of the country through the media. I would like to state here, that there is no problem at all in this part of Turkey, everyone is working and the life is moving forward.

The university has some excellent lecturers and you can choose freely from any kind of lesson you might be interested in. It was a very useful experience that I could listen the historical events from a muslim perspective as well. It gave me a chance to see the international relations from the other side so that my knowledge is much more proper now and I can use this information in my future studies on the field of International Relations. It is in fact a very small university so you will have the opportunity to know students in your departman from the first to the final class. This small community already get used to hosting foreigner students.
(mostly from Asian countries) so they are very opened toward new students. Turkish people in general likes foreign people, especially hungarians since they strongly believe that we are deriving from the same root. :)

I really enjoyed joining the lessons because they were hold in english so I did improve my academic english a lot. However, the education level at this university is not so high so the content of the lessons was quite repetative for me. I have to be honest and tell you that it was very difficult to find matching lessons from Yalova to Corvinus University and in order to complete my second year lessons I needed to take my compulsory lessons from Corvinus University and study them from far. Firstly, I am glad that Corvinus University gives this opportunity to take the exams of the lessons at the end of the semester, secondly I am so thankful for my lecturers who were keeping touch with me in order to complete my tasks during the semester. I have received a lot of understanding and help from them. The other fact is that the english education in Turkey is not so developed so even the university students, whose every lesson is in english they even struggle to understand the lecturers speech and to prepare presentations. As a result the lecturers are often translating the topic of the lesson to turkish.

The Erasmus program can be also a tool for learning a new language. I already had some turkish knowledge before I traveled to Yalova but due to the environment I progressed much quicker. It is easy to pick up the new vocabulary when everyone around you is speaking the language. When I needed to arrange some of my personal stuff in the city, I was forced to use the language, as a result a I did a lot of developement. Unfortunately the university cannot provide turkish lessons but they recommended me an online course and I bought some turkish books for practice. Today I am thinking about to take my B2 language certificate from turkish language. I think that, one year intensive learning can equip you with the bases of a foreign language.

From the Corvinus University’s side I would like to tell that both my department coordinator and the international office were doing their best to help me with my questions. They did a really professional job to assist me over the Erasmus period. I could asked any kind of questions to them and they were always ready to reply me. However, there are numerous papers and documents that are required to be fulfilled during the program, the information is always provided on time so that you wont be lost and confused about the administration. The money that is provided for Turkey is very helpful and was fairly enough for the year. I believe, it can cover most of the essential costs of your stay.

My another aim with the program was to learn more about my hosting country. I wanted to travel and see different places in Turkey in order to face with the real life there. With my school mates, I went to Istanbul several times. This city is definitely one of the best places I have ever seen in my life. In this huge, endless city the mixture of history and modern life is stunning and unbelievable. I also traveled to Izmir by bus and I would recommend this city for everyone, since it has a very unique geographic location near to the sea. In the winter time, I visited Bursa, a historical city from Ottoman times and Uludag, which provides great opportunity for skiing. I also took a visit in the capital city, Ankara which amazed me with it’s modernity.

In conclusion, I believe that the Erasmus program provides several opportunities that you would even not imagine. Creating connections in another country is a crucial step to build up
a neccessary network in our modern world. The value of this experience cannot be taken away, it will always strenghthen your path in life. Learning languages and cultures will develope your skills and will open up more doors in the future. I am endlessly glad for this program and I would like to encourage eveyone to not be afraid to try something new. Especially, I would like to call the attention to Turkey as a possible reciever country in the program, because it is a characteristic state that’s importance in today’s politics and economics can not be forgotten.