
MY ERASMUS EXPERIENCE

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Andreia Catarina da Silva Ferreira, who wrote the following essay to celebrate the 30 years anniversary of the Erasmus programme, is an Erasmus student of Medicine from the Nova University of Lisbon in Portugal. During the summer semester 2016/2017, Charles University's Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen is hosting her.

I am a 5th year medical student in Lisbon and honestly doing an Erasmus has never been a part of my studying plan. I genuinely still don't really know how I got involved in this amazing experience; I guess it was some sort of fate, and I feel so privileged to have grabbed hold of this opportunity with both my hands!

It was only after receiving a confirmed place at Charles University and booking my tickets to the Czech Republic, that the nerves really kicked in. I suddenly realized that this would be one of the biggest challenges I've ever had to face. It was scary, yet exciting to think that I would be a foreign student for half a year, especially as it would also be my first time being away from my own country by



myself.

I arrived in Pilsen on the 4th of February 2017. At the start I had to face a few difficulties, as I had to figure out how to communicate in a new and foreign language, and learn how to manage my own money (I barely knew how much would a frozen pizza, a pill for the headache, or a bus ticket cost at this point). I also came across electrical outlets which didn't connect with my phone charger... Let's just say that my first couple of weeks as an Erasmus student aged me at least 2 to 3 years.

It was definitely challenging for me to go through the initial weeks, however I learned so much about myself and it also helped me develop in so many different ways; I never thought I would be able to overcome these challenges on my own. I am now able to see it as a learning curve within my life, as well as an absolutely fantastic challenge that I appreciated and loved every minute of.

Suddenly, I was getting really involved in the atmosphere created by the Erasmus students and society. The orientation programme (in Pilsen organized by the Erasmus Student Network of the University of West Bohemia) gave me the possibility to learn more about Czech culture, the beautiful city of Pilsen and also helped me meet and interact with people who would shortly become friends and part of my Erasmus family during the next few months!

I have been asked to describe what I've been through these last few months, but honestly no words can accurately describe the Erasmus experience. You have to experience it! I can only tell you to prepare yourself for losing yourself

