
Once Erasmus, now a tutor...

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The Erasmus Club in the Faculty of Arts has existed since the academic year 2003/4. Since its inception, it has not only prepared a rich programme for Erasmus and other international students of Charles University, but also given the opportunity for former Erasmus students returning to Prague to rejoin the Erasmus community as tutors, preparing events for the next generation of exchange students. So far, the Erasmus Club has had 4 tutors recruited from past Erasmus students – Céline Leclerc from France, Daniel Kortschak from Austria, Tanja Amtmann from Germany and Mari Jannetäyinen from Finland. We have asked the four of them to share their experience of standing the middle-ground between Czech students and the new Erasmus students with us.

Tanja, what has motivated you to become tutor of the Erasmus Club?

When I was in Prague as an Erasmus student, I participated regularly in trips and theatre performances (organized in the frame of Erasmus Theatre Club) offered by the Erasmus Club. As I enjoyed the offer of the Erasmus Club, I wanted to pass that positive experience also to the new Erasmus students. To support the Erasmus Club, I decided to become a tutor myself.

How does it feel to stand “on the other side?” Do you feel like an Erasmus student still, or as a local person helping foreigners arriving to your country?

To be honest, I feel more as a local person helping foreigners. In opposition to many Erasmus students, my knowledge of the Czech language is pretty good. So I can help the Erasmus students with their daily life in the Czech Republic. That makes me feel as a local person.

What do you like about being an Erasmus Club tutor? Have you ever done something similar at your home university? Are there any similar institutions to Erasmus or the International Club there? If so, do you know how they recruit their new tutors?

Above all I like the manifold program of the Erasmus Club. There is always a chance to visit famous Czech sights and see interesting theatre performances. At the same time, I can share this experience with the Erasmus students and show them the cultural richness of the Czech Republic.

At my home university, University of Passau, we had a so called Buddy Programme in the time when I studied there. Every Erasmus student who wanted was assigned to a local student, who should then help and support the foreigner. Similar as in Prague, the University of Passau also recruits last year's German Erasmus students to be tutors for the new international students. I took part in this program for several semesters and made very good experiences and new friends.



Tanja in the middle - the trip to Cesky Sternberk (2009/10) was organised by Erasmus Club of Faculty of Arts and Erasmus Club of Faculty of Mathematics and Physics

In Prague, we usually approach the last year's Czech Erasmus students – and international students who have returned to Prague - with the question of whether they would like to become Erasmus Club tutors. Since you as former Erasmus students in Prague have known how the Erasmus Club worked from the time of your own study stay at Charles University, and the Czech tutors usually only realize that there is any association like this once they have participated in Erasmus exchange themselves, how is the cooperation with the Czech, especially younger tutors for you? Is it strange to have to assist to the local student tutors who are completely new to the Erasmus Club?

Yes, for me this is very strange and feels unusual, nevertheless good. ;-) But it is exactly like it works. Sometimes the new local student tutors are not from Prague, so I can show them the fastest way to get from point A to point B in Prague. They are always very impressed that I as a foreigner know their capital city better than they do themselves. And it is similar on the trips: if I go on a same trip for the second or third time and they are there for the first time, naturally I will be the main tutor and show the others where to go.

What did you expect from the Erasmus Club at Charles University as a student here? Which activities did you like best then as a student, and now as a tutor?

As an Erasmus student I expected to meet international as well as Czech students in the Erasmus and International Clubs and to make new friends. For me this was a great opportunity to get to know people from different countries. Moreover, I really appreciated the perfect organization of the trips. If you do not speak Czech, participating in these trips is much easier than organizing them yourselves. I enjoyed and still like the trips to culturally interesting sights and the visits of the theatre performances.

You are all finished with your studies now. Is it very different to live in Prague as student and as an employed person? Is there any difference in the approach of the local people to you as student and a working person?

Actually, I do not see too many differences. In my opinion, the approach of the local people rather depends on the fact whether you speak Czech or not. Life in Prague is much easier, if you have at least a basic knowledge of the Czech language. Of course, now as a working person, there are a lot more administrative operations which I have to manage, such as renting a flat and paying the bills. But that makes the life in a foreign country interesting. ;-)

Why have you decided to come back to Prague after your studies? Would you like to live here long-term? Do you think that your Erasmus stay in Prague has influenced you in this area?

My Erasmus stay in Prague definitely influenced my decision to come back and live here. During the Erasmus stay I made my first experience with living abroad and I got to know the beauty of Prague and the Czech Republic. It was also a chance for me to improve my Czech. I decided to come back to Prague because I am excited about experiencing life in a foreign country. For me this is much more interesting than living in your own country.

Prague seems to me as an ideal city. It is not too big and not too small; I love its historical centre and its cultural offer. Yes, I would like to live here long-term. I do not plan to spend the whole rest of my life in Prague, though – there might be new opportunities to come...

What was/is your occupation in Prague?

I work for a big American company in customer service. My job is in the German speaking cluster, so I can use my mother tongue at work. I found the job with the help of a recruitment agency that placed some advertisements at my home university in Passau. After I had sent my CV, I received an invitation for the job interview in Prague and immediately after that I was hired. I have been working there for almost three years now and I still like it. What I like most is the multicultural environment of our office – it strongly reminds me of the atmosphere in the Erasmus Club amongst the international students.

Thank you for the interview.



Tanja Amtmann, originally from the University of Passau, joined the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in winter semester 2006/2007. After having spent some time back at her home university in Passau, she returned back to Prague and started an internship at the German Embassy. Later, after she finished her studies at the University in Passau, Tanja decided to move to Prague for a longer period of time. She works for an international company here since 3 years now and next to her job, she has been active also as Erasmus Club tutor at the Faculty of Arts.

Similarly to [Daniel Kortschak](#), she has helped to prepare various activities of the Erasmus Club – mainly they have been trips, Erasmus Theatre Club or seasonal events such as the Czech Easter Afternoon. By the occasion of celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Erasmus programme, we have asked Tanja to share her experience with the voluntary function of the Erasmus Club tutor with us.