



My exchange semester in Barcelona could be described with many words, non of which is boring. Protests, marches, parties, strikes, new friends and new experiences, seeing new places and widening my perspective. And, eventually, the virus. My exchange programme is all I thought it would be and more.



When I have decided to go to Barcelona on ERASMUS, one of my best friends said: “I am happy for you, that’s what you’ve always wanted.” Indeed, that was when I remembered that upon graduating from high school, i wanted to take a year off and, before enrolling in Uni, to go away to work or volunteer and Barcelona was destination on top of my list. Eventually, my 19 year old self enrolled in uni and years later decided to go to student exchange programme. ERASMUS+ programme makes mobility within Europe not only possible but very easy. Not only do you get a chance to live and study or do internship in another country with other international students, but you are encouraged to do so and you get financial aid. Of course, when I was deciding where to go, the destination was not my only criterium, I spent days researching faculties and eventually decided on Barcelona.







I originally wanted to go all by myself, but when the time to go came, a part of me was wandering how I will manage moving to a different country, big city, all alone. A lot of people kept calling me to ask if I was managing or how am I doing in first two weeks, but the truth is, it was not hard at all. With all the technology we have today, it is really not a problem to live somewhere unknown and the network of all the other exchange students means you are not alone really. It is a really liberating feeling to have that experience for yourself, which is why I always advise people not to be afraid to go alone, after all, you will meet people. I love how much different, but yet similar people I have met. On ERASMUS seemingly everyone gets along, people approach each other without prejudice, with sincere interest. Activities are held regularly and trips are organised by ESN, but also they are easy to organise by yourself. Other thing that marked my semester were, of course, protests. People marching, striking and protesting, burning and breaking things at night, helicopters flying over the city constantly for 2 weeks. For me, being incurable trouble seeker, it was very exciting to see as I've never seen something like that. I've almost learned how to dance salsa, I have learned to communicate in Spanish and learned some words in other languages. I've gotten more independent and capable. I know people that, after spending semester in Barcelona, felt like the city was home to them. And the biggest drawback of ERASMUS is that most people feel depressed about going back to reality, as it was like a dram for them.

We all come from different backgrounds and have different perspectives, and I believe that we should be curious, not judgemental towards people from different cultures. And as I have met people from literally entire world, I had gotten a chance to widen my perspective about the world.

