



**NEO ALBANIA**  
National Erasmus+ Office of Albania

**“|Studying abroad for one year  
it was not just a year in my life  
–was my life in a year”**

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Erasmus Mundus Programme: Exchange Students  
Host Institution: University of Porto, Portugal  
Period: September 2015-June 2016

## **My experience at the Faculty of Letters, Porto / Portugal**

During my second year of my studies I was sitting in our faculty conference's room while listening a promotion about a program called Erasmus Mundus. It was my first time that I had listened about this project. At first I thought that was just a dream and a beautiful lie to be true. All travel expenses paid, visa cost reimbursed with the month allowance in advance. It looked unbelievable that exists such a program so I remember run straight away to get more info to Career Center of the University.

The application process was simple. You had to be enrolled in the second year of an academic year, two



letters of references written by your professors who knew your academic level very well and your motivation to be able to just move from your comfort zone!

As far as I remember

I applied at the edge of the deadline letting 50 % of my success to my luck. I thought that to be selected the first priority was to be an excellent student who had never failed in exams and had an excellent written and spoken English level. I was wrong. To be an Erasmus students wasn't just about the grades and perfection. Actually was quite the opposite. It was a help for the students who understood that

there is no perfection in them that is why they need a hand to improve their own skills to develop self confidence inside them.

Completing the Learning Agreement was very simple and I can even say that it really helped me out to understand what courses I would take to improve myself not only professionally but also personally. I was student away from home trying to practice not just my academic skills and share information in an academic value but also trying to improve my communication skills in a foreign language and practice navigation skills to find the right path not to be missed in a huge city.

## **Flight towards the Dream**

What I remember from that turbulence of those movements was just my mom's first long distant goodbye, first flight and first flight anxiety mixed with a strange happy feeling. I was living my home trying to find myself and a home away from home. When I arrived to Porto Airport I just remember blurredly my name written in a piece of paper Mrs. Florentina Qorri, The representative of ESN- (Erasmus Student Network) helped me with the suitcases to place in the student residences that I had contracted before leaving Albania and here I was: Living my utopian dream ! Was I getting crazy?

Finally I moved from 'my comfort zone' and then realized that it all starts from that comfort that you have with yourself not trying to grow yourself up. The lectures were open and for international students like me could also find lectures in English

in addition to the national language (Portuguese). I did some course assignments or small mini research projects in order to be evaluated. Additionally I took some exams in English for some difficult courses but professors were really friendly and helpful all the time. It was not difficult to find the necessary literature because the student card and the university library of the faculty where you belong provided the best opportunity to use reserved materials inside and outside the study hall of the library.

I remember that I had some silly questions in my mind back then. Will I be able to pass these exams? Will I miss the year if I do not pass even a certain exam in the Learning Agreement? None of this happened. I succeed in passing all the exams even with satisfactory results. Everything starts from your thought and everything ends again in your mind! I went back to my sending University ( University of Korça,) Presenting my diploma thesis by bringing all my research experiences worked throughout the academic year in Oporto . I felt really happy for a first time in such a long time. Simply because I dared to believe that there are no utopia dreams there are simply doubts in your abilities.

My Erasmus exchange experience was not just one more year of life but it was really my life in one year. I realized that it is not only the university that is important, but also the real life that you face after university time is important too. There are those wonderful peace minutes with you while waiting for the bus to come. There are also the new friends you make in a party and drinking a glass of wine with them on Fridays afternoon. It is also the new language you learned when you first went shopping when you were really hungry , is that workshop that helped you speak in public, is that volunteer work to help animals, is that weird vegetarian friend who became your best friend, is that rainy day that made you miss the lecture and so not to waste the day you



helped your neighbor to talk on messenger with her granddaughter who lived far away, are those solo tourist visits you made when you lost the road back home or the most beautiful places you saw while traveling in parts of Europe that I think you cannot see it for a long time...

**“NJE CITAT QE DO TE DONIT TJU PERFAQESONTE NEPER POSTERA < MBASE VET TITULLI”**

**I am one of the 3.3 million who try to be their self for once in their lifetime and made it until the end.**

**Thank you Erasmus Mundus**



*Graduation Day: Lello Library, Porto Portugal*