

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO - A.A. -

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Testo

The opportunity for international mobility will always be a rewarding experience, no matter where or why. In my case as a Colombian student who had already moved from his home (Colombia) to Italy to study a master's degree program in the Erasmus rather than an academic exchange, it is an opportunity for cultural exchange.

In my case, I was in Lithuania, a country I did not even know before applying. Do not really look for much information about the country itself. In principle, all I wanted was to do mobility. I had never been so north of Europe, which was one of the things that fascinated me most about this Erasmus. The second thing was that I had never lived in a place where it snowed almost every day, in fact, of the most pleasant memories of mobility, I would say that it was the fact of arriving and seeing that everything was white and the next day was the same, then it snowed and this layer of snow of 20 cm was formed. Walk in the immensity of frozen lakes. That was most rewarding.

The cold was not a problem, I have always liked more than the heat, and I was certainly lucky, when I arrived we were only at -10. The first shocking thing was the student residence in which I lived my first week. My position in the residence I had requested was not available, therefore, they placed me momentarily in another. It really was an old building of the Soviet Union, a bunker. But as an experience I would not say it was anything negative. You need also understand that this kind of building in which I lived the first days shows the way most of the Lithuanian students live.

Lithuania is an interesting country to meet, its people are nothing like what I have interacted with before. If I wanted to generalize I would say that its population is not as friendly or helpful as in other parts of the world, I come from Colombia, kindness is born with us, and in Italy the truth I have not had any problem about it, but Lithuania is a little abrupt and challenging in general. I'm not saying that you do not find people with whom to converse or interact. What I feel is that, speaking with ordinary people, leaving the tourist area, the Lithuanians are not friendly at all, they are intimidating and depending in the context mean, most of the time. I understand that they have been culturally oppressed, as they are accustomed to an adverse climate. We had to wait for spring until the end of May, the snow has disappeared at the beginning of February, so it has been 4 months or so when everything seems to be gray. I would say that these are not the most beautiful months in Lithuania. Arrive at the end of May and have 10 - 14 degrees of temperature.

Not being able to enjoy a spring as used in Italy, has been part of the shock. But in counterpart, once everything turns from gray to green, and you appreciate the immensity of the forests, parks, lakes and rivers with which Lithuania has in general the picture is different, and people are also different.

The cities go from being a ghost town to being that typical European city full of life, for sure at least Kaunas in summer has nothing to envy to other cities. The sun and the blossoming of nature, it seems that Lithuanians also flourish in general. Your cultural agenda is really attractive and in fact it is the best time to meet locals. People go out late to enjoy long days like no other I have lived in my life, because the night loses strength as the day and light declare their sovereignty over the night. The daylight disappears at 11 p.m. o'clock (sometimes almost at 12 p.m. o'clock at night) and the night lasts 3 hours, in which the dawn can always be seen at the end of the horizon. It is beautiful, it is different. Quite an experience!.

Home_

I lived in the student residence, although I have to share a room, I do not regret any of that experience. The residence is very active, also something given to the disorder, and so many times you have to be patient with the kitchen because if your floor is not organized nobody will take care of anything, but otherwise there will be no problem. The residence is for sure the best one of the Kaunas University. The vast majority of Erasmus students go there, so at the end of so much sharing not only inside but outside, knowing the city, filled by a beer, cooking; all will end up cooking. I would say that being in the residence was for me one of the good choices I made, it was sure that there was a plan, and if not, it was armed in minutes. However, if you want to live more in the center or something private, prices are not expensive at all, so it is the choice of each one.

University_

Regarding the academic experience, I felt comfortable with the subjects I chose. In the end I made some changes in the learning agreement because some courses overlapped others or because they were not available in English, but in the end I was left with subjects that contributed professionally and culturally. On the one hand, curse sketch and bionics, which helped me develop skills in graphic representation and design thinking, courses that are consistent with my profession as an industrial designer. On the other hand, I studied a subject to learn Lithuanian, surely the hardest language I ever try to learn, but at halftime, we understand a lot of the cultural background and social situation of Lithuania. If there are credits available, I recommend Lithuanian for foreigners. Also if you are interested in learning or improving any other language, I recommend the language courses of the university, I took the German course for a week and I thought it was pretty good. There are no more than 10 people per class so there is a lot of interaction with the teacher.

Travels_

Lithuania is strategically located. It is very economical to travel from there to the Nordic countries, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, the other Baltic countries. Make several trips throughout the semester, at first it would seem that you had a lot of money, but the truth is that it was very economical. Here, a student card with discounts for different things is handled, including transportation. At least in Lithuania there is a 50% discount on all means of transport. And at the bus level, ECOLINES is one of the companies that makes a discount with this student card (ISIC). From Lithuania I recommend going to Trakai, bile, and the coast; Kláipeda, Nida and Palanga. Already among the trips that should be done while in Lithuania is to go to know the other Baltic countries (Latvia and Estonia)

especially Tallinn in Estonia, it is very beautiful. And if you want to go to Finland in fact there is a ferry that goes from Tallinn to Helsinki, somehow it is a good experience and it is not expensive. Also from Tallinn you can take ferry to Stockholm. Another trip that I recommend is to go to Lapland, to see northern lights. We went with times travels that organize events or trips for students and it really came out much cheaper than expected. I would say it is a must. It is already interesting to go to Russia, and it is definitely much cheaper than going to other parts of Europe. I made the trip by bus on my own, I was there for 10 days; I met Saint Petersburg, Novgorod and Moscow. There is also a time travel trip for Russia, but there are really many things to see and that tour makes great leaps in terms of the cultural approach. At least if you want to stay for a day and a half in the Hermitage as I did, it's better not to go with that tour.

Food_

I really eat well, you cannot find so many Italian products, so missing Italy will be a constant thought, but there are other good products that are very economical in Lithuania. Dairy, meat, chicken, vegetables in general. Give it a try, anyway depends where you stay you will try several dishes from the other Erasmus students. Also, between the things I really recommend is the pastry shops in Lithuania. I found them really good and if you go to Poland you should eat pierogi (highly recommended!)

Social life_

By force, being in Erasmus means having an active social life. I would say that there is nothing to worry about in this aspect if you live in the residence for example. But surely other Erasmus will be found. It happens in Lithuania that meeting local people is not as easy as it should be. In winter, people do not go out, but when summer comes they are everywhere in the streets. In Kaunas particularly the sites become repetitive. But among friends that is not a problem. Also I did several friends in Vilnius, I was going constantly there for parties and just hanging around.

Sim card_

Vodafone worked perfectly, I know that other companies that are in the euro zone put problems with respect to the time of permanence.

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano

Firma

