



“I feel I finally am a citizen of the world thanks to Erasmus+”

NEO Albania

National Erasmus+ Office Albania

Edvin PARMEZA

Faculty of Engineering, Information and Architecture,
European University of Tirana (UET).

Mobility Program: Erasmus+

Host Institution: Mälardalen University, Västerås, Suedi

Mobility Period: August 2019 - June 2020

My Erasmus+ Experience at Mälardalen University



Greetings to everyone! My name is Edvin Parmeza and I am originally from Shkodra, North Albania. In 2006, when I was 12 years old, my family and me moved to Tirana and we have been living in the Albanian capital ever since. I completed my Bachelor studies in 2018 after studying Economic Informatics at the European University of Tirana (UET). After that, I continued with my Master studies in Computer Engineering at the same

university. During the recent years, UET has been offering several mobility opportunities given the existing partnerships with several well-known universities in other European countries. Thanks to these mobility opportunities, several UET students were able to study in other universities around Europe for 1 or 2 semesters. Indeed, as I was studying for my second semester courses during the first year of Master at UET, I received a general email where UET students were being informed about a mobility program which would enable the winner(s) to study for one semester at the Lappeenranta University in Finland. This sounded like a great opportunity and possibility for a unique exchange experience and so, I went to ask more about it at the mobility office in UET. There, I was luckily informed about another mobility program that included a full year of exchange studies (the whole second year of my Master studies) at Mälardalen University (MDH) in Västerås, Sweden. This meant that I would have the chance to work on my Master thesis at the host university (MDH) in Sweden but also at the home university (UET) in Albania. In other words, it would be like a double degree. This seemed like a unique opportunity and I did not think twice to apply for it. The documents that were required for the application included a CV, certificate with courses from the first semester of the second year of Master as well as the grades received for each subject, certificate with results from Bachelor courses, one motivation letter, one recommendation letter from one or more professors at the home university, passport photo and a list with planned courses during the stay at the host university (Learning Agreement). Completing the Learning Agreement represents the key part of the initiation for your Erasmus+ application since it is important to choose courses at your host university that are similar with those that would have been part of your

program at your home university during the second year of Master. It is important to do a bit of research on that before hand before completing the Learning Agreement and of course, consult with the University Coordinators.

After sending the application, I was told by the Erasmus+ Office in UET that the next step was going to be an interview with the University Coordinators where they would basically get to know more about me, my view on what I expect from this exchange experience and what I think I can contribute. After having the interview which went pretty well, I got the super exciting news that I was chosen as one of the winners of the ICM mobility program for the academic year 2019-2020.

As for the selection criteria, all I can say is that it is definitely not a must to have the highest possible score in all your courses at your home university in order to succeed with such applications. However, it is important to have a good average score and be able to share your values, ideas and views during the interview. It is important to be convincing when speaking about how you think you will use such opportunity and how do you see it can change you. The coordinators at UET made sure to update us with all the details on how we had to proceed. For instance, we had to apply at the official website of the host university (MDH). The necessary documents for proving the granted scholarship were also provided by the host university. An application for a student visa had to be sent to the Swedish migration office via their official website as well.



As for the accommodation, it was important to apply as soon as possible for accommodation alternatives at the official page of “Bostad Västerås” since that company had an agreement with Mälardalen University to make

sure to provide accommodation for all the students starting their studies at MDH for the successive semester. I was lucky enough to get a student room in Junior which is the building situated right in front of the university campus. All facilities such as supermarkets, bars, restaurants as well as the city center could be reached in short walking distances as well. I can also say that overall, everything has gone pretty smooth during my year as an exchange student at MDH. For instance, receiving the scholarship grant was always something that would happen in time. No delays from the bank or any other side ever happened. A very good and quite helpful introduction program was provided for all exchange students right after we arrived at MDH. Several fun and creative activities were also part of such program in order to help students get to know each other and their new home much better.

I do not hesitate to say that this has been the most wonderful experience I had in all my life as a student. I had the chance to get to know the culture of Sweden and not only that. I had the amazing opportunity to get in touch with students from different countries in Europe and almost all other continents, make many new friends and work with some of them together in team projects which were part of the courses I had chosen based on my Learning Agreement. This experience helped me to develop professionally and personally. Nothing compares to having the chance to exchange ideas and experiences with people that come from such different backgrounds. I notice indeed a sort of an upgrade in my professional profile given that now, I am receiving much more attention from recruiters in LinkedIn for possible career options. This exchange experience can really open you many doors to a better future career. During my studies in Sweden, I also participated in several events such as meet-ups where different companies from Västerås and Stockholm were providing more information regarding their work environment and chances they might offer to Junior Engineers.

Traveling was also part of this wonderful experience. Given that you receive a Swedish student card during your studies there, it was possible to travel with discount by train to different parts of Sweden which is one of the most beautiful countries I have ever seen. In addition, it was quite cheap to travel by cruise to nearby countries such as Finland or the Baltic countries. For example, a trip which I will always remember is the cruise that me and a few international friends took to Riga, the capital of Latvia.

Once this unique experience is over and you have to return to your country and home university, it is important to validate all the ECTS credits received at the host university. Once this is done, there is nothing to worry and all your work during the mobility will be appreciated by your home university as well.

“Never be afraid on taking new chances in life. Especially, when they involve exchanging ideas, expertise and culture. You can only gain from it and lose absolutely nothing!”