



# “Erasmus+: unforgettable memories”

## NEO Albania

National Erasmus+ Office in Albania

Endri Çelaj  
Faculty of Applied and Economic Sciences, Albanian  
University  
Student Exchange Program  
Hosting Institution: Università degli Studi di Salerno  
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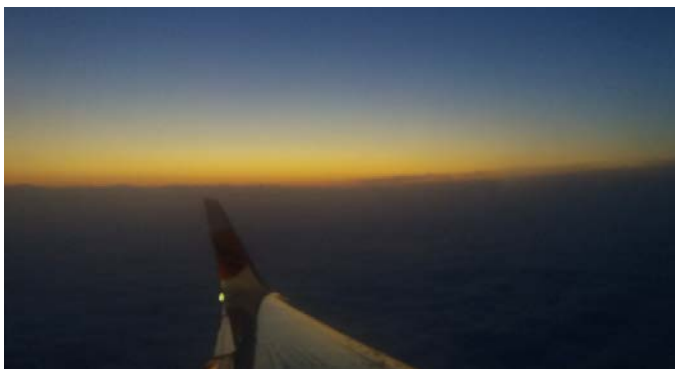
## My experience in Salerno

My name is Endri Çelaj and I study Computer Engineering at “Albanian University” in Tirana, Albania. At the beginning of the 2019 academic year, I was notified by my university about a student exchange program – Erasmus+ at the University of Salerno. I decided to apply by sending a CV and a motivation letter to my Department, because it was my dream to experience studying and living in a foreign country and culture.

A few days after I had my interview, I was informed that I was chosen to be a part of this exchange program, which made me very happy. “Albanian University” and the hosting institution were available to help me with the appropriate documentation. Completing the Learning Agreement was easy, because the University of Salerno offered guides and instructions, and many courses in English or Italian which match the program of study I am following in Albania.

## An unusual Erasmus

After finishing the exams in January, it was time for the last preparations before leaving.



A new adventure...

At the end of February, I arrived in Salerno, a beautiful seaside city where old buildings were combined with modern ones.



For a few days, I stayed in a student’s hostel, until I could find a house. At the University of Salerno, the Erasmus office put me in contact with specialized organizations tasked at helping foreign students to find accommodation. Within three days, I managed to find an apartment in town, sharing it with a Turkish boy and two Spanish girls. I received my scholarship a month after arriving in Salerno. The university campus was 20 minutes by bus, it looks modern and occupy a wide area.



I needed a few days to fully orient myself around the different buildings.



But studying in the lecture halls did not last long. Italy was one of the first European countries to be hit from the Covid-19 virus. At the start of March, the campus was closed, and teaching continued online. The whole city was placed in lockdown, and you could not go out without a valid reason. I had the chance to return to Albania, but I decided to stay, because it was a dynamic situation and I did not want my adventure to end like this.

Lockdown lasted from start of March to the end of May. Many would describe it as a long and monotonous period, but not for me. On the contrary, it passed quickly. Despite the technical difficulties, the University of Salerno made sure that classes would continue as scheduled. During this time “Albanian University” offered me support for any type of question or issue I might have had. But the lockdown had its advantages as well, such as learning to improve my time management and cooking skills.

## Regaining freedom

The situation in Italy started getting better and by the end of May authorities started allowing movement under strict hygienic measures. I used this opportunity to move around with my friends, exploring the city and its surroundings.



Nature hiking

With June on its way my focus shifted on studying, because the deadline for projects was approaching.

The university used the project + oral exam format, where the oral exam consisted in speaking about the project and answering a few questions related to the course. There were only a few exams left in July, because I finished most of them in June. I was very pleased I finished with good grades in all my courses and by the positive estimation from my Italian professors. I also received a certificate of attendance for the Jean Monnet module for the Western Balkans.

After booking my return ticket I spent the last days with my friends, a group of Erasmus students hailing from various European countries. The location of Salerno made it easy to visit an amazing tourist destination, such as the Amalfi coast.



Positano

These days at the beach were the perfect closure to this experience, knowing that I achieved the best results from an academic and personal point of view despite the unforeseen circumstances.

## Reflection

During this student exchange I had the opportunity to gain new knowledge, but not only that. I was confronted with new languages, cultures, and people from different backgrounds. I like to think these factors helped me grow as a person and made me understand that we, as Albanian students, have more similarities than differences with other European students.

I am conscious that this opportunity is not offered to everyone. For this reason, I am grateful to “Albanian University” and its staff, who worked tirelessly to ensure this mobility for me and other students.

Endri Çelaj