

CAPSTONE REFLECTIVE PAPER

I've always wanted to try to live somewhere else, somewhere even warmer, and somewhere where everything will be different and where I'm going out of everyday routine. I heard from a lot of students that they were at Erasmus and that it was great, but I never dared to go to work alone - partly because the paperwork seemed a tedious process. And then there was a click in my head as well as most, and I just decided to sign up - it helped to make the login required only personal, transcript and copy of the health card. Dialing the country I'm going to be the least problem I've ever had - Spain, South. Where is warmer, cheaper and more relaxed than home, and I knew something Spanish. After a couple of months of solving papyrology, faculty duties and so on Valentine's Day 2016, I found myself on a plane to Lisbon, where I after hours and hours traveled to the beautiful Huelva in Andalusia. I immediately saw that I hit the location. Huelva is a town with about 200,000 people on the sea, along the sandy beaches, where everything is near, where it is about 15 degrees in the winter and about 38 in the summer. People are kind, relaxed, working day starts at 10h and ends at around 13h when it starts "Siesta" until 18h. Dinner at 22h, there is always something going on and the atmosphere is like on vacation.

At the beginning everything was unclear, I was thinking and coming home. I, who never lived for more than a month, found myself in an unknown city, without a home, without the people I know - and it was wonderful. In the first week you are forced to become self-confident because you literally have to organize yourself for the next six months. In two days I found a large apartment in the center, got a roommate from America, made a budget, and went to Madrid for the first trip organized by the Erasmus Student Network, an organization that cares about Erasmus and organizes various activities to meet where I am I met a team I did not know how much I would change my life. The very fact that people from different parts of the world found the same place at the same time is strong enough to create honest friendships. At Erasmus, I was struggling to take advantage of every opportunity I had, so I spent the most money on travel.



I went zip-line from Spain to Portugal 80km / h, dancing on a foyer party in Ibiza, walking the magnificent Alhambra, camping in the south of Portugal by the sea, walking through Seville with the Croatian flag and over a thousand Erasmus students, admiring how Toledo looks as a scene from the "Lord of the Rings" churros dishes and tapas beside his flat, a car on the Mallorca coastline, spent the night in a wooden cottage in the middle of the Sierra Nevada National Park and played with monkeys on top of Gibraltar.

Friendships really marked my experience. Starting with my roommate from the United States, Faun. Even though she is two years younger than me, she is mature and has a great life experience, so she has always been there for advice. We are very much like we all worked together, our apartment became the main venue for the after party, there would always be five to ten people at our departure, mostly because Fauna (as a typical American) had a lot of frozen pizza and chicken nuggets so that everyone would always eat at us, and sometimes they would sleep because we had an apartment in the very center near all the clubs and cafes. After two months we joined Emily, a new roommate from Ireland. Emily is probably the favorite person I've ever met. It was always there for us when it was needed, but we lived and lived together in such an unprecedented arrangement. We all went together, beautiful and difficult moments. Besides, there was Eliza of Latvia, one of the most open and free girls who always lived in the moment, and who taught me to live spontaneously. Through time we turned into a team of over 40 people from different countries and just every day we went out and hang out, were there for each other in different situations and I learned something from each other. No one condemned anyone for anything, every moment was spent in laughing to tears and in supporting each other. I can say I'm a better person because I've met them all. Fauna taught me not to regret what, Emily taught me to be kind to everyone, and all gave me a part of myself who made me better. We all agreed that there were even three times a super-bottelon party where over 120 Erasmus people were in one apartment.

At some moments I missed Croatia, but then 8 Croatians found us in one apartment, we cooked the closest thing that resembled the cuckolds, listened to Oliver and they went through nostalgia for the home, and after the lecture, after all Germans, Italians and others to drink your coffee in a couple



of minutes, we would stay longer, because that is our way and our culture. The most beautiful feeling was to watch the Spain-Croatia football match between Huelva, embrace our flags, and win. I do not mention college at all, but that's because he was only a bit of experience for me. It was relatively light, the subjects were similar to those we have already learned in Croatia, so we all used it as a chance to socialize. In April, as soon as it began to be warmer, we went to the 15-minute beach of Punta Umbria. Huge sandy beaches, waves, warm sea, in the background reggaeton, cocktail in hand - as in the movie.

I often say that my Erasmus experience was the highlight of my life and I do not know if I will ever be as happy as I was there, because I really do not really know how to describe it. Such a feeling of freedom, where every day is different, where you never know what will happen to you or who you will meet, is truly wonderful. Four months after we all went back home, the 25 Erasmus from Huelva gathered in Amsterdam where we slept on board and lived old memories, but they created new ones and are now in constant contact and we are negotiating the next gathering. The people you meet there become more of a friend, you become a family, and that is the most valuable thing for me for Erasmus.

No matter where you are now, in which situation or what apologies you have to not go. Erasmus is the most beautiful life experience that can be gained in the days of the students and the damage is not to be exploited. Go, travel, try everything you've ever wanted, meet yourself and come back as a better person - life is too short for something else.

