Erasmus Experience Report Zaragoza SoSe23

As a master's student enrolled in the European Masters in Renewable Energy program at the University of Oldenburg, I had the privilege to participate in an exchange program with the University of Zaragoza in Spain. In the following lines I will provide an overview of my experience, highlighting various educational, cultural and social experiences.

Before going to Zaragoza, I planned and arranged what it will become my exchange semester. I created an agenda with steps to follow to ensure that I started the semester well-prepared and allocated time to familiarize myself with the curriculum and academic requirements of the host institution. Also, I had to relearn Spanish after several years of not having contact with the language, which proved advantageous during my time in Spain.

To reach Zaragoza, I took the train from Oldenburg to Munster, then a bus from there to Paris, after which I shared a ride with a friend to Barcelona, ending my trip by taking a bus from Barcelona to Zaragoza. My experience as a transport engineer makes me consider this route as a sustainable mode of transportation. Although the journey took 3 days, this choice significantly reduced my carbon footprint compared to air travel. Despite the lengthy travel time, I found it to be a worthwhile experience as I had the opportunity to witness diverse landscapes and experience the European cultural diversity along the way.

I have the luck of finding **accommodation** near Zaragoza's city centre, which provided convenient access to amenities and allowed me to immerse myself in the local culture. I shared an apartment with a classmate from Oldenburg and a Spanish guy who I made very good friends with. Their friendship greatly aided my adjustment to the new environment, besides, the apartment was well-equipped and offered a comfortable living space throughout my exchange period. Additionally, its favourable proximity to the university, requiring only a 15 minutes tram ride, provided me with the flexibility to balance my academic responsibilities and experience the city culture and society during my free time.

My experience **studying** at the University of Zaragoza was remarkable. The Renewable Energy Grid Integration courses equipped me with valuable knowledge and insights both theoretical and practical understanding of smart grids, electric mobility, renewable energy systems and energy markets. However, sometimes I felt like the lack of skills on the local language was hindering my ability of taking advantage the fullest of the course, mainly because I consider that knowledge of the local language significantly enhances the learning experience and facilitates interaction with fellow classmates and teachers.

Spain possesses a lively atmosphere and the warm hospitality of the people fostered a welcoming environment for international students. I had the opportunity to socialize and forge lasting friendships with students from Spain and various other countries who were my classmates, thereby cultivating a global network in the personal and professional environment. Exploring Zaragoza and its surroundings during my leisure time allowed me to fully immerse myself in Spanish traditions, cuisine, and historical landmarks. It was a truly enriching experience that broadened my perspective and deepened my appreciation for this land.

To summarize, my exchange experience at the University of Zaragoza was truly incredible. I gained valuable knowledge in renewable energy and smart grids, and acquired insights into Spanish history, culture, and society. I am sincerely grateful to both the University of Oldenburg and the University of Zaragoza for providing me with this wonderful opportunity. I highly recommend the exchange program at the University of Zaragoza to those who are interested in grid integration of RES. Nevertheless, it is essential to plan and organize the semester well in advance to maximize the benefits of the exchange program. Down-below I have shared some memories.

Thanks for this great opportunity

Cheers