Experience report study abroad stay

Preparation (planning, organisation and application to the host institution)

Since I applied for the EUREC master with core university in Oldenburg, I had to select two universities in order to do my specialization semester. Those universities were the NTUA (National Technical University of Athens), in Athens and which was my first election and the second selected university was the University of Northumbria in Great Britain. At the NTUA I was able to do the wind energy specialization and in the University of Northumbria the photovoltaic specialization. So with this condition, I had to do an exchange semester during my master studies. It is to

Travel and arrival

Traveling from Oldenburg to Athens is very easy, with the Semesterticket is possible to go to the central train station Hamburg from Oldenburg for free. After that, it is possible to go to the airport of Hamburg by buying a ticket from Hamburg Hauptbahnhof to the airport. Then, the fly lasts around 3 hours. After arriving at the Venizelos airport in Athens, it is possible to go by subway (ticket cost around 10 euros) or by bus (ticket cost around 6 euros). Finally, depending where is the accommodation, you can go up to Sintagma square, the main square in Athens.

Accommodation

There are nice accommodations in Athens and the city is in general very nice. What I can suggest is to try to avoid the Kypseli neighborhood, it could be dangerous at night and it is far away from the university. Try to find an accommodation in Zografou, which is a residential neighborhood and it’s near the university. In addition, there are groups for finding accommodations in Athens for students or airbnb could be another possibility.

Studying at the host university (courses, academic performance / credits, support, credit transfer)

Due to the current exceptional situation, the courses were leaded in a different way (online). At the very beginning of the semester, it was possible to go to the university and the NTUA has a different peculiar architecture, with a lot of graffiti and quite old fashioned but at the same time very interesting. The library was possible to access without many problems, the lectures were always available when we had any question (for both periods – pre pandemic and pandemix). The way of studying from 9am up to 1pm or 2pm was really good because we had the possibility to do other activities. The credits were 30, as specified for European universities in master studies and the credit transfer was clear and understandable and supported by our coordinator.

Everyday life and leisure time

Everyday life, as mentioned before, was going from Monday to Friday mornings to the university and after lectures and eating lunch, there was always possibility to practice some sports, which are for free in the university, or going to the library to reinforce what we learnt at the lecture or visit
the city center. Touristic attractions are a big offer in Athens and generally in Greece. You have the Acropolis, many islands to visit, museums and very nice restaurants where you can try the tasty Greek food. Nightlife is also very active in Athens, a lot of bars and clubs near the city center are found opened from Tuesday to Saturday. (Considering all this before the lockdown due to the current situation).

**General experience, credit transfer, conclusion (tips for other students, DOs and DONTs)**

As a first impression I found Athens a really nice city, with a lot of attractions, very nice and friendly people, amazing tasty food and with an excellent weather. On the other hand, the driving culture in Athens is totally different as in Germany, people tend to drive as if they would be in a hurry, being careful at the public transport and paying always attention to the belongings because pickpocket is very frequent in Athens. A good recommendation would be to learn at least the most basic words in Greek, Greeks will appreciate it a lot. Be careful with the Omonia area, it is one of the most dangerous areas in Athens. To sum up everything in one sentence, with some cautions, Athens can be a very enjoyable city with many things to discover, not only in the academic focus per se, but also the whole history of the city, the gastronomy that it has to offer, the culture, the other exchange students which can do this Erasmus journey with. I would definitely recommend the city for doing an Erasmus semester.

**If necessary, also observe the specifications of the Erasmus+ Department Coordinators**

-