How did you prepare for your semester abroad?

I am studying the European Master in Renewable Energy by an integral part of a semester abroad. The program offers a specialization semester with cooperating universities in Europe. Already during my application for the master’s degree, I applied for the specialization in wind energy at the National Technical University of Athens, Greece, which was promised to me. Since the program has been offered for several years, the respective processes in terms of planning and organization are already known and run accordingly smoothly. Our course coordinator supported very well in the application of the Erasmus+ Promotion.

How did you find your studies at the host university?

Basically, I liked the studies at the NTUA quite well. Unfortunately, spring 2020 should be marked around COVID-19. In total, I only had 4 weeks of face-to-face lessons before we started with online lectures about Zoom. During the attendance period, lectures hardly differ from the well-known format in Germany. The only thing that bothered me was the very old-fashioned lecture rooms. However, the teaching staff made a motivated impression on me. The switch to online lectures took place within a week, so that hardly any lectures were cancelled. Nevertheless, I see online lectures as a supplement to classroom lectures, as you lack long-term interactions with other students and teaching staff. Attention also suffers during the lectures. In addition, no laboratories can be used.

What I definitely lacked, however, and this is to be understood as criticism, is the lack of explanation about the semester on site. The semester comprises 30 ECTS, although it is only in the late course of the semester that it becomes clear how and when modules and their examinations take place. In addition, there was no introductory week or similar on site. Apparently, the course is not supervised by the local International Office.

What did your everyday life and leisure look like for you?

My everyday life during my stay on site basically started with lectures in the morning. For lunch we spent time with the fellow students in the canteen and on campus or in a nearby bar or restaurant. In Portugal, you will find a restaurant on almost every corner to have a coffee or beer.
After work we went to the gym or just to relax in the next park, as the city consists of several hills. So be prepared for the fact that 5 minutes according to Google Maps can quickly turn into 10, because there is a certain incline! On weekends we liked to go to the beach or to the neighboring places. Athens is super diverse and I’m sure everyone will find something to their own liking. A visit to the restaurant with three courses and a drink is often 15€. Good home cooking can be found almost at every corner!

**How do you rate your semester abroad in total?**

Overall, I am very much satisfied with my experience abroad during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis. With regard to my studies, I was able to fulfill my complete target, even though online lectures and exams took place. In this context, the Técnico reacted very quickly to the new realities. Unfortunately, I could hardly spend time with my fellow students and get to know them and its surroundings.

Greece is a really beautiful country and I am sure I will be back!