Erasmus+ Scholarship 2015

*Study Experience Report – Zaragoza, Spain*

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Gayathri Prakash
M.Sc student – University of Oldenburg
European Masters in Renewable Energy 2014-2015
Specialisation – Grid Integration.
Study Experience Report – Zaragoza, Spain Gayathri Prakash

Studying in Europe is my dream since childhood and this dream turned into reality when I was accepted for the European Masters in Renewable Energy at University of Oldenburg, Germany. I prepared myself for the study in Germany and I chose this master as it provides the flexible curriculum with the two semesters in two different countries in Europe. I did my core semester in University of Oldenburg, Germany from October 2014 till January 2015. I chose Grid Integration Specialisation at University of Zaragoza, Spain as I hold my bachelor's in Electrical and Electronics Engineering and this will aid me for my future career goals. We were informed about the Erasmus + scholarship for our specialisation semester. This aided many students making their life easier in other European country. This encouraged us a step higher and we received the Erasmus + grant for our stay in Zaragoza, Spain in advance by January 2015. I arranged for my accommodation and travel to Zaragoza in January 2015.

With zest and zeal, I arrived on 8th of February 2015 in Zaragoza, Spain. We started our semester the next day on 9th of February 2015. The accommodation in Zaragoza is pretty good and myself along with one of my colleague stayed near to the Circe (Specialisation Organising team) campus and we need to just walk 5 minutes to reach the campus from the place of stay. We were totally 11 in the specialisation course from different countries united for a common cause.

The specialisation course was organised in an efficient manner and we were provided the opportunity to visit the transmission system operator of Spain, the RED ELECTRICA in Madrid, Spain. We were introduced to the operation of control center in Spain, Forecasting tools employed by this company and also a special control center for Renewable Generations. We could imagine the future of ourselves involved in such major operations. We also visited distribution company named ENDESA in Zaragoza, Spain. We were introduced to the smart meter operations and smart grids in major cities in Spain. We practised various software tools like PSCAD, Digsilent, CAPE, HOMER etc which are essential for working in industries. We visited some Photovoltaic plants, Hydro power plants near Zaragoza. The curriculum here was better with totally six modules, where we need to do one presentation, exam, assignments for each module evaluation. This made us to enjoy the course, exploring various topics, gaining and sharing the knowledge. The Facilities in the university are best with library, cafeteria, well equipped laboratory, discussion rooms. The lecturers were very friendly and supportive. As a whole, the Specialisation in University of Zaragoza is satisfactory and well organised, which paved the way to further involve in the world of Renewables.
It is essential to explore the city we live in. We visited ALJAFERIA palace, which is considered to be one of the main touristic spots in Zaragoza. We listened to the history of the place and it was a remarkable architecture. Then we visited pillar church in the city center, which is again a splendid beauty of the city. During the relaxed time, myself with my friends spend our time near the Pilar church in the downtown street. There will be some carnivals happening and it's a peaceful place for relaxation.

Regarding the food, I am a vegan and it was quite difficult to find a vegetarian dish other than salad. So I depend on self-cooking or if it is outside food, it will be either salad or Pizza margherita. There are some Spanish sweets which are very delicious like almond sweets. We also taste some tapas, which are quite popular in Spain.

The other cities like Barcelona, Madrid are not very far. There are several Intercity buses available which are not so expensive when booked earlier. There are some fast trains at reduced cost depends on the date of booking. Barcelona is a must-visit city for its architectural beauty. The south of Spain like Valencia, Granada are some places which can be visited in peak summer to relax in beach or seaside enjoying the Sun.

For me, the stay in Zaragoza was awesome with wonderful memories which I will cherish throughout my Lifetime. The knowledge I gained, I will put in my efforts to contribute my best in Sustainable World. I also thank the Erasmus + team for supporting the students through the scholarship.