

My name is Daniel Carreño and I am a EUREC student for the Master Program in Renewable Energy at Universität Oldenburg. As for this program a specialization semester abroad is mandatory. Among all the options (PV, Grid integration, Solar Thermal and Wind Energy) I chose the one of Wind Energy primarily because I felt more attracted to this kind of energy. After my stay in Greece, I can tell that this has been probably one of the most interesting and unforgettable experiences in my whole life. Interesting because of both the high-level technical knowledge acquired as well as cultural traditions learnt from a very complex society. Unforgettable because of the many unique experiences lived in a very unique country.

Starting from the beginning, the paper work needed in order to apply for the scholarship was considerable but thanks to the support of the Erasmus staff at Uni Oldenburg everything was fine and done right on time. Also there were no concerns about matching the credits required for the master.

As per our arrival in Greece, it was a little bit chaotic even that we (me and other two friends also from the Core in Oldenburg) had already an accommodation to stay for the whole period. We arrived in the airport very late at night and with little information on how to get to the city centre. The bus X95 runs 24/7 with a 15 minutes frequency and it was unaffected by strikes in the whole period of my stay in Athens. We didn't know that at the moment of our arrival. Instead, we took two taxis (3 people, 6+ pieces of luggage and no van-taxis available) which made good profit out of us. First advice: taxis in Athens are relatively quite cheap (compared with Germany or Spain) but at night the fare doubles. Also the distance from the Venizelos' airport to the city centre is considerably long. Lesson learnt. In spite of this anecdote, our welcoming was rather warm. Our landlady was waiting for us with a home-made dessert. Taking into account that it was about 3 a.m., this was our first proof of the Greek hospitality which was a constant all through my stay in Greece. The flat was located at the end of the Zografou (Ζογραφου) quarter, close to Ylissia (Ίλισσια) quarter. It was about 30 minutes uphill walking distance from the Zografou Gate entrance of the NTUA which was the closest to the flat. This flat was 300€/month with everything included. There are also other options closer to the university (but more expensive) and cheaper (but further away). In any case, try living either close to a metro stop or to a 608 bus stop, it is really practical.

Regarding the NTUA itself, we were having lectures at the mechanical engineering school. The first thing you realise about it is that it's located in a very be idyllic spot surrounded by nature and pine trees. Facilities as library, restaurant and even the gym are for free for students which is definitely a plus. The highest value of this university, however, will be found in its lectures and professors. Well-known researchers from the EWEA network will give highly detailed technical lectures which you will enjoy for sure provided that you follow your notes with some

frequency during the week. The academic level of the NTUA is quite high but don't hesitate asking questions to them periodically, it will help you to better understand the syllabus and you'll enjoy yourself more. Among all the subjects, "Aerodynamics" and "Structural & dynamic loading" will be both the most challenging as well as the most interesting from my point of view. Nevertheless this is only the tip of the iceberg and you'll find a number of other practical subjects as interesting as these which will make you start loving the world of the wind industry. The on-site visits and excursions will make you realise that you have taken the right choice by coming here.

Regarding the leisure activities in Athens, simply you'll be spoiled of choice. Of course the first thing you'll do will be visiting the Acropolis and its superb modern museum located right at the bottom of the hill. This first experience, as many others, will be free of charge for students. Later, you'll enjoy the ancient Greek Agora and finish at Monasteraki square enjoying the delicious Greek cuisine. You can find all the routes in any tourist information point. If I can give a suggestion, go with locals and you'll find a surprise in each corner of the city.

Regarding the travelling offer, there are many historical places you can visit as for example the Marathonas Battlefield, Nafplio and Mykenas, the Thermopiles (you may record a famous epic movie), Meteora with its breathtaking landscapes or Thessaloniki with its relaxing promenade and chill atmosphere just to mention a few options inland. If you are to take a Ferry, there are literally hundreds of islands you can explore. Depending on your time and budget you may go to Aegina, Hydra, Mykonos and/or Santorini. Actually Santorini is a real must-see, the best adjective to describe it is just 'unique' so please don't miss it.

In conclusion, my stay in Greece has been one unique experience which will be difficult to forget. Not only I have learnt all the technical aspects expected from this course, but also I have learnt many cultural and social aspects from a very rich and charming country. As an overview, here you can find a brief list of do's and don't's:

- α. Find an accomodation prior to go to Athens. Avoid wandering around the first days. Look for that in the Zografou area, the closer to the Zografou gate in NTUA, the better. Expect prices around 300 € warm/month.
- β. Be patient, Greece has its own pace but eventually everything works out.
- χ. Do follow the lectures and ask the professors. Try reading the syllabus at least once per week. Making the proposed exercises in group helps to better understand the methodology,
- δ. Get in touch with locals to better discover the true wonders of the city.
- ε. Don't forget your passport and driver's license (you may rent a bike or a car on an island or visit Turkey).



*Meteora*



*Santorini*



*Wind farm excursion*



*Academy of Plato*