

Agota's Erasmus experience, Erasmus student at the Department of Political Science during the winter semester of the academic year 2014-2015.



Balos

It was an isolated bay, where I was the only one swimming



Since I got home from Crete, I am dreaming about going back every day. From the moment the plane took off to the very end I enjoyed every second of the Erasmus program. I spent the winter semester of 2014 in the Cretan paradise.



Also Balos

I took the last plane in the summer season from Budapest to Heraklion. From Heraklion it was a one and a half hour bus ride to Rethymno. Since there were some free days between the flight and the first day at the university I had some time to get to know the city and the neighborhood. In September it was summer in Crete with 30 degrees. The sea temperature was also high, but I went swimming also in December. The climate was quite simple. The local people told me that there are 3 seasons. hot summer, summer and mild summer. Sometimes it was raining a little, and there were some colder days as well, but mostly sunshine and warm weather was typical.

The city of Rethymno is not too big, but there are hundreds of streets which makes the orientation more difficult. Almost every local person, even old people speak some English, so if you get lost you can always ask for help. The city center is always full of people. There were lots of tourists until middle of October, so the restaurants, bars were always crowded.

On the first day at University we had a gathering and we could go around the whole place. It was not only one building, but actually a lot, so it took some time until we went through everything and especially until I learned where I could find the right buildings.

From some of the buildings you could see the sea, the historic fortress, etc.

We had to look for our teacher by ourselves, and discuss everything about the semester. The professors are very helpful and nice to the students. In most of the cases they told us “Don’t worry, enjoy the sunshine, everything will be fine”. I think this positive attitude is true for all the Greek people. The teachers were very nice, patient and very friendly to us.

All the departments had 1 or 2 mentors, who were also students at the University, and we could always annoy them with our problems. They were also very helpful every time.



One of the University buildings



White Lake

I started learning the Greek language, because the University offered it for free. The Greek language is beautiful, interesting and it was an honor to learn from the local people. I also found it interesting that the Cretan people use some words and expressions than the people e.g. in Athens.

What you should know about the university:

It consists of lot of buildings

The library is really outstanding. Lots of books can be found, also in English, German, French etc, 3 floors, nd computers.

There is a canteen where you can have a 3 dishes lunch for 3 euros with your student ID. (main dish, salad, dessert)

Unfortunately there is no possibility to stay in a dorm.

Since there were no dorms, I had to find a place to stay on my own. Renting is quite expensive compared to the eastern European prices. Compared to the western European prices, it is quite good. Renting a flat was 350-400 euro so it is good to have someone to share the costs with.

I would also recommend asking some hotels because they have special prices for monthly rent in the offseason.

The food price is fine, but I found the meat prices a little bit high. Usually I was cooking for myself, and it was around 50 euros per month to buy the basic foods. There is Lidl, Spar and other supermarkets in the town – I found Lidl the cheapest.

Prices are basically the same in bars, coffee shops in the whole city. A coffee is 3 euros, a gyros is 2, 5-3 euros. I wanted to do some student works, but I found it impossible to find one, so you need to have enough money – above the scholarship - to cover your expenses.

The university is quite far from the city center. You have to take the bus and you have to buy tickets every single day in the little shops next to the bus stops. The bus timetable (if there is one existing...) is really unpredictable, but usually you don't have to wait more than 30 minutes.

The international office of the university organized lots of trips for us. They showed us the local foods, habits, music, etc. We have been to the Knossos Palace, Cretaquarium, Chrissi Island and to other less well known but really beautiful places. We have visited several impressive beaches, we watched the sunset, spent nights at the beach under the sky etc. Simply unforgettable.

We were never bored, our Greek friends are very good hosts ☺



Seitan Limania – our team at the bay, where we also spent a night

We often got together with the others, rented a car, and visited other places of Crete. Sometimes our mentors, and also our teachers joined us.

We also visited the island of Santorini. We took a boat from Heraklion which took us to the volcanic island in 2 hours. We spent 3 days there. I would really recommend it, it worth a visit!



Santorini (!)

I am really grateful that I had the chance to participate in this Erasmus program. I met a lot of nice people, I made new friendships, and I got richer with unforgettable experiences!



Matala