

## Introduction:

I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Erasmus exchange program during the winter semester of 2022/2023. I spent five months studying at the Department of Environmental Physics, University of Split in Croatia. This report aims to share my experience in detail and reflect on the benefits and challenges of the program.

## Preparation:

Before leaving for Croatia, I had to go through a long and rigorous process of preparation. I had to apply for the program through my home university, and once accepted, I had to fill out a lot of paperwork and make findings about my residency in Croatia, which I was told that since I would be residing in the University dormitory I do not need to apply for a residence permit – this information was before Croatia joined the EU officially in January 2023. I also had to procure suitable clothing for the Split weather, and buy my travel tickets. Although the process was time-consuming, it was well worth it.

## Arrival:

When I arrived in Split, I was welcomed by a friendly representative from the university who helped me settle in. The university had arranged for a buddy program, and my buddy showed me around the city and helped me to adapt into my new environment. The city itself was beautiful, with a historic old town and a bustling port. The weather was also a pleasant surprise, with plenty of sunny days and mild temperatures which I enjoyed so much every single day.

## Academics:

The academic program at the Department of Environmental Physics was rigorous and at the same time rewarding. The courses were taught in English, which was helpful for international students. The professors were knowledgeable and approachable, and they encouraged us to participate in class discussions. The workload was manageable, and I had enough time to explore the city and travel around the region.

The courses I took included Climate System, Extreme Environmental Phenomena, and Signal Processing in the Environmental. These courses gave me a deep understanding of the environmental issues that we face today and how we can tackle them. The lectures were supplemented with practical sessions, where we conducted experiments in the laboratory and in the field.

One of the highlights of the academic program was the research project that I conducted with a group of students was to describe and classify different types of signals using the standard concepts of signal processing theory. I applied the Fast Fourier Transform to solve signal processing problem on the tropospheric vertical column NO<sub>2</sub> signal data we obtained using

the Multi Axis – Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy instrument (MAX-DOAS) and the signal was analysed in the laboratory, and I presented my findings at the end of the semester.

#### Social Life:

One of the most rewarding aspects of the exchange program was the social life. I made friends with fellow international students as well as local students. We would often explore the city together, trying new restaurants and bars. The university and the department also organized several events, such as language exchanges and cultural trips, visit to the meteorological station in Hvar. All these events helped us immerse ourselves in the local culture. Split is a very beautiful coastal city. Roaming inside and outside of Split was very amazing experience. People are very friendly. They usually treat foreigners very friendly. Far and within the University, everybody can speak in English which makes settling very effortless for me. It was not hard for me to get information when I needed to inquire about anything.

#### Challenges:

Although my exchange experience was mostly positive, there were a few challenges. One of the biggest challenges was the language barrier. While many locals spoke English, some did not, and I found it difficult to communicate in some situations. Another challenge was homesickness, especially during holidays such as Christmas.

The Erasmus office of the University of Split is very organized, and they are very much helpful for international student. They provided me with all the necessary documents and procedures that I need to regularise my stay and integrate properly in Split. They also continuously communicate by email updating me with the current information which I found amazing. The staffs at the department are very skilled, and they reply so quickly which makes all things very seamless. Although the department of Environmental physics still experience some administrative challenges as some of the courses found on the program websites and the timetable are continuously updated especially at the beginning of the semester. I could not take some of the courses I had in mind before leaving Bremen because these courses were no longer available when I arrived Split.

The Student centre Split, office of University of Split responsible for allocating student apartment could make changes about ones allocated apartment without prior notification. I was allocated an apartment before leaving Bremen. I only became aware that my apartment has changed at the reception desk; my new apartment was 100 Euro more. I did not prepare my mind towards this and I had to decide to move in or not on the spot, under short time because I arrived so late in the evening. I thought they would have sent me this notice early enough since they sent me the right information and make application for accommodation about two months before my departure. However, the good thing is to keep in mind to ask for accommodation help to international office, the accommodation website, different Facebook group and people around.

## Conclusion:

My experience in the Erasmus exchange program was an extraordinary one. I gained a deep understanding of environmental issues, improved my language skills, and made lifelong friends. While it is difficult to leave such a wonderful City of Split, I know that life is all about growth and development. I take with me fond memories and newfound skills that will guide me on my next endeavours. I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who has made my stay in Split, Croatia an unforgettable one, and to the Erasmus+ for providing me with this amazing opportunity. The program not only broadened my academic knowledge but also enriched my personal life in ways that I never imagined. I would highly recommend the program to anyone who has the opportunity to participate.