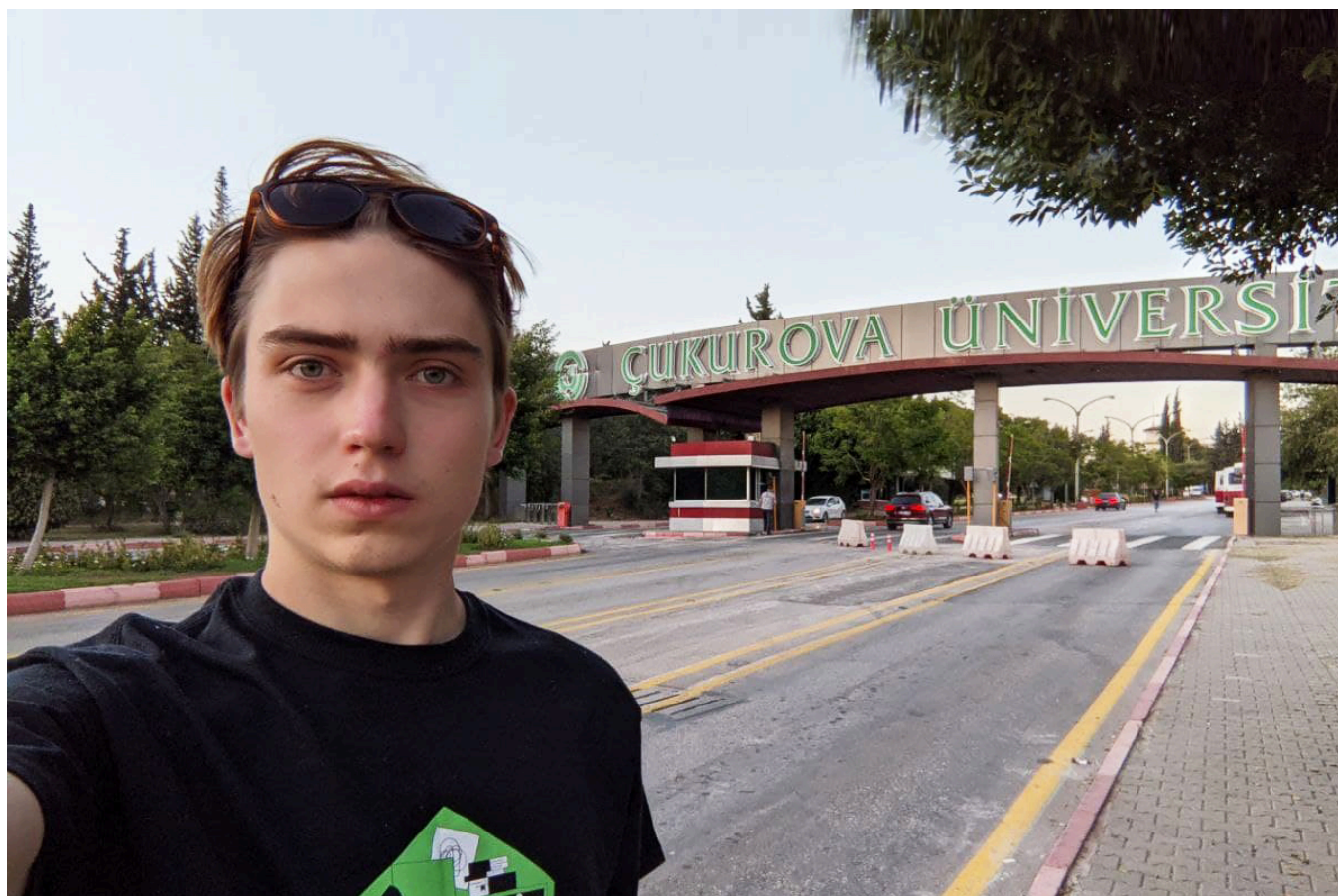


A semester in Turkey: a Polytechnic student about participation in the Erasmus+ project

Ivan KUZNETSOV from Institute of Computer Science and Technologies of SPbPU spent a semester at Çukurova University (Turkey), where he went as part of the [Erasmus+ project](#). Read about the best time to start preparing for your trip and what you need, how to study during the pandemic, the prices in local stores, and the unusual fauna on the university campus in our interview.



— **Ivan, why did you choose Çukurova University for your studies?**

— Çukurova University offered courses that I was interested in in terms of my future profession. It's great that with the help of exchange training one can supplement education with new programs that will be useful in building a career.

— **How did the preparation for the trip go?**

— We started preparing a month and a half before the deadline for accepting applications. This is important because there are a lot of issues that take a lot of time to resolve. Once we received approval from Çukurova University, all we had to do was wait. We had three summer months ahead of us and it was completely

unclear if anything would change because of the pandemic. In July, two months before the trip, I began to gather the documents and apply for the visa. I ended up visiting the embassy three times, which also says that it is better to prepare in advance. In the end, a month before departure, I received a visa marked «Erasmus».

The last, but quite important document before departure was the deployment order. It was prepared two weeks before my departure. I would like to say thank you to the international office of SPbPU — in the process of preparation they helped me solve a lot of issues.

— You say that because of the pandemic, it was not clear how the trip would turn out. Wasn't it scary to fly for a long time to another country at a time like this?

— No, I wasn't. Only the extra checks at the airports and the university were added to it. But, having gone through all this, it seems that the world has already adapted — the main thing is to have a QR code with you.

— Do you remember your first impressions upon arrival?

— My first impression when I came to Turkey was «why does no one speak English?» By the way, this situation is quite common. But the people there are generally very kind, and they try to help in any way they can. The move itself went well — at the airport of Adana, I was met by a student-advisor from the university, who helped me to get to the dormitory, to check-in and to solve a lot of questions in the first week.



— Tell us more about how the adaptation went? Was it easy to get used to living in a new country?

— The first thing I remember is the number by which to multiply the prices in the stores. They are, by the way, lower there, so I would not recommend going shopping on an empty stomach — you can buy a lot of extra stuff.

As far as studying, getting used to it was not difficult. Classes start at 9, which is not much different from Polytechnic university. For the fare on the bus, you pay by card, just like at us.

There is only one point that is important to get used to. On the roads, drivers have priority over pedestrians. Even if you're crossing the road on a crosswalk, you have to be very careful and let all the cars pass.

— What are your impressions of the dormitory, do you like everything?

— I checked into the dorm right on the campus of the university. It's a five-minute walk to my studies. The room is quite large, with a nice view from the window, there is a kitchen, a shower. Unfortunately, at first, there was only cable internet. To connect to wi-fi, I had to go to the store for a router. Most of the students who come to Çukurova University to study as exchange students live in the same dormitory. We often get together and socialize.



— **What do you think about the university campus?**

— The campus is huge. The first weekend I walked around only a small part of it, but I was very impressed: a lot of greenery, a gorgeous view of the lake, there are beautiful new buildings. Everything is pretty close to each other — the dining hall, my faculty, the dormitory, the pool, the concert hall. There are also lots of dogs and cats walking the grounds, bats flying around at night, and even wild boars running loose.

— **How is your education going during the pandemic?**

— My classes are face-to-face, but if someone is feeling ill, there is a parallel broadcast on MS Teams that you can always join. Everyone sits in class wearing masks — professor and students. Auditoriums are processed before classes. In terms of pandemic measures, everyone here is very responsible.

— **Have you had any difficulties in your studies?**

— Here I study five subjects a week, some of which I'm already a bit familiar with, so it's not difficult to study in general. There is one problem — some professors prefer to lecture in their language. The saving grace is that the presentations are in English, and you can come up and ask questions after class. In general, the people here are quite helpful; students and professors are extremely

understanding and helpful.

— In your opinion, is there a difference in the teaching at Polytechnic and Çukurova University?

— There are slight differences, but they are mostly organizational. For example, here students choose the courses they want to study themselves a week before they start. You can do this through the website of the university. The duration of the classes themselves is also different. Here each lesson lasts 3 hours, but taking into account the breaks and the volume of material, we sometimes cope in 2 hours. And some students have disciplines with 5 hours per class.

— And in general, how is the situation in the city? Have you managed to visit anywhere?

— There are European-style parks in the city, and there are orange trees growing in the streets. The main attraction in Adana is the mosque. It is very beautiful inside as well as outside, and you can look at it for hours.



— What do you think are the key benefits of exchange student internships?

— Such internships develop your language level very much because you speak

only English with everyone. Just as importantly, you make a lot of acquaintances. These are people from different countries who come to study other areas and specialties, which is also quality interesting. Talking to them, you learn a lot about their world. I also like the fact that for almost half a year you plunge into another culture. You see with your own eyes how people live, visit not only tourist places, but also those places you wouldn't visit on an ordinary trip.

— What advice would you give to students who are planning to go on an exchange trip?

— I would advise to dare, collect the documents and apply for the competition. Because it is an invaluable experience: never have I spoken as much English as I do here; never have I met so many people from different countries in one place — from Indonesia and Kosovo, for example — or explored entirely new educational programs.

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