

Hello from Italy: SPbPU Student Talked about Participation at Erasmus+ Program

Under the program Erasmus+ a Master's degree student in Electrical engineering of the Institute of Energy of SPbPU Anna PETROVA has studied at Politecnico di Milano for a semester and on arrival shared her impressions. Today in our interview: how to take part in Erasmus+ programs, what documents are necessary, what educational process there is at Politecnico di Milano and lots of other interesting facts.



- Anna, why did you decide to take part in Erasmus+ program?

- I have been studying English language since my early childhood, it is my true passion. Finding an opportunity to combine my professional studies with my English knowledge was one of my dreams. But all along my bachelor degree the idea of going to a foreign university elicited fear. During my first semester I realized that if I did not catch the last chance, probably I would lose it forever. I applied without hesitation despite knowing how many barriers I was going to face.

- What university did you choose, and why?

- My target was Politecnico di Milano, Italy. This particular country is my true passion! Having been here as a tourist I was under a great impression of the culture, architecture, food and people. Thanks to the exchange program my wish of living in Italy came true.

- Tell us about the preparation for leaving.

- Preparation for leaving for another country implies a number of milestones. One needs to be ready to spend a lot of time on pursuing the necessary documents, filling out the forms and communicating with the accountable. Bureaucratic issues are the most crucial and tiresome. Another key point that should be thought of in advance is the accommodation. Such a European country as Italy is quite expensive, so it's better to start finding a place to stay in advance, otherwise it will cost a fortune.



- Do you remember your first day in Italy?

- I remember the day of my arrival as if it was yesterday. I was so excited and happy... However, my first day ended with a couple of problems - I had to tackle in my dorm I had booked: the door was broken so I had to negotiate a lot with the administration, I experienced disappointment because of troubles. Also there was a pile of documentation waiting to be signed. To sum up, the first days in a foreign country as a student are full of contingencies.

- Did you like the university?

- The university impressed me a lot. No disinterested professors; cutting edge technologies, spacious lecture rooms and friendly spirit inspired me from the first lecture. The thing I liked the most was the fact that the professors never strayed from the topic during lessons, therefore the precious time was never lost.

- Was it difficult to get used to new university?

- Polimi is a university with a high share of international students, so I was never a black sheep. Every lesson ended with new acquaintances, I didn't even need to try to start the conversation because practically every time there was someone who was coming up to me to have a talk. People around rendered interest in being out of the box and making new friends, the whole university ambience promoted interconnections and experience exchange.



- Tell us about the studying process. Is there anything the other international students should pay attention to?

- Once did the lessons start I realized that a high rated European university had a number of difficulties in disguise. The main one was the education itself. The amount of studies, project works and new information turned out to be extra large. Polimi provides its students with exceptionally interesting subjects, the professors

often invite external specialists to let the young keep up with the situation in the sphere they are interested in, the workshops and case projects suggested as a homework help to master basic principles taught during the lessons. BUT! All the lectures need a rebound effect from the student. For this very reason here, in Polimi, I realized that to survive you need to study from the very beginning, otherwise you will gain problems. Thereby, the university infrastructure favors studying: there are many study and recreation areas, special study rooms, libraries, virtual platforms, zones equipped with all the necessary appliances for a student to study, study, study...



- Did you have chance to travel around the country?

- I enjoyed my stay in Milan owing to many Erasmus network organizations which were in charge of evening activities for students. They assembled a large number of people from all over Milan and provided services and events for them. Several times a week they offered free aperitivo and buffet, which is typical for Milan. These events were my favorite ones because when you're abroad (especially in Milan) you appreciate each and every opportunity to save money and eat without paying for it. Moreover, excursions and city tours were organized, so we could visit museums, theaters, exhibitions, clubs, even football matches either for free or at a significantly discounted price. During my first months, when the density of studies was not so high, I managed to travel to Como, Lecco, Varenna, Sirmione, Verona, Venice, Bari, Hamburg and Luneburg (thanks to discounted Flixbus and Ryanair

tickets offered to Erasmus students).

- Would you recommend other students to take part in Erasmus+ Program?

- I strongly recommend to apply for an exchange program because it is an unforgettable experience which can help one to expand the comfort zone, upgrade his or her skills and find new friends!

- Anna, thank you very much for a very interesting interview! Wish you good luck and new achievements!

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