

A student from SPbPU about studying at the University of Turku within the First+ program

We continue to report on how SPbPU students [study abroad during the pandemics](#). This winter, Valeria OKROMELIDZE, a student of the Graduate School of Cyberphysical Systems and Control at IKNT SPbPU, went to study at the University of Turku (Finland) as part of the First+ program. You can read about how the training within the framework of the European project goes [in the relevant section](#) on Polytechnic University's website or in our interview.



- Valeria, good to see you! Was it difficult to prepare for the trip?

- It took quite some time to prepare for the trip. I had to make a visa, collect the necessary documents and signatures, book a place in the dormitory of the Finnish university.

- How long will you study in Finland?

- I arrived in Helsinki at the beginning of January and from there I went to the city of Turku where my university is located. There I will study until the end of May.

- Do you remember your first impressions upon arrival? Was it easy to get used to living in a new city?

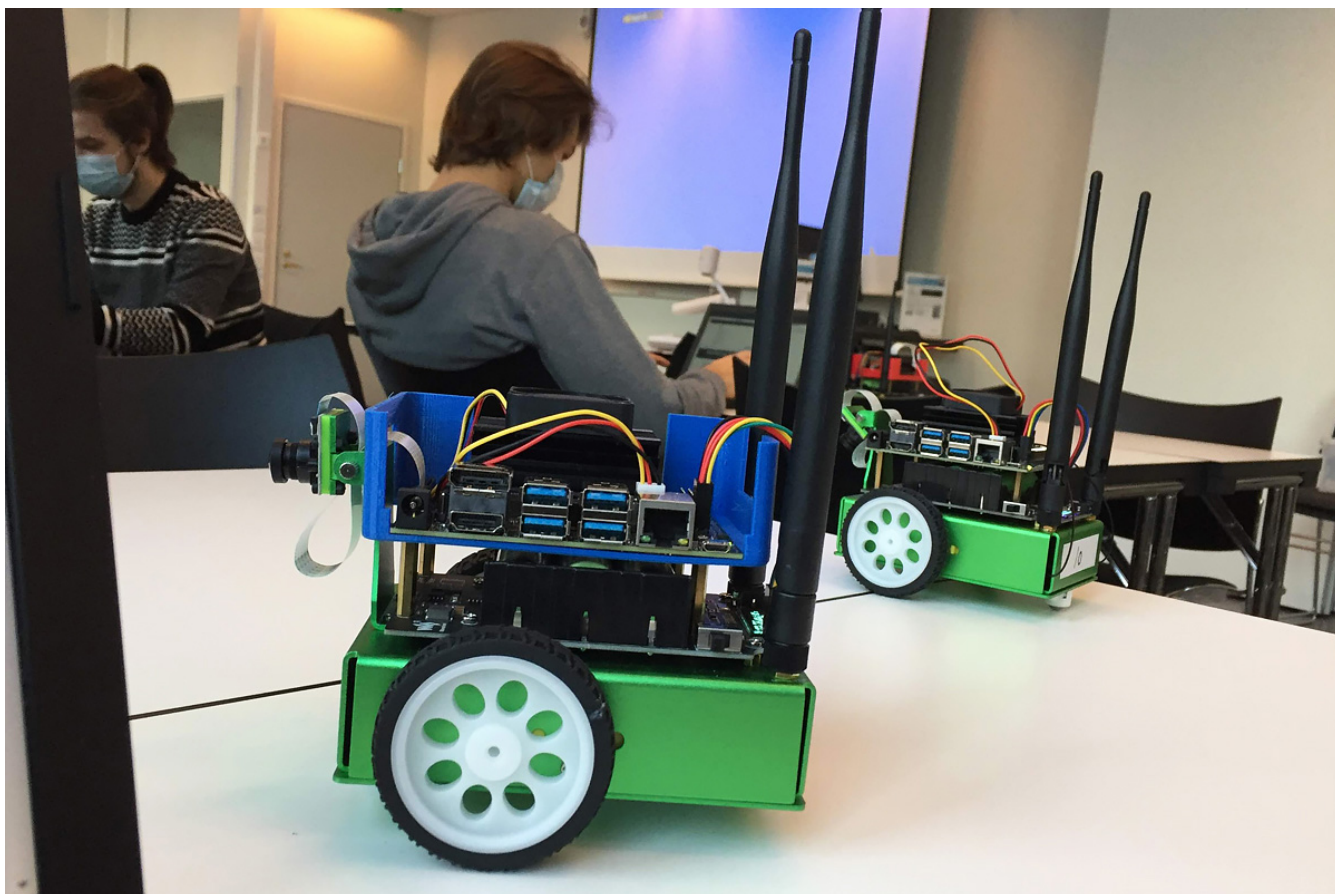
- My impressions were the best, and they remain the same. I got used to everything quite easily. I was especially pleased that everyone speaks English, so I have no problem communicating here. In my opinion, Finns are open and friendly, always ready to help.

- How do you find accommodation?

- The campus here is great, everything you need is just a stone's throw away from the dormitory. One to three people are living in apartments, each of them has their own room.

- Tell me a little bit about the campus. What's it like?

- I would not say that the external architecture of the university buildings is impressive, but everything inside is very well organized and modern. Almost all of the buildings are as close as possible to each other, it takes no more than 10 minutes to go from one to the other, but I don't need to, because all classes are held in one building.



- Are you currently studying remotely or on-site?

- We study in a mixed format. The lectures take place remotely on the Zoom platform. If we have to do practical assignments and use laboratory equipment, we do it face-to-face.

- Is it easy to study at the new university?

- It's hard to study, but you gradually get used to it and get involved in the process. The main thing is not to miss practical classes because the tasks here are very extensive and not to be afraid to ask teachers or other students questions if you don't understand something.

- Were there any difficulties in communicating with other students and teachers?

- I had no trouble finding a common language with students and professors. Teachers are always open to communication, they ask questions and are willing to offer advice or explain things in more detail.



- And in general, what's the situation in the city now? Have you already had time to see the local sights?

- At the moment the restrictions are gradually going down, most public places are open, the university, as I said, has full-time classes. Speaking of interesting places

in Turku, I managed to see Abobo Castle and the Cathedral. I want to visit the coast, but it is almost completely occupied by the port, and it is not easy to get there. In the future I plan to visit other Finnish cities and, if possible, neighboring countries.

- In your opinion, what are the key benefits of exchange student internships?

- I would say the advantages are increased responsibility and autonomy, the development of a quick orientation in unexpected situations, the experience of another educational system, excellent language practice, the opportunity to travel, and, of course, new acquaintances.

- What advice would you give to students who, when the pandemic ends and the borders open, want to go to study abroad?

- First, be responsible regarding your paperwork and your studies, as this is the main purpose of the trip. Secondly, I would recommend arriving before classes start so that you can resolve all domestic, financial, and organizational issues as quickly as possible, as well as get used to the new environment and explore the city a bit.

- Valeria, thank you for the interesting interview! We wish you success in your studies and new achievements!

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