

Agnieszka Osmola (Erasmus+ Exchange Student and Trainee at the Ionian University)



As part of the Erasmus+ program in the winter semester of 2022/2023, I had the opportunity to travel to the beautiful Greek island of Corfu. It is located in the Ionian Islands archipelago, in the Mediterranean Sea, an hour and a half by ferry from the nearest mainland town, Igoumenitsa. The island, besides its captivating landscapes, also has a rich history that can be observed at every turn. It boasts numerous museums, two historic fortresses, and many other monuments worth visiting. Corfu also has a bus station and an airport, from which one can travel directly to places such as Athens, Ioannina, or Thessaloniki. The Ionian University, which agreed to admit me as a student, is located in the heart of the island's capital, Kerkyra. It's close to all kinds of cafes, restaurants, and the UNESCO-listed old town. During my stay at the Department of Foreign Languages, the staff was friendly and helpful. I had no problem communicating in English, which turned out to be widely spoken and at a very high level, even among students. At the University I had the opportunity not only to learn a lot of interesting things, but also to meet friendly and inspiring people.

I loved the island so much that after a very successful student exchange, upon completing my Master's Degree, I decided to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity provided by the Erasmus+ program and return to Corfu to undertake my graduate traineeship there. One of the lecturers I met during my previous stay helped me contact the International & Public Relations Office, and the staff immediately agreed to accept me for the traineeship. Among my duties, I was to assist in maintaining documentation related to the Erasmus+ program,

update data on the office's website, help organize events, and communicate with both Erasmus+ exchange students and those interested in the program. Having spent a few months on Corfu previously, also as part of the Erasmus+ program, I had no trouble settling on the island and could even use my knowledge of the place to help others find their way around.

The atmosphere in the office from the first days was exceptional - wonderful and friendly, fostering effective work and positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors. The staff were not only competent but also exceptionally helpful and kind. During the traineeship, I felt supported and appreciated, and the opportunity to familiarize myself with the way of working in another culture significantly expanded my horizons. Besides work, I also had the opportunity to travel around the island, taste local cuisine and excellent coffee, and admire the beautiful nature and fascinating architecture. One of the interesting experiences during my stay was getting to know the local students, who had recently joined the Erasmus Students Network (ESN) and are enthusiastically organizing activities for exchange students, from karaoke nights to island tours and trips to mainland Greece. Overall, the experience gained during the traineeship as part of the Erasmus+ program was extremely valuable and enlightening. During the traineeship, I had the opportunity not only to learn many things related to the Erasmus+ program and its organization but also to meet interesting and inspiring people, see beautiful landscapes, immerse myself in another culture, and significantly improve my language skills. Thanks to the varied responsibilities and the support of the fantastic staff, I was able to learn a lot and develop my skills, and the place where the traineeship took place will remain in my memory as a beautiful and inspiring environment.

In summary, my participation in the Erasmus+ program was excellent. It was a significant logistical challenge, but also an invaluable lesson in life and independence. Living, studying, and working in a foreign country and experiencing a different culture broadened my horizons and changed the way I view the world. During the exchange, I also had the opportunity to meet wonderful people, developing my English language skills every day. Furthermore, in addition to the island itself, I was able to explore a piece of mainland Greece, which is a beautiful, incredibly culturally rich country. To anyone considering participating in the Erasmus+ program at the Ionian University, I would recommend overcoming any doubts and taking this step - it is truly an amazing experience. I highly recommend it!

