

Experience report study abroad semester

How was it?

You may have heard this question more often now that you are at the end of your semester abroad. The International Center would also like to know how you evaluate your semester abroad. The experience reports will be published and serve to help orient others going abroad. The International Office would also like to use the contents for advertising purposes if necessary. We would therefore like you to keep this in mind when filling out the report.

1. General information

Please do not mention any personal information (name, e-mail address, etc.) in the experience report.

I agree to the publication of the report and the attached photos:

yes No

New outgoing students sometimes ask us for a way to contact alumni outgoings. Are we allowed to pass on your contact details in case of enquiries?

yes No

Study program at EUF

EUCS

Discipline combination (if BABW)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Host country

Greece

Host university

Panteion University Athens

Semester abroad (e.g. winter semester 2020/21)

Winter-Semester 2020/21

2. Your story

At this point you can now tell your stories from abroad. Often it is not so easy to tell about your experiences abroad in such a compressed way. We have therefore prepared some reflection questions to help you do this. At the end of the questionnaire, you will also find a free field for you to fill in, in which you are welcome to enter aspects that are not covered by any of these questions.

How did you prepare for the semester abroad?

I did research on the city itself, if english is sufficient to get by and on the stores for daily needs near my apartment as well as on public transport. I still wanted to just explore it on my own so I limited my research on places to go.

How did you establish social networks in your host country? Do you have any tips on how this can be achieved?

Erasmus-Students generally form groups on social media and via those organize meetings. My friends outside the university I actually just met in the streets of athens.

What I would have liked to know before going abroad?

I would have liked to know beforehand that many parts of athens are "tourist-traps" and where to look for more affordable alternatives. You do find them on your own eventually, but in the beginning you might get tempted to pay prices well above the average for Athens. I would also have liked to know that tickets for public transport are available at most kiosks that can be found in almost every street and in metro stations, not aboard busses though.

How was the study program at the partner university structured?

(e.g. premises, workload, language of instruction, examination forms, accessibility)

What intercultural encounters/competencies shaped your stay?

The number of courses available in english was high enough to give each student enough options to individually choose according to their preferences, there are also courses in other languages, e.g. french, but none in german. You need to watch closely though as many courses in english are offered only every other semester. I had significant trouble having the online-plattform displayed in english, however that can be efficiently passed by with a translator-plugin. What took me some getting used to was the fact, that lectures are usually 3 hours long. They are designed in a way that makes getting through without losing concentration possible, it is still quite a change from the usual 90-minute-lectures in Germany.

What intercultural encounters/competencies shaped your stay?

A big part of staying in greece is the language-barrier. You do get by with english in most cases, however every now and then also english will not help you and it might get difficult to understand others as many greek people have a rather strong accent.

Which perspectives on the host country/country of origin have changed and why?

Especially in Germany the general population is not too fond of Greece due to the economic problems and the need for financial aid resulting from them. I found that some Greeks have similar opinions about Germany. One encounter that specifically stuck with me was my taxi-driver telling me how much he loved Wolfgang Schäuble, as opposed to Angela Merkel who he called "crazy". I have to say that I did not have any strong views on Greek people as I had never personally encountered one before. However a cliché that I am happy to say is true is that Greek people are very open to others and always ready to help others find their way or similar things and also to conversations. The Greek friends I found outside of university I met at Syntagma-square (THE central square in Athens, like the Südermarkt in Flensburg) and just started a conversation with them.

What was your daily life like where you were? (e.g. living, shopping, leisure, inclusion)

My daily life was not too different from my daily life at home when it comes to shopping for groceries, public transport etc. As I had multiple shops very nearby (the nearest actually being a LIDL). The biggest difference would be that whenever I did not have lectures I just went into town to explore and just get to know the streets. Luckily Athens and especially the area around the Metro Stations Syntagma, Monastiraki and Acropolis never gets boring as you will always find something new, whether it is a nice Café, a new store or ancient ruins that got preserved. Your companions everywhere will be the stray cats of Athens. And there are a lot of them. Most of them are in rather good shape however as the locals regularly just set out dishes with cat food on the streets. I strongly advise to go with your local friends to places in town as the best places I have been to were shown to me by them and during your stay taking a day or two to visit the Acropolis-Museum and the Acropolis itself. The ruins are free for students, the museum is very affordable and has people in the halls who are there for you to ask questions about the things on display. In general Athens is a town in which you can just let your phone navigate you to the center and then just go wherever your feet carry you, you are guaranteed to find something interesting.

How did you manage with the money?

Compared to other European countries life in Greece is not particularly expensive, on the contrary. Public transport is very cheap, a single ticket for all buses and Metro (except for going to the airport) for 90 minutes is just 1,20€. Groceries are rather cheap as well, I often times paid way less than what I anticipated. Also taxis cost only a fraction of what they would cost in Germany. The only thing I have found to be more expensive than in Germany were alcoholic beverages. Rent is not very expensive either, especially considering the fact that it is the country's capital. I paid a monthly rent of 330€ for a 16 square-

meter room Kallithea, electricity, AC, water and internet included in a flat shared with 2 other Erasmus-Students. I do recommend either working while you are there or saving up beforehand (as I did), but in general getting by financially in Athens is not a hard thing to do. Most places allow electronic payment as well as cash.

Is there anything else you would like to share? (e.g. anecdotes, criticism, etc.)

If you are going to spend the winter-semester in Athens do not be fooled by the warm weather in October. Eventually it will get rather cold, comparable to fall in Germany, just not as humid. So pack shorts for your first few weeks but also sweaters and a warm jacket.

Unfortunately at least half my semester was spent in quarantine due to Covid, all the things I described above about exploring town etc. Happened in October, since the 6th of November until at least the 11th of January the whole Attica-region has been in strict lockdown. This means that you're only allowed to leave the house for necessary things that are put into different categories and (provided you have a Greek sim-card) send a text with information about when, why and to where you leave the house to a government-number or carry a paper with those infos with you and wear a mask whenever you leave the house and not leave your part of town. Breaking those rules is punishable with a 300€-fine. So I spent a big part of my semester locked in my apartment. Athens is a wonderful city and in just one month I had many great moments, I just wished I would have had more time to explore it properly.

Unfortunately I can not add any pictures to this report as all the pictures I have were taken with others. What I can say is that Athens is just as beautiful as the pictures online suggest, especially Plaka.

3. Photos

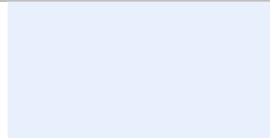
Finally, you can upload photos here, which visualize/imagine your stay abroad well. If necessary, add a description. The following reflection questions can help you choose an appropriate photo:

- Does the photo possibly reinforce prejudices or stereotypes about the country?
- Do you have the consensual consent of the persons depicted in the photos?
- "A picture is worth a thousand words!" What does your picture say about the country and your semester abroad?

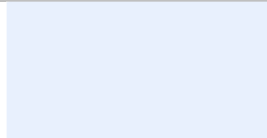
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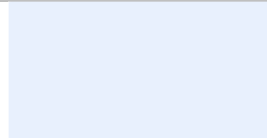
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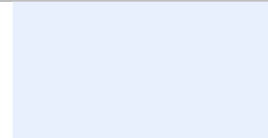
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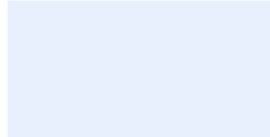
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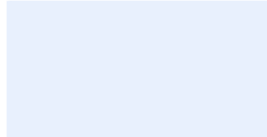
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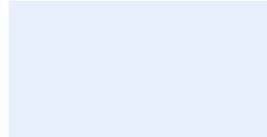
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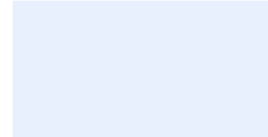
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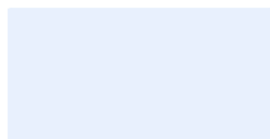
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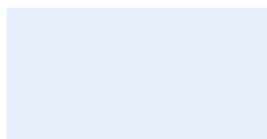
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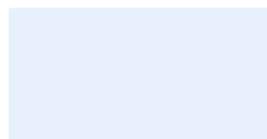
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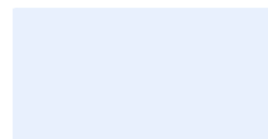
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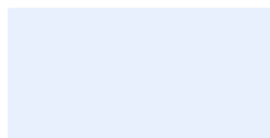
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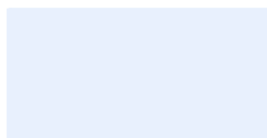
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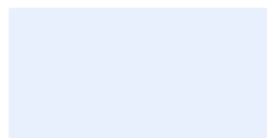
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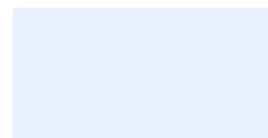
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Many thanks for your assistance!