

ERASMUS OPENS MANY DOORS TO YOU

TWO SUCCESSFUL ERASMUS+ STORIES FROM KOSOVO

"Erasmus can be a life-changing experience for many students. Certainly it was for me. It helped shaping my future and preparing me for international career. Also by traveling in a lot of countries, learning new culture and languages of others and discovering new habits in a different society assisted me in re-educating myself, changing attitudes and opinions. Now, Lisboa, the capital of Portugal, is my second home. Through Erasmus, I feel more motivated and inspired. I made friends that will be there for me all my life. Once you return to your country, you won't be the same person bearing the same thoughts; this is what it means to be in Erasmus: you advance in every level" says Gentian Retkoceri excitedly.

Gentian Retkoceri participated in Erasmus Program as an exchange student. He left Pristina in order to study in Lisbon for six months at "Nova ims - Universidade nova de Lisboa" pursuing a Bachelor degree in Management Information Systems. Like him, a lot of students from Kosovo have benefited from Erasmus program. Gentian is the perfect example of how good education and good teaching practices can strengthen a human character.

"When I came back to Kosovo, I started searching for job opportunities. I was accepted at a telecommunication company as a Business Intelligence Analyst. They took in consideration my Erasmus and all my certificates gained during that time. Now I am a regular employee in one of the biggest companies in Kosovo and I feel very proud to have the possibility to work. The company helped me a lot by creating a space where I can share my knowledge, develop new ideas, be productive and improve my skills. I benefited a lot from Erasmus. You realise that as soon as you start working: Erasmus opens many doors for you, It helps you get connected with people from all over the world" admits Gentian.

Gentian feels sceptical about his personal feelings towards education in Kosovo. "Kosovo has to do more regarding education, specifically on schools' curriculum and teaching methods, which are quite old and not been updated for a long time. From 1 to 10, I would give a 5 to the education in Kosovo. A lot of universities have started to replace the old methods of teaching by giving us more on the practical side, especially private universities. As an improvement, I clearly would say there is a need to train and advance old-fashion style of teaching, giving more space to share ideas, working more on preparing students for the future, creating labs, providing us with latest and sophisticated tools and creating students community."

Kosovo has been a partner of Erasmus+ since 2015 through its Kosovo Erasmus+ Office in Pristina, and its branch office in North Mitrovica. Kosovo today can take advantage of four Erasmus+ components: International Credit Mobility of students and academic staff; scholarships for Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters; capacity building and "Jean Monnet" activities to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of EU studies worldwide.

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CAPACITY BUILDING AND "JEAN MONNET" ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF EU STUDIES WORLDWIDE



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Dunja Veljković is another Erasmus example of a successful story. A third year student of Faculty of Arts in North Mitrovica, she attended the winter term (September 2017 - February 2018) within the Erasmus+ programme at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia.

She has now returned from her exchange and was kindly asked to share her experiences at Erasmus+ Info Day in North Mitrovica, on the 23rd of May this year.

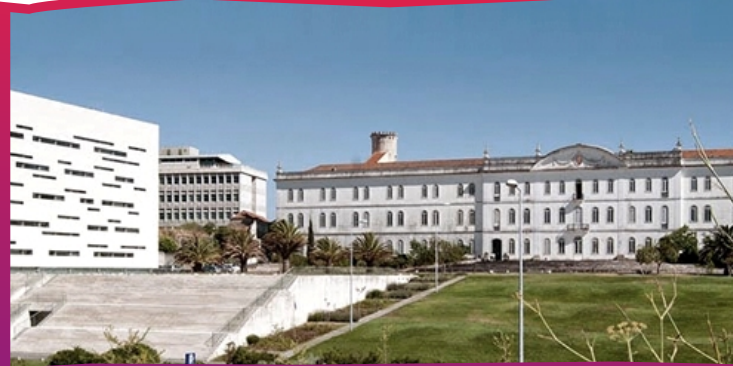
"My fondest memories from the Erasmus+ experience in Bratislava have to do with the people I met, the new things related to profession that I learned and of course the travels that I made. Studying in another European country influenced my personal and professional development as well. I was pretty insecure before leaving Kosovo. I thought that I was not ready for such a big step in my life. Not being able to rely on anyone but myself was a sure sign that I can accomplish everything on my own" Dunja Veljković states.

Dunja chose Slovakia because this country is well known for its graphics making tradition. "The work in Slovakia is concept-based, something that is still being set aside here in Kosovo. At the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava the focus is on talking about what is to be done. These are the biggest differences comparing to Kosovo, where everything is oriented about the work that you have to deliver."

Her colleagues in Slovakia found it very interesting that Dunja came from the Balkans and through European Union help she became part of the big Erasmus+ family.

"I keep a lot of good moments from this experience, mostly studying together with other Erasmus students in Bratislava. At the beginning in Bratislava it took us all Erasmus students some time to feel relaxed. Soon, not knowing a lot about the countries the other students were coming from made our studies even more exciting. We were spending every night together chatting about our traditions and habits, making comparisons between cultures and taking conclusions about our own countries. At the end of the programme, many of my co-students made plans to visit the Balkans."

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