

Lithuania

I learned about the opportunity to go to study at Utena College within the Erasmus+ programme from the management of the College of Law. After some thought, I decided to agree. At the beginning of 2016, I already went to get acquainted with Lithuanian lecturers, who told about the course of studies and introduced the study courses to be acquired. The college had a pleasant atmosphere, the lecturers were kind and welcoming, so it was clear from the very beginning that the studies would definitely trigger positive emotions and, of course, give the most important thing – valuable knowledge and experience. During the Erasmus+ programme in Lithuania, I had classroom instruction, as well as regularly contacted the lecturers by e-mail. They always provided tutorials and real help to foreign students in their study courses. All in all, I would like to say a big thank to them. Within three months, I passed all the examinations and returned to Latvia to study at the College of Law. All in all, the Erasmus+ programme was a really valuable experience and if you are in doubt about whether to take this opportunity, I can safely say that it is worth it, and refreshing a foreign language (English or Russian) is never a bad thing.

Roberts Urdziņš

Italy



At the beginning of my studies, I did not think about internship in any way. It seemed that there would be enough time for that. When I had to choose an internship place and my classmates were already looking for the most suitable company in Latvia, I remembered my teenage dream – Italy with its history, culture, and people. I realised that I could do it – try something new, in another country, with the help of Erasmus+ project. The next step was to find a company that would provide job opportunities. Considering different options on the Internet, I chose the offer of AMFI International. All that was left was to conclude a tripartite

agreement. I may have found something else, but the cooperation with this company was good. When I arrived in Italy on the evening of 14 March, the feeling of getting off the plane was quite strange – I was alone in a country where I did not know anyone, and I did not speak Italian. The excitement was also relatively great, as from Rome I had to get to Avecano. In addition, I had missed the letter from AMFI International, in which I was sent a bus ticket. I finally managed to call my contact person at the company from a phone of a helpful Italian. In Avecano, at the bus station Giovani – one of the directors of AMFI – was already waiting for me. He then took me to the nearby town of Celano, which was also the destination of the trip. The town was small, it did not take long to get to know it. There was an ancient castle in the centre, and I took the opportunity to see it in more detail for two euro. The house, which was offered to me during my internship, turned out to be freshly renovated with all the necessary amenities, except for the Internet. I did not like the idea of living alone in this house. The next day I went to the office of AMFI International, met with the administration, got acquainted with the employees, and received all the necessary information. Already at this first meeting, when signing the agreement on the rules at the place of residence, I informed the AMFI administration that an internet connection was needed at the place of residence, and I did not want to live alone. Three days later, I was offered to move to another house where four people already lived. In terms of amenities, the new place of residence turned out to be not so good, but there was everything necessary, including the opportunity to contact like-minded people, use the Internet, which interested me more than an empty house. So, on the fourth day of practice I moved to the new dwelling. A girl from Spain lived next door who, like me, was undertaking internship at AMFI International. Three other girls from Finland lived on the second floor. In Celano, spent two weeks, during which I also attended the Italian language courses. After passing the language examination, I moved to the nearby town of Avecano. This place was once a big lake, then the water was drained from it by means of tunnels. Today, Avecano is famous for its potatoes. Here, potato fields occupy a large part of the area of the former lake. In Avecano I stayed in a spacious and well-equipped apartment in the very centre of the city, where two Spaniards lived next door. The city itself was bigger than my previous internship place in Celano, so the public life in it turned out to be much more active. During the internship, working as an assistant to both a lawyer and a mediator, I gained the best work experience. I got a lot of positive emotions at work, meeting people, going on excursions, visiting different Italian cities, going to the mountains. Every day something new happened and did not develop into a routine. There were also curiosities. I remember the evening when a new tenant from Spain moved in next door. At that time, the electricity disappeared throughout the apartment, the emergency light in each room immediately turned on, so I had to sleep in the room for two nights with emergency lighting switched on. We informed AMFI employees about it in the morning. It turned out that the company that supplied the electricity had not received a transfer of money from AMFI, although AMFI claimed that the money had been paid. But for us, the students living in this apartment, it was the problem because the food in the refrigerator spoiled, the water in the shower was cold, and so on. Personally, I think that a cold shower in the morning is a good way to wake up. The Spanish student and I had already found another apartment during three days and wanted to terminate the contract, but the AMFI staff was already waiting for us in the apartment after work, agreed to compensate the losses, so we stayed there, because one of the nicest places in this house was the roof, from which an indescribable view opened. I have several favourite cities – Siena and Rome are remembered for their architecture, which evoked indescribable emotions, but in Pescara, a large seaside resort, I spent a couple of weekends, because this city, like Rome, was relatively close – only an hour's drive from Avecano by car. I also visited other settlements,

such as the town of L'Aquila, where the 2008 earthquake destroyed most of it. Eight years have already passed, but the historic centre is more like a ghost town, with repairs going on everywhere, which will definitely continue for a few more years. Unfortunately, I did not visit Florence, Venice and other gems of Italian culture this time, but one of the things we learn when we are abroad and with limited resources is that we have to consider priorities and give up something. I promised myself that I would definitely return to Italy. Four months ran fast in this southern country, in the end I did not long for home as much as it was at the beginning of the internship. I had already met my colleagues working in the court, we went to lunch and dinner together. Often, after trials or in the meantime, we spent time in a bar opposite the courthouse. Bars in Italy are an integral part of everyday life, people make meetings in them, discuss various topics, and simply enjoy the most delicious coffee in the world. I took part in various events that addressed issues of regional importance, such as the proposal to move the court from Avecano to another city that was a 40-minute drive away. I did not really understand why local young people did not take part in such events. My question as to why this was the case, no one was able to answer, but I myself received praise for being interested in current events. Time passed quickly, and it was time to go home, although I would have liked to stay there. When I got off the plane at Riga airport, I realised that nowhere was as good as at home. It was great feeling, especially to hear the Latvian language all around. I spoke my native language during my internship only when calling relatives and friends in Latvia. In Italy, I spoke English, sometimes also Italian. Italians have a big problem with their knowledge of English, which is why I often had to use my newly acquired Italian language skills, which, of course, improved during this time. Work experience, communication skills, emotions and memories from the time spent during this Erasmus+ project are clearly a positive benefit. If I had the opportunity to go back to the moment when I had to make a choice where to undertake internship, I would make the same decision again. Therefore, I would like to thank the College for such an opportunity, AMFI for the admission and the SPMC organisation that gave the work and experience in my chosen profession.

Toms Kajāns, student of the study programme "Law Science"

Great Britain



I still cannot believe how lucky I am with my Erasmus+ internship. First of all, the place is the island of Guernsey, which is one of the most beautiful gems of the UK crown. Secondly, a circle

of friends and acquaintances who already lived there and positively influenced my choice. Thirdly, the picturesque landscapes of the island and the peculiar way of life of its inhabitants convinced me again and again of the correctness of my intention to explore the island. I arrived at the internship place in April. The annual tourist boom had just begun, so there were ample job opportunities. I started working at the local jewellery store Guernsey Pearl, which specialised in making pearl jewellery. Work was responsible but enjoyable. The circle of customers – tourists, but also among the locals, the store has earned widespread recognition. During this time, I learned jewellery making skills; colleagues were responsive and I learned the job quickly. Here I met people from different parts of the world, and I also improved my English language skills. I learned something new every day! During the internship, I had the opportunity to learn a lot from my employer and boss: how to act in non-standard situations, how to more properly solve problems, how to communicate with the client. A rule that every business builder must remember – the customer is always right! I also acquired knowledge about contracts and purchase of goods, pricing policy, organisation of store work. The island is just a 45-minute flight from London, but one cannot draw parallels with the UK. There is peace and special slowness on the island of Guernsey; people do not rush anywhere, there is no bustle of people every day. The island has its own government, currency and highly demanded locally produced food. Feelings could be described as going back in the past in a time machine, because people still travel with their horses in some places on the streets, there are “trust boxes” near private houses, where the owners put up their garden crops and various belongings for sale. The islanders are kind, greet everybody, including strangers, apologise or every step and try to live in a friendly way as one big family. I spent my internship at the epicentre of the island’s events. I settled in St. Peter Port, where I shared the living room with another student. We became very good friends. The island of Guernsey is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. It covers an area of 65 square kilometres, which means that the journey to the island’s border takes 20 minutes. Breakfast by the ocean, fabulous beach and a great vacation are guaranteed here! I also spent my free time by the ocean, where I learned to surf. Although Guernsey is by no means popular among students, I believe that I have gained a lot of practical experience and positive emotions!

Madara Stikāne, student of the study programme “Business Studies”

Finland (Michael Perander individual company)

My ERASMUS internship took place in the Finnish autonomous islands of Åland from 1 June to 30 September 2014, in one of the country’s most popular and recognised areas – the apple growing sector. The internship place was with Michael Perander, who is a free apple grower, one of the members of the cooperative “Granlids”. This internship gave me a great opportunity not only to develop personnel management skills, but also to get to know new people, culture and traditions, make new friends, get to know the Åland archipelago, autonomy management system, Finnish labour and tax policy, gain knowledge of the apple market in Finland, and improve my English language skills and learn Swedish. I was given a great opportunity not only to learn, but also to make changes and improvements in Michael’s relationship with the staff. During the internship, I dealt with staffing issues, assisting Michael in correspondence with staff, creating staff files, documentation, setting up a staff lunch house (previously there was not such), helping to organise the selection and arrival of seasonal staff, their settling in, creating tax cards and signing contracts. At Perander company, I also

developed several questionnaires about the staff's attitude towards work, desired motivational measures, wishes and satisfaction level. I proposed and helped create one element of quality control – the labelling of apple boxes, thus improving the motivation of employees to work better. A working time check-in system has been set up and is currently operating in a testing mode, which helps the employer to control the arrival and departure of employees. I witnessed an accident at work, provided first aid and, as the accident did not cause serious consequences, I took the injured employee to the hospital myself, paid for the medical service, and filled in and sent the employee's accident report to the labour inspectorate. During the internship I also visited and gained experience at the company Daniels Frukt. The company grows apples and pears, and its staff tends to reach dozens of people during the season. It was valuable to visit this company, because it takes special care of employees' convenience even outside working hours. After the visit, I proposed setting up a wireless internet connection in the rest and living areas of the employees, as well as to take over Daniels Frukt working time and break schedule, which was very efficient and self-disciplined. The internship at the Åland apple orchard with Michael Perander gave me the confidence that any case at work could be resolved through discussion, listening, immediate and safe response to events, helping in any situation, even if it was not my direct responsibility, as well as a spirit of friendship and solidarity when employees worked as a team, helping each other achieve a goal. Michael Perander is a unique person and a

responsible boss who taught me things like work efficiency, the ability to listen to well-expressed criticism and correct one's actions, the ability to change one's mind if it was wrong, the responsibility for any one's actions, including inaction, and the ability to look at things with a slow mind, thought, and



sometimes with humour. I think that the ERASMUS internship should be used in any case, because it is a unique opportunity not only to test the theory taught in practice, but also to get to know other cultures and traditions of the work, and not only that. It is this circumstance that is unique, as it makes it possible to change existing thinking, to make it more flexible and open to the unknown. The acquired knowledge and experience will be a good capital when starting an employment relationship in Latvia or another country. Thank you ERASMUS for that!

ZANE BRENCĒ, student of the study programme "Human Resource Management"

Ireland (Swaine Solicitors)

14 April 2014 – start date of my internship. April is the month when everyone in Swaine Solicitors law office gets stuck, as at the start of the new year, people come in February and March with their applications for cases they want to resolve. One of the fields of this law firm is family law: divorce, marriage contracts, etc. The courts did not take place because it was the week before the holiday, but on the first day, when I arrived at the office, I was seated at the reception to understand the system, how they work. The first week was very short for me, but I was very tired. The office employs three lawyers, an accountant in charge of the website and computer systems, then two other employees at the reception who work shifts. They work according to a court based system, which has a section with diaries of all lawyers, appointments, court dates, times, participants, etc., as well as information of all clients and specific cases. There is a pile of documents next to each file because all incoming, outgoing letters are scanned, absolutely everything. The law firm specialises more in larger cases. There are three types of courts in Ireland: the district court, where the amount of the claim is up to 1000 EUR; the circuit court, where the amounts are already more than 1000 EUR, and then there is the high court, where the amounts are already very large. So if you sue, for example, a husband for the recovery of alimony payments, then the case will be heard in a district court. Swaine Solicitors handles cases that are heard in a circuit court or high court, so each of the case folders consists of several thousand documents. Of course, all information is also stored in the system. Once the cases have been reviewed and cash cheques have been received from companies (for example, from an insurance company, if the case is about a traffic accident), then the money has to go to the customer's account, so I had to go to the bank almost every day to present cheques. The cases were very different, but I think one of the most psychologically difficult things is those related to family law. Personally, I really enjoyed the study course "Family Law", but talking to the lawyers, I understood why it was so emotionally difficult to be involved in it all. The first week of internship passed very quickly and with positive emotions, but I realised that the work was very difficult and responsible. In the coming weeks, I had to get more and more involved in all things. I participated in client consultations, wrote letters, went to the courthouse to submit all the necessary documents, as well as participated in the court proceedings. During these four months, I gained more confidence in myself and my decisions, because very often lawyers asked me for my thoughts, what I would say on a particular issue, how I would deal with it, and so on. I had access to legal literature, so I could go into specific cases, as soon as something was unclear; books and lawyers always helped. If I had the opportunity, I would have liked to use a longer internship. But I must say that these months were also memorable and very, very valuable!

BAIBA VĀRSBERGA, student of the study programme "Law Science"

Ireland

Already studying at Riga Secondary Business School, I used every free time to go to Ireland and earn pocket money from people I had already known. Despite the fact that the majority of the public has developed a stereotype about workers in Ireland – whether they are mushroom pickers, construction workers or factory workers on a conveyor belt, my experience of working in Ireland was different. It is clear that no one "will put anything in your hands for doing nothing", and it takes time, hard work and determination to achieve

something in another country. After graduating from Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, I moved to the Irish city of Limerick for permanent residence. I studied English extensively and obtained a certificate as an English language teacher of a pre-school institution. Thanks to my knowledge of Russian and sufficient level of English, I got a job in Garda (Irish Police) as an English-Latvian, English-Russian interpreter and participated as an interpreter in court hearings, police stations and elsewhere, as needed. When I had enriched my knowledge and experience, but at the same time exhausted my opportunities in this job, at some point I decided to return to Latvia, but it was not the most successful decision. Therefore, I decided to use this time usefully and started studying real estate management and administration at the College of Law, at the same time looking for a job in Ireland in this field. Taking into account that I informed a potential employer in a job interview that I had started studies whose field and diploma were internationally recognised, I was hired as a real estate administrator at the company. Over time, gaining knowledge and practical experience as a management assistant, my goals became larger – not just job retention. After graduating from the College of Law and submitting my diploma to the relevant institutions, I automatically obtained an Irish certificate, which allowed me to work as a certified real estate manager, where my duties were as follows:

- To act as the main contact point for resolving various issues related to tenants and business in the client portfolio.
- To review tenant requests and maintain work/coordinate block management requirements.
- To communicate with tenants, landlords, third party contractors and relevant committees.
- To manage rental income, ensure timely payment of rent, and take appropriate action if necessary.
- To check bank statements with incoming payments.
- To plan and monitor annual service budgets and allocation.
- To coordinate equipment management, including planned preventive and reactive maintenance.
- To participate in assigned court hearings.
- To update property schedules for monthly reports.
- To draw up tenant agreements and organise the signing process, etc.

Given that I turned out to be the only employee with such a certificate and authority at the company (before that the company outsourced such a certified specialist), I gained priority – the company, thanks to me, saved significant money on outsourcing, as well as gained a loyal and educated employee, after which I obtained a promotion, salary supplement and recognition from the employer. Hard work and our choices at the right time and in the right place pay off. Also – believe in your dreams and try to achieve the set goals, using all your strength and opportunities.

Jānis Beide (Student of the study programme “Real Estate Management and Administration”

Ireland

My Erasmus+ internship took place in Dublin, Ireland. The road to the internship was not as easy as I imagined, because in total I had applied to 12 different companies, mostly without even receiving any answer. I accidentally noticed AIAEM Internship in ads placed on Google search engine (no matter how amusing it may seem). When contacting this company, they immediately hired me for an internship. In total, the duration of the internship was two months from 15 June to 15 August. AIAEM Internship offers students an internship in Europe, with extensive experience in various European educational projects. The company's office is located in one of Ireland's most prestigious colleges, Trinity College, founded in 1952 by Queen Elizabeth I. Faced with the current pandemic in the world and travel restrictions in Ireland, part of the internship took place online, where the level of responsibility and

independence was very high. Unfortunately, due to the closure of all education institutions in Ireland, I was not able to enter the premises of the College, but the company set up separate office premises for such cases. In my internship assignments, I had to deal with anti-money laundering and countering terrorism and proliferation financing laws in different countries, as well as widely apply European Union directives. Above all, I had to find suspicious financial transactions by making appropriate assessment in case of money laundering; to perform a report analysis, etc. Overall, I valued my internship very well, as I gained new knowledge of European law as well as improved my English language skills. I also received praise for evaluating my work on a professional level. The photo shows Elio (on the right) who works as a data protection specialist at the company. I think it would be useful to encourage students to find an internship abroad based on their future career goals. Also, it is not always necessary to stick to what is considered to be the “ideal” place of internship, but to seize every opportunity, as it can prove to be very useful for your future career process. Erasmus+ internship should be seen as an opportunity to travel to other countries, get to know their culture and “get out” of one’s comfort zone. I greatly appreciate the opportunity provided by the College and would definitely recommend it to others.

Artis Kauliņš, student of the study programme “Law Science”

Denmark



(Crossing Borders) I learned about the studies and internships offered by the Erasmus programme already at secondary school and at that time I thought that I would definitely use this opportunity during my studies. So, thanks to my College of Law, I undertook ERASMUS internship in Denmark this year. The road here was far from easy. It took exactly six months before I finally received the contracts signed from the internship place. From the very beginning, I was very interested in the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), because I had experience in this field in Latvia, so I decided to improve my knowledge right in

this field. I am excited not only about the variety of fields they represent, but most of all about the people who work in NGOs. Many are volunteers, for many it is extra work for fun, but all of them are immeasurably passionate about what they are doing. Every day I spent in the office of Crossing Borders, where I was a project assistant and helped project coordinators implement their plans. The “Democracy in Action” project, which involved young people from Hungary and Denmark, took place in August. At the end of August, the Hungarians arrived for training, and during the week, young people from both countries learned about democracy, found out with practical examples the differences between Denmark and Hungary, the pros and cons, and how to create campaigns. It was also their task for the near future to set up an event or campaign that would express their views on one of the problems in their country. At the end of the week, a debate was held with both young people themselves and representatives of youth political parties. For me, this was a great experience in organising international projects. One of my largest tasks during the internships was an event – Global Day – organised by Crossing Borders at Kokkedal School. Throughout the day, 400 young people were given various presentations, films and exercises on issues affecting young people around the world. I represented the Eastern European region and discussed with the young people the current situation in Ukraine, as well as the current problems in the former USSR countries. It was interesting to hear their opinions as well as to share my thoughts. I was very happy to be a part of it all. When I came to Denmark, I did not experience a big culture shock. Of course, some stress was and still is, because differences in living standards are obvious. Moreover, it is clear how many people have come here because of the standard of living in Denmark; you can meet many people from different cultures on the streets. I am also excited about the infrastructure and the cycle lanes. This is fantastic! There are convenient and safe cycle lanes everywhere. Looking back on the ERASMUS internship period, I conclude that I have used it usefully.

KRISTA VASILJEVA, student of the study programme “Law Science”

Bulgaria

My ERASMUS+ internship was in Slivo Pole, Bulgaria from 1 February to 1 June 2016. Location – Bulbioeko Ltd., where we were two students of the College of Law within the framework of ERASMUS+ internship, but since we studied at different study programmes, the tasks of the internship were also different. I worked as an Assistant Personnel Manager. My working hours were from 9.00 to 16.00, I spent most of the day in the office, organising work for staff in factories and participating in product presentations, where a company representative presented products to potential customers. The company is engaged in the production and sale of organic fertilizers. The products are produced in several factories and later sold on the domestic market and exported to other countries. The production process takes place almost continuously, so many workers work in shifts. During the internship, I had a great opportunity to get acquainted with various personnel documents of this company: personal files of employees, orders, work schedules and tables, vacation schedules, etc. I had the opportunity to participate in the development of a survey on employees’ attitude towards work, desired motivational measures, their wishes and satisfaction level. I think that students should use ERASMUS+ internship as much as possible. Of course, in the beginning there is fear, unawareness and excitement, but this experience and the opportunity to get to know other people work, culture, everyday traditions is an invaluable benefit. This is an opportunity where

the student can test the theory in practice. The experience gained in Bulgaria is very valuable and I think it will be useful in later life and work.

Larsens Pulturs, student of the study programme "Human Resource Management"

The choice of a country for my ERASMUS+ internship was mainly due to the fact that several of my acquaintances worked and lived here, who also helped me find an internship place. I am studying at the programme "Real Estate Management and Administration"; therefore, I chose as an internship place the real estate company Constructio International GmbH in Germany, which deals with construction works, focusing mainly on the construction and management of residential houses. Finding a place to live did not cause me any difficulties – I rented a room in a private house, which I also found through acquaintances. The work regime was very intensive, I worked full time like the other employees. One thing that surprised here was how much employers respected working hours, they did not allow employees to finish the work they started, if it was after the set working hours. During the internship, I was involved as an assistant, assistant construction foreman, so my direct responsibilities were very wide, starting with the accounting and control of working time; I had to pay special attention to how employees comply with work safety requirements, i.e., with regard to clothing, personal protective equipment, observance of personal safety during work, etc. As an avid fisherman, I devoted practically all my free time to my hobby.

Ilvars Šmits, student of the study programme "Real Estate Management and Administration"