

Erasmus exchange semester in Bucharest, Romania

Exchange period: from 07 February 2021 to 25 June 2021

Exchange context

I went for an Erasmus exchange to Romania and had the chance to study in Bucharest, the capital of the country. Initially studying in an engineering school in France, I was able to deepen my engineering course in the Polytechnic University Polytechnic of Bucharest (UPB) within the FIIR unit (Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Robotics).

Life in Bucharest

Life in Bucharest is very nice. By staying during the period of February to June 2021, we could discover the different climates of Romania. Indeed, when we arrived, the weather was very cold: between -5°C and 0°C . Nevertheless, Bucharest is a very sunny city which makes it very pleasant to live. From April onwards, the temperatures are rising, and meetings in the parks have multiplied. The Erasmus community is very large, we were between 400 and 500 Erasmus students. There are many different nationalities with a European dominance: Italians, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Greeks, Germans, Lithuanians, Turks...

The local food is quite diversified and the city offers cuisines from all over the world, which ensures a very wide prism of choice. Romanian food focuses mainly on vegetables such as potatoes and cabbage, and meat is cooked in water. For Romanian specialties, the ideal restaurant is Caru cu Bere (the oldest restaurant in Bucharest).

Romania is a very religious country (89% of Romanians considered themselves as practising Orthodox), so there are certain religious holidays that are celebrated by all Romanians. It is very nice to discover the tradition of painted eggs during the orthodox Easter for example.

Most Romanians have a good level of English, which makes it easy to communicate. In addition, the Romanian language has Latin origins and is easily understood and similar to French.

The whole country is very rich to visit: from the ski resorts in Brasov and Sinaia, to the big cities of Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara or the coastline of Constanta, there is plenty to do on an Erasmus exchange!



Figure 2 : Peles Castle in Sinaia

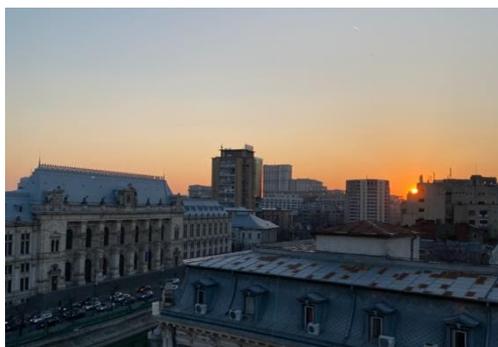


Figure 1 : A sunset in Old Town



Figure 5 : Ateneul in Piata Victoriei



Figure 4 : Carturesti, a beautiful bookshop

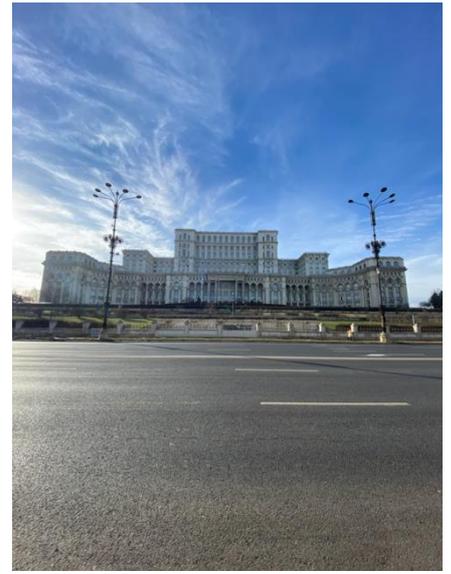


Figure 3 : Palace of Parliament

An Erasmus in the COVID period

In the middle of the COVID period, the Erasmus experience was slightly different. Indeed, restrictions limited exchanges between Erasmus students and it was more complicated to travel to neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, I consider Bucharest to be one of the best destinations in this period because, in contrast to other European countries, there was no lockdown and the curfew was relatively late. We were also able to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in the same way as Romanian citizens.

Our studies in UPB

We studied in the FIIR section of the Polytechnic University of Bucharest. Our courses were concentrated in 7 weeks and were followed by a project. The whole course was varied and divided into three formats: lectures, laboratories and projects. All the teachers encouraged group work on different assignments to stimulate exchanges. All the courses were given in English and the language level of the lecturers was impeccable. We had the chance to exchange quickly in French with some teachers.

The three courses we took over the seven condensed weeks were:

- Quality Assurance
- Technology Strategy
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation

All courses were held at a distance due to the pandemic situation this year. We work exclusively on *Moodle* and *Teams*, and all the tools were very well mastered by the lecturers, the teaching staff and the students: the technical time lost during the courses was therefore minimal.

We regret, however, that we did not have access to the campus, which seems to be well equipped, and that we did not have more contact with the other students of FIIR and UPB

more generally. Indeed, the restrictions have clearly reduced the number of events within the university.

The Graduate Project

After our period of studying the three subjects explained in the last paragraph, we had to complete a graduate project. Initially planned for fourth-year students, we were able to discuss with our coordinator Irina Severin, to adapt it to our studies. We were able to deepen a project we've been working on during our fourth year in France. We used the concepts we're been studying in the three subjects we discovered just before and it was very interesting to apply them concretely to a problem that we knew.

We've been working in autonomy during 7 weeks, and we had some one-off appointments, it allowed us to define our objectives and deadlines. We were working us 6, and we chose to divide the work between us. When we finally presented our work, it was very rewarding to see how we manage to create a lot of work and information when we've been given as much freedom on the subject as possible. It was probably the most stimulating part of our studies in UPB. I strongly recommend this graduate project because you can learn on a subject, on your team and on yourself !

Us six



Here is a picture of us six. From left to right : Louise, Paul, Clémence, Anatole, Thomas and Eliot during a trip in Cluj-Napoca.

If you have further questions on UPB, Bucharest or anything else, feel comfortable to contact us on these addresses :

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