Erasmus student at the University

Hola Erasmus!

The number of Erasmus students coming to Győr increases yearly. All the students unanimously agree that on this European exchange programme our city and Széchenyi István University have made a name for themselves. The Spanish and Italian students who have been here since the autumn had this to say on the whys and the wherefores, and they also shared their different experiences.

Daniel Llamazares Gallego, Leon Castillo Guillermo, Alberto Prieto Montiel, Diego Sancho Lopez and Fabijan Batalli arrived in Győr almost a year ago now and it’s not hard to spot those typical Erasmus student traits. They’re all open to new people, ideas and situations, and they travel, study and have fun. You might ask yourself why they chose Hungary. They were looking for an English speaking area, which they could use as a base and get to know the surrounding countries. The latter aim has been so successful that already in the first half year spent in Győr they visited Serbia, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, and of course other parts of Hungary.

They all agreed that Hungarians are friendly, but very reserved. Still the strangest thing for them is that in the evenings the streets are empty and the towns are quiet, when at the same time at home in Spain life is just beginning and people are getting together. It’s because of this contrast that they tend to view our nation as somewhat cold. However, when I asked them about the beauty of the Hungarian girls they all had grins from ear to ear. When speaking with five men then of course there are certain subjects that you just can’t avoid, so the conversation inevitably turned to sport and cuisine. They were all positive about Hungarian food and were all happy to recall stories of when they first tried goulash soup, fried dough, chimney cake and pancakes. They’ve not really bothered with cooking here much, the reason for this being that compared to Italy and Spain it’s so cheap to eat out here that they'd rather go to restaurants and try the Hungarian specialities on offer.

The five of them particularly like the style of education here, partly because for Erasmus students certain subjects are a bit more relaxed and also because at Széchenyi István University they acquire additional knowledge that will be useful later on in their professions. This goes beyond the obvious fact that study experience abroad will always look good on your CV. Local university students also advise that you have to „dare to take the next step”. For them the Erasmus program is an experience of a lifetime and it helps them to get to know themselves better.

They all see their futures in a different way. When I asked them about their immediate plans they straight away started listing all the voluntary work placements and industrial work placements they are looking for. However, when we started discussing actual jobs the picture is much more complex. Post - financial crisis unemployment is tangible in Spain and Italy, which makes it practically impossible for young people to find jobs. The process works exactly like in Hungary; those young people with the appropriate language skills find work abroad and while until recently there were many immigrant workers from South- and Latin America the work flow
nowadays is the other way round. It’s exactly for this reason that the Erasmus program is much more than just an option to study abroad for half year or so. The wide range of professional skills, acquired knowledge and increased self-confidence helps in your search for a job, added to the fact that this international program is today a well organised process with a good reputation.

(Széchenyi Magazin, Winkler A. 2014)