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Why am I afraid of going abroad?



I love to travel and I like meeting new people, but I have never thought something like the story I am going to share would have ever happened to me.

I was travelling by car between Kosice and Presov, two of the largest cities in Slovakia. Suddenly, I heard a strange noise under the car, so I stopped in a petrol station. The car did not work anymore.

This was scary. I was in a foreign country, 2000 KM from home, I did not know about any car service station and everything was against me. But there is always a but..

Three weeks before this incident, I was in an Erasmus+ project where I met Marty from Slovakia. I have sent him a message and found out that he lived 10km from the place the car did not want to move. He was so helpful, kind and connected to the problem, that we solved the issue in around a day.

Travelling in a foreign country can be difficult for everyone, even more difficult if you are going to study abroad. You step in a different



environnement, an environnement that you don't know. But, the good thing is that you will always find people like you. You will always find a person that will understand, help and love you.

Why is it important to understand the values of people in the EU?

If there is one message I would underline, is the one that people are different. Different does not mean bad. Every person has his own experiences, values or informations. Let's start accepting what other people value, so we can make friends and perform in our personal and professional lives.

How to see yourself in this environment?

If you want to understand yourself and others, responsibility is crucial. Be responsible about everything. If you want to study in Denmark, go and find more about the social behavior and reasons why they value different things than you.

What are the values of the EU?

The EU shares a set of value, that are important when deciding of accepting or not another country in the community. If you study there, I am sure that you share at least 80% of these values:

You respect human rights and human dignity.

You value freedom.

You like the democratic system.

You want equality for everyone.

You respect the rule of law

But there is always a but...

I feel bad to respond to a question that you can see everywhere nowadays. *“Are the same values shared everywhere by everyone in the EU?”* No, they are not shared by 100% of the population. Most of countries still have scars from the communist period and old people have different people.

The good thing is that we see changes. We live in the most awesome period in the history of the world. About 100 years ago, education was available only for rich people, but now it is more easy to get. 100 years ago we had no airplanes or water.

And you can study in awesome places, meet awesome people, travel the world and build an amazing career or company.

Everything starts taking responsibility for having good strong values. Let's respect each other. Let's value freedom. Let's accept democracy. Let's be equal. Let's respect the rule of law.

Veronel



Things to consider before you move to another country

I always loved travelling and studying abroad. My first long-term journey began in 2008 when I won an Erasmus scholarship in Krakow for a semester. Earlier I had only smaller holidays in different countries. I was so excited to move into another country and live there for a time, I can not express my feelings in words. Till now I have already lived in Germany and Turkey as well, and now I am sharing my experiences with you from London.



Let's go back to my polish journey. I had some information about Poland from my studies due to that fact I studied international relationships at the uni and I had already been in Krakow once before but after getting this great opportunity I started to search for more information about the country.

I am hungarian, and I am aware of the difficulties of our beautiful language but I did not expected that polish language would be more difficult than my mother language. I just immadietly bought a small dictionary, because living in another country where English is not the official language, and you even not know, how to ask for a bread at the supermarket can causes funny situations in the first few weeks.

Communication, language – verbal or non-verbal - is so important, you should really take care of it before moving into another country. I still remember how I got to know my bulgarian friend. We went for visiting a museum one day, and I saw, she was alone and I stepped in front of her with my invitation to join our group not to make the tour alone but she just replied to me an answer No. I was a little bit surprised but I only thought maybe she did not like us, or I was just simply scary. But imagine at that night she came to me and she tried to express herself and apologize because she did not understand what I asked from her because she only knew one or two words in English. That was a beginning of our beautiful freindship.

And if you are already in that other country, get out of your comfort zone....meet local people, participate in events, discover the countryside, try national dishes, enjoy the cultural diversity. Being open-minded and open for the world is going to change of the way of your thinking. But never forget you are in another country and you should respect for that nation's own values. I still remember those

times I spent in Turkey for half a year. I am roman catholic and I practice my own religion, so on Sundays I attended at churches' messes in Turkey. One Sunday I visited Saint Mary's house near Efesus which is a sanctual place and it was amazing for me to see how christians, muslims people can pray together at one place.

Travelling to and living in another country is absolutely exciting and amazing in another hand but it can be hard as well in the same time. Never forget to check the rules of that country, be aware of their traditions, custom, habits. You should take care about your passport, ID card, all of your different documents, tickets, lagguauges before your travel, and sure, never forget to have enough money in your packet. These are as important, as your attitude is in a different country. My only advice is to you: be open for the world around you, because it is as colourful as an rainbow is. It is just waiting for you to discover it.



Customs and traditions. How strong are they?



Hi, Eni. Can you tell a few things about you?

Hi Vero. I am Eniko from Hungary, and after our Erasmus+ training course in London I am going to start to work at a company in Budapest. I live in the capital city. Earlier I studied International Relations and European and International Studies at university. In my free time I love working with children and doing voluntary work.

What was the reason that you moved to Poland for half of year?

I was studying at a College in 2008 and I applied for an Erasmus scholarship in Krakow for half a year. I wanted to continue my international relationship field abroad. I had an amazing half year in Krakow and I got to know awesome people.



What differences have you seen between the traditions and customs?

I am roman catholic and I did not find so big difference between my culture and the polish one. I also took part in catholic messes during Easter time with my mentor and I was invited to his family house as well for spending Easter time together with his family.

Which other countries have you visited?

Turkey. And my nicest experience which connected to religion and customs happened to me in Izmir, Turkey. When I lived there on Sundays I visited church. One Sunday the priest invited me for an Italian-turkish wedding ceremony. Earlier I have already been at Turkish weddings and it was such nice experience how two different people from different cultures and religion can find a middle way, the balance to create their common life and harmonize it. The ceremony was with fulfilled with Italian and Turkish elements and these made this event more special.

What was the reason for your visit in Gdynia?

I participated in an EVS project in Gdynia. I worked at Experyment Centre for children. I organized workshops and events for children and young people who visited the centre. Our team was really well-qualified, and I lived in a flat with Italian, Turkish, and Ukranian people. My colleagues were amazing at my workplace, I have learnt a lot from them. During my EVS time I had possibility to visit Warsawa as well for a



one-week training course. It was my first time when I have heard about Youthpass.

Which would be a great advice you say to a young person who is in front of travelling abroad for studies? How can he or she keep his or her traditions?

My only advice would be: get out of your comfort zone and let's discover the world around you. Life is a life learning process and you should gather experiences to develop and improve yourself. But keep in your mind, you are abroad and you have to respect other nation's religion and customs.

Thanks for sharing your experiences with us.

I thank you for the possibility.



Your religious beliefs abroad

Paul came to from Poland to England 5 years ago. As a young person he was going to the messes in catolic community but it was mainly to fulfil his parents' needs. Nothing about truly religious needs - they just wouldn't look in their neighbours' eyes with an awareness that their only son is atheistic. One hour of standing, sitting, kneeling rituals. In his adolescence he got rid of any connections with the church. He didn't really need it. It didn't fit to his life, didn't help to answer any questions. After graduating and making a degree in management he couldn't find a satisfying job. Together with his fiancée Marta, Paul decided to go to England to work for few years, collect some money and gain international experience.

The reality in England turned out not to be as colourful as it seemed to be. Paul was not very fluent in English and couldn't find satisfying job. For few years he was working as a pizza driver. It was really hard for him to communicate with the locals - cultural differences were not to



overcome. Paul always respected straightforwardness and a direct sense of humour. The only people he communicated with on a personal level were Poles. He found out that in Manchester (the city he lived in) polish community organizes regular meetings every week. They were discussing problems, talked a lot about polish culture and even started to attend the messes in a catholic church. At first Paul was quite sceptical about the latter but then he realized it gives him a lot of positive energy when performing rituals together with other Poles - people that found themselves in the same tough situation on emmigration. Not only it was something that sticked the community together but he also realized that his mindset has changed. He stopped being superficial and started to think about deeper things - sense of life, position of God in the world, questions of birth and death.

It happens quite often. Common rituals, religion, specific culture - that were not really significant before - become to stand as cornerstones for identity of emigrants abroad. It's much stronger when people find themselves in insecure environment, where they are discrimanted on the basis of harmful stereotypes. They build their strength of mass emotions and defend themselves from the hostile daily experiences.

