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Developing New Knowledge and Awareness of EU Social and Corporate Culture by Participating in Erasmus+ Programs

Academic mobility of students, various exchange programs are realia of today's internationalization of Ukrainian higher education. This paper is about experience I have gained while participating in Erasmus+ program as an exchange student.

Erasmus+ is the EU's program to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Set to last until 2020, Erasmus+ doesn't just provide opportunities for students. It has widened its opportunities for a variety of individuals and organizations by merging of seven prior programs. The aim of Erasmus+ is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training.

The possibility to get a grant for this kind of Erasmus+ by students is provided in the form of competition by the International Mobility department of the University I study at and the IT department where I study as a postgraduate student. Erasmus program supplies its participants with funds required for living, accommodation, healthcare etc. It covers all expenses, which you may face when going to another country's university. So, I was a lucky one to win this grant and to experience by myself the value of academic mobility.

According to my Erasmus+ program, I studied at the Koblenz-Landau University of Germany. Exploring German culture and facing the specific features of the country educational system was a great and valuable experience. The main difference of study process in the German University is that it is far less strict than in Ukraine. For example, students are given up to five attempts to write the exam paper, but no matter how many attempts they take, this doesn't prevent them to show high performance and/or limit to get high grades. In their turn, professors strive to fill their courses with the up to date information and technologies required in the market right now and give actual examples of their usage. All these factors give students an inspiration to study that one could not resist, me too. As a result, I have raised my awareness of new fields in IT and the latest innovations in this area that caused my high interest to go deeper into the subjects learnt in Germany, especially Web-science and Machine learning. The experience described proves the effectiveness of international student exchange programs which contribute to obtaining new knowledge in the area of study, raising awareness of the other country social and corporate culture and putting hands on practice of the understanding of the newly learnt and having been constructed in the international environment with the help of peers and professors. From my perspective, the programs like Erasmus+ are of high value for Ukrainian students, because they help young people to educate, connect and get a taste of new environment both social and learning. Otherwise, it is a choice of a person to take this chance or not.