



RURAL YOUTH

Mobility Opportunities



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Introduction



The main objective of the RYMO project consists of creating cross-border opportunities for young people living in disadvantaged areas to improve socio-economic integration through mobility projects. This means increasing possibilities for young adults and social workers living and working in rural or disadvantaged areas, to get informed and trained to experience mobility or to guide people towards it. This project then will involve young people, professionals, and other stakeholders with the objective to give to all the individuals the same possibility to be informed, trained and to allow them to adopt other innovative instruments.

This project is composed of 6 European entities, as follows:

- Association Community , France.
- Bellidée, France.
- Mediterráneo International Erasmus Centre, Spain.
- Association Walk Together, Bulgaria.
- AY Institute, Lithuania.
- Association pour le développement des initiatives citoyennes et Européennes, France.

One of the main activities of this project is the elaboration of an international mobility guide. This guide is innovative and, above all, necessary for young people in rural areas as a training, guide and pedagogical kit. Therefore, it has been essential to consider the specificity related to the situations of young people deriving from the rural environment.

With this in mind, if you are interested in this project, you will be able to find the information you need to go on Erasmus, find the type of mobility that best suits your needs and learn about the options available to you at the local level.

Before your mobility

+ What is an Erasmus project?

The European Commission established the Erasmus programme in 1987 with the purpose of funding global exchange initiatives. Every year, the programme gains more and more popularity, which is understandable. It is the most well-known of the several international student exchange programmes that allow students from all over Europe to experience real living in a foreign country in addition to receiving an education.

One of the parts of the Erasmus project is the different mobility options it offers for young people, which is, in this case, what you may be most interested in as students or young adults.

The Erasmus programme is all about extending horizons, sharing perspectives, learning different languages, and frequently going on a once-in-a-lifetime journey.

Do you wish to experience studying abroad first-hand? Do you want to learn about the cultures that are so like your own yet still so different? Do you want to meet people from other countries?

+ Benefits of an Erasmus Mobility

An international mobility such as those offered by the Erasmus programme will provide you with many valuable tools for your daily life. Here you can see some of those benefits:

- **Improve your language skills.** During your stay abroad you will improve your language skills, as you will have to speak another language for absolutely everything. During your time there, you will put aside your mother tongue to immerse yourself in the culture and language of your destination country. Learning a new language or improving a language you already know will be very useful in the future, both personally and professionally.
 - **Independence and responsibility.** For most students, Erasmus is their first time away from home, away from their environment, away from their comfort zone. This experience will give you a pleasant feeling of independence, but also of responsibility.
 - **It improves career opportunities.** Companies value very positively having been a participant in the Erasmus programme. It gives them confidence in the candidate, as it demonstrates responsibility, ability to adapt to new environments and command of a foreign language.
 - **You will meet a lot of people.** During your stay abroad you will meet students of all nationalities.
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As you can see, this is an experience that, whichever way you look at it, will bring new knowledge into your life, improve your intercultural competences, and make for a completely different experience that you will always remember. However, these benefits are not only linked to an Erasmus mobility; they are common to any mobility experience abroad.

+ What are the options offered by the European Union?

The European Union offers many solutions and options for young people from all over the continent to take up this type of mobility. However, here is a selection of calls for applications or programmes that may be of interest to you.

Erasmus+ program Mobility projects

These kinds of mobility projects are inside the Key Action 1 of the Erasmus+ programs. This action on mobility in higher education supports the physical and combined **mobility** of higher education students **in any field of study and cycle** (short cycle, bachelor, master, and doctoral levels). Students can study abroad at a partner higher education institution or undertake a period of practical training in a company, research institute, laboratory, organisation, or any other relevant workplace abroad. Students may also combine **a study period abroad with a practical training period**, further strengthening the learning outcomes and the development of transversal skills. While long-term physical mobility is strongly encouraged, this Action recognises the need to offer a more flexible duration of physical mobility to ensure that the Programme is accessible to all students, irrespective of their background, circumstances, and fields of study.

To find out more, you can research on this [link](#).

Youth exchanges

Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to meet, live together and work on shared projects for short periods. Youth exchanges take place outside the school environment. On a youth exchange, you can expect to participate in activities such as workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, outdoor activities and more. Youth exchanges last between 5 and 21 days.

After that, participants' learning experiences are recognised through a **Youthpass**.

Conditions for Youth exchanges:

- Open to people between the ages of 13-30 years old.
- To be a group leader in a youth exchange, the minimum age is 18 years old.
- Youth exchanges are managed by youth organisations, [informal groups of young people](#) or other organisations.

Financial support:

- The EU grant supports travel as well as practical and activity-related costs necessary for the exchange.

How to apply:

- Applications must be made by an organisation or a group of young people who in turn select who will participate in the exchange.
- It is not possible to apply directly as an individual.

European Solidarity Corps

This modality allows through the European Solidarity Corps to offer funding to young people between 18 and 30 years old. You can opt for the following modalities, depending on your goals, your intentions, and your life circumstances:

- Volunteering.
- Local solidarity projects.
- Humanitarian aid volunteering (European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps).

These activities can be carried out in a multitude of fields: education and training, citizenship and democratic participation, environment and nature protection, migration, culture, humanitarian aid and many more.

How does it work?

- The European Solidarity Corps funding is provided in the form of grants to organisations through call for proposals.
- If you want to engage in these kinds of activities, you should [register in the European Solidarity Corps portal](#).



Erasmus studies

You must be registered in a higher education institution and enrolled in courses leading to a recognised degree or tertiary-level certification to use Erasmus+ to study abroad. You must be at least in your second year of study to be eligible for first cycle students. Your time spent studying abroad must be pertinent to your degree-related learning and personal development goals and must fit into your current study plan. For you to study there through Erasmus+, there must be an inter-institutional agreement between your home university and the receiving institution.

Erasmus internship program

Erasmus+ supports traineeships (work placements or other training) abroad for short cycle, bachelor, master, or doctoral students enrolled in higher education institutions in Programme Countries. Recent graduates can also benefit from these opportunities, which opens the door for those who not only want to be mobile abroad, but also want to gain work experience.

By completing a traineeship experience abroad, you can make a significant boost to the knowledge, skills, and competences that recruiters are seeking. What's more, one in ten Erasmus+ trainees have gone on to set up their own business!

In the following [link](#) you can find more specific information about this and start your adventure in one click!

The Erasmus Internship Portal, created by the Erasmus Student Network, can help you find Erasmus+ internship opportunities in companies.

However, if you are determined to do an internship abroad, there is one thing you need to keep in mind: the language. Once you have decided on the country you would like to go to, you should improve your language skills to understand what you are asked to do and to make yourself understood by others. Don't worry, because the European Commission promotes free language learning tools so that you can improve your language skills and speak like a native speaker.

You can use this kind of European and non-European tools for language:

- [Duolingo](#)
- OLS: [The Online Language Support \(OLS\)](#) is designed to help Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps participants improve their knowledge of the language in which they will work, study or volunteer abroad so that they can make the most out of this experience
- [Memrise](#)

+ Why is it important for your future?

Going to study or live in another country is a tough experience. **This experience gives you the opportunity to live in another country, learn another language, meet people from other cities and other countries and integrate into a completely different society** when you are quite young. It is an experience from which you can learn a lot, not only about how the world works, and who your friends are, but you can also learn a lot about who you are as a person.

Indeed, Erasmus or any other type of mobilities is very much appreciated by companies. The language factor is very important, it is not only enough to demonstrate that you have a great **academic knowledge** of that language, but also that you have lived and managed using that language in another country. Nowadays, large companies are looking for international profiles, who know how to use another language and have no problems when it comes to interacting with people from other countries. In addition to work relations, doing international mobility also shows that you are a person capable of being self-sufficient and resolute, you have initiative, and you are not afraid to face new situations.

Apart from learning what it is like to be under the rules of another country, you will experience a different cultural environment. Strolling through streets with different architectural styles, structures, museums, markets, bars, and bars with terraces.

+ What can you get from going abroad for mobility?

Participating in international mobility has many benefits and advantages. In the following lines we explain some of these advantages:

- **You will learn to get by in another language:** the total immersion that this experience offers in the foreign language guarantees its mastery. It gives young people the opportunity to learn a language and become fluent in a new language.
- **You will get to know other cultures:** by participating in an Erasmus programme, you not only get to know the culture of the host country, but also other people of different nationalities who are studying at the same university and who have come from other parts of the world. This will allow you to grow as a person and open your mind to other ways of doing things. In the same way, during an international experience of any kind, you are likely to meet people from other countries who are also living an international experience, so you will benefit from it as if you had gone on Erasmus.
- **You will improve your transcript and your CV:** going abroad is a plus in any academic or professional record, as it adds value to your CV, both for the languages and for the experience you get from living abroad and getting out of your comfort zone.
- **You will have access to several opportunities for personal and professional development:** you can participate in an Erasmus study programme or an internship in a company, you can be a volunteer... In addition, you can opt for an Erasmus volunteering programme, with the same advantages as if you were going to study or do an internship.

Local tips for each country

Now that you have a clearer idea of the different opportunities that an Erasmus mobility can give you, here are some tips per country so that you can get an idea of what you can do in each of them.

+ France

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A VISA DOCUMENT WITH ME? WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED?

The specific documentation you need to enter France for an Erasmus project can depend on your nationality and the nature of your stay. Here are some general guidelines to help you understand the documentation requirements:

1. Passport or Identity Card: You will need a valid passport or identity card, depending on your nationality. Ensure that your passport is valid for at least three months beyond your intended departure from the Schengen Area. Participants coming from EU countries do not need a visa during their stay in France. Their National Identity Card should suffice for travel purposes and other administrative procedures.

2. Schengen Visa: France is part of the Schengen Area, which allows for visa-free travel within its member countries for short stays (up to 90 days) for citizens of many countries. If you are a citizen of one of these visa-exempt countries, you generally do not need a Schengen Visa for a short-term Erasmus project.

3. Erasmus+ Mobility: If you are participating in an Erasmus+ mobility project, your host institution or organisation should provide you with an invitation or acceptance letter. This letter is important for visa application purposes, as it demonstrates the purpose and duration of your stay.

4. Travel Insurance: It's a good practice to have travel insurance that covers health and medical emergencies during your stay.

5. Financial Means: While not always required, it's advisable to have proof of sufficient funds to cover your expenses during your stay. This can include bank statements, proof of scholarships or financial support, and access to credit cards.



6. Accommodation Details: information about your accommodation arrangements in France.

7. Visa Requirements for Non-Visa-Exempt Nationals: If you are a citizen of a country that is not visa-exempt for short stays, you will likely need to apply for a Schengen Visa. You will need to submit your visa application to the French Embassy or Consulate in your home country. The specific requirements can vary, so be sure to check the embassy's website for the most up-to-date information.

8. Residence Permit (if applicable): If your Erasmus project extends beyond 90 days or involves activities that require a residence permit, you will need to apply for the appropriate permit.

It's essential to check with the French Embassy or Consulate in your home country for the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding visa requirements and application procedures. Requirements can change, and specific documentation can vary based on your nationality and the purpose and duration of your stay. Always start the visa application process well in advance of your planned travel to ensure you have the necessary documentation in place.

WHICH ARE THE MOST RECOMMENDED OR ATTRACTIVE CITIES TO GO ON ERASMUS IN THIS COUNTRY?

France offers a wide range of attractive cities for an Erasmus experience, each with its unique charm and opportunities. Some of the most recommended cities to consider for your Erasmus exchange in France include:

1. Paris: The capital city, known for its rich history, iconic landmarks, and vibrant culture. It offers a wide range of universities and a diverse student population.

2. Lyon: Renowned for its culinary scene and historical architecture, Lyon boasts several universities and is known for its quality of life.

3. Toulouse: Located in the south of France, Toulouse is known for its aerospace industry and has a young, dynamic population. It hosts several prestigious institutions.

4. Bordeaux: Famous for its wine, Bordeaux offers a relaxed atmosphere, beautiful architecture, and a strong academic community.

5. Montpellier: Located on the Mediterranean coast, Montpellier offers a mix of cultural heritage and a lively student scene.

6. Strasbourg: Strasbourg is a beautiful city with a rich Franco-German culture, home to the European Parliament and numerous universities.

7. Aix-en-Provence: Located in the sunny south of France, Aix-en-Provence is known for its art, culture, and beautiful surroundings.

8. Grenoble: Nestled in the French Alps, Grenoble offers a stunning natural backdrop for students who enjoy outdoor activities.

9. Lille: A city with a strong sense of community and a diverse population, Lille is known for its cultural events and lively student life.

10. Rennes: In Brittany, Rennes is known for its strong student culture, historical sites, and a variety of academic institutions.

These cities offer different experiences, so it's essential to consider your academic goals, personal preferences, and interests when choosing your Erasmus destination. Additionally, be sure to research the specific universities or institutions within these cities to find the best fit for your field of study. Each city has its own unique charm and can provide a memorable and enriching Erasmus experience.



HOW CAN I FIND ACCOMMODATION?

Finding accommodation in France can be a manageable task if you plan ahead and consider your options. Here are some steps to help you find accommodation in France:

- 1. Start Early:** Begin your search well in advance, as housing can be competitive, especially in popular cities.
- 2. Online Platforms:** Use websites and apps like Le Bon Coin, Seloger, SeLoger Étudiant, Appartager, or Airbnb to search for rental listings.
- 3. Real Estate Agencies:** You can contact local real estate agencies (agence immobilière) for rental listings. Be prepared for fees.
- 4. Hostels:** You can stay in a hostel temporarily while you search for long-term accommodation.
- 5. Join Local Facebook Groups:** There are many local Facebook groups for housing. Join these and post your housing preferences.
- 6. Word of Mouth:** Let friends, classmates, or colleagues know you're looking for accommodation. They might have leads.
- 7. Visit the Area:** If you're already in France, consider visiting the area in person to check out available apartments and meet with landlords.
- 8. Understand the Rental Process:** Be aware of French rental procedures, including deposits and documents required. The usual requirement is the presentation of a guarantor, who is a French resident. You may need to pay a security deposit (usually one to two months' rent) and agency fees if you use a real estate agency.
- 9. Short-Term Rentals:** Consider short-term rentals or subletting while you get settled. This can give you time to explore the area and find a more permanent solution.
- 10. Language:** If you're not fluent in French, you might want to get some assistance with reading rental agreements and communicating with landlords.
- 11. Be Cautious:** Be cautious of scams, especially if you're searching online. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- 12. Prepare Documents:** Make sure you have the necessary documents, such as identification, proof of income or financial stability, and a rental application. Some landlords may also request a French guarantor or accept a bank deposit as a guarantee.

Remember that finding the right accommodation may take some time and patience. Start your search early, explore various options, and be well-prepared to secure the housing you need for your stay in France.

IS THERE ANY KIND OF LOCAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION I CAN TURN TO?

Yes, France has numerous local student associations and organisations that you can turn to for support, information, and social activities during your stay. These associations provide valuable resources and opportunities for international students. Here are a few types of student associations you might encounter:

1. Erasmus Student Network (ESN): ESN is an international student organization that operates in many cities across France. They organize social and cultural events, offer support to international students, and help you get acclimated to your new environment.

2. Student Unions: Most universities and higher education institutions in France have their own student unions (Bureau des Étudiants or BDE). These unions organize events, parties, and various activities.

3. Cultural and Interest-Based Clubs: Many universities have clubs and associations dedicated to specific interests, such as sports, arts, and culture. These can be a great way to meet like-minded students.

4. Local International Student Associations: In addition to ESN, many universities have local associations focused on international students.

5. Student Housing Associations: If you're looking for accommodation, check with housing associations in your city or university. They can provide information on student residences and available apartments.

6. Career and Professional Development Clubs: If you're looking to network and build your career, there are student associations focused on professional development and job placement.

To find these associations, visit your university's website or campus bulletin boards. Additionally, many associations have a presence on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, making it easy to connect with them. Joining a student association is a great way to meet people, engage in activities, and make the most of your time in France.

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORT ARE THERE IN THIS COUNTRY? WHICH ARE THE MOST USED AND THE MOST AFFORDABLE?

France has a well-developed and extensive transportation network, offering various modes of transportation to choose from. The most commonly used and affordable transportation options in France include:

1. Public Transit: Public transportation systems are widespread in France, and cities like Paris, Lyon, and Marseille have extensive metro, tram, and bus networks. Public transit is often the most affordable way to get around cities.

The metro systems in major cities like Paris, Lyon, and Marseille are fast and affordable. Daily or weekly passes are available for unlimited travel. You can purchase single tickets or discounted passes for regular use. The metro systems in major cities like Paris, Lyon, and Marseille are fast and affordable. Daily or weekly passes are available for unlimited travel.

2. Regional Trains (TER): For traveling within regions, regional trains (TER – Transport Express Régional) are cost-effective and efficient. They connect towns and cities within the same region. The prices are generally reasonable.

3. High-Speed Trains (TGV): France has an extensive high-speed rail network connecting major cities. The TGV is a fast and comfortable way to travel between cities. Booking tickets in advance can help you secure lower fares.

4. Intercity Trains: Intercity trains, such as Intercités, connect cities and regions. They are generally more affordable than high-speed trains.

5. Ridesharing: Platforms like BlaBlaCar are popular in France for ridesharing. It's a cost-effective way to travel between cities if you're comfortable sharing a ride with others.

6. Bicycles: Many French cities are bicycle-friendly, with dedicated bike lanes and bike-sharing programs. Renting a bicycle or using bike-sharing services is an affordable and eco-friendly option for short trips within a city.

7. Walking: For exploring cities and smaller towns, walking is not only affordable but also a great way to experience the local culture and sights.

8. Trams and Light Rail: Trams and light rail systems operate in various cities. They are convenient for moving around urban areas.

9. City and regional Buses: City buses are a common mode of transportation for local travel within cities. They offer affordable fares and convenient routes. For long-distance travel between regions or to smaller towns, regional buses or coaches are economical options.

10. Taxis: Taxis are readily available in cities and can be a convenient option for door-to-door service. While not the most affordable option, they are relatively accessible.

Keep in mind that transportation costs can vary depending on the city or region, and it's a good idea to research and plan your travel to find the most affordable and convenient options. Additionally, booking tickets in advance for trains and long-distance travel can often save you money.

WHAT IS THE TYPE OF CLIMATE IN THIS COUNTRY OR CITY, AND SHOULD I BE PREPARED FOR ANY EXTREME WEATHER?

France experiences a variety of climates due to its size and diverse geographical features. The climate can range from oceanic and Mediterranean to alpine and semi-continental, depending on the region. Here's an overview of the main climate types in France:

1. Oceanic Climate (Maritime Climate): Western and northwestern France, including cities like Paris and Nantes, typically have an oceanic climate. This means mild temperatures, relatively high rainfall throughout the year, and no extreme weather conditions. Winters are generally mild, and summers are warm but not excessively hot.

2. Mediterranean Climate: The southern regions, such as the French Riviera (Côte d'Azur), Provence, and parts of Corsica, have a Mediterranean climate. This results in hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Be prepared for very hot weather in summer, with occasional heatwaves.

3. Semi-Continental Climate: Eastern France, including cities like Strasbourg and Lyon, can experience a semi-continental climate. This means more distinct seasons with hot summers and cold winters. You might encounter occasional snowfall in winter.

4. Mountain and Alpine Climate: The French Alps, Pyrenees, and Jura regions have mountain and alpine climates. These areas have cool summers and cold, snowy winters. If you plan to visit or live in these regions, be prepared for winter sports and chilly conditions.

5. Semi-Arid Climate: The southeastern region of Languedoc-Roussillon and parts of the Rhône Valley can experience a semi-arid climate with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters.

When visiting or living in France, it's essential to be prepared for the specific climate of the region you'll be in. Here are some general tips:

1. Clothing: Pack a variety of clothing suitable for different seasons. Don't forget to include a light rain jacket or umbrella, especially if you'll be in an area with rainfall.

2. Summer Precautions: If you're in a Mediterranean region during summer, stay hydrated, use sunscreen, and be cautious during heatwaves. Air conditioning is not as common in France as in some other countries.

3. Winter Precautions: If you'll experience cold winters, ensure you have warm clothing, including a good coat, gloves, and a hat. Winter sports enthusiasts should be well-prepared for mountain conditions.

4. Weather Forecasts: Keep an eye on local weather forecasts for your specific location, as conditions can vary significantly even within regions.

Overall, France's diverse climates offer something for everyone, from beautiful Mediterranean beaches to alpine ski resorts. Being prepared for the local climate will help you make the most of your stay and enjoy your time in France.

WHAT ARE THE TIMETABLES LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY?

Timetables in France can vary depending on the context, such as work hours, school schedules, and business hours. Here's an overview of typical timetables for various aspects of life in France:

1. Shops and Businesses: Most shops and businesses in France follow a common schedule: They open around 9:00 AM and close for a two-hour lunch break between 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM. After the lunch break, they typically remain open until 7:00 PM or 8:00 PM. However, in larger cities and tourist areas, you may find some businesses that do not close for the extended lunch break and remain open all day.

2. Restaurants: Restaurants typically serve lunch from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM and dinner from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM or later. It's a good idea to make reservations, especially at popular restaurants.

3. Schools: School schedules can vary by level. Primary schools usually start at around 8:30 AM and end at 4:30 PM. Secondary schools and high schools may have classes starting around 8:00 AM and finishing in the afternoon. Universities and higher education institutions have flexible schedules, with classes often spread throughout the day.

4. Public Services: Government offices and public services, like post offices and town halls, generally follow regular business hours, opening around 9:00 AM and closing for the lunch break.

5. Banks: Banks in France typically open from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM or 5:00 PM. Some banks may close for a longer lunch break from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM.

6. Public Transportation: Public transportation schedules, including buses, trams, and trains, can vary by location and route. In larger cities like Paris, public transportation can run from approximately 5:30 AM to midnight. Be sure to check schedules for specific routes and lines.

7. Work Hours: French work culture generally values work-life balance. Full-time employees often work 35 to 39 hours a week, with a 35-hour workweek being standard. Working hours are typically from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM or 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM with a one-hour lunch break. Some businesses may offer flexible hours or have variations in their work schedules.

8. Weekends and Holidays: Many businesses and shops are closed on Sundays, and some may also be closed on Mondays. However, in larger cities and tourist areas, you'll find more places open on Sundays. France has several public holidays, and on these days, many businesses and public services are closed.

It's important to note that local customs and schedules may vary, especially in smaller towns or rural areas. When planning your activities, be mindful of typical French timetables to ensure you have access to the services and amenities you need.



+ Spain

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A VISA DOCUMENT WITH ME? WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED?

It is not always mandatory to have a VISA document with you. It depends on your personal situation. Generally, when you come to Spain for Erasmus mobility, you are coming from a country that is a member state of the European Union (EU) or is part of the European Economic Area (EEA), so you won't need a VISA document. If you come from a country that is part of the EU, you only need your passport or ID document.

On the other hand, if you come from a country that is not part of the EU or the EEA, you may need a VISA document, it depends on your personal situation and the country you come from. In this case, you should check it with **the Embassy or the Council of Spain**. They will help you regarding which kind of VISA it is needed, which documents are required.

Some countries participate in the Erasmus programme as associated countries, such as Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, among others. You won't need it if you come from a country which has a Visa Exemption Agreement with the EU. And some specific countries have agreements for students coming for less than 90 days and they won't need a VISA document.

WHICH ARE THE MOST RECOMMENDED OR ATTRACTIVE CITIES TO GO ON ERASMUS IN THIS COUNTRY?

With more than 40 destinations included in the Erasmus program, Spain is the perfect country for Erasmus students. It depends on the preferences of the students which would be the most attractive city for them. In the following lines, I include my 3 popular choices for Erasmus:

- **Valencia.** Valencia is considered to be the favourite city for university life thanks to its perfect climate, its wide range of sport possibilities and its proximity to beaches. The city is a mixture of historical and new buildings. In the historic city centre, you can visit the Lonja, the Cathedral or the central market; but you can also find the modern City of Arts and Sciences. In conclusion, if you want to experience Erasmus in Spain to the fullest, Valencia is the perfect destination for you.
- **Granada.** Located in Andalusia, this city is full of students, both national and international. Granada also has a great cultural and artistic heritage, including the beautiful Alhambra. Moreover, the University of Granada and the quality of teaching in its faculties is well known throughout Spain.
- **Barcelona.** The second-largest city in Spain, but you can easily get around by metro. It has a wide range of cultural activities to offer, such as enjoying some of the city's viewpoints, strolling through Park Güell, climbing the mountain of Montjuic, walking around the Rambla... Barcelona is also one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Southern Europe, and if you like to party, you will find a good nightlife scene almost every day of the week.



HOW CAN I FIND ACCOMMODATION?

It is important that you find accommodation that you feel well in because a good living situation is key to feeling comfortable in a new country, in this case in Spain.

Some schools or centres provide housing. However, others leave it up to you to find an apartment to stay abroad. If you have to find an apartment, I recommend you to start as soon as you learn of your mobility; although I know it is scary to book something from hundreds or thousands of kilometres away. Some sites where you can find accommodation are:

- **Spotahome**
- **Roomless rent**
- **Uniplaces (exclusive for students)**
- **Housing Anywhere.**

IS THERE ANY KIND OF LOCAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION I CAN TURN TO?

The best student association you can turn on is the **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)**. It is not a local student association, but a non-profit international student organisation. It is located in 39 cities in Spain.

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORT ARE THERE IN THIS COUNTRY? WHICH ARE THE MOST USED AND THE MOST AFFORDABLE?

In Spain you will find an extensive offer of transportation via road, railway, sea and airways. Although, it is important to consider that there might be regional differences.

If you want to travel between Spanish cities, buses and trains are the most widely used vehicles in Spain. Buses are not only used to travel between cities, they also play a big role in daily life; the cost of single-use tickets can vary from one city to another since public transportation in Spain by bus is operated locally. In most cities there are vouchers and discounts for students.

The railway network of Spain is considered the best way of cheap transportation in Spain. It is one of the cheapest ones in Europe, although it is slightly behind European standards in terms of punctuality.

Regarding the metro, Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca and Bilbao have their own metro systems. Other cities, like Alicante or Malaga, use tram. The prices of the tickets can vary between cities; larger networks probably are more expensive and may have additional costs depending on the distance or the number of zones you travel.

WHAT IS THE TYPE OF CLIMATE IN THIS COUNTRY OR CITY, AND SHOULD I BE PREPARED FOR ANY EXTREME WEATHER?

Spain is a sunny country with around 3,000 hours of sunshine every year. The temperatures are mild, but there are differences depending on the seasons and areas of the country.

The mildest temperatures are in spring and autumn, allowing you to enjoy the outdoors practically the whole day long.

Maximum temperatures are reached during the months of July and August, which are hot and dry throughout the whole country.

The coldest temperatures occur during December, January, and February, which are the months with the most rainfall, mainly in the north of Spain.

WHAT ARE THE TIMETABLES LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY?

In Spain, classes at university usually start at 8-9 a.m. and they last all morning until around 2 p.m., which is the typical hour for lunch. Usually, there is a break between 10-11 a.m. You can also have classes in the afternoon. In that case they will start around 3 p.m and finish around 9 p.m, but it depends on the group and the subject.

Regarding work, people usually start their job at 8-9 a.m., they have a break of 2 hours for lunch around 2 p.m. and they finish their work between 6-7 p.m. But it depends on the type of work. Shops usually open from Monday to Saturday. Shops open around 10 a.m. and close around 21 p.m, sometimes they are closed between 2-5 p.m.



+ Lithuania

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A VISA DOCUMENT WITH ME? WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED?

Documentation Requirements for Erasmus+ Mobility Projects in Lithuania:

Regardless of whether a visa is required or not, all participants will need a valid passport or identity card, depending on their nationality, valid at least 3–6 months longer than the intended stay.

Participants from EU countries typically do not need a visa during their stay in Lithuania, as Lithuania's membership in the Schengen Area permits visa-free travel for short stays of up to 90 days for citizens of its member countries. The passport or National ID should suffice for all travel and administrative purposes.

You can check whether your stay will require a visa [here](#).

In case your visit does require a Schengen Visa, make sure to apply for one way in advance while still in your home country. To make sure your entry to the country goes smoothly you may need to provide additional documents (check the link above to see which of them apply):

- Erasmus+ Mobility invitation or acceptance letter;
- Residence Permit;
- Have information about your accommodation arrangements in Lithuania;
- Proof of sufficient funds to cover your expenses during your stay.

You can always refer to the Erasmus program coordinator for additional information or help regarding necessity or obtainment of these documents.

It's advisable to have travel insurance that provides coverage for health and medical emergencies throughout your stay in Lithuania. You can verify whether your Erasmus program offers insurance or procure an appropriate policy before your journey.

Remember, document requirements can change (i.e. COVID-19 regulations), so always check for the latest information from the Lithuanian Embassy or consult your Erasmus program coordinator for extra guidance on visa or other documentation requirements.



WHICH ARE THE MOST RECOMMENDED OR ATTRACTIVE CITIES TO GO ON ERASMUS IN THIS COUNTRY?

Lithuania has a variety of enticing cities for an enriching Erasmus experience. So we highly recommend staying at or visiting these locations:

- **Vilnius:** The capital city of Lithuania, Vilnius, is known for its rich history, stunning architecture, and vibrant cultural scene. It's the largest city in the country and offers a mix of modernity and tradition. The city's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a picturesque area with cobblestone streets, historic buildings, and a lively atmosphere. Vilnius is also home to several universities, making it a popular choice for international students.
- **Kaunas:** As the second-largest city in Lithuania, Kaunas is known for its youthful and dynamic atmosphere. It has a thriving arts and music scene, along with various museums and cultural events. The city boasts a blend of historic and contemporary architecture, offering a unique urban experience. Kaunas is home to several universities and is a great option for Erasmus students.
- **Klaipėda:** Situated on the Baltic Sea coast, Klaipėda is Lithuania's only seaport. It's known for its maritime heritage, beautiful beaches, and cultural events. The city offers a relaxed coastal lifestyle and a welcoming atmosphere. Klaipėda University and other educational institutions make it a suitable choice for international students interested in coastal and maritime studies.
- **Trakai:** Trakai is a picturesque town famous for its stunning Trakai Island Castle, situated on Lake Galvė and its beautiful natural surroundings. Trakai offers a tranquil and scenic environment, making it an excellent choice for visitors who appreciate a more relaxed and nature-oriented experience. If you're seeking a serene and historically rich Erasmus experience, Trakai is a delightful place to visit.
- **Nida:** Nida is a small town located on the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO World Heritage site, bordering the Baltic Sea. This town is known for its breathtaking natural beauty, including sandy dunes, lush pine forests, and serene beaches. Nida offers a peaceful and idyllic environment, making it an excellent travel destination, especially in the summer season.

HOW CAN I FIND ACCOMMODATION?

Here are some options that will help you finding suitable accommodation in Lithuania for Erasmus program:

- **University Dormitories:** Many universities in Lithuania provide on-campus dormitories for international students. These accommodations are convenient, and you'll be in close proximity to campus facilities. Check with your host institution to see if they have dormitory spaces available and how to apply for them.
- **Private Rentals:** If you prefer more independent living arrangements, you can explore private rentals such as apartments or shared housing. Websites like Booking.com, Airbnb, and local classifieds websites can be useful for finding private rentals. Be cautious when dealing with private landlords, and ensure that the terms of the rental agreement are clear and transparent.
- **Housing Agencies:** You can contact local housing agencies that specialise in finding accommodation for international students. They can assist you in finding suitable housing options that match your preferences and budget.
- **Facebook Groups:** Search for local Facebook groups related to Erasmus students, international students, or housing in Lithuania. Many students post available accommodation options, roommate requests, and sublet opportunities in these groups.

Lithuanian Real Estate Websites: Explore local Lithuanian real estate websites like Aruodas.lt, Domoplius.lt, and Skelbiu.lt. These websites often list a variety of rental apartments and houses, both for short and long-term stays.

When searching for accommodation options in Lithuania, consider checking the following websites that offer a good variety of choices for students and travellers:

- www.booking.com (hotels, hostels, guesthouses, etc. with flexible booking options)
- www.airbnb.com (short-term rental apartments, homes, and rooms)
- www.erasmusu.com (a platform specifically for Erasmus and international students)
- www.nestpick.com (focuses on furnished apartments and student housing)
- www.hostelworld.com (budget-friendly hostels in Lithuania)

When using these websites, make sure to read reviews, compare prices, and contact landlords or hosts for additional details and questions. It's advisable to start your accommodation search well in advance to secure the best options.

Keep your budget in mind when searching for accommodation. Living costs can vary significantly depending on the city you choose and the type of housing; factor in rent, utilities, and any additional costs when making your decision. Make sure you have all the required documents, such as ID and proof of income. Start your housing search well in advance as popular accommodations can fill up quickly, especially in major cities. Carefully read rental agreements, understand terms and conditions, and clarify any doubts with landlords or housing providers before finalising your accommodation.

IS THERE ANY KIND OF LOCAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION I CAN TURN TO?

Erasmus mobility program participants in Lithuania can turn to various local student associations and networks to enhance their experience, make connections, and access valuable support. Here are some notable student associations and networks that you can consider:

- **ESN Lithuania** (Erasmus Student Network Lithuania): ESN is a well-established network specifically focused on helping international students, including Erasmus participants. ESN Lithuania has local sections in many cities, and they organise various events, social activities, and provide assistance with integration and practical matters.
- **AISEC Lithuania:** AIESEC is a global youth-led organisation that offers opportunities for leadership development, cultural exchange, and international internships. It's a great platform to connect with local and international students and engage in community projects.
- **BEST** (Board of European Students of Technology) Local Groups: BEST is an organisation that provides a platform for engineering students to connect and collaborate. Many Lithuanian universities have local BEST groups that organise events, workshops, and international projects.
- **Local Student Unions:** Many universities in Lithuania have student unions and associations. These organisations often plan events, represent student interests, and provide information about various student services.
- **City-Specific Student Organisations:** Depending on the city you choose for your Erasmus experience, there may be city-specific student organisations. For example, the Vilnius International Club (VIC) in Vilnius or similar groups in other cities can offer a platform for cultural exchange and social events.

- **Cultural and Interest-Based Clubs:** Look out for clubs or associations that align with your interests, whether it's sports, arts, or a particular hobby. Joining such clubs can be a great way to meet local and international students who share your passions.

To connect with these organisations, you can visit their websites or social media pages, attend their welcome events, or inquire at your host institution's international office. These student associations and networks offer opportunities to make friends, participate in cultural exchange, and access valuable resources during your Erasmus mobility program in Lithuania.

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORT ARE THERE IN THIS COUNTRY? WHICH ARE THE MOST USED AND THE MOST AFFORDABLE?

In Lithuania, you can find a variety of transportation options to get around the country. The most commonly used and affordable transportation methods include:

- **Buses and Trolleybuses:** Buses and trolleybuses are a popular and cost-effective means of transport in Lithuania. The country has an extensive bus network that connects cities, towns, and even remote areas.
- **Bicycles:** Many Lithuanian cities are bike-friendly, with dedicated bike lanes and rental services available.
- **Car-sharing:** CityBee is a popular car-sharing service operating in major Lithuanian cities. It allows users to rent cars and electric scooters for short trips via mobile app, providing a convenient and cost-effective urban transportation option.
- **Trains:** Lithuania has a well-developed railway system. Trains are generally efficient and affordable. The train service is operated by Lithuanian Railways (Lietuvos geležinkeliai), and you can check schedules and book tickets on their website.
- **Taxis:** Taxis are available in most Lithuanian cities and can be convenient for short trips. Uber and Bolt are often more affordable than traditional taxis and provide a convenient way to get around town.
- **Car Rentals:** If you plan to explore rural areas or prefer the flexibility of having your own vehicle, you can rent a car from international and local car rental agencies.

The choice of transportation depends on your location and travel needs. For longer journeys between cities, buses and trains are often the most used and affordable options. In urban areas, buses and trolleybuses are mostly used for getting around. Public transportation is generally well-regulated and reasonably priced in Lithuania, making it an accessible and efficient way to travel within the country.



WHAT IS THE TYPE OF CLIMATE IN THIS COUNTRY OR CITY, AND SHOULD I BE PREPARED FOR ANY EXTREME WEATHER?

Lithuania experiences a temperate maritime climate and has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Each season brings its own weather conditions and temperature ranges.

- **Summers** are generally mild and pleasant, with temperatures averaging around 18–22°C. It's the most comfortable time for outdoor activities, with longer daylight hours.
- **Autumn** is characterised by cooler temperatures and increasing rainfall. It's a good idea to be prepared for changing weather conditions, including rain and cooler temperatures.
- **Winters** can be quite cold, with temperatures often dropping below freezing, on average between -10°C to 5°C, but it can drop lower. Snowfall is common, and participants should be prepared for cold and sometimes icy conditions. Warm clothing and proper winter gear are essential during this season.
- **Spring** is a transitional period with gradually warming temperatures. It can be unpredictable, with occasional showers. Layered clothing is advisable to adapt to changing weather.

Daylight Hours: The length of daylight varies significantly between seasons. Summers offer longer days with more daylight, while winters have shorter daylight hours.

Extreme Weather: While extreme weather events are not common in Lithuania, travellers should be aware of occasional strong winds, especially during the autumn and winter months. Winter storms can bring heavy snowfall, impacting travel and daily activities, so you should be prepared for the seasonal variations and the occasional challenges they may pose.

WHAT ARE THE TIMETABLES LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY?

Timetables in Lithuania, especially for public transportation and businesses, follow a relatively standard schedule, here's a general overview:

- **Supermarkets and Grocery Stores:** Supermarkets and grocery stores typically open early in the morning and close late in the evening, around 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Some supermarkets may operate longer hours, most of them are open on weekends.
- **Restaurants and Cafes:** Restaurants and cafes generally have flexible hours, with many opening for breakfast and serving meals throughout the day. Some restaurants may close briefly in the afternoon between lunch and dinner services.
- **Public Transportation:** Public transportation in urban areas typically runs from early morning (around 5:30 AM) until late in the evening (around 11:00 PM or midnight). Timetables may vary depending on the city and route, so it's advisable to check local schedules.
- **Train Services:** Trains in Lithuania typically have schedules that align with the standard workweek, with services available throughout the day (5AM-11PM), however, it can operate a little shorter during the weekend. Be sure to check specific train timetables for long-distance or intercity travel.
- **Shops and Businesses:** Shops and businesses typically operate during standard business hours. This means they are open from around 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, many shops have shorter hours, typically from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Some larger cities may have extended shopping hours and shopping centres that are open later.

Museums and Cultural Sites: Museums and cultural sites often follow a schedule similar to shops, with standard hours during the day around 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Some museums may have specific days when they are closed, so it's a good idea to check in advance.

Bank Hours: Banks in Lithuania are usually open during regular business hours, from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Some branches may offer extended hours or limited services on Saturdays.

It's important to keep in mind that holidays and special occasions may affect timetables, with some businesses and services closing or operating on reduced hours during these times. Overall, while Lithuania follows a standard timetable for many services, it's advisable to check the hours of operation for specific businesses and services in your area to ensure they align with your plans and activities.



+ Bulgaria

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A VISA DOCUMENT WITH ME? WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED?

Since Bulgaria is in the European Union, Visa is not required.

WHICH ARE THE MOST RECOMMENDED OR ATTRACTIVE CITIES TO GO ON ERASMUS IN THIS COUNTRY?

- **Sofia:** The capital city of Bulgaria, Sofia, is a bustling metropolis with a vibrant cultural scene. It offers a mix of historical landmarks, modern amenities, and a thriving nightlife. You can explore museums, theatres, and diverse neighbourhoods while enjoying the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere.
- **Plovdiv:** Plovdiv is one of Europe's oldest cities, known for its rich history and captivating old town. As the European Capital of Culture in 2019, Plovdiv boasts an artistic scene, Roman ruins, and a welcoming ambiance that makes it an attractive destination for cultural exploration.
- **Varna:** Located on the Black Sea coast, Varna offers a unique blend of academic opportunities and beachside relaxation. You can study while enjoying beautiful beaches, water sports, and a lively coastal atmosphere.
- **Burgas:** Another coastal gem, Burgas, is ideal for students who appreciate a relaxed lifestyle and outdoor activities. With its inviting beaches and proximity to natural wonders, it's an excellent place to combine academic pursuits with relaxation and adventure.
- **Veliko Tarnovo:** For history enthusiasts and lovers of picturesque landscapes, Veliko Tarnovo is a charming choice. Explore its medieval Tsarevets Fortress and the architectural beauty of the old town, all set against a backdrop of stunning natural scenery.
- **Blagoevgrad:** Nestled near the Rila Mountains, Blagoevgrad offers a tranquil environment surrounded by nature. It's an appealing destination for those who value a smaller, close-knit community and enjoy academic experiences enriched by the surrounding natural beauty.
- **Ruse:** Situated along the Danube River, Ruse exudes European charm and boasts historic architecture. If you have an interest in international relations and cultural exchange, Ruse's welcoming atmosphere and riverside ambiance are worth exploring.

Each of these cities in Bulgaria has its unique allure, whether it's the vibrant urban life of Sofia, the cultural richness of Plovdiv, the coastal beauty of Varna and Burgas, the historical charm of Veliko Tarnovo, the serene surroundings of Blagoevgrad, or the European ambiance of Ruse. Your choice should align with your interests and the experiences you seek during your Erasmus adventure.



HOW CAN I FIND ACCOMMODATION?

Online Resources: Use online platforms and websites dedicated to housing listings. Websites like Booking.com, Airbnb, and Expedia can be useful for short-term stays. For longer-term rentals, consider websites like:

- [imot.bg](https://www.imot.bg)
- [olx.bg](https://www.olx.bg)
- [moti.net](https://www.moti.net)
- [bulgarianproperties.com](https://www.bulgarianproperties.com)

Local Groups and Forums: Look for local Facebook groups, forums, or websites where people post rental listings. These platforms can be valuable for finding accommodation, especially in smaller towns.

IS THERE ANY KIND OF LOCAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION I CAN TURN TO?

Bulgaria has a vibrant student community, and there are several local student associations and organizations that you can turn to for support, information, and social activities during your stay. These student associations can be valuable resources for international students, including those participating in Erasmus programs. Here are some types of student associations you might encounter in Bulgaria:

- **Erasmus Student Network (ESN):** ESN is a Europe-wide student organization that focuses on supporting international students, including Erasmus participants. Many Bulgarian universities have local ESN sections or ESN-affiliated student groups that organize social events, cultural exchanges, and provide assistance to international students.
- **Student Unions:** Most universities in Bulgaria have student unions or associations that represent the interests of students. These organizations often organize academic and social activities, advocate for student rights, and provide various services to students.
- **International Student Associations:** Some universities have student associations specifically dedicated to international students. These groups can help you integrate into the local community, navigate administrative processes, and connect with fellow international students.
- **Volunteer and Community Service Groups:** If you're interested in volunteering or contributing to the local community, you can often find student-run volunteer organizations at universities. These groups organize various community service projects and events.
- **Academic Clubs and Societies:** Depending on your academic interests, you might find clubs or societies related to your field of study. These groups can provide academic support, networking opportunities, and a chance to engage in discussions and research.
- **Sports and Recreation Clubs:** If you enjoy sports or recreational activities, universities typically have sports clubs that offer a range of options, from traditional sports to outdoor adventures.
- **Social Media and Online Communities:** In addition to physical organizations, consider looking for online communities or social media groups for international and local students at your university. These groups can be great for getting information and connecting with peers.

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORT ARE THERE IN THIS COUNTRY? WHICH ARE THE MOST USED AND THE MOST AFFORDABLE?

Bulgaria has a variety of transportation options available for getting around the country, including public transportation, private transportation, and more. The choice of transportation depends on your specific needs, budget, and destination within Bulgaria. Here are the most common types of transportation in Bulgaria:

Public Transportation:

- **Buses:** Buses are a primary mode of public transportation in Bulgaria, connecting cities and towns across the country. They are often affordable and relatively reliable.
- **Trains:** Bulgaria has an extensive rail network, and trains are a convenient way to travel between major cities. While not as fast as buses, trains offer scenic routes and are generally cost-effective.
- **Trams and Trolleys:** Many cities, including Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna, have tram and trolleybus systems for getting around within the city.
- **Metro:** Sofia has a metro system, making it an efficient way to navigate the capital city.
- **Taxi:** Taxis are widely available in Bulgaria, and they can be affordable, especially for short distances within cities. Ensure the taxi has a working meter, or agree on a fare before starting your journey.

Rental Cars: Renting a car is an option if you want more flexibility and plan to explore rural areas. Rental car agencies are available at airports and major cities.

Bicycles: In some cities, like Sofia and Plovdiv, there is a growing trend of using bicycles for transportation. Bike-sharing programs and dedicated bike lanes are becoming more common.

Domestic Flights: While Bulgaria is a relatively small country, there are domestic flights available between major cities, primarily Sofia, and coastal destinations like Varna and Burgas. However, flying is usually more expensive than taking a bus or train.

Hitchhiking: Hitchhiking is a less common but still practiced mode of transportation in rural areas. It can be an adventurous way to meet locals and save on transportation costs.

The most used and affordable modes of transportation in Bulgaria for both locals and tourists are buses and trains for intercity travel. Buses are often the preferred option for short to medium distances, while trains are suitable for longer journeys. They are both cost-effective and offer the chance to see the Bulgarian countryside.

In cities like Sofia, public transportation, including trams, buses, trolleys, and the metro, is a convenient way to get around and is generally affordable. Many cities offer transport cards or tickets that allow unlimited travel within a specified time frame.

When using taxis, be cautious and ensure that the meter is used or negotiate a fare in advance to avoid overcharging. Always choose licensed taxi services.

Overall, Bulgaria offers a range of transportation options to suit different needs and budgets, making it accessible for both tourists and residents.

WHAT IS THE TYPE OF CLIMATE IN THIS COUNTRY OR CITY, AND SHOULD I BE PREPARED FOR ANY EXTREME WEATHER?

Bulgaria has a diverse climate due to its varied geography, which includes mountains, plateaus, and a coastline along the Black Sea. The climate can be broadly categorized into four main types: Continental, Mediterranean, Alpine, and Subtropical.

Here's a general overview of the climate types in different parts of Bulgaria:

Continental Climate:

Sofia and Northern Bulgaria: These areas have a continental climate with cold winters and warm summers. Winters can be quite cold, with temperatures dropping below freezing, and snowfall is common. Summers are warm and dry, with temperatures often exceeding 30°C (86°F).

Mediterranean Climate:

Coastal Areas (e.g., Varna and Burgas): Coastal regions along the Black Sea have a Mediterranean climate, characterized by mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Winters are milder compared to the interior, with temperatures rarely dropping below freezing. Summers are hot and sunny.

Alpine Climate:

Rila and Pirin Mountains: The high-altitude areas of the Rila and Pirin Mountains have an alpine climate with cold winters and cool summers. These regions receive significant snowfall in the winter, making them popular destinations for winter sports enthusiasts.

Subtropical Climate:

Southwestern Bulgaria (e.g., Blagoevgrad): Some parts of southwestern Bulgaria have a subtropical climate with mild winters and hot, dry summers. This region benefits from its proximity to the Mediterranean, resulting in a relatively temperate climate compared to other areas in Bulgaria.

When preparing for your stay in Bulgaria, it's essential to be aware of the local climate of the specific city or region you'll be in. Here are some considerations:

Winter Clothing: If you'll be in Bulgaria during the winter months, especially in northern and mountainous regions, be prepared for cold temperatures and snow. Bring warm clothing, including a winter coat, gloves, a hat, and waterproof boots.

Summer Clothing: In the summer, light and breathable clothing is suitable, especially in coastal areas where temperatures can be high. Don't forget sunscreen and sunglasses.

Rain Gear: Be prepared for occasional rain showers, especially during the spring and fall months. An umbrella or a waterproof jacket can come in handy.

Mountainous Areas: If you plan to visit or spend time in the mountainous regions, be aware that weather conditions can change rapidly at higher altitudes. Always check weather forecasts and be prepared for possible temperature drops and rain, even in the summer.

Overall, Bulgaria experiences a range of climates, so your level of preparedness will depend on the time of year and the specific location you'll be in. Checking local weather forecasts and packing accordingly will help ensure you're prepared for any weather conditions you may encounter during your stay.

WHAT ARE THE TIMETABLES LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY?

Timetables in Bulgaria can vary depending on the type of service or business, the day of the week, and the specific location within the country. Here's a general overview of common timetables and schedules you might encounter:

Public Transportation:

Buses: Buses in Bulgaria typically run from early morning to late evening. The frequency of buses can vary, with more frequent services in urban areas and less frequent services in rural regions. Public buses are often used for both short city routes and long-distance travel between cities.

Trains: Train services in Bulgaria also vary by route and location. Major train routes between cities tend to have regular schedules throughout the day, including overnight trains. Smaller routes and rural areas might have less frequent services.

Metro: In Sofia, the capital city, the metro operates from early morning until late evening, usually with frequent service during peak hours. Be sure to check the specific metro line's schedule, as there may be slight variations.

Shops and Businesses:

Shops: Most shops in Bulgaria, including supermarkets and convenience stores, follow regular business hours. They are typically open from around 9 AM to 8 PM or 9 PM on weekdays. Some stores may have shorter hours on weekends.

Restaurants: Restaurants often have longer hours, with many staying open until late at night. However, the exact closing times can vary, so it's a good idea to check with individual establishments.

Bars and Nightclubs: Bars and nightclubs in urban areas, especially in Sofia, can stay open well into the early morning hours, often until 4 AM or later, especially on weekends.

Government Offices and Banks:

Government Offices: Government offices typically operate on a Monday to Friday schedule, with working hours from around 9 AM to 5 PM. Some offices may close for lunch.

Banks: Banks also follow a similar schedule, with some branches offering extended hours on certain days. ATM machines are widely available for cash withdrawal outside of banking hours.

Museums and Attractions:

Museums, historical sites, and attractions usually have specific opening and closing hours. These can vary, but they often open in the morning and close in the late afternoon or early evening. Some may have specific days when they are closed.

Weekends: On Saturdays, most businesses and services follow regular weekday hours. However, some smaller shops and businesses might close early on Saturdays or be closed entirely. Sundays are generally quieter, with many businesses, especially smaller ones, closed for the day.

It's important to note that Bulgaria observes Eastern European Time (EET) during standard time and Eastern European Summer Time (EEST) during daylight saving time. The country switches to daylight saving time on the last Sunday in March and returns to standard time on the last Sunday in October.

Keep in mind that individual businesses and services may have variations in their schedules, so it's a good idea to confirm operating hours with specific establishments, especially if you plan to visit during non-standard hours. Additionally, larger cities like Sofia tend to have more extended and flexible timetables compared to smaller towns and rural areas.

+ All project countries

WHERE SHOULD I GO ONCE I ARRIVE AT MY ERASMUS DESTINATION?

When you first arrive at your Erasmus destination, you should take several steps to ensure a smooth transition and make the most of your experience:

1. Register with Local Authorities: If required, make sure to register with the local authorities, such as the local police or town hall.

2. Accommodation: Check in at your accommodation, whether it's a dormitory, student apartment, or private rental. Ensure everything is in order and report any issues to your landlord or housing provider.

3. Orientation: Attend any orientation sessions or welcome events organised by your host university or institution. These sessions provide valuable information about the campus, academic procedures, and local services.

4. Set Up a Bank Account: If you'll be staying for an extended period, consider opening a local bank account to facilitate financial transactions and manage expenses.

5. Get a Local SIM Card: Purchase a local SIM card for your mobile phone if you don't already have one.

6. Explore the Area: Take some time to explore your new surroundings. Familiarise yourself with public transportation, nearby grocery stores, pharmacies, and other essential services.

7. Meet Locals and Fellow Students: Start building connections with locals and fellow students. Join student groups or clubs, attend social events, and participate in local activities to make new friends.

8. Learn the Local Language: If you're not already proficient in the local language, consider enrolling in language courses or practising with language exchange partners. This can greatly enhance your experience.

9. Health and Safety: Familiarise yourself with local healthcare facilities and emergency services. Ensure you have adequate health insurance coverage and know how to access medical care if needed.

11. Cultural Exploration: Immerse yourself in the local culture by visiting museums, historical sites, and experiencing local customs and traditions.

12. Travel Opportunities: Research nearby travel destinations and plan your excursions if you intend to explore the region during your stay.

13. Stay Informed: Keep up to date with local news and regulations, especially if there are any changes that may affect your stay.

Remember that the beginning of your Erasmus experience may be both exciting and challenging. Be open to new experiences, stay flexible, and seek support from your host institution and fellow students. Your time abroad will be a unique opportunity for personal growth, academic enrichment, and cultural immersion.

WHERE CAN I FIND A PLACE FOR LANGUAGE EXCHANGE?

Finding a place for language exchange can be a fun and effective way to improve your language skills while making new friends. Here are some options:

1. Language Exchange Meetup Groups: Websites like Meetup.com often have language exchange groups where you can find events or gatherings where people exchange languages. Search for groups in your city or the city where you're studying.

2. University Language Centers: Many universities have language exchange programs or language clubs where students can connect for language exchange.

3. Language Schools and Cultural Centers: Some language schools or cultural centers offer language exchange programs or can help you find language exchange partners.

4. Tandem Programs: Some universities offer formal tandem language exchange programs where you're matched with a partner for language exchange.

5. Online Language Exchange Platforms: Websites and apps like Tandem, HelloTalk, ConversationExchange, and Speaky allow you to connect with language exchange partners online or in person.

6. Cafes and Language Exchange Events: Some cafes or bars host language exchange events, particularly in larger cities. Look for flyers or online announcements for such events.

7. Public Libraries: In some cities, public libraries host language exchange events or may have resources to help you connect with language exchange partners.

8. Online Forums and Social Media: Look for language exchange partners on online forums, Facebook groups, and other social media platforms.

9. Language Exchange Partners: Language exchange can be as simple as connecting with someone you meet who speaks the language you're learning and is interested in learning your language. This can be done in a casual setting like a park or coffee shop.

When participating in language exchange, be sure to establish clear expectations with your language partner, including how you will divide your time between the languages and your goals for improvement. Language exchange can be a fantastic way to develop conversational skills and cultural understanding, so take advantage of the opportunity to meet new people and practise your language skills in a real-world context.

HOW CAN I FIND LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY?

Finding leisure activities in a new country, whether you're a local or an expat, is relatively easy due to the diverse and rich cultural offerings. Here are some ways to discover leisure activities in the city:

1. Tourist Information Centers: Most of the cities have tourist information centres that provide brochures, maps, and advice on local attractions, events, and activities.

2. Event Websites: Websites like Eventbrite, Meetup, and local event listing websites can help you find concerts, festivals, exhibitions, and other events happening in your city.

3. Local Magazines and Newspapers: Grab a copy of local magazines, newspapers, or free city guides to find listings of upcoming events and activities.

4. Social Media and Apps: Follow local event pages on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Event and activity discovery apps like Eventful, Time Out, and Nearify are also helpful.

5. City's Official Website: Most cities have an official website with information on cultural events, sports activities, and more.

6. Libraries: Public libraries often have information on cultural events, book clubs, and other leisure activities in the city.

7. Community Centers: Local community centres host a variety of events and activities, from art exhibitions to dance classes.

8. Local Cafes and Notice Boards: Many cafes and community hubs have notice boards where local events are advertised. You might also ask the staff for recommendations.

9. Sports and Recreation Centers: If you're into sports, contact local sports and recreation centers for information on group activities and fitness classes.

10. Art Galleries and Museums: Art galleries and museums often host exhibitions, workshops, and cultural events. Check their websites or visit in person for the latest offerings.

11. Word of Mouth: Don't hesitate to ask locals, friends, and colleagues for recommendations. They might know of lesser-known but interesting events or activities.

12. Online Forums: Local forums or Reddit communities specific to your city may have event listings or discussions about local activities.

When exploring leisure activities in a foreign country, consider trying something new and, if possible, traditional activities from that country. Participating in leisure activities is not only a way to enjoy your free time but also a great opportunity to immerse yourself in the local culture and make new friends.

Risk management and safety measures

Having a risk plan and safety measures in place will help ensure that when problems arise, they can be dealt quickly and easily. In the following sections, we will provide you some tips on how to improve your mobility crisis management.

1) Risk identification:

Health and safety:

- Medical emergencies and insurance coverage.
- Local health risks and necessary vaccinations.
- Safe practices regarding food and water.

Security:

- Awareness of local crime rates.
- Political stability and potential protests.
- Respect for cultural norms to avoid misunderstandings.

Social:

- Risk of isolation and loneliness.
- Social adaptation to challenges.
- Peer pressure and potential risky behaviours.

3) Pre-departure preparation:

- Comprehensive pre-departure orientation covering risks and safety measures.
- Share emergency contact information for local authorities and the embassy.
- Provide cultural sensitivity training to navigate social challenges.

5) Cultural awareness:

- Encourage cultural sensitivity training.
- Provide resources for learning about local customs and traditions.
- Promote respectful behaviour and cross-cultural understanding.

2) Safety measures:

Health and safety:

- Comprehensive health insurance coverage.
- Pre-departure health check-ups.
- Familiarisation with local healthcare facilities.

Security:

- Research on local safety conditions.
- Emergency contact information readily available.
- Regular check-ins and updates with family and support networks.

Social:

- Establish a support network for young travellers.
- Provide resources for mental health and well-being.
- Encourage participation in group activities and clubs.

4) In-country support:

- Establish a local support system for young travellers.
- Regular check-ins and support from local mentors or guides.
- Clear communications channels for immediate assistance.

6) Regular updates:

- Continuous communication channels for safety updates.
- Encourage reporting of any issues or concerns.
- Periodic reviews of safety measures, considering the specific needs of young travellers.

7) Travel safety:

- Guidance on safe transportation methods.
- Encourage the use of sustainable transportation services.
- Provide information on safe travel times and routes.

8) Post-program support:

- Debriefing sessions for returning young travellers.
- Support for reintegration and potential reverse culture shock.
- Gather feedback for continuous improvement of safety measures and support services.



Mon voyage à Sofia a été une expérience remplie d'enrichissement.

J'ai vu une culture, un mode de vie et des richesses différentes de la nôtre. Une grande ville avec divers monuments, des parcs magnifiques et une Histoire très intéressante et captivante. Mon séjour a été très bénéfique pour moi et lors de la formation, j'ai approfondi mes connaissances et appris de nombreuses choses sur l'Europe et l'Union Européenne : ce qu'elle peut apporter comme aide financière, technique et humaine, les mobilités qu'elle propose aux jeunes européens... Ce voyage a été une très bonne expérience et me donne envie d'en découvrir davantage sur d'autres pays de l'Europe.

- *Juliette Champion*

My trip to Sofia was an enriching experience.

I saw a culture, a way of life and riches different from our own. A great city with various monuments, magnificent parks and a very interesting and captivating history. My stay was very beneficial for me, and during the training I deepened my knowledge and learned many things about Europe and the European Union: what it can offer in terms of financial, technical and human support, the mobility opportunities it offers young Europeans... This trip was a very good experience, and makes me want to discover more about other European countries.

- *Juliette Champion*



MEDITERRÁNEO INTERNATIONAL ERASMUS CENTRE, SPAIN

The project was really interesting because it allowed me to discover the possibilities of mobility for young people in rural areas. Working with people from other countries, listening to their ideas and learning from their realities helped me to broaden my own points of view. Thanks to that we considered more scenarios, and we reached better outcomes that we couldn't have achieved by ourselves. Overall, it was an experience with which I think I've grown up and learnt valuable things.

- *José Manuel Verdejo Llopis.*



ASSOCIATION WALK TOGETHER,
BULGARIA

Engaging in this project proved to be incredibly captivating as it provided me with insights into the potential mobility options available for young individuals residing in rural areas. Collaborating with individuals from diverse countries not only exposed me to a myriad of ideas but also allowed me to glean insights from their unique perspectives and experiences.

- *Boyka Borisova.*



AY INSTITUTE, LITHUANIA

In the summer of 2023, Vilnius became a melting pot of cultures and ideas through the RYMO event. This gathering was a significant step in connecting young people from rural areas of Europe, including France, Spain, Bulgaria, and Lithuania, with urban experiences and intercultural dialogues.

The essence of RYMO was vividly captured in the joy and curiosity of rural youths as they navigated the city life of Vilnius. Their eagerness to engage with a different environment highlighted the event's success in introducing them to new perspectives and lifestyles. One of the key aspects of RYMO was its role in enhancing language and social skills. Participants not only practised English but also learned the art of communication in a diverse setting. This experience was invaluable in helping them build confidence and social competence.

Perhaps the most remarkable outcome of RYMO was the forging of intercultural friendships. These bonds went beyond mere acquaintanceships, representing a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures. This aspect was instrumental in promoting unity and mutual respect among participants. The event served as a bridge, connecting rural youths with urban realities, thereby broadening their horizons and challenging their preconceptions about city life. By providing this platform, RYMO empowered rural youths, instilling in them a sense of belonging and importance within the larger European community. RYMO epitomised the spirit of European unity, showcasing how diversity, when embraced, can lead to a harmonious and enriched community.

The RYMO event in Vilnius was not merely a gathering; it was a celebration of diversity and a testament to the power of inclusive opportunities. It marked a significant step towards building a more interconnected and empathetic Europe, with the joy and growth of its participants standing as a testament to its success.

- *Lina Žemaitytė.*



ASSOCIATION POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES INITIATIVES CITOYENNES ET EUROPÉENNES, FRANCE

As a volunteer in an international mobility association, taking part in the RYMO project's training cycles enabled me to meet French and foreign professionals working in contact with young people, and to discuss their experiences and future plans with them. These discussions were a source of new ideas to develop and put into practice in order to improve working methods and offer more comprehensive support. I was also able to expand my network and find common ground with other people, which also encouraged exchanges outside the formal training framework. This experience has been very useful for my present and my future, and I hope that other projects will be set up to continue to evolve.

- *Serena Rivaroli.*



Conclusions

We hope that with this guide, you will be much more oriented to what kind of mobility can be in line with you, and what are the steps to follow in case you decide to apply for it. From the RYMO consortium, we encourage you to participate in this important and beautiful experience that mobility can be for you. You have seen that you can improve many of your skills and improve both your personal and professional life, so let's get to work!