

My Mobility

Students from Ca' Foscari Recount their Learning Experiences Abroad

An unexpected meeting

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In a moment of crisis in Stuttgart Eliana Spampinato meets a friendly secretary and discovers that it really is a small world.

My name is Eliana Spampinato, I'm a student at Ca Foscari University in Venice, enrolled in the Magistral in Philosophical Sciences and I would like to tell you about an event that occurred during my recently completed Erasmus study in Germany, at the University of Stuttgart. Even though it was my second Erasmus, I was very excited and worried as I would have to learn a language as difficult as German, so when I had to go to the studio of one of my German teachers, I was terrified of having to express myself in German; I knew I could speak English, but it was as if my brain had decided I no longer knew any language other than Italian I was so afraid, that I had finally decided to go home and write a simple email to the professor, when his secretary came out of the office and gave me a warm smile as she invited me to come in with her hand. With a lump in my throat, I entered.

While I was trying to organize myself mentally to formulate a logical and grammatically correct speech in English, she told me, in Italian, 'Don't worry, I speak a little in Italian'. At the moment, I thought I misunderstood and stared at her, bewildered. From my look, she understood what I had thought and she burst into a thunderous laugh while I didn't know what to think or do. She returned to look at me and she explained that had done, a few years ago, an Erasmus in Bologna and that she had also visited the city of Venice and Treviso. At that point, I smiled and relaxed thinking about my city and Venice and I told her that in Italy I was living in Treviso and that I was a student at the university Ca' Foscari in Venice. She opened her eyes wide and she went to her desk to show me a power point she was doing right on the city of Treviso and on a historical fact that had really happened in 1214.

While we were talking, time passed, but we two weren't realizing that, because we were telling each other a bit about our lives, drinking tea and sipping coffee. Ania, this was her name, was from Austria and she loved

Italy, so much she had melancholy and wanted to help me solve all the things I had to do. As the saying goes: wanting is power. In half an hour she managed to do what I could do in two hours at least: she called to my German Erasmus coordinator and told her to be found in her office because I needed to talk to her and she also called one my professors to give me the exam certificate; she could not talk to him, but she told me to leave my contact information because she would have thought about it. I, astonished, looked at her and thanked her for all she had done for me; she smiled at me and told me that it was she who thanked me for keeping her company, for having listened to her and for having talked to her a little about her beloved Italy. I smiled at her and told her we could stay in contact, if she pleased her. And she immediately told me she would like it very much. After leaving my phone contact, we said goodbye and, once! had left the office, I realized that I had been afraid for nothing.