

Visiting the Department of Dermatology at Roskilde Hospital, Denmark

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Elga Mozeika applied for the Erasmus Student Mobility for Placements which she received for a 5-month training in Roskilde, Denmark. Read her report below and become inspired to test this opportunity yourself.

I am currently a second-year dermatology and venereology resident, as well as a PhD student, at Riga Stradins University, Riga, Latvia. Thanks to the Erasmus training exchange scholarship provided by my home university I had the opportunity to spend 5 months as a fellow at the Department of Dermatology, Roskilde Hospital, Denmark, as part of my specialty training.

This scholarship, an Erasmus Student Mobility for Placements, provides the opportunity to a student in higher education (which includes all specialty residents in training) to spend a traineeship or internship period of between 3 and 12 months in an organization in another European country. Participants are selected by the home institution through an interview evaluating their grades, activities, language ability, motivation and pre-arrangements, as most of the arrangements have to be made by the student who wants to go abroad. The value of the scholarship varies from 500 to 850 Euros per month, depending on the country of exchange (850 Euros for students going to Denmark) and should cover most daily expenses, such as rent, food and transportation. Each applicant can receive only two Erasmus grants in a lifetime; one for a study period and one for a placement period. Study exchanges are usually organized between universities with bilateral agreements for basic study years, while placement exchange mostly involves individual arrangements, which may be more difficult to organize. In my case I was fortunate to be warmly welcomed by Professor Gregor Jemec and the whole Department of Dermatology at Roskilde Hospital. In order that I underwent a fully recognized training period my clinical placement was also accepted by the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Copenhagen.

As I spoke no Danish on my arrival I spent my time in the Department as an observer following other doctors with their patient programmes. During my stay in Denmark, together with other doctors, I have seen more than 800 patients and participated in many treatments, including laser therapy.

Patients in Latvia have to pay for most of the cost of dermatology treatments themselves; therefore treatments are much more limited or sometimes not available at all. I thus gained invaluable experience, seeing many patients treated with biological, photodynamic and light therapies. Screening of transplant patients, control of skin tumours, laser treatment for complications after radiation therapy, and great cooperation with plastic surgeons are only a few of the examples of patient care that we do not experience on a daily basis in Latvia. In the past few years, dermatology and venereology in Latvia has focused much more on aesthetics and private clinics, so I was very fortunate to receive training in a hospital department with complicated and interesting classical dermatology patients. In addition, I had the opportunity to participate in research in collaboration with the Department of Pathology at Roskilde Hospital and various educational activities.

Having finished my 5 months' training in Denmark I can say that I have learned a lot, seen a lot and experienced many things that at home I might only have read about in dermatology textbooks or seen after several years.

I would like to say a very big thank you to Professor Gregor B. E. Jemec for accepting me in his department, and to Dr Tomas Norman Dam for teaching me so many theoretical and practical aspects of laser treatment, Dr Lars Erik Bryld for paediatric dermatology Mondays, Dr Michael Heidenheim and Dr Deirdre Nathalie Dufour for their advice and help, and to all the other great junior doctors, PhD students, nurses and secretaries, who made me feel at home in the department. At the same time, I can definitely recommend other young dermatologists to take the opportunity to apply for this training scholarship. The Erasmus scholarship is available to students in higher education in any European country to study in any other chosen European country, with almost unlimited individually arranged programme options, for a specially arranged period with subsequent full recognition at home. I am returning home inspired, with new vision, and even with a basic knowledge of Danish.