

## “For a foreigner, the French language is like music!”



*Roxana Irimia, a student at Lucian Blaga University in Romania, spent a year on an Erasmus exchange at uB in 2013-2014. Find out her memories and her view of France in her interview.*

This journalism student wanted to discover the true France behind all the clichés and preconceptions that foreigners can have about us: the baguette, Napoleon, Asterix and Obelix, the TGV, snails...

“I also chose this country because of the passion I have for the French language and the literary tradition which gave us Balzac, Victor Hugo, Paul Valéry...” Roxana tells us. She chose Dijon because she wanted to live in a typical French town with small streets which hide old stories. She did not regret her choice.

“I am very curious and I am constantly looking for change in my life and new experiences which will help my personality grow. The first month was the hardest: we had to fill in various administrative papers and I admit it was not a very exciting task. But once that was done, *la vie en rose* could start.”

### Level of French

French language is a compulsory subject in Romania. Roxana started studying it at school and then decided to continue at University, where she also had the choice between English and German.

---

*“Before arriving here I already had a good level but now I can express myself spontaneously in written or spoken form. I was really able to perfect my French. Having French friends helps a lot in learning a language: they helped me to better understand the informal language and to use typical expressions which we are not used to hearing in our country.”*

---

Classes also allowed Roxana to learn a specialised and technical vocabulary. “Listening to the radio, music and reading in French are also good ways of perfecting the language.”

## Classes at the uB

“The classes put on by the uB were very interesting. Certain classes were very easy compared to the classes which I took in my country. My favorite class was the linguistics module. I was especially drawn to getting to know typical expressions and the language’s origins but also the problems the French language faces.”

The only difficulty Roxana found was taking notes during class. “The professors spoke quickly sometimes and I did not have time to take down all the details. But a French classmate helped me a lot by giving me her notes. The professors made no distinction between me, an international student, and the other French students, which I found positive and highly stimulating. They were very understanding each time I made a grammatical error or each time I did not understand what we had to do for homework.”

---

*“I was the only international student in my department of IUT Information-communication and the professors were always attentive and welcoming.”*

---

Roxana also explains that the exams were the same for French and international students. “I had written and oral exams but also coursework to hand in. Some exams were easy and some were very hard sometimes. The key to success is always to revise your notes diligently, know the subject well and above all be motivated! At times I received 18 or 16 out of 20 but also 8 or 9 – it happens! But most of the time I always had more than the average and I passed the year.”

## Life in Dijon

Roxana lived in a student residence hall where she paid 153 euros a month. On average she spent around 500 euros per month. “The room was small but satisfactory for a student,” she says. During her free time she practiced sports, travelled and took part in plays at the [CIEF](#).

---

*“Dijon is a typical French town, small but very welcoming. Maybe the people in Dijon do not smile a lot, do not realise the beauty of the architecture in Dijon and do not have the time to stop to watch the small performances in the street but nevertheless I think they live a beautiful French life and maybe, from my point of view, the sound and beauty of their language is enough for them and they do not need to stop to listen to the man who sings on the corner of the street. The French language is like music – at least for a foreigner.”*

---

## Personal development

“Thanks to this stay abroad I feel like I have grown on a personal level – finding myself in new situations, in a foreign country, I discovered aspects to my personality which I was not aware of before. When you decide to go abroad you throw yourself into an unknown adventure and I think that the main idea that we should take from this experience is not to perfectly pronounce the word *drôle* (this word causes me problems) but to discover yourself, observe and analyse your behavior, your reactions in another environment which is completely unknown.”

---

*“If I could do it again, I would do the same things, I would take the same decisions. Small matter where you go, you will always get an experience which will develop and enrich your personality.”*

---

Roxana spent the summer of 2014 in Germany, after which she returned to Romania to finish her studies at the faculty of journalism.



*In Paris*



*Dijon campus in winter*