**I can say I am lucky because I have been on a scholarship abroad twice, both times in Italy. For the first time, I studied for half a year as an exchange student at the University of Pisa from September 2017, and for the second time I spent my three-month internship in Rome at the Research Institute for Agricultural Policy and Organic Farming from July 2018. Although both trips were great and adventurous, now I will tell you about my first trip to Pisa because it was the real student experience I can recommend to everyone to experience once in a lifetime!**

 **On September 1, 2017, the ADVENTURE started for me. I’ve always loved traveling, exploring new landscapes, and Italy attracted me in some indefinable way. When I first heard about the possibility of an exchange program, I immediately felt that yes, I want to go! I have no idea how, where, but I will go. I remember thinking in Padua or Ancona at first, but in the end, with a sudden turn at the last minute, it became Pisa. I do not regret it! Well, I think it was one of the most special and exciting half years of my life. Finding a room was not very easy from a distance, but I was lucky and I found the apartment just a few small streets from the famous Leaning Tower, which I could call my home at the time. I lived in a house with four Italian college girls, I couldn’t complain, my wish came true, I fell into the middle of a real Italian temperament! The first few days and weeks were very exciting, as the host team of ESN (Erasmus Student Network) exchange students in Pisa did their best to get to know, integrate and have fun with our foreign students! The first week was full of organized programs: there were introductory afternoons, an ethnic cooking club, interactive language learning, sightseeing, excursions, and a party until dawn every night. Then there was no time to get bored! Fortunately, friendships soon developed, in addition to Italians, I made friends mainly with Turks and Poles, but in fact I found friends and acquaintances from almost all continents in half a year. From Mexico through many, many European countries to Mongolia, I was lucky enough to get to know my fellow students and learn about their special culture.**

**Needless to say, the situation offered an excellent opportunity to practice a foreign language, by this time I had already learned to speak English at a high level. But at university and in everyday life, in addition to English, I also had the opportunity to learn Italian, which I enjoyed and learned from zero to about level B1 in half a year.I was very excited on the first day of teaching, which began in the second week. I remember feeling a little alone while I waited for class to start, as I only found local Italians around me, no one at the Agricultural University was foreign but me, at least then it seemed. But in the end, another foreign guy came, so I was already reassured that I was all right, in a really good place. And the initial fright was replaced by joy, as it turned out that my teachers and fellow students were super friendly and helpful! It was unusual for me and yet good that the professors had a friendly relationship with the students. As a student, we enjoyed the respect of our professors, and we certainly tried to earn the trust we had in advance. The time I spent at university was wonderful, I remember the subject of biopesticides was my favorite because we got involved in very interesting research in the field of biological plant protection. But I also really liked the subject of viticulture and olive growing, because we were on practice several times on the beautiful Tuscan slopes, where we pruned the grapes and studied the olive trees. It was a real relaxation and excursion for me. In addition, the education was so well organized that we followed the path of the grapes from the capital to the wine bottle by learning about wine and olive oil tasting as part of one of the exercises and trying out the fine, local Tuscan wines. So then it was really easy to remember what I learned. Within the Italian lessons, learning the language also went very quickly because the teacher refused to speak in another language, so we were forced to understand what she wanted. Indeed, everyone learned Italian without exception. In the end, my hardest subject was general chemistry. The teacher handed me one of the American university textbooks in PDF format, and then it was all left to me. It was a challenge, but I am very grateful for that in retrospect as well, because I was able to improve a lot through it. I remember knowing the concept of pH by heart in English, but I had to think about it in Hungarian.**

**During the semester, the weekends were always exciting, we traveled to the beach many times, we even had a beach with friends in October! The ESN team also organized a monthly trip to another city, so I got to Florence, Perugia, Puccini’s hometown, Lucca, and the local Verdi Theater, among others. We played a lot of sports, I became a member of the basketball team, for example. Alas and divine Italian food! I think I left most of my pocket money in the local "trattorias" for a delicious pizza, spaghetti, penne or lasagna, and of course the unadulterated Italian ice cream I almost always bought everywhere, because for the same amount of money at least three times as much dumplings were given finer than at home. We spent so many good dinners with my friends. In the meantime, I became more and more independent, and successfully meeting the new challenges also strengthened my confidence. We had a lot of fun, we went to the local university club every Wednesday and Friday, sometimes we played board games, sometimes we even cooked, everyone presenting their own ethnic food, presenting it to others. An unforgettable experience for all.**

**Towards the end of the semester, all my exams went well, I got the grades from 27 to 29, which corresponds to 5 in Hungary, as they are interestingly graded from 0 to 30. It was a touching experience that one of the professors fell in love with us so much that he invited his small group to one of the local restaurants to celebrate the successful exams together.**

**The semester flew by incredibly fast and I certainly didn't return to Hungary as the same person I left. I learned a lot outside the walls of the university, the adventures and challenges strengthened, reshaped me, and the many, many new friendships showed me the other face of life. With a heavy heart, I said goodbye to one of the defining venues of my youth and to the many friends when the time came. It was a really defining and unforgettable experience to be an exchange student abroad, which is nothing to spare. I can wholeheartedly recommend all students to go into it because they can enrich their souls for a lifetime with these experiences. I know it may seem scary at first, but you will be surrounded by a lot of support and help and if you walk with open eyes and hearts, you will have fabulous adventures through friendships!**