



ATHENS – Final Report

Month/Year:	11/2025
Code and name of the course:	ITU13, Biotechnology
Host University:	Istanbul Technical University (ITU)
Course Language:	English
Dates:	15.11.–22.11.2025
Student:	Pavel Říkovský
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Transport:

Means of transport (+price): Direct flight from Prague (Václav Havel Airport) to Istanbul (Istanbul Airport) and back; 4035.50 CZK for both flights (no checked baggage).

Local transport: public transport only (subway, buses, trams); 790 CZK in total.

Accommodation:

We booked a hotel in a group of 4. The final price was 4041.30 CZK per person for the entirety of our stay (9 nights).

Food:

I mostly ate street food, in local restaurants and cafes and occasionally visited the local supermarkets. I was able to keep track of my expenses and the total amount of money spent for nourishment (food and coffee) was 6599 TRY in total. That is about 3250 CZK.

Scholarship – the amount you have received:

I've received 10600 CZK.

Please state in percentage: The scholarship covered 77.31 % of my expenses.

In the item of “my expenses” (that I used to calculate the percentage of my expenses covered by the scholarship), I included accommodation, transportation (both local and airfare), food, the mandatory EDA fee, the SIM card price, and entrance fees to historical sites. I purposely excluded spending on gifts, souvenirs, and beer.

Course schedule (how it was organised):

We had classes starting on Monday (17th November) and then every day through to Friday, when we had a final test. The class was supposed to begin at 10:30 each day, but the teacher was usually late, so we often started at 10:45 or later. The class was scheduled to end at 12:00, but it sometimes finished earlier. We also didn't have a morning lesson on Monday and Wednesday. Afterward, we had a 2-hour lunch break, followed by an afternoon lesson from 14:00 to 15:30. However, there were no afternoon classes on Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, we had a short quiz in place of the afternoon lesson. Additionally, the afternoon classes were much shorter than expected. One day, the afternoon class ended after just 47 minutes, 14 of which were spent waiting for the teacher to arrive.

Although we had a lot of free time (which wasn't necessarily a bad thing since it allowed us to explore the city more), the lessons didn't feel very productive or worth the time at all. Attendance was mandatory, but the lessons themselves were often not very engaging. The teacher mostly just read from the presentation slides and played some "educational" videos from YouTube. Her English was understandable but not always clear. She struggled with some longer words while reading and would often solve the issue by simply not reading them.

Spare time:

We had plenty of free time, and I spent most of it exploring the city on foot. During our first full day in Istanbul, the four of us went sightseeing together, and it was fantastic. We visited several mosques, including the Blue Mosque, and wandered through the Grand Bazaar and the surrounding markets. I also went to see the Basilica Cistern later in the week. There was no entrance fee for the Blue Mosque or the other mosques, but there is one for Hagia Sophia and the Basilica Cistern. Fortunately, the price is much lower for students (only a quarter in the case of the Basilica Cistern), and the ITU student card is enough to receive the discount.

We also spent a lot of time getting to know other international students. We met a lot of new people, though unfortunately almost no locals, since none were part of the exchange program (obviously). For me, this was the only downside of the Athens program. I would have loved to experience the culture alongside someone with local insight!

Overall Evaluation:

Overall, I'd strongly encourage any student to take part in at least a short stay abroad, and the Athens week is a great opportunity for exactly that. It's a meaningful way to step outside familiar routines and see how everyday life unfolds within a different culture. For me, the experience was truly enriching. I met wonderful people, gained insight into their daily lives, and picked up some new things along the way. I also had the chance to explore a new city and get a feel for what it's like to live there.

As for the school, it functioned fine in most aspects. Even though the organization was sometimes questionable and could have been significantly better (especially the EDA activities), the trip was absolutely worth it.

!!Obligatory Enclosure: A4 POSTER (preferably with photos*)

(The poster with photos has been uploaded separately.)