I picked Poland for my exchange studies, because I didn’t want to learn Polish. The University of Łódź offered a very wide selection of courses that were English-taught. I also chose Poland because I have several Polish friends at home and this made me curious about their country. It’s a beautiful place, with a lovely coastal area, wonderful old towns, old forests in the mountains with fascinating wildlife. The landscapes are stunning and there’s a lot to discover.

The most obvious difference between VUB/Belgium and Poland was public transport, which in Poland isn’t that well organised and there are very few bike lanes. Also, quite a few buildings are in need of renovation, but when they build/renovate, they do it amazingly well. I’ve been very impressed with what I’ve seen here. In academic terms, things are a bit more relaxed here, a bit more interactive, but VUB is better organised.
Where did the interest come from? Friends/family, fellow students? I decided to go on an exchange because my brother had done it and he had a really good time. Additionally, I love travelling, seeing new places, meeting new people, so I knew I’d go on an exchange from the beginning.

What where the three key decision-makers that means “Yes, I’m doing this”?
1. The University of Łódź is known for marketing
2. I was keen to discover Poland, and with low prices travelling around the country was cheap
3. The university has a wide range of English-taught courses

What were the top 5 things you’ve learned while being abroad?
1. Intercultural communication, since we are a mix of Erasmus students and we talk and compare a lot
2. I have learned a bit of Polish and have become creative in communicating
3. Empathy - I share a room with a Turskish girl, so we’ve been learning from each other, with a sense of humour and and interest in each other’s cultures.
4. I discovered how easily you integrate, thanks to meeting new people, also outside the university, so I’ve met lots of local people
5. I’ve come to appreciate the different cultures within Europe, and how different people are from Northern, Eastern and Southern Europe.

Would you recommend students to go and venture out into the world?
“Definitely, yes! It’s a great adventure and a lot of fun. It makes you grow as a person, and you’re never really alone and make so many friends!”

Will you remain active internationally? Yes for sure! I’ll visit people who have invited me to their home countries, and I’m sure I’ll host several of them in Belgium. I also hope I’ll get a job that allows me to travel, and am now also more motivated to learn new languages.