

**30 YEARS OF ERASMUS SUCCESS
STORIES
IN EUROPE**

**35 YEARS OF ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
BETWEEN
HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY
&
100 YEARS OLD
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA**

ERASMUS+
CREDIT MOBILITY PROJECT
2016–2018



Erasmus+



広島大学

30 Years of Erasmus Success Stories in Europe

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CREDIT MOBILITY BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF HIROSHIMA AND MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA

Success stories of the exchanged Erasmus staff

The Medical University of Sofia has won a project for the exchange of Erasmus teachers and students with the University of Hiroshima, Japan for the academic years 2016/18. The total number of contracted exchanges are 12 – 6 students and 6 teachers. In connection with the implementation of the project activities, three teachers arrived from 15 May to 19 May 2017 and an expert from the International Department, the organizer of Erasmus mobility on their behalf.

Prof. Tajiro Sueda presented lectures on Surgical therapy for atrial fibrillation at the "Maxima" Aula of university hospital "Saint Ekaterina"

The following lectures were presented at the Anatomy Auditorium at the Medical Faculty:

Prof. Takemasha Sakaguchi - on the subject: Microbiology, Virology. Perspectives of replication and pathogenicity of mammalian viruses such as influenza viruses, hepatitis viruses and herpes viruses. Current status of vaccines and drugs against viruses.

Prof. Norio Sakai - on the topic: regulation of serotonin transporter (SERT) function via its membrane trafficking.

The lectures were attended by more than 350 students and lecturers from the Medical Faculty of the Medical University - Sofia. Within Erasmus period, they visited the university hospitals: "St. Catherine" and "St. Ivan Rilski", the cell signaling transduction laboratory at the Department of Medical Chemistry and Biochemistry at the Faculty of Medicine. At Faculty of Dental Medicine they met with the Vice Rector for International Integration and Project FUNDING – Prof. Dr. Radomir Ugrinov, MD, DSc. With the head of the Department of International Integration and Project Funding - Prof. Dr. Radoslav Girchev, MD, DSc, including the experts from Erasmus Office, discussed the Internal Rules for Administration of Erasmus Mobility between the two Universities, the procedures for selecting students for exchanges.

Meetings with university lecturers and students were organized, as well as they participated in training on the "Sophisticated Medical Teacher in a Multicultural Environment" according to the project's program.

On behalf of Medical University – Sofia has also have been sent three teachers – two from Medical Faculty and one from Faculty of Dental Medicine from July 1 to July 8, 2017.

Prof. Dr. Radoslav Girchev, MD, DSc. and Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Ishkitiev, MD, PhD, from the Faculty of Medicine and Chief Assist. Professor Dr. Nikolay Apostolov, MD, PhD, from the Faculty of Dental Medicine.

Prof. Dr. Radoslav Girchev, MD, DSc in seminar hall 1, in the building of Basic and Sociomedical Research, at the University of Hiroshima delivered lectures presenting the structure and curricula of the Medical University - Sofia, including the educational objectives and the learning outcomes of Physiology training as required by the Bologna Process. He also presented the ERASMUS credit mobility at the Medical University of Sofia with the industrialized partner countries of the 13 region. During a seminar organized

by Professor Hideya Yamamoto, he presented a scientific report entitled "Effects of Newly Synthesized Nociceptin Analogues Modified in Ninth Position on the Sympatho-Vagal Balance in Spontaneously Hypertensive Rats."

Chief Assist. Professor Dr. Nikolay Ishkitiev, MD, PhD, delivered lectures on "Potential for Differentiation of Stem Cells in the Dental District". During his Erasmus stay Dr. Ishkitiev attended the Department of Biomaterials, the Department of Biochemistry headed by Professor Chisa Sukunami, the Department of Oral Biology and Engineering of Prof. Hiroki Nikava, with whom they exchanged views on future cooperation.

Chief Assist. Professor Dr. Nikolay Apostolov, MD, PhD delivered lectures on "Prosthetic adhesives - application and necessity", held meetings with the Dean of the Faculty of Dental Medicine - Prof. Kuichi Kato and the Head of the Department of Oral Physiology Prof. Sugita, with whom discussed the possibilities for collaborative research projects.

The lectures were attended by more than 300 students and professors from the Medical Faculty of the University of Hiroshima.

CONGRATULATION FOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAM

TAIJIRO SUEDA, Prof. of Cardiovascular Surgery, Hiroshima University, Graduate School of Medicine

I celebrate the 30th anniversary of Erasmus plus program cordially. My relationship between Bulgaria and Japan began from 2008. I received a young Bulgarian cardiac surgeon as a graduate school student supported by the Japanese ministry for education and science. He stayed in Hiroshima University for 4 years and 6 months and performed gene analysis which occurred acute aortic dissection. He got his title of PhD by this work. His name is Dr. Zehcho Naychov and works in the department of cardiovascular surgery in Sophia University now. I belonged to the Hiroshima-Bulgarian association from his stay to now. I had been to Sophia twice. The first visit to Sophia was 2011 May after the congress of the European Society for Cardiovascular Surgery which was held in Dubrovnik. The second visit to Sophia was from 14 to 20 May 2017 with support of Erasmus plus program. Prof. Sakaguchi (virology) and Prof. Sakai(pharmacology) also attended this program. During this stay, we discussed the following plan of the next Erasmus plus program between Sophia Medical University and Hiroshima University 15 May 2017.



I presented my paper 16 May, entitled “ Surgical therapy for atrial fibrillation“ which included etiology of atrial fibrillation, pharmacological and catheter treatment of atrial fibrillation. I devised a new surgical procedure for atrial fibrillation, which gave a lot of suggestion to resolve the real mechanism of atrial fibrillation. Then, I presented my procedure with basic concept and procedural aspects. Our visit was successful and continued to send 3 medical students supported by Erasmus plus program from October 2017 for 3 months. One Bulgarian student also will come to the Hiroshima University from January 2018, and two from April in the same year. I hope this Erasmus plus program continues in future. Again, congratulation for 30th anniversary of Erasmus plus program.



16th of May lecture at the "Maxima" Aula of university hospital "Saint Ekaterina", Sofia.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAM

TAKEMASA SAKAGUCHI, M.D., Ph.D., 2017, Hiroshima University, Japan



Academic exchanges by the ERASMUS + program between Medical University – Sofia and Hiroshima University have started in this commemorable year. Three professors of Hiroshima University, Dr. Sueda, Dr. Sakai and I, visited Medical University – Sofia in May 2017 and gave lectures in a long-standing auditorium that had a stone dissecting table in the center. Our lectures were also honored as a part of the lecture series, 2017 International Workshop, for the 100-year celebration of Medical University – Sofia. In this occasion, we visited a pharmacology laboratory and a biochemistry laboratory that were equipped with cutting-edge analytical machines. We also attended a scene of medical student education in one of the university hospitals. We had an opportunity to talk with brilliant and active students.

The medical education system in Medical University - Sofia, which may be common to other EU member states, is different from ours.

Students concentrate on one subject for a period of several weeks, and students have lectures and clinical clerkship alternatingly. The learning unit is called a “cycle”. This system was new for us.

Before being dispatched to Sofia, I must confess that the location of Bulgaria was somewhat obscure for me. However, after staying in Sofia, I was fascinated by Bulgaria. I could experience the European atmosphere and I enjoyed delicious food and wine. I was overwhelmed by the solemnity of Aleksandar Nevski Memorial Church and Rila Monastery of Greek Orthodox as well as many other churches and remains. After coming back to Japan, I become a member of the Hiroshima-Bulgaria Association, which is a historic private exchange organization, and started to work for friendship between Hiroshima and Bulgaria.

Three staff teachers, Prof. Girchev, Dr. Ishkitiev and Dr. Apostolov, came to Hiroshima from Sofia in July 2017. We have just sent three excellent students from Hiroshima to Sofia, and they are taking “cycle”s in Medical University – Sofia. One medical student and two dental students from Sofia will be coming. The medical student will arrive first in January 2018. We are now preparing to accept the student. These efforts will bring rich fruits to the EU and Japan. I am happy to be involved in the staff and student mobility program of the ERASMUS + program, and I sincerely hope for further development of the program.



NORIO SAKAI Professor at
Department of Molecular and
Pharmacological Neuroscience
Graduate School of Biomedical &
Health Sciences
Hiroshima University



ERASMUS Period: **From May 14– to May 21, 2017** country and receiving university: **Bulgaria , Medical University -Sofia**

My success Erasmus story:

I have reinforced or extended my professional network or built up new contacts.

I have reinforced the cooperation with the partner institution/organization.

I have learned from good practices abroad.

I have increased my social, linguistic and/or cultural competences.

I have had a good opportunity to present my own research achievement.

I have learned the educational system in foreign countries especially in Europe.

I have learned the actual situation of medicine in foreign countries especially in Europe

PROF. DR. RADOSLAV GIRCHEV, MD, DSc.

ERASMUS Period: from 01 July – to 08 July, 2017, Japan, Hiroshima University



The main purpose of my visit to Japan was to get acquainted with the University of Hiroshima- one of the leading universities in Japan.

The core of the discussion, held at the official meeting organised by the Dean of the Medical Faculty, was the cooperation between our two universities, important parts of it being the continuation of the Erasmus+ project as well as the joint research. In addition, we also exchanged information about the principles and the organisation of our educational systems.

The Erasmus + project was tackled with further and in greater detail at the talks at the International relations department with a focus on the procedure for selection of students to participate in the programme.

Apart from the meeting, we had the valuable opportunity to be shown around the hospital complex as well as several leading research laboratories.

During our visit to the hospital compound /which included the dental sector as well/ we could get an informed insight into the way the whole body functioned. The visit to the laboratories gave us the opportunity to discuss ideas with a lot of the university prominent scientists and I, on my part, had the chance to present some of my research work and achievements.



Laboratory at the Department of Cardiovascular Studies headed by Prof. Hideya Yamamoto at the Hiroshima University, Japan, 05.07.2017



Meeting with the DEAN Body of the Medical Faculty of Hiroshima University, 3rd July 2017

„My visit to Japan, the Hiroshima university in particular, proved a further success owing to the effort and contribution by our friends from the Hiroshima-Bulgaria association. The warm hospitality, the rich Japanese culture and the world – famous delicious Japanese food made it not only fruitful but unforgettable experience as well“.

D-R NIKOLAY ISHKITIEV DDS, PhD

ERASMUS Period: from 01 July – to 08 July, 2017, Japan, Hiroshima University



My ERASMUS experience in Hiroshima gave me exceptional opportunity to see how one of the leading universities in Japan works, as well as a chance to personally experience Japan.

From academic point of view ERASMUS exchange gave me insight of the Japanese approach towards personal dentistry and medicine – I visited

the biomaterials science laboratory, molecular and cellular biology laboratory, metabolic engineering laboratory as well as the hospital complex, including dental hospital, cardiovascular hospital, etc. We exchanged research ideas with many of the leading researchers in the Hiroshima University, like prof. Koichi Kato, prof. Isao Hirata, prof. Katsumi Fujimoto, prof. Chisa Shukunami, etc. We planned on future collaboration. My stay in Japan extended my professional network and reinforced the cooperation between Medical University – Sofia and Hiroshima University.

From personal point of view I have increased my job satisfaction and have improved my foreign language skills. Although I have been in Hiroshima before, Ms. Hitomi Ogawa organized our stay perfectly and managed to show us Hiroshima in such a way, that we fell in love with it as we increased our cultural competences. Overall, during our stay in Japan I made new friends, exchanged ideas with some of the leading Japanese scientists in my area of research, experienced Japanese hospitality, Japanese cuisine and Japanese cultural heritage. I am sure ERASMUS program helped me increase my career opportunities by giving me chance to improve my teaching skills, to compare my research methods with leading laboratories in the world, to learn applications of new technologies in my research and to build up new contacts, extending my professional network.

D-R NIKOLAY APOSTOLOV, DDS, PhD

ERASMUS Period: from 01 July – to 08 July, 2017, Japan, Hiroshima University



D-R N. APOSTOLOV, PhD, FDM-Sofia, MU-Sofia

ERASMUS Period: 01 July – 08 July, 2017, Japan, Hiroshima University

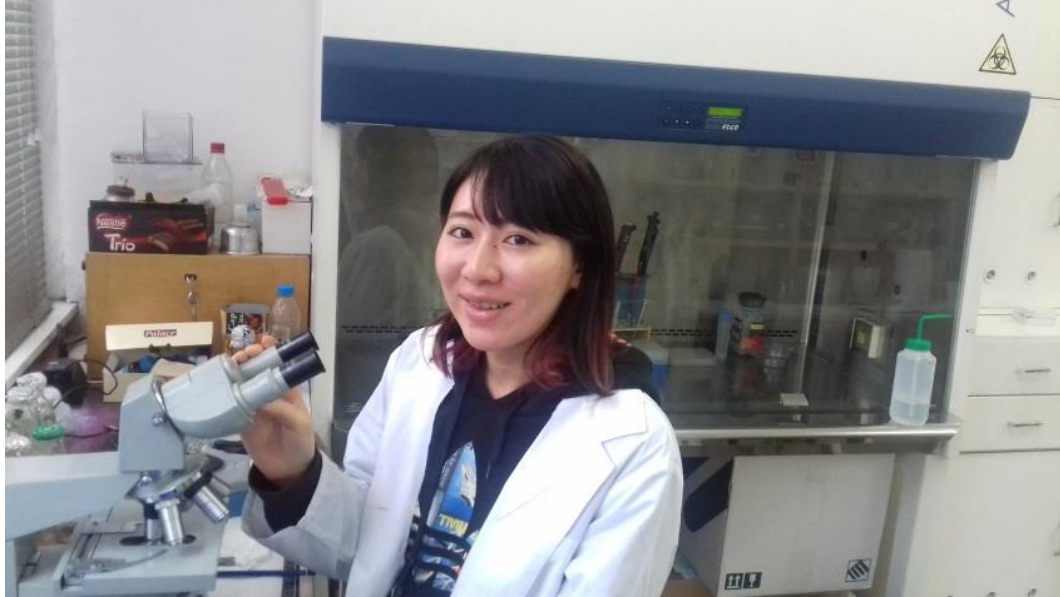
My Erasmus+ experience gave me a great chance to see how one of the best medical universities in Japan works. I saw the working process in the Departments of Prosthetic dentistry, Orthodontics and Dental Physiology. Also i saw the University hospital, the process of treatment and prevention about the patients. I had great appointments with the dean of the University and lots of Medical and Dental medicine teacher. I had a lecture about the dental adhesives, the subject of my dissertation. Before my mission in Japan i had an article about the denture adhesives which was the most read publication in Research Gate, Prosthetic dentistry. The lecture was approved by my Japan colleagues and we had a great discussion after that. After my arrival in Bulgaria i wrote a material about Erasmus+ in the newspaper of FDM-Sofia and an article in Infodent magazine about the denture adhesives.

From personal point of view it was a great experience to see the historical city Hiroshima, the Japanese culture, traditions. The meeting between me, my Bulgarian colleagues Prof. Gyrctchev and d-r Ishkitiev and the association Bulgaria-Hiroshima was another great moment. I am sure ERASMUS+ program helped me to improve my teaching skills, to compare my researches with one of the leading laboratories in Japan, to build up new contacts with great lecturers and colleagues.

CREDIT MOBILITY BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF HIROSHIMA AND MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA

Success stories of the exchanged Erasmus Students

NATSUKI CHO, ERASMUS Period: **from 4th Oct. 2017 to 8th Jan. 2018, 4th year, Medical University – Sofia, Bulgaria**



Academic point of view: First of all, the program gives me a lot of opportunities to use Microscopic control of pure Lactobacillus cultures

English and it helps me to improve my English skill. Though I couldn't understand exactly what the teachers were saying in English at first, but now I can manage to make out most of their words. This enables me to enjoy interacting with foreigners more than before. In addition, there are various people from different countries, and I'm glad to make friends with them.

Next, the educational system for medical student in Bulgaria is quite different from that in Japan, which let me broaden my horizon. We in Japan have clinical training since our 5th year while the medical students in Bulgaria have both theoretical part and practice in parallel. I have found it's interesting to know similarities and differences between our country and Bulgaria.

Lastly, training in the hospitals seems to be more practical than that in Japan. The patients are very cooperative with us and they teach me a lot of things with their bodies.

Personnel experience: On my days off, I took some trips to Italy, France, Plovdiv, Belovo, and so on. Italy and France had been one of the countries which I always wanted to visit, so these experiences was exciting a lot. Since European countries are quite far from Japan, my stay in Bulgaria is really good chance for me to travel to some of them.

In addition, people in Bulgaria and from other countries are free-spirited and DIGNIFIED; therefore I have become to accept myself as is under the influence of them, not to pay mind so much to others.

Anyway, I believe that this experience would be advantageous to me in the near future.

KENICHIRO SUGIYAMA

ERASMUS Period: **from 8th of October to 20th of January 2017 to 2018, Medical University - Sofia**



Academic point of view:

Erasmus+ mobility program was the first student exchange program that I attended and it has been a great experience. In Sofia Medical University the clinical practice and lectures are combined together so I was able to study in textbooks and also from the bedside teaching at the same time. The practice is done in small groups, which made each study very intensive

and valuable. In Japan, clinical practices are done after we finish all the lectures and tests so the clinical practice was something very fresh and also satisfying. Being able to practice and communicate with a real patients is special and it was a precious experience which could only be gained only through this mobility program.

In addition, from this program I learned the difference in the medical systems and the situation of the medical aspect of a country. Learning different techniques, different medical systems and understanding the local medical situations could only be done through experiencing and learning in that country. I believe the study and the experience through this mobility program will be a big advantage for me.

Personnel experience: Comparing to Japan, students in Sofia Medical University was diverse in nationality. I had many opportunities to discuss about medical problems, economics, culture and other topics with the students. It gave me a greater understanding of other countries and also learned the perspective of how Japan is looked at from other countries. It was a great to know how my country is seen from the outside. As a studying group I learned to become more active instead of being passive. Studying in a different environment made me more flexible, self-confident enabled me to think in different prospective.

TENKEI TUKIMOTO

ERASMUS Period: **from 8th of October– to 20th of January, 2017-2018, Bulgaria, Medical University – Sofia.**



Academic point of view: In Academic point of view, I'm really satisfied with this Erasmus program.

There are two reasons.

One is that the program was held in a small group and the class contents are mainly discussion. In my country, everyone take the same lesson and do the same practices at the same time. In the Erasmus program, we can not only learn what the professor says, but also hear the opinion from other students, which is very significant for further understanding.

Another is that every program that is included in this cycle is done by using English. There are many students that come from different country (Italy, Germany, Greece, etc.), and everyone can communicate with each other using English. By communicating and discussing with different people from different country, I could understand

not only the medical skills, but also the different culture and standard.

Personnel experience: For me, this Erasmus program was the best opportunity to enhance my personnel experience.

There are two reasons.

First was about the English communicating skills. In the modern society, it is becoming more and more important for us to use International language for the communication. Since I didn't use English in my country, it was hard at first to tell other people what I want to advocate during the discussion. But after few months, I was gradually able to give my opinion using English. This was a great progress for me.

Second reason was about "the activeness". During the class, I found many people have confidence about what they know and think, whether it is correct or not. I learned that it is important to make it clear what you think for the communication. The Erasmus program gave me the chance to become more self-confident with what I think.

MARIA DINKOVA

ERASMUS Period: from 10.01.2018 - 09.04.2018 - Japan, Hiroshima University

Fulfilling my dreams with ERASMUS



Cherry blossom petals

Scatter near the river Motoyasu

I am transformed

University life in Japan is a challenge. You have your productivity levels tested on a daily basis! Every day is a competition and you are always surprised how much work you had managed to complete at the end of each day! There is nothing more stimulating than being surrounded by hard-working Japanese people!

Apart from my dearest appreciation of the University library, I did manage to sense the Japanese spirit in the stolen moments without studying! This is a short summary of all I have experienced: travelling 13 000km and not getting lost, mastering the use of chopsticks, Kaligraphy lessons, tea ceremony, the Japanese food, spending hours in the art museums, falling in love with Hiroshima, climbing mount Misen, running up to mount Misen as well, Shimanami Kaido, travelling by the Shinkansen, Hanami and all the cherry blossoms, finding a friend for a lifetime...

Japanese culture is absolutely enticing, there wasn't a single day when I haven't felt amazed, but most importantly, I've never felt more energetic in my life. Most of all, I feel thankful that I had the chance to meet the kindest, most inspiring and hard-working people. I will remember everyone whom I was able to learn from, because in the long run this whole experience will make me not only a better person but also a better doctor as well. I really hope I will return some day! ERASMUS program changed my life! Arigatou gouzaimasu!

Where will you go to study?! – I will never forget the amazement in my mother's reaction when I told her I was accepted as an exchange student in Hiroshima University. It will never stop sounding totally surreal – me, living on my own in Japan, studying and passing some of the most demanding subjects in Medical school with flying colours!

Describing what I have seen and learnt is close to impossible, because it simply needs to be experienced. However, let me tell you, Japan is magical! Regarding the opportunity, provided by the ERASMUS program, I had the chance to grow in every possible aspect- academically, culturally, socially etc.

MEGI EMILOVA NAKOVA

ERASMUS Period: from 10.04.2018 - 09.07.2018 - Japan, Hiroshima University



The period I've spent in Japan were so far the most colorful, inspiring and adventurous months of my life. Japan and Bulgaria are 8904 km apart but since the first day I arrived I felt more and more like home. Everyone warm-heartedly welcomed me giving me the opportunity to fully soak up the Japanese culture in every aspect.

Every city I visited showed me a different part of Japan that was hidden until then- Tokyo- the futuristic, innovative thinking of the

Japanese, Kyoto- the vibrant past, entwined with Shinto and Buddhist religious beliefs and finally Hiroshima- a city that rose up from the ashes to become, in my opinion, the most peaceful and pleasant city in the country.

In regard to my university life I had the chance to work with the research team of the Department of Oral Pathology. For the first time I did things like- mRNA extraction, PCR and I even had my own cell culture to take care of. Everything I experienced in Hiroshima university was unique in its own way- from having lectures and practical exercises with the Japanese students to learning all about the new innovative Japanese dental technologies and materials. Both my classmates and the professors were very nice, friendly and always ready to help and answer my questions. I was also utterly impressed by the fact that after every exercise we had to clean the room by ourselves which taught me how to be more disciplined than before.

If I can use only one word to sum up my life in Japan I can say it was truly unforgettable. I am certain that everything I do from now on, be it in personal or professional aspect will be strongly influenced by it. Japan showed me how to be more humble and in touch with nature as well as how to be a real innovator, heading towards a bright future.

VIKTORIYA PETROVA PENCHEVA

ERASMUS Period: from 10.04.2018 - 09.07.2018 - Japan, Hiroshima University



The past period in Hiroshima, Japan have been the most enriching experience of my life both professionally and personally.

Hiroshima University is an amazing academic establishment, filled with professors, assistants and students, who allowed me to get the most out of my experience as an exchange student, acquire new knowledge in the field of dentistry, improve my practical skills and get accustomed with Japan's exquisite medical field and culture as a whole.

I had the opportunity to attend lectures and practices given by outstanding specialists from all dentistry departments. I learned different and innovative approaches and advanced techniques, which I intend to carry through my future professional life.

Being part of the Department of Oral Physiology's research team, where I was given the privilege to work on my own research topic, opened my eyes to a side of science I never thought I'd be a part of and deepened my appreciation for Japan's passion for scientific discovery and its contribution in the field of dentistry.

Upon my arrival and throughout my entire study I was met with kindness and understanding by both academics and students of the university. The curiosity towards Bulgaria and its clinical approaches

made room for intercultural and professional exchange. I was helped where I was lacking and encouraged professionally and socially in my dental studies and practices.

On a personal level Japan offered me countless new experiences that left me with memories for a lifetime. I made many new friends in the face of colleagues and professors, who helped me experience Hiroshima to the fullest. I am left fascinated with Japan's beauty, culture, etiquette as well as its citizens hard work and humanity, that made me feel safe and welcomed in every new place and city I visited. From the calming, spirited and perseverant Hiroshima, to the busy and industrious Tokyo, and finally to the picturesque and historically vibrant Kyoto, Japan's diversity and unique ways made my stay here an experience like no other.

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to be a part of the Erasmus exchange program between Medical University - Sofia and Hiroshima University.

It's a pleasure to leave Japan with an acquired academic knowledge, experience and amazing new friends and memories, that enrich my professional and personal accomplishments and fulfilment.

This brochure “30 Years of Erasmus Success Stories in Europe. 35 Years of Academic Cooperation Between Hiroshima University & 100 Years Old Medical University – Sofia” is published with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.



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