

Report Form Exchange Period Abroad 2017 – 2018

Host university: University of Ljubljana

Country: Slovenia

- Study period: 1st semester
 - Start date: 03-10-2017; end date: 15-01-2018
 - Period of classes: 04-10-2017 until 07-12-2017 (depends on the set of subjects)
 - Examination period: 30-11-2017 – 11-01-2018 (depends on the set of subjects)
 - I did not follow a language course but there was an opportunity to do so a month prior to the beginning of the academic year and the possibility to continue it afterwards.

Courses completed at the host university

1. Civil and Medical Law
2. Diplomatic and Consular Law
3. European Human Rights Law
4. International Labour Law
5. Mergers, Acquisitions & Corporal Restructurings

1. **Study programme**

There is a variety of courses to choose from at the University of Ljubljana. Each semester has its own set of courses and each of the courses are 6 ECTS, regardless of the number of hours that are counted in for classes and self-work. The courses are 100% in English and only offered to exchange students since the legislation in Slovenia prohibits to teach law in any other language but Slovene. Therefore, there is not that much contact with Slovenian students but classes are not big so it is easy to meet people regardless. When it comes to the quality of the courses, some are better and others are not as much. Teachers' level of English varies, as well as the content of the courses and the type of examination. I had either written exams (mostly 1h) or oral exams (lasting 10-15mins) but it depends on the subject. Moreover, some courses are made up to be more theoretical and so is the exam and others are more practical, also including meetings with guest lecturers, later reflecting in the examination. Every course is composed of lectures and then examination. There are no 'seminars' per se or the practical hours are included in the lectures, usually the course has 1 lecture per week (some courses have 2 lectures per week). The period of classes as well as examination varies on the subjects selected. We were given 3 examination opportunities – all spread out through December and January (with the exception of Diplomatic and Consular Law – 2 first dates were offered at the end of November). The semester officially ends on 31 January.

2. **Language/language preparation**

As already mentioned, the courses are 100% in English. The University requires a proof of proficiency in English (if you have an IELTS, TOEFL or a similar test that is still valid on the day you were selected to go to the University of Ljubljana, it will suffice). Slovene is not necessary, neither in University, nor in everyday life – in general, everyone speaks at least some English. Nevertheless, culturally they respect if people try to speak Slovene. The required B2 level of English is sufficient to follow the courses and prepare for the examination.

3. **Finances and general matters**

First of all, according to Slovenian law, everyone staying in the country for more than 90 days have to register themselves at the registration unit where the person is also issued a residence permit. For EU citizens, it costs almost 12€ and for non-EU citizens it depends on the visa – sometimes nothing has to be paid. That is one of the first expenses in Slovenia.

Furthermore, there is an option to get a monthly bus card which is 20€ for students and can be ordered prior to arrival. Another option is to buy a simple bus card (called URBANA card) (2€) and top it up with either tickets or money (one ride costs 1,20€). However, Ljubljana is very small (comparable to Groningen), therefore bike culture is developed to some extent. Many students own a bike of their own (possible to buy for 40-70€) or use the city-bike system 'Bicikelj' which costs 3€ per year. The same URBANA card can be used for the bike system as well.

When it comes to expenses for food and other necessities, it is comparable to the Netherlands. Due to the meal subvention system (Studentski Boni), many students do not cook at home and just go out to eat (price of meals ranges from 0€ to 4.37€ per meal and that includes a salad, a starter or a soup, a main dish and either a desert or a fruit). To use the system, you will need a Slovenian SIM card but that is easy to arrange for free with ESN University Ljubljana and you do not need to put any money on the

account either. If to buy groceries, it depends on the eating habits but generally it would come down to approximately 150-180€ per month.

Majority (if not all) exchange students travel quite a bit during their time in Slovenia, therefore, if you are planning on exploring Eastern Europe and Balkans, you should plan the budget for that as well.

4. **Preparation and contact with the faculty abroad**

The staff of host university (meaning the lecturers and the international office) are very helpful and responsive. I have never encountered any delays when e-mailing anyone and have never heard any complaints. Furthermore, the international office has office hours every single day and they are always open to help with any questions, be it about studies, medical help, referring for psychological consultancy or absolutely any other matter that might come up.

5. **Housing**

The price of the accommodation depends on the type of accommodation chosen and the location in the city. The cheapest option is usually the student dormitories where the prices start as low as 120€/month for a double room. Other options are a private or shared room in a privately-owned house (price defers but can range from approximately 150€ to as much as 450-500€ per month). A lot of places ask to pay a ‘supplement’ if the lease is not for 12 months and usually there is a possibility to get part of that money back if you find someone to replace you upon your departure.

As for the recommended neighborhoods, I would suggest anything that is close to the city centre as the Faculty of Law (where also the examination takes place) is located at the very heart of the centre, 3mins walking from the main Prešeren square (Prešernov trg) and right next to the Dragon bridge (Zmajski most), therefore, the closer to the city center, the more convenient it is to reach the faculty as well as enjoy the night life and everything best Ljubljana has to offer.

When it comes to housing, it is better to start looking as early as possible. People usually start looking in August, however, there are a lot of exchange students who come to Ljubljana in the middle or end of September without having any options or house-viewings arranged at all and are therefore forced to stay in a hostel or Airbnb until they find a place to live which can be quite stressful, therefore, I would recommend at least arranging viewings before arrival so that you do not have to spend a lot of money for accommodation while looking for one.

6. **Guidance/reception at host university**

The faculty organizes an introduction session close to the beginning of the semester (usually 1 or 2 days before the classes begin). There they present the staff as well as provide the students with a lot of useful information when it comes to studying and living in Ljubljana as well as other matters. They are very generous, kind and helping, always ready to assist everyone with any problems. Besides the introduction session, there are no other guidance activities, however, the session is informative enough to prepare the students and provide with all the information needed.

The faculty also offers a ‘Student buddy’ system, where, when signed up, you are put in contact with a Slovenian student from the faculty who can help you with various things, again, anything that one might need help with. Moreover, they organize activities for exchange students as well such as bowling night or dinner which is a great way to meet Slovenian students.

7. **Other**

Firstly, I would recommend taking the language course. It is a great opportunity to learn basics in Slovene but mostly, it is a perfect place to make friends and immediately feel like you are not alone in a new city since everyone taking the course are freshly arrived exchange students wanting to meet people, make friends, have fun and have at least some sort of 'support system'.

Secondly, Slovenia and surrounding countries are very beautiful in their nature and culture and offer countless opportunities for exploring. Most popular way of travelling is renting a car with 3-4 other people (there are at least 2 car rental agencies offering discounts for Erasmus students) and driving either around Slovenia or the neighboring countries. Students enjoy exploring Balkans which have rich cuisines, cultures and, most importantly, are incredibly low in price once there. Moreover, with the study schedule and the work load it is possible to have weekends completely free which leaves a lot of time for travelling.

Thirdly, take the advantage of the meal subvention system, I can assure you that you will never go out to eat as much as you will in Ljubljana, it is an amazing way to socialize, grab lunch after class or dinner with friends or even get a food delivery!

Overall, I had a great time in Ljubljana and only positive experiences. I ended up living in a private house with many exchange students which made my experience even more fulfilling. In my opinion, it is important that in the end YOU feel happy and satisfied with your time and little Ljubljana and all the lovely people you have a chance of meeting there will make your time great and unforgettable! Good luck!