

Report Form Exchange Period Abroad 2017-2018

Receiving Institution: Masaryk Univerziteit

Country: Czech Republic

Study Period: 1st semester

Start date: 06/09/2017

End date: 06/01/2018

Period of classes: 18/09/2017

End date: 19/12/2017

Examination period: 19/12/2017

End date: 08/01/2018

Did you follow a language course: No

Courses completed at the host university:

1. Information Warfare and Propaganda
2. Competition Policy and Competition Law
3. European Cyberlaw
4. International Law in International Tribunals and Domestic Courts
5. International Criminal Law
6. Basics of EU Environmental Law

During this exchange period, I spent my time in Brno, Czech Republic. This University was in the top of my preferred Universities simply because this University gives a wide discretion to students on which courses they would like to take. They also have fairly interesting courses. It was in English and inside Europe, and according to student reports from the previous years, Brno was a good place to do the Erasmus programme. When I arrived there, I was disappointed at the courses even though I picked all of them in accordance to my interests. The courses were way too easy. It did not feel like I learned much from my exchange period. In some courses that share resemblances to the topics we learned in the Year 1 and 2 LLB, I learned more in a two-hour lecture given to first and second year students in Groningen than a course I followed for 3 months in Brno.

The classes were mandatory and attendance were counted to the final grade of each course - which I personally think is the most unreasonable system of grading I have ever seen. Some of my courses begin extremely early in the morning (8 AM!) and many students that live in the student housings need to take a 20 minutes public transport to get to the Faculty. So this rule is a free giveaway of grades by showing up in a class without the need to pay attention, since all students present were half asleep and still chugging on their morning coffee.

I did not live in a student housing because rent was very cheap in Czech Republic when compared to Netherlands. Since I was tired of small student rooms in Groningen, I decided to go all-out and get a real nice apartment in Brno. Right in the city center, big spacious rooms, close to the Faculty, and I also lived alone. So the Erasmus grant given for accomodations was not enough for my accommodation fee, but to me it doesn't really matter. Food is great in Brno. It is fairly cheap to eat out so I never cooked at home, despite my fancy kitchen. It would have

costed you about the same price of cooking at home in Groningen to eat out in a nice restaurant in Brno, which will cost around approximately 4-5 Euros (drinks included!).

Also, I met very good people around the city, but Czech people are quite hard to get close with. I felt like I really put in the effort to meet new people and even though I had all-in-all a great time, it was rather exhausting since I really had to try. Maybe I am a bit unfair in this regard since I compared this experience with my time in Groningen, which is a student heaven where I could meet so many students without really trying. I did not hang out much with Erasmus students in Brno. This was because I wanted to have a "full" living-in-Czech-Republic kind of experience and I feel like hanging out all the time with foreign students who don't know anything about Czech Republic is rather pointless. Also, the Erasmus parties and gatherings are trash; and the ESN programmes in Brno are badly organised.

Since my schedule in Brno was incredibly relaxed (I have classes on Monday and Tuesdays only, so I technically have 5 days of weekends), I had so much time to spare. I wanted to actually get better grades during my exchange so I wanted to become more diligent and stuff, yet I don't even have any material to go through if I wanted to study. As I said, the courses were way too easy. So I had to fill my time being active in University doing other things than just classes. It was great because I met more people this way and become more active around the University, but it was just a bit dull and I wished I had learned more exciting things during my exchange period. I would like to note that the administration staff in Masaryk University was very nice. They are very responsive to requests and were happy to help me whenever I need.

In conclusion, my Erasmus was a nice experience. I felt like I learned a lot about myself but it was nothing I would not have learned if I did not go to an exchange. I really felt like it was pointless for our programme to have a mandatory exchange period, since many Universities don't even take exchange students seriously - the materials we go through during exchange period is a joke and this exchange period just works as a GPA-enhancer for us. Not that I wasn't pleased with an increase in my GPA, but why is this exchange period even mandatory?