

Report from Exchange Period Abroad 2018-2019

Receiving University: Masaryk University

Country: Czech Republic

Study Period: First Semester

Start date: 09/09/2018                      End date: 20/01/2019

Period of classes: 25/09/2018              End date: 20/12/2018

Examination period: 11/12/2018         End date: 20/01/2018

Did you follow a language course: No

Courses completed at the host university:

1. Competition Policy and Competition Law
2. European Cyberlaw
3. International Law in International Tribunals and Domestic Courts
4. Comparative Constitutional Law and Politics
5. Privacy and Personal Data
6. European Court of Human Rights and Family Law

I spent my exchange period at Masaryk University located in Brno, Czech Republic. This university was one of my preferred choices when applying for exchange, due to relatively good feedback from exchange students of our University before me, and the opportunity to take all courses in English with no additional language requirements. Before arrival the choice of courses seemed interesting and varied, and the opportunity to choose between many courses provided attracted me initially. However, upon arrival and after the schedule was published, it turned out that there were several schedule clashes between my chosen courses with several important classes held at the same time each week. This resulted in me having to change my courses and apply for new approval of courses a few times. As a result, already at the start of my exchange period I was a bit frustrated with the organization of the host university, and the fact that it was left up to the students to figure out which courses were overlapping. Perhaps there could have been some kind of system alerting of overlapping courses and thus already at the start narrowing down the choice of courses available.

As a result, I ended up having courses which I initially did not choose as my first options. Overall the courses held at Masaryk University were easier compared to the LLB courses at Groningen. With the exception of Cyberlaw and Privacy and Personal Data courses, which were in areas of law previously new to me, where I did feel that I learned new concepts and found new interests. When picking the courses I suggest to choose something you are interesting in of course, picking something completely new might be a good idea to keep your interest in the studies throughout the exchange period. Classes were often mandatory and marks towards the final grade could be obtained by attending, which would be great if all the classes remained of interest to me during the semester. However, as the many of classes discusses topics I had already learned without adding new aspects, I sometimes felt like the classes were merely to be attended to receive the necessary points.

I lived in private accommodation as the general level of prices for housing was lower than in the Netherlands. I am not sure if I missed out on the parties of exchange students by not living in student housing, as this seemed to be the general trend amongst the exchange students. However, I preferred to have my own room, and I still lived in a shared house with friends and locals. I did not take much part in the ESN programme or parties other than the Introduction Week, and preferred to explore Brno and other cities in Czech Republic independently with friends. Due to the general price level being cheaper, travelling around the country, eating out and doing other touristic/entertainment activities was quite attainable with a student budget. Also, as I had courses only from Tuesday to Thursday with a four-day weekend, there was plenty of time to make small weekend trips around the country. Another thing to point out is that as all the English-speaking courses were made only for exchange students, most people I came to contact with and had classes together were all exchange students. This meant that there was almost no integration with Czech students and the culture, as naturally all the exchange students were as new to Czech Republic as I was. Yet, I did get to experience more of the Czech way of life through staying in private accommodation with locals, and making trips and excursions around the country independently.

Overall, I think my exchange period taught me more about myself and how I react to new study situations and environments, rather than bringing me academically forwards. I think exchange can be a great experience to learn more of a country you are interested in, and due to less workload and classes there is actually time and opportunities to learn and do more activities at the country of your exchange.

In conclusion, I would recommend Masaryk University as a host university to those students who wish to have a break from the hectic time during the LLB Programme study wise, and are looking forward to the opportunity to travel and experience the local life at the exchange destination.