

## **Exchange experience report Brno, Masaryk University, Fall 2019**

### **Your study programme**

I was studying Law in Masaryk university. There is a variety of courses available for the Erasmus students. I personally took 5 courses: Roman Law, Cyber Law, Basics of EU Environmental Law, Labor Law and Competition Policy and Competition Law. In the Czech Republic there are basically 2 forms of examination: an exam for which you get a grade or a Pass/Fail course. All of my courses were the exam model courses. Each of them was the 6 ECTS course. Usually, all the courses have a weight between 4-6 ECTS each, where the exam course almost always is 6 ECTS.

Regarding the level of studying, I enjoyed all of the courses, even though it is more easy to study in Brno than in Groningen. Particularly, I really enjoyed the course of EU Cyber Law. Our professor gave us a valuable inside to the topic with various examples. In order to prepare for the exams you need to study during the entire semester because you will have minimum 4 exams at the same time with sometimes only 2-3 days between them. At the same time, the format of the exam and the assessment is less strict than in Groningen. You can have a multiple choice examination or an open book exam. However, those exams do not usually form the final grade for the course. You can be asked to write a semester paper (around 4000 words essay) or to prepare presentations. Nonetheless, I cannot say that studying in Brno was much easier than in the Netherlands. As a general conclusion on this topic I would write that the amount of work per course is usually less than in Groningen but because of the quantity of those courses the difficulty of the entire exam period is equal in bits Universities.

Lastly, I need to point out that Masaryk University library has a very good access to many online resources which Groningen University might not have. It helped a lot with writing the semester paper and even working on my thesis.

### **Language**

All the courses were taught entirely in English. Level of English proficiency of the professors was good.

### **Finance and other conditions**

Czech Republic is cheaper than the Netherlands when it comes to general expenses such as food and rent. However, it really depends on how you organise your budget and what are your priorities. You can find a relatively cheap food to buy for your house and also to visit a nice Czech cuisine restaurant in the city centre where you will spend around 25-40 euros depending on what you eat. Transportation is in contrast very cheap, both public transport and taxis. The main annoying thing is that Czech Republic is not in the Eurozone and continues using Czech Koruna. Thus you need to get ready to change euros and that sometimes the currency exchange is not very good (you need to know particular places where to go to have the best deal possible). The estimated costs per month would be between 300 to 500 euros depending on how often you travel around.

Regarding the residence card, being non-EU citizen I had to apply for an “updated” Dutch residence card which allows you to reside in the third EU Member State for around a year for the purpose of finishing your studies in the Netherlands. However, it was all easily arranged for me by the Groningen University immigration Service Desk. They always contact you in case you need this residence permit arrangements. No additional costs for the Masaryk university were required.

### **Preparation and contacts with the faculty abroad**

Contact with the Masaryk university law faculty was good. Their exchange office helped me a lot to figure out some incoming student issues such as housing and visa questions. They were replying lastly and gave me comprehensive answers to almost all of my questions which I had before coming to Brno (including the English language test and learning agreement).

### **Housing**

I was living in a flat. Found it myself with my friend with who we went together to Brno through the Flatio website. The only advice is to look for places close to the city centre. It simplifies traveling a lot and access to nice places to go during your free time.

### **Guidance / reception at host university**

Masaryk university organised a comprehensive introduction week with many social activities. They explained very well how to deal with Erasmus + documentation and gave advice on day-to-day places to go (such as supermarkets, discounts etc.) The social program organised by ESN was nice as well, which involve various programs such as visits to the dog shelters (which I personally give a round of applause) and other events and parties.

### **Culture, free time and travelling**

Brno is located in a very comfortable location regarding traveling around. Only 1.5 hours and you can get to Vienna and from there almost everywhere else. You can also visit Bratislava and of course Prague (even though the latter is 2.5 hours train). There are various museums and cathedrals to visit in Brno. Generally I found Czech architecture and culture quite interesting and thus advice to everyone who goes there to learn about it as much as possible.

Importantly, Brno is a legal capital of the Czech Republic. All the core courts (Supreme Court, Constitutional Court etc) are located there. Thus it reflects the good level of law courses in the university as well.

### **Other**

Do not use Czech Post! That is a very important thing to know. I sent a parcel from Brno to the Netherlands and used the most expensive priority service of the Post. It took me almost a month to get it and it was very problematic to trace it.

Moreover, if you are vegetarian or vegan it will be difficult for you to find nice restaurants to eat. Almost the entire Czech cuisine is based on meat.

Lastly, I will reiterate that during exchange semester in Brno you need to use your chance to travel around, but properly balancing it with studies, otherwise your last month can be a very difficult one.