

Exchange report Masaryk University, Brno, Czechia, Autumn 2019

Study Programme

The Masaryk Law Faculty offers a rich variety of English-taught courses as well as a few intensive two/three-weeks long courses taught by visiting lecturers from the US. In order to apply for your preferred courses and after you received an acceptance letter from Masaryk University, you will have to submit a short motivation letter (via the Masaryk student portal) for each course. Thus, make sure you read the descriptions and requirements for all courses and submit these letters fast as all courses have a limited number of places available. Besides this, I would recommend applying for more courses than necessary for 30ECTS in order to make a definite decision after attending the first lecture and construing a general impression of the course. At Masaryk University I was enrolled in the following classes: European Cyberlaw, Roman Law, Basics of EU Environmental Law, Competition Policy and Competition law, European Labour Law. I enjoyed all my courses, yet I was particularly fond of the European Cyberlaw module. Masaryk University accommodates the famous Institute of Law and Technology that also hosts an annual conference on Cyberspace. Therefore, I would encourage everyone with an interest in technology law and cyberspace to check out the University of Masaryk. Significantly, European Cyberlaw and Competition Policy and Competition Law are the most demanding and involved greater workload (compared to my other courses). However, these are the courses that I found the most enriching and comprehensive and if one stays consistent in taking notes, acing an exam is a real possibility. The study materials for all my courses were limited to the lecture presentations (accompanied by lecturers' comments) and case law. Otherwise, any books and prescribed reading were only provided as additional support. For some courses, the final grade consists of a written exam and an oral presentation (European Labour Law) or an exam and a 3000-words paper (Competition Policy and Competition Law).

Language

All members of the teaching staff proved to be confident users of English language thus I had no problem keeping up with the lecturers. Finding someone who speaks English in the city, on the other hand, was more difficult, thus knowing Russian definitely came in handy at understanding bits of Czech. The university provides free Czech language courses for students, which I unfortunately did not attend, but which would have definitely been useful.

Finance and Other Conditions

In Brno you will find prices to be generally lower than in the Netherlands, from food to entertainment to public transport tickets. Therefore, eating out during exam time is a feasible option. As pertaining

to other costs, you may have to pay for your ISIC card which is great for securing fantastic discounts with the local rail and bus company RegioJet. In order to withdraw cash in Brno, I would recommend the AirBank ATMs, which have a fair conversion rate, or otherwise opening a Czech bank account. I also paid for a three-month transport card (around 30 Euros) which I used when travelling by tram or bus Brno. Besides this, I also purchased a library card (2 Euros for three months) at the Moravian Library because I found it more comfortable than the Faculty of Law Library and it offers cheap printing prices.

Preparation and Contacts with the Faculty Abroad

After you have decided what courses to stay enrolled in, ensure to make any appropriate changes to your Learning Agreement – the ‘During Mobility’ section. Masaryk University is also able to send any documents directly to the University of Groningen, upon request.

Housing

I was renting an apartment with a fellow classmate from Groningen. We found our apartment via Flatio (online platform), which allowed for easy and safe payment and put us in touch with an English-speaking landlord. We started looking for our place in May. Our house was located in the Cerna Pole district, which is a safe and quiet neighbourhood, thus perfect if you have few classes and prefer studying at home. However, it is a good 20 min by tram away from the Law Faculty and city centre, thus it may not be the perfect option for someone who hates commuting or would prefer living closer to the city centre. Masaryk University also provides housing on campus, and the dorms for law students is very close to the Law Faculty.

Guidance/Reception at Host University

The Masaryk International Office is fantastic at maintaining contact with Erasmus students and proved immensely kind, helpful and quick to reply. Upon our arrival, Masaryk University organized a series of introduction sessions and workshops, which contained valuable information about how to select and enrol in courses and set exam dates. We also attended a fair where we learned about opportunities for joining Brno MUN events, local student newspapers, foreign language courses, and other student-focused activities. ESN MUNI Brno organized lovely social activities such as visits to a dog shelter and country presentations.

Culture, Free Time, and Travelling

You will have loads of free time to discover the city and travel – hence, make sure you arrive in Brno with at a solid plan on how you wish to spend it. Traveling by train or by bus is cheap, especially if

you make use of your ISIC card and/or use the local travel company RegioJet. Brno is only 2 and a half hours away by train from Prague and only two hours away from Vienna. If in Prague, make to sure to visit the National Gallery in Prague.

Tips and Suggestions

Of course, no library will replace the UB in my heart, yet finding a comfortable study place was essential. The Library of the Faculty of Arts is lovely and is one of the very few libraries in Brno open on Sundays. Alternatively, the Moravian Library is the place where I was cooped up for the most part of the exam period and is right next door to the Faculty of Law Building. It is very easy to lend books from the Moravian library and from the Faculty of Law Library, but do make sure that you either extend your loan or return any books on time in order to avoid incurring fines.

If you opt to eat out, be prepared to struggle finding vegetarian/vegan dishes. The café Vegalite is an amazing vegan place with affordable prices and dishes that even my meat-lover friend found delicious.

Perhaps the nicest aspect of studying at Masaryk University is the opportunity to write your exams in December, which is great if you want to spend your Christmas holidays exam-stress-free.