

Erasmus Exchange Report: University of Ljubljana Winter Semester 2019-2020

Your study programs

Available courses in English for the winter semester 2019-2020 (each course 6 ECTS):

- Civil medical law
- **Diplomatic and consular law**
- **European human rights law**
- European private law
- International and European social security law
- **International criminal law**
- **Judicial cooperation in civil matters**
- **Judicial remedies in the EU**
- Mergers, acquisitions and corporate restructurings
- Roman law

Diplomatic and consular law:

This course was one of my favorite choices due to my personal interest in the subject matter and the creative and variable style of teaching. Firstly, the course required the students enrolled to participate in the MUNLawS which took place in Ljubljana in November 2019. Since this was my first time ever participating in a MUN, it was quite intimidating in the beginning. But it was a very beneficial and fun experience which taught me the value of MUNs and lead me to sign up for the next one in Groningen in 2020. Additionally, we were given the opportunity to join a study trip to Vienna for three days and attend various lectures and presentations by law firms, UN related offices and other international organizations. It was a perfect networking opportunity which ended with a guided tour of the UN Headquarters. Since the Slovenian government subsidized the trip, each student only paid 50€ in total. Lastly, the coordinator invited the American ambassador on one occasion, and Irish ambassador on another, to fill some of the lecture time with a presentation of their work and experiences as diplomats. The examination was oral and, as far as I am concerned, hardly anyone failed, though adequate preparation was of course necessary.

European human rights law:

Initially, I was extremely excited to participate in this course because it is probably my favorite field of European and International law. However, I was mildly disappointed to be completely honest. The level of study was very low which makes sense because students from different countries in different stages of their studies come together and a minimum standard needs to be ensured. However, lectures were quite long and dry, though the teacher is enthusiastic about the subject and has profound knowledge. The exam was in written form and not very difficult, especially because the professor gave lots of information on the questions which would be asked (even the topic of one of the two questions). In general, for a year three

LLB student, this course will, unfortunately, not provide too many new insights. But the teacher was up for more specific and technical discussions during breaks and after class which, after all, did lead to interesting new perspectives.

International criminal law:

The teacher of this course is professionally involved in several national criminal law projects and was, therefore, able to grant interesting insights into topics which you are unlikely to discuss during your LLB. Generally, the class gave students a comparative national and international criminal law perspective. Though the topics were quite interesting, the delimitations of the topics were not very clear. Classes included long debates and exchanges of opinions, experiences and knowledge. It was hard to find a red thread to follow, but the teaching did enrich the students, mainly due to the comparative method of teaching by allowing vivid discussions. The examination was written and included three essay questions. If each topic was studied enough, the exam was not hard to pass.

Judicial cooperation in civil matters:

This course is mainly about Brussels Regulation (Recast) I and II. Hence, its subject matter is very similar to the content of the LLB course Civil Procedural Law. It was not very well organized, but the content was clear and the examination (oral) was fairly easy.

Judicial remedies in the EU:

Thanks to the two good teachers of this course, though I was initially not that excited to take it, it ended up being one of my favorite courses. The subject matter was well-defined, and the teachers gave good and interesting lectures, trying to keep the students' attention. A large part of class included presentations given by my fellow students and we were required to write a total of three papers over one page each. The examination was written, 45 minutes and five questions. Though the subject matter seemed complex in the beginning, the classes and reading material helped understand it and the exam was not that hard to pass.

Language

Generally, people in Slovenia speak good English and especially young people are eager to make use of their English skills. However, in case of an attempted comparison of Slovenian use and level of English to the average English level and attitude towards internationals in the Netherlands, one might be slightly disappointed. Such disappointment is not necessary, taking into account that the Netherlands are one of the best non-native countries making use of the English language. Overall, being an international in Ljubljana did not come with many disadvantages though it made me realize how good the conditions in the Netherlands, particularly in Groningen, really are for internationals.

Finance and other conditions

Obtaining the residence permit, which is necessary in case of a stay exceeding three months, was not a very pleasant experience. It took a long time waiting at the agency and the process was very messy and disorganized. But everyone had to do it and in the end it was not that big of a deal. Estimated costs per month are between 450 and 500€, depending on the personal spending of the student and whether accommodation was found in the student dorms (around 200€ monthly). Slovenia is generally slightly

cheaper than the Netherlands, but some products are surprisingly expensive. The amazing invention of the Slovenian government, commonly known as Boni, entails subsidized meals for all students in form of coupons which can be validated through a Slovenian SIM card or an app (no absolute need to get a Slovenian phone number, even if it may say so in the documents sent by the University of Ljubljana). As many times as there are working days in the month at hand, students can get full meals (soup, salad, main dish and fruit) for a few euros in almost all restaurants of the city (actually, this is overall a nationwide system). Study materials were mainly made available online or in the library and only few pages had to be printed out, depending on personal preference.

Preparation and contacts with the faculty abroad

The International Office of the University of Ljubljana provided us with valuable information before our arrival and gave instructions and tips concerning academic and other processes. For example, the application process for the dorm rooms was well explained and even signing up for Boni was included in the document of information. The women working in the International Office are quite nice and will give you any information needed, if you just go and ask, or send an email.

Housing

I was blessed enough to get a place in the student dorms which is most probably the cheapest accommodation possible (around 200€ per month, 400€ deposit which will be collected again upon your departure). However, this entails sharing a room. If that is not for you, do not bother trying to apply because capacities are very limited and as soon as application opens, hundreds of students will try to get a room because they are awarded on a first come first serve basis. Sharing a room with a stranger may be weird in the beginning, but it is easy to get used to it. Each flat in the dorms has two rooms with two beds and these four people will then share the kitchen and bathroom with each other. The dorms are not very luxurious, but taking the price into account, I am glad that I did opt for them. Additionally, it makes socializing unbelievably easy. However, earplugs are a must if you are a person who generally enjoys uninterrupted sleep at least during the week. Otherwise, Ljubljana is a very safe and calm city. Any neighborhood would be recommended, except for the ones which are just too far away from your faculty. Since the city is not too big, it is possible to go everywhere by walking or by bike. There is a public bike system for only three euros per year which allows you to borrow a bike for an hour at a time and cycle wherever you would like to go within the city. I highly recommend taking up on this opportunity.

Guidance / reception at host university (introduction program, social events, study program, guidance, social care and help from host university)

Unlike the Dutch, Slovenians are not as stingy. Hence, the faculty provided all incoming exchange students before the start of classes with a city tour and a meal at the oldest restaurant of Ljubljana afterwards. Additionally, there was a welcome lecture which provided us with plenty of information about the faculty, the student information system and the library. As mentioned before, the International Office is always of help when approached and can guide a confused

student through any kind of academic or personal question concerning (the University of) Ljubljana. The faculty is located very centrally, right by the river and offers all that a law student may ask for.

Culture, free time and travelling

As an Erasmus student, it is very likely that you will spend the majority of your time surrounded by other Erasmus students, especially if you decided to live in the student dorms since there is a dorm just for the international students. However, making friends on Erasmus is easier than ever because everyone is aware that time is limited and it takes other people to make the experience worthwhile. With my selection of courses, I did study quite a bit and prepared well for my exams which paid off. However, very intense preparation is honestly not necessary if you attend class and remember most of the material already. This will give you quite a bit of free time which you can spend traveling. Ljubljana is located in the perfect spot to take daytrips into nature or other beautiful European (capital) cities. The local ESN offers a variety of trips, but even organizing one with your friends on your own is very easy and cheap. Renting a car is not a problem at all and places to see could be: Zagreb, Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Großglockner, Piran, Koper, Trieste, Maribor, Ptuj, Graz, Hallstatt, Salzburg, of course famous lake Bled and Bohinj, the Julian Alps, Smarna Gora, and the list goes on and on. If you would like any insider tips or recommendations, please feel free to contact me (ask the international office Groningen for my details).

Overall, I really recommend including Ljubljana in your options for the semester abroad. The city is great for a fairly short stay and the country and surrounding countries are amazing to visit.