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Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

- 1) **Darf der Bericht anonymisiert, also ohne Ihren Namen und E-Mail, auf der Webseite der Viadrina veröffentlicht werden?**
 Ja Nein
- 2) **Darf auf Anfrage eines interessierten Viadrina-Studierenden Ihr Erfahrungsbericht samt Ihrer Kontaktdaten an diese/n weitergegeben werden?**
 Ja Nein
- 3) **Bitte bestätigen Sie, dass Sie im Erfahrungsbericht nicht direkt die Namen dritter Personen (Dozierende/-r, Vermietende/-r) aufführen.**
 Ja Nein - in diesem Fall wird Ihr Bericht nicht veröffentlicht.
- 4) **Bitte bestätigen Sie, dass die im Bericht verwendeten Fotos von Ihnen selbst und nicht von Dritten sind. Mit der Zusendung geben Sie der Europa-Universität Viadrina die Nutzungsrechte an den Fotos für die evtl. Veröffentlichung des Berichtes auf unserer Webseite. Die Urheberrechte bleiben bei Ihnen.**
 Ja Nein, ich habe keine (eigenen) Fotos verwendet.

Es würde uns freuen, wenn Sie auf folgende Punkte eingehen (der Bericht sollte mindestens 2 Seiten haben, für die maximale Anzahl an Seiten gibt es keine Begrenzung):

- **Vorbereitung** (Empfehlungen zur Planung, was ist zu beachten z.B. ggf. für Visa, Versicherung, Anreisemöglichkeiten? Wie sah die Bewerbung an der Gasthochschule aus? Gab es Einführungsveranstaltungen an der Gastuni? Waren diese verpflichtend und zu welchem Datum fanden Sie statt? Gab es ein Tutoren/Buddy-Angebot?)
- **Unterkunft** (Wie haben Sie eine Unterkunft gefunden? Haben Sie Tipps dazu, z.B. was vermieden werden sollte? Gab es Studierendenwohnheime? Mietkosten? Welche Wohngegend würden Sie empfehlen?)
- **Studium an der Gasthochschule** (Wie sah der Unialltag aus? Anwesenheitspflicht? Welche Kurse haben Sie belegt? Durften Sie Kurse verschiedener Fakultäten wählen? Link zu den Kurslisten der Partneruni. Wie laufen die Prüfungen ab? Wurden Sprachkurse angeboten? Wie fanden Sie die Uni allgemein und das Betreuungsangebot für Austauschstudierende?)
- **Alltag und Freizeit** (Wie hoch sind die Lebenshaltungskosten insgesamt, bzw. wie viel Geld sollte monatlich zur Verfügung stehen? Kosten und Tipps bzgl. der öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel? Freizeit- Sportangebote?)
- **Fazit** (schlechteste und beste Erfahrung)
- **Verbesserungsvorschläge/Feedback** (Wie können wir, Ihrer Meinung nach, unsere Austauschprogramme verbessern, z.B. bezgl. der Beratung, gewährter Informationen, des Bewerbungsverfahrens an der Viadrina?) – Dieser Abschnitt soll der Abteilung für Internationale Angelegenheiten der Viadrina als Feedback dienen und wird nicht veröffentlicht.

Preparation

When I get the confirmation from ICHEC that I am allowed to go there on my Erasmus, I became very nervous and wanted to plan everything as fast as possible. I have realised quite quickly that preparing anything in spring is way too early. As a European student I did not need Visa and the international health insurance was ensured by my country. The only important things are costs (if somebody hasn't checked that before applying for the exchange). I describe it thereafter. When it comes to travelling: there are super cheap flights from Berlin Schönefeld to Brussels Zaventem, however I travelled by car because I thought it was easier with the amount of luggage I had. I did not drive alone so the cost was about 80euros.

Applying for everything at ICHEC was clearly explained in emails from the university and did not include anything unexpected. There is a buddy program in Brussels, which I could additionally apply for by an email, so I did. In September students had opportunities to attend intensive French course and take part in welcoming events. I could attend whatever I wanted, but I was not obligated to do so. ICHEC has its ESN section that organized everything and was ready to help anybody who had questions. The dates related to the beginning of the semester differ every year, but I had to keep in mind that I had to make decisions regarding my schedule in September (I wasn't allowed to change it later!!!).

Housing

Looking for a room was very difficult. First of all, everything was very expensive (comparing to renting a room in FFO or even Berlin). I wanted to have a clean room in a safe district- prices start at 400euros, but it is more common to find a room for around +500 euros/month. While looking for an apartment, it's important to take care about what the rent includes. I was recommended to look for something that has a constant rent (everything included) and I think it was very good advice, because water and electricity are also super expensive.

The university is rather far away from the city centre, but as long as you have a place close to the metro station and you are ready to get up a bit earlier (in my case classes did not start too early) renting a room/apartment in the downtown is a good idea. There are some parts of Brussels that are not safe, it is always better to ask your buddy from ICHEC or google information than being spontaneous.

I was told to not plan too long travels through Brussels by buses because they are either late or completely stuck in the traffic. Metro and trams are better transportation modes.

When it comes to the neighbourhood, I am unable to recommend anything- in my case it was just luck. I lived 100m from Schuman metro station, which basically mean I had European Parliament and other EU buildings “right next door”. Thanks to this, there were always police patrols so I felt safe.

University

In my opinion the university life is similar to the Viadrina’s one. ICHEC is a small school, but it felt good. I only missed warm meals from Mensa, not because I particularly like Viadrina’s canteen, but sometimes it’s nice to have a place right at the university to get your lunch. If the lecture was long there were always breaks. I took only one course that had “tutorials”, I assume they are not as common as at EUV. You are not obligated to attend any classes, but I definitely recommend taking part in them. It is easy to get lost once you miss something. I have received the courses list in June, you can find classes both in English and French. Exams weren’t very different from the ones you write at Viadrina. I had also one oral exam. You can take language classes through the year (English, German, French, Spanish and more).

The coordinator from ICHEC answers emails quickly and you can always ask her anything. Students and teachers were very helpful and understood that exchange students could feel lost.

Daily life

It’s up to you how much you spend monthly, but I would say 1000 euros a month is a minimum (rent included). However, if you want to travel the costs go higher. The coolest thing in Brussels that you can do regarding public transport is buying a ticket for a whole year for only 55euros (metro+buses+trams in Brussels) or 95euros (metro+ buses+ trams+ trains in Brussels). Personally I have bought the cheaper one and never had a need to use trains inside Brussels. The university ensure some sport activities but I was not very interested in them. There are many gyms in the city (prices similar to Berlin and FFO).

Experiences

My worst experience were public transport strikes. The city is completely paralysed and it took me hours to get anywhere. Most of the time is useful to keep a map in your bag or on your smartphone, because it has happened to me to get a bit lost when I couldn’t use the metro. The best memories are related to trips. It is very easy and cheap to travel inside and outside Belgium. Everything seemed to be close to Brussels. Obviously it is also amazing to meet new people and realise how similar yet different we all are.



The exchange application process wasn't very complicated from the Viadrina's side. Whenever I needed help or had question, I could easily get . As long as someone is interested in getting information regarding the exchange he/she can easily do it in the International Office.

If you don't want to go on an exchange far away from Germany, I can recommend ICHEC and Belgium as a nice place for this stay.