



## UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Cultural Anthropology- and Development Sociology
destination city & country	Istanbul, Turkey
name university abroad	Koç University
start date	01 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

After having already done a semester abroad at Koç University in Spring '16, I wanted to go back for another semester and extend my Erasmus mobility period. Luckily my university's International Office as well as the International Office of Koç were both very supportive and welcoming in extending my stay abroad.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

See answer above. As an addition I would like to add that also during my stay, people of the International Office were very helpful and thoughtful (for example after bombings) but I'm most of all very grateful for them understanding my situation and that I was very happy in Istanbul and didn't want to leave.

#### academic preparation

Because I was already familiar with the course system of Koç University this time, I could prepare well in advance as to which courses I would be taking (except for the timeslots of the courses) and which courses would interest me.

#### language preparation

The language of the University was English, so in advance I took an obligatory test that tested my English, which was sufficient for my studying abroad (C2). Apart from that the main language to get around with was Turkish, and as I took a Basic Turkish 1 course last semester, I was capable to get around in the city, which made me feel very comfortable and at home.

#### finances

For finances, I had a governmental grant because I would live away from my parents, which meant I was awarded a grant of around 280 euro's a month (normal for most students who don't live with their parents anymore), however this stopped in december because it is my third year in my bachelor, so I lend the same amount of money from the government instead. Apart from that I received 100 euros a month from the DUO for public transportation. And I had an erasmus scholarship.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took 5 courses:

1. Introduction to international relations
2. Introduction to comparative politics
3. Turkish Constitutional system



4. Politics of ethnicity and nationalism

5. Bodies in literature

The total of credits was 30 ECTS.

academic quality of education activities

As opposed to last semester (spring 2016), I felt more challenged and definitely way more inspired by the courses that I took this semester. Especially for the comparative politics and Turkish constitutional system courses I became very inspired by the professors and the field of International Relations in general.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The university abroad seemed very professional concerning counselling and support for foreign students. Apart from that, the mentors (local students who mentor exchange students) were most helpful and friendly.

transfer of credits

Like mentioned above, I took 5 classes that added to a total of 30 ECTS, just like a semester in Utrecht University would be.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In one word: amazing. Like I said, Koç is very professional concerning exchange programs. This meant that the week before classes officially started, we had an orientation week, which was perfectly balanced between academics, getting to know Istanbul and local ways and getting to know other exchange students.

accommodation

This this semester I stayed off campus as opposed to last semester. However, it was still very close to campus so I was still able to use all the facilities.

leisure & culture

During my free time I got to know Istanbul and Turkey and how amazing it is. I completely fell in love with the city and explored many different districts, café's, city's etc.

suggestions/tips

Koç arranges trips for exchange students to go on to different places in Turkey. I would highly recommend you to do this, because you see different parts of Turkey, get to know the exchange students better just as the locals, and all in all it's just an amazing experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Definitely. Even though Istanbul is a city which has 17 million inhabitants, the campus is located 30 kms from the city center, in a very nice & quiet district. You can choose to hang around the Bosphorus, the Black sea, the quiet Forest, but you can also go to the crowded heart of Istanbul, either on the European or on the Asian side.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Even though (or because) in these times we hear so many negative news about Turkey, I would highly recommend you to go there just to experience what I have experienced. And that is a beautiful and diverse country in every possible way: the landscape, the people, the mentality, the food, the culture, everything!



## UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Cultural Anthropology- and Development Sociology
destination city & country	Istanbul, Turkey
name university abroad	Koç University
start date	23 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	04 / 06 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

I didn't get my first options after applying to study abroad, so for me in the beginning it was all a little bit stressful, since I really had my plans set on going abroad during my second year. However, the people the work at the International Office of UU were very helpful and friendly towards. I did speak to many different people at the same time, which was a bit confusing from time to time. But they were very thoughtful towards my ideas and dreams and directly as soon as a new place became available to go to Koç University in Istanbul, which I am still so grateful for towards them.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

See answer above. As an addition I would like to add that also during my stay, people of the International Office were very helpful and thoughtful (for example after bombings) but I'm most of all very grateful for them understanding my situation and that I was very happy in Istanbul and didn't want to leave. As I am going back in september to study there another semester, the IO was so helpful in helping me to arrange everything last minute and to still be understanding towards my plans.

#### academic preparation

The academic preparation was not ideal, but that has more to do with the receiving institution and myself than UU. I thought I wasn't able (or capable) of taking more advanced classes so I ended up taking classes that were nice but not so challenging for me as I would have hoped. Which is why for next semester I'm planning on taking more advanced courses.

#### language preparation

The language of the University was English, so in advance I took an obligatory test that tested my English, which was sufficient for my studying abroad (C2). Apart from that the main language to get around with was Turkish, which apart from some simple words and sentences I didn't prepare before I left, although I did take a Turkish course in Koç which really helped me and which I enjoyed. I am planning on continuing with Turkish 2 when I resume my academics in september.

#### finances

For finances, I had a governmental grant because I would live away from my parents, which meant I was awarded a grant of around 280 euro's a month (normal for most students who don't live with their parents anymore). Apart from that I received 100 euros a month from the DUO for public transportation. And I had an erasmus scholarship.



<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I took 5 courses: Turkish 1, Contemporary Issues in Turkish Politics, Culture & Society, Music & Society, and Identity, Power & Culture. The total of credits was 30 ECTS.
academic quality of education activities
Like I mentioned above, the courses were mostly based on an introductory level, which meant that I didn't feel properly academically challenged, apart from the Contemporary Issues in Turkish Politics course. This is why for next semester, I am planning on taking more high level courses like that one.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The university abroad seemed very professional concerning counselling and support for foreign students. Apart from that, the mentors (local students who mentor exchange students) were most helpful and friendly.
transfer of credits
Like mentioned above, I took 5 classes that added to a total of 30 ECTS, just like a semester in Utrecht University would be. It took a while for me before I received my proper transcript because a grade was missing. But since this week (19-08), my transcript is at the commission so I will hope to receive my proper result of the transfer of credits soon.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
In one word: amazing. Like I said, Koç is very professional concerning exchange programs. This meant that the week before classes officially started, we had an orientation week, which was perfectly balanced between academics, getting to know Istanbul and local ways and getting to know other exchange students.
accommodation
I stayed on campus during my stay. It's great, everything you need is there (sports facilities, supermarket, health center, etc.)
leisure & culture
During my free time I got to know Istanbul and Turkey and how amazing it is. I completely fell in love with the city and explored many different districts, café's, city's etc.
suggestions/tips
Koç arranges trips for exchange students to go on to different places in Turkey. I would highly recommend you to do this, because you see different parts of Turkey, get to know the exchange students better just as the locals, and all in all it's just an amazing experience.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Definetly. Even though Istanbul is a city which has 17 million inhabitants, the campus is located 30 kms from the city center, in a very nice & quiet district. You can choose to hang around the Bosphorus, the Black sea, the quiet Forest, but you can also go to the crowded heart of Istanbul, either on the European or on the Asian side.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Even though (or because) in these times we hear so many negative news about Turkey, I would highly recommend you to go there just to experience what I have experienced. And that is a beautiful and diverse country in every possible way: the landscape, the people, the mentality, the food, the culture, everything!



## UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
destination city & country	Istanbul, Turkey
name university abroad	Koç University
start date	07 / 09 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

exchange application process
I applied for exchange programs in Australia and Canada, but was not selected for them. I then had to pick a top 3 out of remaining open places on a list. Istanbul was my first choice and I luckily got it.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Utrecht University's International Office helped me a lot with the preparation and with making contact with Koç University. If I needed anything, they would make sure to help me and keep in touch with me about whether it had worked out or not.
academic preparation
I did not have to do a lot of academic preparation.
language preparation
I did a language test before I went, but since my dad is English I didn't have to really do anything in terms of language preparation.
finances
I applied for the Erasmus scholarship and made sure to also apply for the OV-vergoeding.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I chose subject I wanted to do before I went on my exchange. When I arrived, it turned out not all of the courses I wanted to do were available sadly. So I had to choose new courses, and a lot of them weren't open to exchange students or were already full. Choosing courses was a pain at Koç.
academic quality of education activities
The quality of the education activities was quite high. I would say most of the courses were kind of the same level of difficulty as we have at Utrecht, but more work. There are more exams you have to take. All the teachers have really high degrees and most of them were quite experienced so the teachers are good.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There is barely any support from the university abroad. However, you do get a mentor there and they were all really helpful and they helped me deal with any issues that came up.
transfer of credits



The transfer of credits went smoothly. The only thing is that the grades there are letters (A, B etc). So with transferring it is difficult for Utrecht University to convert them to our number grades I think. They just gave me an 8 on everything (I had A's, but I think I should have gotten higher marks since my average GPA was 3.94).

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

The orientation week was a lot of fun and a great way to get to know the other exchange students. We did a lot of activities on campus and in the city and we had parties as well so that was great.

### accommodation

I chose to live on campus and this apparently meant I had to share a room. They did not inform me on this beforehand and there was no opportunity to change this. This was a big disadvantage for me. I did not really like my roommates and I hated having to share my room since you never really have time for yourself then. So I would advise others to choose not to live on campus, even though you have to travel a while to the university then. Other than the fact that you have to share your room, campus life was nice though. There is a swimmingpool, a gym, restaurants and bars are near campus. Most of the other exchange students are also there. So in the end I liked the campus, just not my room situation. If you don't mind sharing a room, you should go for the campus. There is even a health centre there which was handy.

### leisure & culture

Istanbul is an amazing city and obviously the culture in Turkey is very different from our own. It was a wonderful experience for me to be in such a different place which is not even too far from home. The food and drinks are different, they listen to different music and there are different ways of dealing with people than we have here in the Netherlands. I thought of this as a good learning experience.

### suggestions/tips

If you are a girl, make sure you have a lot of friends who are guys. It can be intimidating for girls in Istanbul but as long as there are guys with you, this will not be a problem.

## CONCLUSIONS

### would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, I had such a good time there and wish I could go back. The time went by too quickly. Istanbul is such a great city and so different from other big European cities that I think it is worth going on an exchange there. At least then you will be living there and not just on holiday. And I think it is more of an experience than being in another Western city like Milan or something.

### do you have any additional advice or comments?

No.



**UU Report form - Erasmus 2014-2015**

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology
destination city & country	Istanbul, Turkey
name university abroad	Koc University
start date	06 / 09 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	25 / 12 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

The most important part of the application process was submitting the documents that were required. And of course sending an application form to the host university for the dorms.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support at Utrecht University, the International Office and the student counselor, were really helpful. We had to do most of the preparation ourselves, but they would give us help when we had questions regarding the application or difficulties with the host university.

academic preparation

I didn't really prepared myself in academic perspective.

language preparation

Before I left I learned some basic Turkisch words and phrases.

finances

I have saved money and made a fanincial plan in order to have enough money during the four months.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

There were a lot of organizational issues and problems involved with the study programm and course registration of the university. It felt like they werent really prepared for the exchange students, especially regarding the (available) courses, which caused us a lot of study related stress.

academic quality of education activities

The academic system is different in comparing to what I am used to, but I really enjoyed my classes because they were really interactive since we were only with a maximum of 25 students in each class. Of course there are some differences in difficulty and organization between the Netherlands and Turkey, but the courses were really interesting .

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There were a lot of problems with the organizatio, like the course problem and residence permit, but they eventually took care of everything. The only thing that all of the exchange students have experienced, is that the woman who was in charge of the international office didn't seem to like us at all.



transfer of credits

There are no problems with the transfer of credits.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme in the first week was really nice. It was chaos, but we did a lot of nice activities and the people at Koc really tried to make us feel welcome and home.

accommodation

The accommodation in the dorms are excellent.

leisure & culture

I think I didn't experience a culture shock, but I definitely had to get use to some aspects of the culture in Istanbul, especially since I am a blond girl from West of Europe. But I really liked (most of) the people and the city is just beautiful.

suggestions/tips

A suggestion/tip for girls would be that you have to look out for yourselves, it can be quite dangerous, especially when you are not aware yet of the possible dangers when you are in the city.

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I definitely would recommend Istanbul as the most beautiful and interesting city to experience your student life abroad. Koc University is a beautiful place as well, but there are some aspects that I didn't really enjoy. You can't really compare it with the rest of Turkey, since it is a private University and the students are quite different people than I am used to.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Make sure your preparations are done before you leave and just experience, without any expectations or fears, because everything will be fine. It was the best experience of my life!





## UU Report form - Erasmus 2013-2014

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name degree programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Istanbul, Turkey
name host institution and/or company/organization	Koç University
purpose Erasmus grant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> courses <input type="checkbox"/> research <input type="checkbox"/> work placement
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	07 / 09 / 2013
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	09 / 01 / 2014

### preparation

#### exchange/placement application process

The application process was a bit stressful for me, because I didn't get placed in my top 3 of choices. In the list of universities that were still available, I chose to go to Koç University in Istanbul. Thankfully, a lot of application documents and other processes were done in Istanbul once we were there. During the Orientation week we all had our own mentors who helped us get our documents sorted. Beforehand they gave us a list of things to bring, like 4 passport pictures etc. This made the application process go very fast.

#### counselling/support at home university

Before leaving Utrecht to go to Istanbul, I went to the International Office multiple times. At first to figure out which other options I had after not getting placed for my top choices. Afterwards I think I had one more meeting just to check if I was handling everything well. They were always very helpful. Coincidentally, in the first week of being in Istanbul one of the counselors was there too. We had some contact about how I was doing, which was thoughtful!

#### academic preparation

I didn't do a lot of academic preparation, because I was just going to be gathering my last few ECTS in Istanbul. I was able to choose from all the courses I wanted, so I chose courses that interested me or courses that were an advancement of courses I had done in Utrecht.

#### language preparation

None. My English was sufficient and all courses were taught in English. People from the University Utrecht all have a sufficient level of English, so a test or preparation beforehand isn't needed.

#### finances



I had been working for a year and saved up a part of the loan I received every month for my exchange. My parents also helped me out, as they were very supportive of the exchange.

**study/placement abroad period**

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

As mentioned above, I was able to choose from basically all the courses that were offered. The only rules were that the exam counsel at the University of Utrecht had to approve and that I had the right amount of knowledge for the courses. I ended up choosing courses within the psychology and sociology area. I also took Turkish and Spanish classes and a Philosophy class. Normally two language courses aren't allowed or recommended, but as I only needed to pass 4 courses to graduate for my bachelorsdegree and seeing that I took 5 courses, it wasn't a big problem.

I didn't want to work whilst being on exchange in Istanbul.

academic quality of education/placement activities

Compared to the University of Utrecht, I found the academic quality a bit lower. The lectures were always good and interesting, but I felt that essays and exams were scored a lot milder than they would be scored at UU. However, because I was following 5 courses it was still a good challenge.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The support at host institution was reasonable. What I really liked was the fact that we all had our own mentor and every mentor had about 6 mentees. Sending emails directly to the international office were often not answered or answered a lot later than I was used to in the Netherlands. However, the mentors made up for a lot. When I wanted to change my dormroom, I told my mentor and within a day I had a new room. So I found the international office support a bit slow, but the mentors made up for a lot of that!

transfer of credits

This took me about a month. I really dislike the way they were so slow with transferring my credits. I emailed them just after I got back and they sent it 3 weeks later, but after a week it still hadn't arrived. After calling the international office back home, they allowed me to let the host university scan the document and send it to them, because otherwise I would have to pay college money for 2 more months after I was back, even though I'm not enrolled in a study right now.

**student life**

welcome/orientation programme

I really liked the orientation week programme they had set up. It made us meet our mentors and other mentees and let us learn about the university, the Turkish culture, and the beautiful city! After that first week we could all notably feel how close we had gotten. It also gave me an idea of how to get around in such a big city.

accommodation



The accommodations were great. I lived on main campus in a room with one Turkish girl and one Norwegian girl. Every exchange student living with someone else is supposed to be in a room with a Turkish student, which is nice because it lets you meet a lot more people than just the exchange students. Our room was cleaned twice a week by a cleaning crew. They also cleaned the common kitchen/sitting area that we shared with the whole dormbuilding and the bathroom which we shared with half of our floor daily. We all had our own clothing closet, desk, chair and bed. Every room also had a phone and fridge. It felt very safe, was always clean and a lot of fun.

leisure/culture

The campus had a lot of leisure options for us to choose out of. I really enjoyed going to the gym, which was open 24 hours 7 days a week! They also had an outside swimmingpool on main campus and an inside swimmingpool on the west campus. For the colder winter months they had a ice skating rink on campus. Together with the football field, tennis courts, basketball courts and squash rooms, the campus had more than enough leisure!

The Turkish culture is very different from the Dutch culture, but not so different that I had difficulties adjusting to it. It's fun to dive into their culture, learn about their religion, food, and habits. Istanbul offers more than enough options to experience their culture. Of course there are the big tourist attractions like the Grand Bazaar, Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, etc. But after seeing that a couple of times, there are also a lot of other things to see and do, like visiting a turkish bath, looking at the less popular sites, going to the spice bazaar or visiting Princess Islands, a group of islands just beside Istanbul which is really suitable for a biking trip or a picknick, because cars aren't allowed on the islands. And the ferry trip to the islands is also amazing!

suggestions/tips

My tips would be to get your documents sorted in time and check up on the progress often to get a quick response, because the Turkish international office is just a little more laid back about those things compared to the Netherlands. Another tip would be to create a Facebook page with all the incoming students beforehand. I wanted to live in the city, but through the Facebook page I noticed everyone was going to be on campus. This may have been because of all the riots that were in Istanbul whilst we were there, so it's definitely worth checking that out. The page also lets you meet people that might take the same flight or arrive at the same time, which gives you the possibility to share a cab and save a lot of money!

**conclusions**

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Yes, I would recommend Koç University to other students. I had a lovely time and everything really gets taken care of. The only downside is the more laid back attitude, but it's by far not so bad that I wouldn't recommend the university. The Turkish and exchange students are really nice and there are a lot of trips and parties that get organized. It was almost too much! A lot of people might think that the university is far away from the city centre, but it's about 45 minutes with public transport and they have shuttles that go back during the nights in



the weekends, so it's fine and I got used to it very easily. I had a lovely time there, met a lot of new friends and will definitely go and visit Istanbul again!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Start your preparations soon and put all the important document you receive in the Netherlands and abroad in a file, so you don't lose anything important!