

2019-2020

Report 1

permission to publish contact details	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: sabinepersijn@hotmail.com
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Language & Culture Studies

destination city & country	Brno, Czech Republic
how did you travel to your destination?	plane
name university abroad	Masaryk Univeristy
start date	06 / 02 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 06 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process went very smoothly and the communication with Masaryk University as well. It helped greatly that they respond fast and have a clear website where you can find all the information. It's a lot of paperwork, like everyone says, but if you keep an eye on all the deadlines it is very doable.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The people at the International Office are always ready to help wherever possible and answer your questions and sign the required documents. They respond very fast, either through e-mail or phone call or at the office.
academic preparation	I did not need any academic preparation for my semester abroad in Brno.
language preparation	Since all the classes were taught in English, I did not need any language preparation either. There are possibilities offered by Masaryk University to learn Czech, but be careful because they are a lot of hard work and also cost extra money. Czech is a very hard language so it requires determination and practice. I only took Survival Czech classes in orientation week, which was enough for me to manage.
finances	The Czech Republic is a very cheap country, you don't need a lot of money at all. In fact I saved money by living there, since my rent at the dorm (Vinarska) was only 160 euros a month and the living costs are very low. Moreover, you can apply for an erasmus grant and if you stop your travelling card (OV) you will receive about 98 euros a month for that too. Also I could apply for an accomodation grant, which was another extra 111 euros.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Masaryk University works with an equivalent of blackboard/osiris which is called 'Information System', where you can read descriptions of courses, enroll in them and unenroll. Important is to keep an eye on the term calendar so you know when the deadlines are for enrolling and unenrolling in classes, because if you miss them you can't unenroll and it will say that you failed the class!
academic quality of education activities
The academic level of the courses was in general very low compared to Utrecht University. Because of the corona pandemic, most courses offered an even easier alternative (e.g. summarize a text, compare 2 movies...). Nevertheless I had very interesting courses, they were just not very intensive (but I didn't expect otherwise from a semester abroad).
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The contact person answers all your questions very quickly, and there are also many other students for example at the dorm who are willing to help you. Also it's useful to apply for an ESN buddy, as my buddy helped me greatly with a lot of practical issues.
transfer of credits
Masaryk University makes use of ECTS. They use a different grading system, but I think in the end only the credits matter (passed/ not passed)

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
ESN organised an orientation week which was a great way to get to know other students. They organised for example an international dinner, a pubquiz, karaoke night and a pubcrawl. It is not hard to make friends!
accommodation
I stayed in the Vinarska dorm, which is no doubt the best dorm offered by Masaryk University (in its facilities). Other dorms are Kounicova (which is also okay) and Komarov (which is not very good but offers single rooms, because in Vinarska I shared a room. I must say I got very lucky with my roommate who ended up being my best friend but either way you get used to sharing a room very fast)
leisure & culture
Brno has a lot of museums and events and a very big park (which is especially nice if you come in Spring Semester!) Also it has multiple cinemas where you can get a student discount (you can get student discount in a lot of places!).
suggestions/tips
Don't just go to the ESN events, they are kind of lame. Search on Facebook for events that draw your attention and ask your friends to go with you! This is how we found the best parties and the hidden gems of Brno. Google is your friend! And also ask around, there are so many cute coffee places and restaurants of which a lot I didn't get to discover because of quarantine.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
It's a pity that I didn't get the full Erasmus experience in Brno because it is truly the perfect city for it. Not too

big, not too small, a lot of students. The city draws international students from literally all over the world. The university is really great and the communication went flawless. Everybody is always willing to help (even though Czechs aren't the friendliest people). The Czech Republic is a really beautiful and cheap country and also perfect for travelling because it's in Central Europe.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you want to experience something new, definitely go to Brno. I'm really glad I got out of my comfort zone and went to a country and a university which is completely unknown for me!

2016-2017

Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Media & Culture

destination city & country	Brno, Czech Republic
name university abroad	Masaryk University
start date	16 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 05 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The process of applying went smoothly. Both UU and Masaryk University (MU) provide a lot of information and respond to questions quickly. The MU has instruction videos in English and the coordinator is very helpful and friendly.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I did not use a lot of support from the UU, but I did not encounter any problems when I consulted them about practical questions.

academic preparation

I did not do any specific academic preparation before leaving.

language preparation

I also did not do any language preparation, since all my courses were in English.

finances

Brno is a very cheap destination, so I did not use a lot of savings. I financed everything with my student loans (stufi), the Erasmus fund, the public transport refund (ov-studenten reisvergoeding) and a small stipend from my parents. For instance, the rent in the dormitory is only 130 euros a month, 0,5 liter beer is around 1 euro and for 3 months of public transport in Brno you only pay 25 euros. So compared to Utrecht the lifestyle is a lot cheaper.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
	study programme (content and organisational issues)
	The courses I took were really interesting, although the general level is definitely lower than at UU. They offer many courses in English so there are probably enough courses to choose from. All of them have different credits and different timetables so it can be a puzzle to make a schedule with enough credits and without overlapping courses. However if you take some time to do this there will not be a problem. Teachers were nice and spoke good English. They expect less of you preparation-wise: there are not really critical discussions in the classrooms and they do not give a lot of homework. The exam period is a little busier but I found it still relaxed compared to UU.
	academic quality of education activities
	As told above, the academic quality is lower. The courses had interesting content/literature however a lot less is expected from the student. For instance, for a course on master level I only had to write a 2000 word essay as a final paper. At the UU I sometimes for bachelor courses write 4000/5000 word papers.
	counselling & support at receiving university abroad
	The coordinator is really friendly and kind, and always willing to help you. I did not need a lot of support since I did not encounter many problems. When I did however Radka (the coordinator) responded to my questions quickly by email. She is also in her office for a few hours everyday, so for urgent questions you can drop by.
	transfer of credits
	I have not transferred my credits yet but I expect this to go smoothly since the support from MU has been quick and easy.

STUDENT LIFE	
	welcome & orientation programme
	The orientation programme was great! It was a full week of 5 days of introduction. This meant many different activities, from practical introductions and lectures to a lot of social activities. There was a city tour to discover the nicest pubs and cafés, a city game, dinners and parties next to a lot of guidance with practical stuff. I truly enjoyed this week since I met a lot of new people, because with every activity you were placed in a different group. The 'fun' part of the intro week is not mandatory, however I would recommend everybody to participate because this makes it really easy to meet new people.
	accommodation
	There are three dormitories to choose from: Vinarska, Komarov and Kounicova. You can choose in which one of these dormitories you want to live. You can also search for private accommodation in a flat which will be more expensive but still cheaper than living in Utrecht. In 2 of the dormitories you will have a roommate (meaning, sharing a bedroom with somebody). I truly enjoyed this experience since my roommate was from Brazil and we became best friends over the semester. In Komarov you can have a single room however this dorm is the furthest from the city centre. I lived in Kounicova which is 20 min walking to my faculty and 25 to the city centre. Also a tram stops right in front of the dorm, taking you in 10 min. If you have more questions about which dorm would suit you best please send me an email!
	leisure & culture
	The city is really great: around the same size as Utrecht and many students since there are 3 universities. A lot of international students as well. The ISC (International Student Club) organizes many activities so you never have to be bored. I for instance every Sunday joined the hiking club where we went on a 15 km hike in nature

around Brno (with pub breaks). I also went weekly to the pubquiz, the parties and sometimes to the weekly board game night (all organized by ISC). Because there are so many students the city is full of bars, restaurants etc. The city is not yet discovered by tourists which I loved: it is not overcrowded and prices are very friendly. It is 2,5 hours to Prague, 2 hours to Vienna and 2 to Bratislava so I took many weekend and daytrips with the cheap buscompany Regiojet (major tip). Also the Alps, Budapest and Krakov are very close. So if you like to travel in the weekends and see more of central Europe Brno is the place to be for you.

suggestions/tips

I do not have any specific tips or advices. Generally I would say this Erasmus was one of the best experiences of my life so I highly recommend others to go. Also I would recommend you to participate in many activities and keep an open mind to these activities and the different kinds of people you will meet. You will make friendships that will last forever and have a lot of fun, even though saying goodbye will be very hard.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would highly recommend this destination to others. Brno is not very known (I also did not know it before going there) even though it is the second city of the Czech Republic after Prague. There are many international students, the student club is very active, you live in a dormitory full of other international students, living and eating/drinking out are extremely cheap, you escape the tourist crowds, many weekend trips within reach etc. etc. Brno itself is also a really modern city with all the conveniences of "Western European life" since many people seem to be prejudiced about the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is also full of cute villages (many with UNESCO heritage) and has really good nature for hiking. The weather is also good: from April on it was mostly 20/25 degrees and sunny. The least appealing thing was the academic quality which I found higher at UU. However, the lower academic quality gives you plenty of time to enjoy Erasmus life with little worries and stress.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Nop! If you have more questions or are considering Brno as a destination, please send me an email and I can answer your questions :)