



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report

family name	xxx
first name	xxx
student number	xxx
e-mail address	
faculty/college	Geesteswetenschappen
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences

destination city & country	Bratislava, Slovakia
name university abroad	Comenius University
start date	01 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The application process was pretty easy I think if you just follow the steps in Osiris.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Utrecht University helped me a lot because they placed me and Robert at the same University like we requested.
academic preparation	
	Utrecht asked to do a lot beforehand but actually it was better to do it when I arrived. The information online was not always correct or up to date and when I was there I had to change all my courses.
language preparation	
	The courses were taught in English but the level was not very high so this was no problem.
finances	
	Bratislava was very cheap to live (groceries/rent) so this was no problem.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	<p>Everything was a bit differently organised compared to what I was used to at Utrecht University (or any Dutch University) and it was a lot more chaotic. This is alright if you don't mind having to switch courses last minute or suddenly having an exam tomorrow instead of next week. Because of this chaos there is a lot of space to change things last minute for yourself as well. The teachers or the systems are not superstrict in rules etc so it feels more easy going which I thought was a plus</p> <p>There was an issue in the beginning of the semester as all the courses that I picked and put in my learning agreement turned out to not be taught in English, and the English taught programme suddenly was very very limited.</p>
academic quality of education activities	<p>The academic quality of education was very different throughout the university and throughout the courses and I think this was mostly due to the teachers.. Some teachers for example were very qualified and I learned a lot in those courses. But other teachers simply ignored the book or material and did not speak English very well which made it hard for me to "learn" things from them and I had to do a lot by myself.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	<p>Teachers and contactpersons at Comenius were very helpful, it really surprised me!! More than what I have had in Utrecht so far. My contactperson always helped me really fast and a lot of teachers also took time apart to teach their subject in a small group for the International students. These courses were really focused on personal attention and you could ask the teachers for help about anything.</p>
transfer of credits	<p>The credits were transferred to Dutch grades and I think this was done in a fair way although not all the faculties do this in the same way. For example natural sciences A became a 9.0 and social sciences A became a 8.5 at Utrecht University which I thought was strange. But overall the transfer of credits seems fair to me. What did surprise me is that all the courses were listed as level 1 courses in Osiris while I followed courses of level 1, 2 and 3 at Comenius University. The courses of level 3 were significantly more difficult and I think it is not very fair that in Utrecht they are seen as level 1.</p>

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	<p>The orientation programme was very well organised! ESN is a really fun group and they organise a lot of activities which made it easy to get to know everyone.</p>
accommodation	<p>The University has dorms in very bad condition, but very cheap. You sleep in a tiny room with 2 or 3 people and everything is really small and shitty. But a lot of parties are happening there and it has a really nice vibe. There are other dorm-like places with more privacy to live in Bratislava as well, like Incheba or the Student House where I lived. There are plenty of students in these places as well but the rooms are really nice and clean.</p>
leisure & culture	<p>There was not a lot to do in Bratislava, it's a tiny city. However there is a lot to do close by: trips to the mountains, Vienna, Prague, Budapest. There is definitely a lot of Slovak culture to explore in Bratislava and the whole of Slovakia (which you can tour with a free train pass for students)</p>
suggestions/tips	<p>The high Tatras in Slovakia were a really nice surprise! It is beautiful in Winter (with loads of snow) and in Summer as well and only a few hours away by train!</p>



CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this University if you want courses where you get a lot of personal attention and if you don't mind the unorganised chaos. Bratislava is a cheap place full of international students but if you prefer a big city with a lot to do than this is not the place for you.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Do the Slovak language course and use it! I got to learn a lot of Slovak in just six months and I thought it was really awesome. It is nothing like any other familiar language and now I can understand a lot of other slavic languages like russian/polish/czech etc and that is really cool I think!!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report

family name	xxxx
first name	xxx
student number	xxx
e-mail address	
faculty/college	Sociale wetenschappen
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	ASW

destination city & country	Bratislava, Slowakije ,
name university abroad	Comenius university
start date	01 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
You can read this on the website of the UU.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I went to a general meeting of going abroad. Furthermore, I had a meeting with the coordinator (Marleen van der Ven).
academic preparation
It took some time to choose courses online. Finally, I had to send emails to the teachers directly to ask whether or not the course would be given that semester. Some plans for following courses changed.
language preparation
I took a slovak language course in the first week in Slovakia.
finances
I received 600,- in total from Erasmus+ and some money for not using OV (approximately 90,- a month).



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>I chose 9 courses (all not many ECTS). These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Slovak language 2. Moral psychology 3. Individual psychology 4. Interventions in education 5. Alternative schools 6. Painting and sculpture of the 19th and 20th centuries 7. Social motivation and behaviour 8. Visual grammar 9. Introduction to logic
academic quality of education activities
<p>The quality of education is good. For most courses, I used some articles of recent research or some very interesting books. Furthermore, I had more individual courses (only with the teacher or just with a group of five students and the teacher).</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Good
transfer of credits
Good. I did 32 ECTS

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Very nice! I recommend to do this.
accommodation
<p>Dormitories Mlynske dolina, see the website of the university. It is very cheap and you can sign up online. Note: there are only rooms you share with 1 or 2 others. (I liked this actually)</p>
leisure & culture
Nice
suggestions/tips
Explore the city and the country (you can buy free tickets for travelling by train & bus/metro is also very cheap). Contact me if you want to have more info!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes. It was well organised, a different way of having courses and a very beautiful city to be.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
No



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report

family name	xxx
first name	xxx
student number	xxx
e-mail address	
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Developmental Geography

destination city & country	Bratislava, Slovakia
name university abroad	Comenius University
start date	18 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Applying for the exchange was very easy and straight forward! All the information was presented on one web page of the UU with a clear overview of what needs to happen when. Didn't encounter any problems or difficulties!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Experienced great support from UU! My situation was slightly different from normal applications, because together with a study mate we tried to enter the same university/city at the same time. That was a challenge, but with the help of the international office we made a top 3 of favorite locations and they helped by thinking along with us.

academic preparation

I mostly didn't prepare for the courses at Comenius University. I didn't receive any information as to what to prepare for, probably because the teachers at the university didn't know anything about which courses the Erasmus students were going to attend to. For a chemistry class I looked up some basic information to make up for the fact that I didn't have chemistry in high school, but that's all the preparation I had and needed!

language preparation



I followed the Slovak Language Course and trusted that I would learn everything I wanted to learn there. Therefore, I didn't prepare anything back home in terms of language.

finances

Slovakia was cheap, very cheap. Still, I made sure that I knew the estimates of what the day to day life would cost me there, and prepare for it. I did work a bit extra the summer before going, which was not necessary in order to survive financially. It was nice though to have some surplus for fun activities like traveling in the region or eating out and I recommend to do the same.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed the first half year of the English taught 'Environmental Sciences', which was a mixture of different beta courses focused on the exact sciences to understand the environment. Think chemistry, geology, geography etc. This study programme is popular in its Slovak version, but the English version was not very well organised. I think mostly because there was only me, and two other Slovak students. There was no clear information concerning how to apply for courses (I thought I already did that with my Learning Agreement, but they never used that to register me for courses). I think they had an online area like Osiris, but not for Erasmus students. If I wanted to register for a course, I had to track down the responsible teacher in person in a strange building and ask if I could attend their course. If they agreed, I had to go to the office and confirm, and there they would register me. I was lucky that a teacher wanted to help me, so she walked with me for an hour trying to find all the teachers, but if she wouldn't have helped me I don't think I could have even registered for all the courses. The content of the courses was interesting, but very basic. It felt like a recap from high school. We would never really go in depth.

academic quality of education activities

I liked the topics they addressed and I liked the hands-on approach: not so theoretical, but presented as such that you understand the value of the information in the real world. However, the quality was nowhere near University level in my opinion. It felt like applied sciences, which isn't a bad thing on its own, but which is good to know before you go or even make your decision. Some teachers didn't show any compassion to their discipline, or to teaching, which was extra demotivating apart from the language barrier (English levels were very basic and not really academic). However, some teachers were very passionate about their job and loved to teach us all about it, which was nice. Because we were such a small group, the teachers that loved to teach actively engaged with us and made it very personal. One teacher however didn't even bother to contact us in a month and send us new slides, so we basically never had any class from him (I think he did teach the regular class, but he found the English class too small to even bother and try to teach us). The test was normal, but we just had to learn for it in the last week and that was sufficient.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The moment you ask for help in Slovakia they will try to help you, but if you don't ask for it they will never try to think for you. If you want the rosters, contact info from teachers, a head start, someone to think along with you or anything else, you have to actively ask around until you find the right person. They will never give you a good overview of what needs to be arranged when and with who to actually start attending courses. Even after their help it was still confusing and my Slovak class mates, both first year students, didn't know much more either. So the bottomline is: when asked for, the counseling is okay and sometimes great, but the organisational structure behind the counseling could use a major improvement and needs to be more established as well. (For example, hand out on paper a small guide that explains all that needs to happen with a link for further information online, IN ENGLISH).

transfer of credits



Didn't experience any problems. Courses were already in ECTS and were taken over by the UU without any problems.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Great welcome week, the students from ESN Bratislava really did go out of their way. The welcome week was organised very well, with all the information you needed in an online Facebook group with separate activities you could attend and sign up for. Also, when you had a question, you could just message them and they would answer fairly quick. They were great people! At activities, you could see they were enjoying themselves and enjoyed to connect with the Erasmus students (and occasional other exchange student). After the welcome week, you know where to go for everything and who to ask if you want to know more. Also, you will have plenty of opportunity to meet all your fellow exchange students, so make sure you join the welcome week.

accommodation

Accommodations offered by the university (Mliny, Druzba) are really small and crappy, but even more cheap to make up for it. For between 50 and 70 euro you have a room for a month, shared with one or two other exchange students! If you enjoy your own space and privacy and don't mind missing out on the hallway parties and social activities that spontaneously happen, there's plenty of possibility to find private accommodations. Just google, or look at Flatio (sort of AirBnB for longer periods).

leisure & culture

Bratislava is a nice and historic city that you can enjoy for a long time, with a nice main street where you can shop, eat and party (Obchodna), and with many modern shopping malls (really, I don't know any city with more shopping malls, it's ridiculous!). But if you were a tourist, I would say you can see everything of Bratislava in two days tops. Luckily, Bratislava is located at a very great spot to discover nearby cities and countries. Vienna, Budapest, Prague and Brno are all doable in a weekend! Also, I (and probably every Slovak as well) definitely recommend visiting the High Tatras (Zdiar, or anywhere else) because they are really beautiful mountains.

suggestions/tips

See leisure & culture! And go to the Slovak pub for a traditional meal and some Kofola!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would recommend visiting Bratislava for your Erasmus experience, but the recommendation is conditional. If you join Erasmus just for the contents of the courses abroad, don't go here, you will be disappointed in the academic quality and lack of professional teachers. If you want to go to a country where everyone speaks perfect English, go to England or Ireland or any other country where English is commonly spoken. If you don't mind the challenge of speaking a bit with your hands and feet and a little with the local language, I recommend it. Locals are usually quite surprised when you speak a bit of Slovak and will open up to you quickly.

In conclusion, if you want to wander off the beaten trail and experience an authentic country where tourism and internationals are not embedded in the day to day life, and if you don't mind adapting a bit to the sometimes seemingly rude way people interact with you (but that's just their way, they're not mad at you, that's just normal!), then I definitely recommend giving Bratislava and Slovakia in general a try.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Comenius University and Slovakia both seem a bit unorganised and chaotic, which is true. Don't let that scare you off though, because although the lack of structure and protocol can be confusing and annoying, it also



means they will be more open to adapting to you. Have two exams at the same time? No problem, you can do your exam another time. Want to go home before Christmas and don't come back after? No problem, you can finish and do all the exams before Christmas. Already know the contents of a course because you had something similar back home? No problem, they will just try and think of something different and more challenging for you, as long as you show that you know everything of the standard curriculum. That's the positive side to the chaotic and unstructured side of Slovakia. If you find that charming and not utterly annoying, you know you will find likeminded people during your exchange. Enjoy!