



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
how did you travel to your destination?	By train (Utrecht-Berlin, Berlin-Warsaw) and by bus (although since early 2023 there is a train connection which can be booked via the website of the Lithuanian railways.
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	31 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 6 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process went smoothly - I heard within a few weeks that I was accepted. Of course, you need to prepare some documents. Like everybody else, I advise you to start on time because these documents often need to be signed by the International Office, which takes time you do not have if you apply last-minute.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	All my questions were answered, and I could always expect a reply within 3-5 days. I encountered no major obstacles, though.
academic preparation	No academic preparation was needed. As a matter of fact, if you do not choose subjects wildly different from your usual study programme, you'll be fine. The standards at UU are a lot higher. So don't hesitate to try courses from a different faculty either!
language preparation	An intermediate command of English is all that's needed. However, there are many quality-courses taught in Russian and Polish, and of course Latvian, Estonian, Finnish, French and German, too. It is a university-wide exchange, so if you want to take courses in either one of these languages, go for it. I myself found the Russian course I took a bit too challenging, but language courses are also available.
finances	You don't have to save up that much money. I myself had some money specifically reserved for the exchange, which came in handy while travelling the Baltics and Poland. Other than that, the Erasmus grant and the OV-vergoeding together might well almost pay your rent (the dorm are still cheaper).

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	Compared to Utrecht, things are a bit chaotic. One course hadn't provided the syllabus until two months in, another teacher did not even necessarily want to see our final paper (he decided the presentations would do).



In a third course, the teacher got a new job after three months and we never saw her again. A fourth course ended mid-May, while the official end date of the semester was 1,5 months later. Sometimes you get the feeling they just do whatever.

academic quality of education activities

The teachers are by no means incompetent, I would say they just go with the flow a little more. They talk about interesting things, and make sure to ask questions, because some are not used to it, but provide you with fascinating information. Especially because some subjects are unusual to Utrecht standards: a followed a course on Central Asian history and diplomacy, which I would have never been able to follow at the UU, taught by a professor from Mongolic descent.

Referring back to the previous topic (study programme), the knowledge of the teachers gets wasted a bit in some cases by the funky programmes and chaotic itineraries.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

VU administration was always quick to respond and clear in their answers. This was a huge relief, as I have heard about some more difficult circumstances at other uni's abroad.

transfer of credits

I have not as of yet received my Transcript of Records, so can't say.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Make sure to join all the events! I met some of the nicest and dearest people during the first week. The parties at Salento night club were in hindsight kind of crappy, but you meet a lot of people in a casual way there, which makes the rest of the exchange easier. The introduction ceremony was well organized, funny, and made us feel like we were really on an adventure here. The city games were a lot of fun, as well as the culture night (traditional lithuanian dancing etc.). But the real fun starts after the orientation week. Still, I'm glad I attended most of the events.

accommodation

I know people that shower in the dorms while holding their breath. Almost nobody cooks there, and there's barely any places to hang out. It's ridiculously cheap, but also chronically underfunded. I chose to rent an apartment with a friend. It was much more expensive than the dorms, but not shocking to Dutch standards, and our landlady was responsive and helpful. I walk out the door and I'm immediately in the city centre - 5 min from university faculties and 10 min from the main streets and squares. From the dorms, you'd have to take a bus. The old town is still the place to go for an apartment - naujamiestis and uzupis are cool too. Above the river makes moving around the city a bit more of a hassle.

leisure & culture

2023 celebrates 700 years of Vilnius, so of course it was event-packed compared to other years. Still, some of the museums are worth visiting, there are yearly markets and music festivals, many cafés etc. The clubbing scene is small though, and you'll not find the most vibrant restaurant culture here.

For leisure, cafés were great in my opinion. In the summer, the city is busy and fun. Also, make sure to travel.

From Vilnius, travelling to Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Poland is cheap and does not take too long. I was not only entertained by the city-trips, but also by Latvian and East-Polish natural parks and Baltic coasts.

After four months, in my case, the ideas run out, and you realize Utrecht is more vibrant after all.

suggestions/tips

-travel! everything is cheap and within reach.



-don't break your head over learning Lithuanian. Normally I wouldn't vouch for that, but 6 months is really not enough to get conversational unless you really immerse, as its not related closely to any languages in the neighbourhood (except Latvian). Most young people know English.

-check <https://www.vilnius-events.lt/> It's comprehensive and you'll see what's happening

- go to the independence days in februari and march!

The traditional Lithuanian restaurants are really not that great. I'd say only Etno Dvaras cuts it, but I'd advise to go to bars to really taste Lithuanian snacks

- go to basketball games at the Zalgirio Arena!

CONCLUSIONS

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

This is most definitely not like Spain or Portugal, and you have to be prepared for snow and cold, but mostly grayness until april. There's less of a party culture (among this Erasmus group) and the city is calm most of the time. If you want to live in a country with a beautiful university, fascinating history and interesting geopolitics, in the proximity of other travel destinations, it might be for you. At least I do not regret choosing Vilnius.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have questions just email me :)



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
how did you travel to your destination?	Train & Bus
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	27 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

As it is with every administrative procedure, the applicant needs to take the time to understand the procedure and to find the documents. But Utrecht University greatly facilitate this procedure. The UU gives enough tools to make the procedure easy enough to follow.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had enough support. When help was needed, I could contact my regional erasmus supervisor and get the answers I needed.

academic preparation

Not academic preparation was needed for my exchange to Vilnius.

language preparation

Not linguistic preparation was needed: the classes were taught in English.

finances

The funding was a very welcome support. The administrative process is quite straightforward. One thing must be said as Lithuania is not as cheap as thought. Inflation has caused prices to rise significantly. It would be great if the support could be adjusted according to price inflation in the country.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme is varied and interesting. Courses specific to the country are a must to take. Those courses broaden your view of the world. There were some organisational problems, such as communication between students and lecturers but overall it was great.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the teaching activities meets the quality expectations of a host institution in the Erasmus exchange programme.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



The support at the receiving university is good. Support was approachable and effective in resolving problems and answering questions.
transfer of credits
No problem at all with the transfer of credits.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
A rich welcome and orientation programme organised by the university and the ESN network. It helps to discover the city and make friends.
accommodation
The university dorms are quite rough (virtually no privacy), but it is a great place to make a lot of friends. I have been staying on the vibrant Vokiečių gatvė. The stay has been of the most pleasant. In Vilnius, if you're looking for beautiful accommodation, you'll find it.
leisure & culture
Lithuania's culture, outside the touristic places, is very vibrant. Kaunas is a center of culture with a lot of museums. In Vilnius itself, a lot of events are being organised; a pink soup festival (typical beetroot soup) to a marathon, Vilnius is a vibrant city!
suggestions/tips
Go study in coffeshops! A lot of coffeshops have their own character with their own strong and weak sides, go discover them. Furthermore, with your new Erasmus friends, go explore Lithuania by train or by car. Lithuania has much to offer. Don't forget to travel to the other baltic countries, and Finland. It is quite the experience.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
An exchange at Vilnius university is not the most obvious choice comparing to the Scandinavian countries or Italy or Spain for example. But it does really broaden your world in a great way. Due to a different history to the rest of Europe, Lithuanians are really proud of their history. They also still suffer from it due the occupation of the USSR during the 20 th century. In short, history is very much alive in Lithuania, and is mixing with the present and the future.
do you have any additional advice or comments?



ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

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

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
how did you travel to your destination?	Public Transport
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	01 / 02 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The exchange application process was surprisingly easy and hassle-free, not nearly as intimidating as I imagined it to be
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Utrecht University international office staff were quick with responding to any questions I had
academic preparation	



None relevant.
language preparation
None relevant.
finances
The application process for an Erasmus+ grant was easy to understand and follow, and the international office staff from both universities were ready and able to help out.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The organisational aspects of the study programme were sometimes disappointing; in particular, course manuals were often incorrect, outdated by one or more years, and in one instance ignored altogether. Another professor didn't supply us with a course manual until several weeks into the study period.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality was somewhat lower than I might otherwise have experienced at home, but that's not that surprising considering all these classes
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Vilnius University international office staff were quick with responding to any questions I had
transfer of credits
Went off without a hitch.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The welcome week was packed thanks to activities organized both by the university and the Erasmus Student Network, giving ample opportunities to get to know the city and each other.
accommodation
Not relevant: I found my own accommodation rather than staying in university dorms.
leisure & culture
Vilnius has a lively bar/club culture, various activities to see and do around the city. the ESN organized bi-weekly activities (though not very well, it has to be said) and there are a number of study cafes scattered around the city.
suggestions/tips
Mint Vinetu is good for sitting and reading a book, studying, or playing chess!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Individual classes were very fun and student life was lively and exciting, but if you're looking for something to raise
do you have any additional advice or comments?



None.



ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
how did you travel to your destination?	by Bus and train
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	03 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	26 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process went all fine. Of course it is some work to fill in all the documents (especially for the board of examiners) but is definitely doable. The international office in Vilnius is super friendly and even extended the application period for me to submit all my documents.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The UU international office always helped me when I had questions.
academic preparation	I did not need any preparation. Of course you should keep the requirements for the courses in mind.
language preparation	I tried to learn a few words Lithuanian in advance, but it is a very difficult language. During my language course in Vilnius however I learned more and I knowing the words for food items was especially useful. My level of English was sufficient.
finances	Since I lived in a dorm and Lithuania is not a very expensive country, I spent less money per month than in the Netherlands.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I followed courses from different faculties which made my schedule very diverse but also more challenging to put it together since I had classes at different locations and the lecture times kept changing in the beginning. Unfortunately, they didn't offer that many courses in English in my field but still enough to choose nice courses. On the website I could find all the courses but when I arrived, I heard that some were not taught in that year anymore. So you have to stay flexible. The first two weeks of the semester are really about choosing your courses and you can try and drop them. The only challenge was to find the schedule online but eventually it gets posted. During those first two weeks the teachers mainly gave an introduction to their course and we



could see whether we liked it. Since my courses were very small, we could even change the lecture times for some courses.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was fine. In general, the teachers' English was not as good as in the Netherland but totally sufficient. I also felt less challenged there (but maybe they are just nice with exchange students). However, they knew much in their field and were super happy when you asked them questions. They were also super friendly.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office at Vilnius University is very friendly and always replied in time to my questions.

transfer of credits

It worked well and all my courses got approved.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was an orientation week with events every day, unfortunately I couldn't attend so I can't say much about it. From friends I heard good things about it.

accommodation

I stayed in the university dorms (Sauletekio 39). At first I only planned to stay there until I found a flat since the dorms are not especially charming (to put it nicely) but then I stayed. The conditions didn't bother me that much anymore and it was just so much cheaper and livelier than a flat in the old town. The advantages are that it is very cheap, you live with lots of other international students and it is close to the science campus (Sauletekis). The disadvantages are that it is not a nice building (but you totally get used to it), it is far from the old town and there is less privacy (you share your room). There is another dorm closer to the old town (Olandu) which is renovated and if you're lucky you get placed there.

leisure & culture

Vilnius is not a very big city but there is always something going on. In the weekends there are shows, markets or concerts on the street which is super fun. There are also many options to go out, eat out and visit cultural places. Moreover, it has a very beautiful old town where everything is within walking distance. There are many cool and nice places to discover in the city. Outside of the old town you also find big malls where you can find everything you might need. I also liked that there is a forest near the city and you can go to some nice nature reserves at the border of the city by bus.

You can also travel cheaply throughout the country and the neighbouring countries which is great to do on the weekends.

suggestions/tips

If you want to meet Lithuanians, you should join a university club. I joined a climbing course and hikes on the weekends that were organised by the hiking club (VUZK) which was the best choice ever. On the hikes I discovered the country and usually I was the only international and I met many super nice people. You should check out the other clubs of the university if you want to interact more with the local students. This is especially worth it since Lithuanians usually take some time to open up but then they are super friendly.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, definitely! It is such an underestimated and undiscovered country. I had such a good time. It is especially nice if you are open to a new culture and curious about it, like nature and hiking, and want to let yourself be surprised.



do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
name university abroad	Vilnius University (Vilniaus Universitetas)
start date	01 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was quite clear and if you have questions, the Lithuanian coordinator is very helpful and responds quickly.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Sometimes responses take a few days, but all my problems were easily resolved.

academic preparation

Courses are easier than in Utrecht, so I didn't do any academic preparation. For some courses at the start I had to do a little extra googling.

language preparation

I followed courses in English, the same language as my bachelor here, so I didn't do any preparation except for the mandatory language assessment.

finances

I had a few thousand euros in my bank account from borrowing and working before. Expenses are very similar as in the Netherlands (except if you live in the dorm), but I wanted some money so I could go on trips.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I had been assigned to the Faculty of Medicine. This was a surprise to me, as I thought going to a university-wide partner meant I could do all kinds of courses. I had to do half of my ECTS (22.5) in this faculty, which came down to 15 ECTS as there are no 7.5 point courses. Because I am not a medicine student, my options of which courses I could follow were very limited.

academic quality of education activities

The quality of the courses varies a lot. I would recommend asking full time students which courses they recommend, it is very easy to switch courses the first couple of weeks.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I didn't receive much counselling, but I didn't really seek it out either. The amount of support depends on which faculty you're studying in.

transfer of credits



This is still ongoing for me.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I missed a few days of the orientation week due to an exam, but the activities I went to were fun, mainly because they were an opportunity to meet new people. I definitely recommend participating in the welcome week, as this is where I made a lot of friends.

accommodation

I stayed at the Olandu dorm because I didn't want the hassle of finding a room for myself, it's easy to meet people there and it's very cheap (58 euros a month). It's not very high end; you share a room with one or two other people and you need to buy your own cooking gear etc. That said, considering the price it's an ok place to stay with a good location, and I got to know a lot of people here. I recommend going to Olandu over Sauletekis, since the latter is quite far from the city centre and from what I heard dirtier.

leisure & culture

Vilnius is a very fun student city; there's enough to do but it's not too massive so you can easily walk everywhere or take a bus. There are a lot of concert halls, open air events and pubs with activities. During my stay, especially in spring, there were a lot of music and dance events throughout the city. There are also a lot of clubs to visit, everything from pop or alternative to techno.

suggestions/tips

I recommend going on an ESN trip like the one to Lapland. You need a bit of extra money and check if skipping some uni days is possible, but it's extremely worth it in my opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I really liked the city and the university gave enough opportunities and support while not having too difficult courses.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you want to try out the dorm but end up not liking it, you can end your rent agreement at any time since payments are monthly.
Get the bolt and trafi app: former for scooters and taxis, latter for busses. You need to couple a credit card so make sure you have one. With trafi, select 80% off for a monthly ticket: students can take buses inside Vilnius for 5,60 a month. You need a student card as proof (international is cheaper, but a Lithuanian card gives you access to the old town uni library)



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	01 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was very easy and straightforward. Vilnius University was one of the exchange destinations that still had spots left after the initial deadline. I made the decision to go on my exchange quite late as there were still uncertainties due to Covid, and I had to make some last-minute changes in my planning because of a course that I had to follow in Utrecht. Despite this, the application process still went smoothly.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

No comments

academic preparation

Vilnius University has a rather clear website with a special page for international students with an overview of courses available for them in English (as well as a limited number of courses in German and French). It was easy to select courses that I wanted to follow in Vilnius, even at different faculties. Unfortunately, the Geosciences faculty is rather small in Vilnius, and offers only a limited number of courses for international students, but luckily courses from other faculties filled this gap for me.

language preparation

In the semester before going on my exchange, I wrote my thesis. I wrote it in English to prepare myself for having to write all my academic work in English for a whole semester. I personally think this has been a good preparation. I also followed one course in German in Vilnius, for which I did not prepare myself in any way, as I deemed my level of German as sufficient. I did try to learn some basic Lithuanian before leaving for Vilnius, but you learn the most when you actually get there. I would advise taking the Lithuanian A1 course (which you receive credits for) to learn basic Lithuanian for your stay. This course is not only very useful, but also a lot of fun.

finances

Next to the Erasmus grant, I did save up some money in advance, as I knew that I would not be able to work for half a year. Lithuania was not as cheap as I expected, so living costs were not that much lower than at home. Travelling was cheap (public transport) but the prices of groceries were really not that different from prices in Dutch supermarkets.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



After arriving in Vilnius, you have the first week of classes in which you are still allowed to change courses. You can try out as many courses as you'd like, and decide which ones you want to take within the first week of the semester. Unfortunately one of the courses that I had initially selected to take, was suddenly taught in Lithuanian only, meaning that I had to change this one. Another course did not meet my expectations and I dropped this one after attending the first lecture, swapping it for a different one. This was not a problem at all. One course that I took contained too much content that I had already seen in courses in Utrecht, even though the course description made me expect otherwise.

academic quality of education activities

The courses that I have taken all had very small groups of students. One course only had 2 fellow students (probably due to the fact that it was taught in German), and in another one we were only 5 people. This made a large difference in the quality of the education as you received a lot of personal attention and a lot of interaction was possible. In the course with 2 other students, we went on excursions around the city several times with the professor, who even drove us around in her car once, showing us different parts of Vilnius as part of the course, which was very interesting and fun. I only had a negative experience in one course: the professor of this course barely gave us any real lectures. In the first month of my semester, the class was still given online, but this professor did not want to give us remote lessons and just gave us some readings and assignments. Even after the course was again allowed to be given in real life, the professor constantly cancelled the class and gave us assignments. Only when it was time for students to give their presentations, the class took place for several weeks at the end of the semester. Other than this one course, I had very positive experiences and the courses were all very nice. The quality of education is lower than in the Netherlands, and it is easy to get high grades. Failing a course is almost impossible if you attend classes and hand in your assignments. The professors of the courses other than the one mentioned before were all very kind, approachable, and really wanted to go the extra mile for the students. Our teacher of Lithuanian language regularly sent us e-mails about life in Vilnius, about things to do and places to visit. This made the classes feel very personal and you would really feel connected with the other students in the class and the teacher.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I was in Vilnius during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and given the proximity of Lithuania to Russia (and especially Belarus being only 30 kms away from Vilnius), this news was received with a lot of uncertainty and questions amongst international students in Vilnius. From day 1 of the war, we received many updates from Vilnius University about the current situation, about which news outlets to follow and about what was happening in the country. This was a very positive and calming experience, communication was really good during this time.

transfer of credits

Transfer of credits went fairly easy. I only had to send an e-mail to the international office in Vilnius about them having to send the transcript directly to Utrecht University, as you would usually receive the transcript yourself. Many foreign universities accept the transcript when received from a student, but this is not the case in Utrecht and I had to communicate this towards Vilnius University, which was not a problem and the transcript was soon sent to Utrecht directly. Afterwards, the credits were quickly entered into Osiris.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme was organised by ESN (European Student Network) Vilnius. The first week of the semester was full of activities aimed at meeting new people, such as parties, speed friending, and city games. They were all well-organised and good opportunities to meet new people. The only downside was that it seemed that they copied the programme of the orientation week after summer, to our week which



was in the middle of winter. Because of this, there were also some outdoor activities which were unpleasant with temperatures just below zero. Lithuanian winter can be tough, but being there in spring semester will only make the weather get better over time.

accommodation

I was staying in the Vilnius University Apartments, a type of dormitory with private rooms that have their own bathroom and a shared kitchen. I applied to stay here already in November 2021, so three months before leaving for Vilnius. I really liked this accommodation because of its location (10 minutes' walk to city centre & university buildings) and the services: your room is being cleaned weekly by a cleaning lady, and you have access to washing machines and a fully equipped kitchen. The price of this accommodation is around 450 euros per month, which for me is the same price as I pay in Utrecht, although it is expensive for Lithuanian standards and there are cheaper places to find if you rent privately. There are also dormitories available in which you share a room with 1 or 2 other (international) students. Staying here costs only 60 euros a month, but the location is very bad (30 minutes by bus to the city centre) and the buildings are not in the best shape.

leisure & culture

Vilnius is a very unknown city for many people, but it has a lot to offer. It is approximately the same size as Utrecht in terms of inhabitants, so it is a rather small capital. The old town is absolutely beautiful and is full of cafés, restaurants, bars, and clubs. Even after half a year, there are still many places in the city that I haven't discovered. When arriving in Vilnius in February, in the middle of winter, life did not take place outdoors yet, and the city was sometimes rather dead. But as the time passed and weather became better, the city really got livelier, and terraces started to appear, and people were returning to the streets. Vilnius is a very green city and there are a lot of nice parks in the city, but you are also never far away from real nature such as forests and lakes. In only 40 minutes by bus, you can reach a beautiful lake which is perfect for swimming or just going for a walk. Lithuania is not a mountainous country, but it is full of forests and lakes. There are also many other places in the country that you can discover, the most famous ones being Trakai, Klaipeda, Nida, and Kaunas. ESN, the organisation that organises the orientation week in the beginning of the semester, also organises trips across Lithuania during the semester. The other Baltic states (Latvia and Estonia) are also close by and many students, including myself, have made trips to Riga and Tallinn during the semester. It is a lot of fun to discover these rather unknown countries.

suggestions/tips

I stayed in Vilnius during the spring semester and would recommend you to do the same. It will probably be very beautiful as well during the autumn semester, but winters in Lithuania can be rough with temperatures down to -20, and during autumn the weather gets grey and cold very fast. In spring, the city really comes to life, and you still get a taste of winter in your first month.

I would recommend finding accommodation close to the city centre. Fellow students who were living in the dormitories on the outskirts of the city had to take taxis home, or catch the last bus of the evening at 23:00, when going out in the evening. Vilnius is a very walkable city if you live close to the city centre so it is definitely worth spending an extra bit of money to live in a central location.

Definitely go explore the countryside outside of Vilnius. There might not be spectacular mountains or tons of beautiful cities, but you will find beautiful nature and peace and quiet in many places. Spending time with friends in a cabin in the woods with a private frozen lake and sauna has been one of the best experiences I've had there.

CONCLUSIONS

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



I would absolutely recommend Vilnius as an exchange destination if you're looking for a cool but unknown city. I felt at home in Vilnius after one week of living there, and it felt as one of the safest cities I've ever been to. The university has a lot of nice courses and professors are very friendly. Quality of education might not always be the highest, but the university really does its best to give you a nice experience as an exchange student.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Do not hesitate to contact me if you are (considering) going to Vilnius. I'll be happy to share some more experiences and tips.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Utrecht University, REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschap
destination city & country	Vilnius, Lithuania
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	28 / 08 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	26 / 01 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process was quite easy. Once the UU approves your destination, there are still some documents left but it's not that much. Vilnius University does not require much more than the usual documents for the exchange period. What was difficult however, was finding the courses and their time tables and deciding which courses to take on. It is doable, just requires some patience and perseverance.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling & support at the UU was great from the International office, they are an e-mail away and always willing to help. It would be easier if there would be more information given by my study program, regarding which courses will be accepted by the exam board and which will not.

academic preparation

I did not do any academic preparation, and did not need one.

language preparation

I tried to learn some Lithuanian, but that road stranded quite early ;). It is a difficult language to study, especially if you try to do it with an online course like I did. Vilnius University does offer language courses, which you can follow as a regular course and thus earn credits with. I did not follow one, and after a few weeks I was able to manage myself in Lithuanian in grocery stores etc. Lithuanians do really appreciate it if you take the effort to learn their language, so I would advise learning a few basics, for things like grocery shopping, once you settled down.

finances

The living costs in Lithuania are generally lower than they are in the Netherlands. This made a lot of my trips during the semester possible 😊. I would advise to have some savings, although the Erasmus scholarship and overgoeding helped a lot.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme that I followed, which consisted of six courses from the Political Science and International relations faculty, was interesting but very doable. I followed courses on nationalism, political and radical Islam, Asia pacific countries, Northern countries, West European countries and Latin American countries. To get into the courses was quite a hard process, before arriving in Vilnius I already had to sign up for the courses I wanted to follow. After arriving it became clear that that registration was not valid, and we had to go through the process again, however this time we needed to go to the administration in person to get the signs



we needed instead of doing it online. If you do end up going to Vilnius University, do not hesitate to contact me and I will give you the tips and tricks to get into the courses you want to!

academic quality of education activities

During the classes I experienced the courses as interesting and challenging. After having the exams, I would say that the academic quality is lower than the quality at my home university. The exams, or more specifically the way that grade the exams, is easier than in the Netherlands. Although I did really enjoy the topics and courses and learned a lot from them, you can pass most exams quite easily.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support at the receiving university was quite good, except for the course registration part. That part was unclear, but the other support was very well. The international office is open a lot of the time and is easy to visit, they also reply quickly by e-mail.

transfer of credits

I did not go through this process yet, so I cannot comment on that.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation week organised by ESN/VU was great, it was an easy way to get to know the city and the other Erasmus students. It included a broad range of activities, such as a karaoke party and city games.

accommodation

I decided to not stay in the dorms, and I am very happy I made this decision. Although the dorms are really cheap (shared room for 3 for 59 euro per month), the conditions are shitty and the location is far from the city centre. I shared an apartment in the city centre from the best landlord and with great roommates, which I found through Facebook. It was obviously more expensive, but for me living in the middle of the city centre and having my own room was definitely worth it for me.

leisure & culture

Vilnius is an amazing city and has a lot more to offer than most people are aware of. It has beautiful streets, great activities, delicious (and very affordable!) restaurants and not the least important, a great night life to offer. There are a lot of students, since it is one of a few universities in the country. Next to that, it is a great starting point for trips through the rest of the Baltics, the Nordic countries, Russia, Belarus, Poland and more. There are loads of international busses leaving each day, which are a cheap way to discover other places. The culture in Lithuania is mostly based on their newly found independence, they are very proud of their own country, their language and their traditions. For me, this was really interesting to get acquainted with. They have just started to try to figure out how to govern and manage their country, which makes everything much more relaxed. There are no fancy metros or trams, there are very few skyscrapers but there are an enormous amount of amazing people.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Absolutely! I had an amazing time in Vilnius. If you're looking for an experience in a country that you barely know anything about, Lithuania is your place to be! I am really pleasantly surprised by the country, which has a lot of things to offer which you would not find in other countries. Such as a hill, in the middle of nowhere, with a few million crosses on it ("hill of crosses"), a sculpture park in which they are showing all the crazy sculptures of the soviet times ("grutas parkas") and a house, in a tiny village, fully covered in pans. Now, if you are somewhat like me and got all excited about the panhouse, sign up for your exchange in Vilnius now!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Information Science

destination city & country	Vilnius , Lithuania
name university abroad	Vilnius University
start date	28 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	This process went very smooth and less work than I expected. Both parties, UU and Vilnius University, were very responsive on questions and were quick with signing documents and things like that.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Very good. Always got a quick reply on questions and when I needed signatures on some documents this was easily arranged.
academic preparation	
	None
language preparation	
	None
finances	
	Had around 1000 euros saved up

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	Broad choice of courses and great option to orient on what courses you like in the first week of the



semester.
academic quality of education activities
Not as good as in the Netherlands but it was alright.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Very good. They were very helpful with answering questions and always available when you needed them.
transfer of credits
Not done yet

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Nice orientation week with on the first day an opening ceremony and on the following days activities as city games and parties in the evening organized by the ESN association. These activities were great opportunities to meet new people and make new friends.
accommodation
I rented a flat via the site 1home.eu which is an organization that rents rooms to students coming from abroad. In my flat I lived with 3 other people who were very nice and also studying there for the semester. There is also an option to live in the dorms, but as it was not easy to get a room for yourself and I didn't want to live in a room with one or two other guys I did not choose this option. A lot of other exchange students did live in the dorms and had great time. In some aspects the dorms are better, they are more lively, there is always some party you can go to and you only pay around 60 euros a month, but the facilities are not always good (as you maybe can expect for that price). There are 3 different locations for dorms of which Olandu is the most modern and has the best facilities, so if you decide to live in the dorms I advice you to apply for a room in Olandu.
leisure & culture
There is enough to do in Vilnius, Lithuania has an interesting history with the occupations by Russia bringing communism, that ended only 30 years ago and has left its marks on the culture and the people. There are some museums on this era and it's interesting to visit them to get a better understanding of the past of Lithuania. At first Lithuanian people may come across as closed and shy, but they are really willing to help you and friendly. A lot of Lithuanians speak English very good, especially the younger generations. Many older people may not speak a lot of English, but there is always someone around to help out. As soon as you start talking to them they will open up more and are often curious to what brings you to Lithuania. There are a lot of bars to have a drink in and also some clubs. The prices are low compared to the Netherlands, but not crazy cheap. For 0,5 liter of beer you pay around 2,50 euros. There is one place that a lot of students go to have cheap beers called +++, here you can get 0,5 liters of beer for only 1,50 and on sundays and mondays for only 1 euro.
suggestions/tips
Participate in as many activities as possible in the first weeks, this way you meet a lot of new people and at some moment you will find people you like. Also the location of Vilnius is very good for travelling, I really enjoyed travelling to Latvia, Estonia and Finland. Other exchange students I know went to Poland, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and all of them were very positive about those journeys.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, I had a great time in Lithuania and it was very valuable.
do you have any additional advice or comments?