

# Aarhus – city of smiles!

## General Information

During the fall semester in 2015 I got the amazing opportunity to study at Aarhus University in Aarhus, Denmark.

## Preparation

First of all, although Aarhus is Denmark's second largest city with 300000 inhabitants, most people – including me before applying for exchange – don't know of its existence (yet!). I only found out about Aarhus when I was doing my research to discover which partner university I should pick. Since my GPA was below 7.0 I had to stay within Europe. The reason why I picked Aarhus as my destination was straightforward – I had been in most areas in Europe except Scandinavia. Since Denmark is the cheapest Scandinavian country (but still relatively expensive!) and Aarhus is the only Danish partner of the ESE at the moment, I picked it as my first choice – and I got it 😊

The preparation that has to be done before going on exchange in Aarhus was very simple for me if I need to compare my preparation to the preparation of my fellow ESE-students who went on exchange to different universities. Since Aarhus is a new partner, I was the first ESE-student ever to be sent on exchange to this destination.

When I got accepted, the International Centre of Aarhus University sent me an email where they clearly explained how I should apply for courses and housing. Speaking of housing – you can do two things:

1. You can request housing through the International Centre
2. You can look for housing yourself

I chose to apply for housing through the International Centre and I made the right decision! It saves you a lot of time and stress and I don't know anyone who applied for housing through the International Centre who didn't receive an offer. Please bear in mind that when you receive an offer from the university you have 48 hours to accept it – otherwise it will go to someone else. Furthermore, looking for housing yourself in Aarhus is extremely difficult. My best friend there deferred his offer and he was renting several apartments through Airbnb until he finally found a place in October – not recommended!

Since Denmark is part of the European Union, a visa is not needed. Applying for courses also needs to be done before exchange, however you can still change courses up to two weeks after the start of the semester.

## Arrival

I arrived in Aarhus in August - two days prior to the start of the introduction week. Since Aarhus is relatively close to the Netherlands and my parents are very sweet – I was lucky enough that they drove me there by car so I could move all my belongings without a problem. The introduction week takes place in the week before the start of the lectures and is mandatory. During this week, you get

to know your fellow students and the city, you receive info on all the practical stuff and you party (a lot!).

Aarhus University also has a mentor program. I got a mentor in July whom I could contact prior to my exchange as well as during my exchange if I had any questions.

### Courses

I chose four courses with 25 ECTS in total. All the courses are either 5 or 10 ECTS and you can pick from a wide range so there is always something appealing. You follow all the courses simultaneously and examinations take place in December. For some of my courses the lectures ended in the last week of October which gave me a full month to revise for the exam. The Danish way of teaching is similar to the Dutch – you have lectures and tutorials and during them you are free to ask questions whenever you want. Examinations are quite different though – a lot of subjects have oral exams and the written exams are all open-book, also for Danes! I think this way of examining is much better since they test you more on whether you can apply the theory rather than on whether you know it by heart. Also in real life you can consult all sources, like books and websites, so why not in exams too? In general I must say that the level of teaching is very professional. Since I only chose courses from the Business Administration department, it was easier for me than in Rotterdam.

The courses I took were:

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship (10 ECTS) – This course was a practical introduction to innovation and entrepreneurship where they taught us how to start our own company and what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur, supported with some background theory on entrepreneurship. More than half of the lectures were taught by guest speakers who told about their own companies and thus provided us with real life examples. During the course we had to write a business plan in groups of four and the final examination was an oral reflection on our business plan. I can definitely recommend this course to anyone who is considering to be involved in entrepreneurship at some point!
- International Marketing (5 ECTS) – This course was about differences in culture and it taught why different approaches in marketing are needed for different countries. Although the material might seem straightforward to some, it makes you realize things you just don't think of if you have never taken the course. For this course, we had 8 lectures in total – one lecture per week in September and October. The exam is a written open-book exam. International Marketing is quite easy to pass.
- Strategy (5 ECTS) – A course where they introduce you to a lot of models and frameworks which you can use to analyze different aspects of a company or an industry. For this course we had one lecture and one tutorial per week. In the tutorials, we had to solve cases by applying the strategic frameworks that were introduced to us in the lectures. The exam is a written open-book exam as well, however you don't have time to look everything up, so you should understand all the frameworks beforehand. In general, this course taught me a lot about strategy, so I can recommend it.
- Qualitative Methods (5 ECTS) – In this course they taught us how to perform qualitative research. I chose this course because the ESE only focuses on quantitative methods and I might want to perform qualitative research for my thesis later on. We had one lecture per week. Also, we had to write a report in groups of three and do qualitative research ourselves.

The exam is an open-book exam where you have to come up with a framework for a qualitative research paper to a problem that they give you. This course was very useful too!

### Finances

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Per Month</b>	<b>Total</b>
Rent	€320	€1600
Phone contract (Dutch & Danish)	€35	€140
Transportation costs	€40	€160
Other*		€5026
<b>Total</b>	<b>€395</b>	<b>€6926</b>

\*Includes costs of living such as food, but also costs of going out and travelling

<b>Income</b>	<b>Per Month</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dutch government**	€555	€2220
Erasmus +	€270	€1080
Additional scholarships	€288	€1152
Savings Account		€2474
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1113</b>	<b>€6926</b>

\*\*includes study finance, public transportation card and carer's allowance

It is possible to spend way less than I did though. I just spend a lot of money on trips and while I was on exchange I did not really think about the money I was spending – for me the experience was worth the money!

Also a good tip: I received additional scholarships. Please inform yourself on that. You will be surprised to find out for which reasons they might give you scholarships for!

### Daily life

As all of you have lived in the Netherlands for a while now I guess you will not need time to adapt to the way of life when going to Denmark – both cultures are very similar. Danes – like Dutchies - are very direct, tolerant and punctual and although everything is well organized, they will always find a small thing to complain about ☺ Also in Denmark you SHOULD have a bike, just like in the Netherlands, since everyone bikes everywhere. I brought my Dutch bike with me, but you can easily buy a second hand bike through Facebook or DBA (the Danish equivalent of 'Marktplaats'). Furthermore, not even the culture – but also the weather is more or less the same – so there is no need to feel homesick ☺

About Aarhus – it is a very cozy student city with a lot of bars, clubs and cafeterias. I like electronic music a lot so I went to clubs where they play electronic music, but there is really anything for

everyone. Furthermore, the international student association organizes 'International Nights' every Tuesday which is where almost all exchange students go to weekly.

Besides Aarhus, I have been exploring the rest of Denmark as well – I have been to Copenhagen, Odense, Skagen and Legoland and I suggest you do the same. Furthermore I have also made trips to other cities close to Denmark such as Hamburg, Oslo and Stockholm which really added something to my experience. Exchange should be a life experience so explore as much as you can ☺

Should you have any further questions about Aarhus or Denmark, then please do not hesitate to send me an email or contact me through Facebook ☺

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