

# Ciao Milano!

Student report  
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## General information

In the fall semester of 2015, when I was in my third year of the Bachelor in Economics and Business Economics, I moved to Milan in Italy for my exchange at Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi. The exchange period was for 4 months, so I would be there from the end of August until the end of December.



## Preparation

In February of the year 2015 I heard I was allowed to go to Milan. As the courses at Bocconi would only start in September, I had half a year to prepare for my leave. Excited as I was to go, I postponed arranging my leave to the beginning of the summer. Because Italy is a European country, a visa was not necessary. The main things were to settle that my free OV in the Netherlands would stop for the 4 months I was away, which could very easily be arranged through DUO. Also, my room had to be sublet and I had to get the approval of the ESE for the courses I picked at Bocconi. The main thing, however, was to find a suitable room in Milan. I had heard from a friend who went to Bocconi the previous year that there was a possibility to rent a room in the Bocconi dorms. Those dorms are owned by the university and can be found throughout the city. However, a big disadvantage in my opinion of those dorms is that no visitors are allowed to stay with you during the night. As I was planning to bring my parents and a few friends over, I wanted to have the possibility to let them stay with me. That's why I didn't choose the Bocconi dorms. This did mean that I had to find a room through other means. I have to admit that I underestimated this. I thought it would be easy for me to find a room through Facebook or via via. After weeks and weeks of sending messages through Facebook and being in touch with a lot of people, I decided that Facebook was not a good way to find a room, because lots of people were pretending to rent a room, but were actually a fraud. At the beginning of August I finally found a suitable room through Spotahome. Spotahome is an internet agency which provides rooms for students in a few cities. My room would be a single room, very close to Bocconi university and with 3 other roommates. This sounded very promising to me, so I accepted the offer. With this, I was ready to go!

## Arrival

I arrived in Milan at the 25<sup>th</sup> of August. As I could only move into my room on the 26<sup>th</sup>, I had arranged for me to stay in a hostel for 1 night. Because I had a lot of luggage, this was not the most convenient. It would have been easier if I could have moved into my room straight away.

Bocconi university gave the opportunity for exchange students to do an Italian course. This course was very intensive. It was a course which lasted 10 days and every day there would be a 4-hour lesson. I really liked it! It was very nice to start the exchange experience at a different university straight away and a perfect way of getting to know new people. At the same time as the



Italian course, the International Student Desk of Bocconi organized lots of welcome activities for exchange students, such as speed date sessions, the visiting of important highlights in the city and lots of parties in the night. This is a very nice and easy way to make new friends and get to know lots of new people.

## **Courses**

Because Bocconi is a university specialized in Economics, Management and Finance, there was a huge offer of courses to pick from. I am very interested in a broad field of studies. That's why I decided to follow courses which didn't have to do with economics (because that's what I'm doing at home as well), but which have to do with the management field. This way, I wanted to find out if this was something I was also interested in.

- The first course I took was called 'Business Strategy'. This course was worth 6 ECTS. There were 2 lessons every week with in each lesson a different teacher. The objective of the course was to give an insight in the strategies of different types of businesses. We worked with case studies which had to be prepared beforehand and were discussed in class. All sorts of different business branches came along, such as the airline industry, fashion industries, the car branch industry, IKEA etc. It was very interesting to learn how the strategies of those different branches can differ immensely. The course was very interactive, which made it way more fun. I really enjoyed this course. The final exam consisted of a case study you had to do.
- The second course I took was called 'Management of international and supranational organizations'. It was worth 6 ECTS. This course had its main focus on the European Union and the United Nations system. Even though most of the course consisted of learning the facts about those organizations, the teachers managed to make the course way more interactive, by introducing role playing games and inviting guest speakers (who worked for example for the UN). The grade consisted of a 50% midterm exam and a 50% final exam. I enjoyed the course and I think the knowledge I obtained there is very useful.
- The third course I took, 'Leadership Skills', was a very original course which was also worth 6 ECTS. The course consisted of different topics which covered the importance of leaders, what makes a leader and what can you do to become a better leader. Also, the differences between leaders which have different cultures was an important part of the course. The course was graded through 3 different exams and a group project. This course was the course I enjoyed best, because of the unexpected but very interesting content and the very good way of teaching of the professor.
- The last course I took was called 'Organization theory', was worth 6 ECTS and was given by the best professor I have ever had. The man was a German professor who clearly really enjoyed what he was teaching. He involved all the students in a very interactive way and was open for all comments or improvements. The course itself was very interesting, because the teacher let us combine theory with practice by giving real life examples and making us do research on organizations which are experiencing difficulties in the way we learned in class.

I used all these courses to incorporate into my elective space.

The courses at Bocconi are generally known to be very interactive courses. Most of them contain a group project (where you have to work with (randomly assigned) group members). This is a very good way to get to learn new people and also to learn how to deal with different cultures in a group.

## Finances

Per month

INCOME		EXPENSES	
category	amount	category	amount
Student grant + loan	€ 1.050,00	Italian rent	€ 750,00
Erasmus grant	€ 265,00	Transport (incl. flights)	€ 150,00
OV grant	€ 98,00	Phone	€ 20,00
Care allowance	€ 78,00	Leisure (eating out, going out, trips, sports)	€ 550,00
Parental contribution	€ 250,00	Groceries	€ 300,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 1.741,00</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 1.770,00</b>

## Daily life

The life I had in Italy was completely different than the life I have in the Netherlands. The main reason for this was of course the fact that I was an exchange student. Being an exchange student made me want to experience as much as I could from the culture, the country and the food. Therefore, I did as much as I could with regard to trips, eating out and experiencing things I never would have experienced had I stayed in the Netherlands.

An example of the experience I had with regard to culture is the organization of everything in Italy. Italians are very passionate people, but not very efficient with the organization of their country (e.g. public transport, governmental services and traffic situations). If you want to get a good idea of what I mean, you should watch this clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAJNFoHuLno>

With regard to the trips I did, I can only say this: see as much as you can while you are there. Italy is a gorgeous country, with lots of different landscapes and cities. I did the trips with a group of 5 and the best way for us to see the country was to rent a car. This is much cheaper compared to travelling by train and you are also able to see things you are not able to see when you go by train. We did a trip almost every weekend, because during the week we went to class. There is also an international student organization which is called the ESN. The ESN is run by Italian student who want to organize activities, parties and trips for exchange students. They are able to do this for a low price. Going with the ESN is also a lot of fun. It's a great way to get to know other exchange students, but it is also very nice to get in touch with the members of the ESN, as they are Italian students and can therefore tell a lot about the cities, the country and all the cultural habits.

As I said, I did most of the trips during the weekend. During the week, I went to class almost every day (Bocconi has quite a lot of contact hours for every course). Before or after class, I usually tried to meet up with friends; drink a coffee, go to lunch or see something of the city I hadn't seen before. Also, I tried to go to the gym 3 times a week. I found an Italian gym (not the Bocconi gym), which was quite close to my house and offered lots of equipment and lessons.

There is no need to feel bored in Milan!

I can only conclude this report with the fact that I had an amazing time those 4 months I studied in Milan. I really liked the courses, enjoyed the delicious food and loved the country. If you want to go to Bocconi in Milan, I can only tell you: please do so, it's a guarantee for great fun and the time of your life!