

Oslo exchange fall semester 2016

General information

In my second year of my bachelor at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam I had the opportunity to study abroad for a semester. I was very interested in the Scandinavian culture, since I never been to any of the Scandinavian countries. So I decided to go to study in Norway in the city named Oslo. I was studying at the BI Handelshoyeskolen from the 16th of August until 14 December. One particular reason why I wanted to go to Scandinavia was that I really wanted to see the northern light.

Preparation

Before you actually go to your exchange there are a lot of preparations you need to do. First of all you need to fulfill all kind of documents for your Erasmus Grant. Furthermore I investigated which Universities are well known in Scandinavia. For me the BI Handelshoyeskolen was a good school since it was ranked the 35th business school in Europe. After you have chosen your school and you are accepted at this school you need to choose 4 subjects. Furthermore you also need to arrange your accommodation which was quite easy in Oslo. The school gave me a link where you could choose between several accommodations. The accommodation itself was decent, decent enough for 4 months.

Arrival

I was still on a holiday when I was expected to arrive in Oslo. Due to this I missed a part of the introduction week and I had some trouble with collecting my key. When I arrived at my apartment there was no one there who could help me with collecting my key. Eventually after a few hours I found someone that could help me getting my key. So my tip is if you arrive later, try to inform the accommodation keeper in advance so you won't have any trouble to get in your apartment when you arrive. The school had an introduction week, called Fadderulan events. Luckily the people who I met took me immediately to some events. For example I went to a Steve Aoki concert, unfortunately the roof collapsed during the concert, but I had a great time before that. Unfortunately you have to pay for all the events. I remember that another event was a boat party, which also sounded really nice!

Courses

All my courses were elective as long as 2 out of 4 courses were economical. All the courses where 7.5 ECTS credits. Unfortunately my university would only approve 24 of the 30 ECTS credits I took because the semester only lasted for 2 blocks in my school year (we have 5 blocks during the whole year, 5*12 credits each block= 60 ECTS credits).

I took the following courses:

- Economic Anthropology, this is a course that combines economics with the culture of Norway and China. I founded this course really cool, because it gave me some knowledge about the Norwegian culture and made me understood the culture better. I also liked the China aspect of this course, since I did not know much about this culture. The only I disliked was all the reading you had to do every week. We also had to write a paper about a cultural phenomenon which ever you founded interesting. This quite fun to do, my paper was about a Somali culture thing; in their culture it is normal that women and men eat in separate rooms.
- Real estate finance, this course was my hardest course. What I missed in this course was like a set of exercises for each week where you could train yourself. The only thing the professor did was giving you notes and talk about theories. The course itself is about calculating mortgages and investment returns. If you are interested in doing something with finance than this is a good course to take, but you have to be really disciplined to do all the self-study exercises which were in my opportunity quite hard to solve sometimes.
- Shipping management, I decided to try some shipping courses and see what it is like. The shipping management course was in the beginning really interesting. We discussed the type

of ships, type of trade routes, different contracts and most of all which type of products are trade on which routes. Unfortunately at some point the course got a bit repetitive with all the graphs and type of products which are being traded. The test itself was on the computer. A fun thing of this course was that we did several visits to different companies which were very well organized

- Maritime law, I chose this course because I thought it would go quite well with the shipping management course and it did. To be honest I do not like law courses, but I liked this course. It was basically discussing about contracts and if something happens who is liable for what amount of money. Also with this course we did a visit to a company which was very well organized. The teachers were good and the lectures were well organized, like the shipping management course. This course was also tested on the computer.

As an overall judgement the courses were of a good level.

Finances

Norway is a really expensive country and even after 4 months I was still not used to the ridiculous high prices, especially for the alcohol. I sometimes paid 10 euro's for a beer which absolutely amazed me. The rent was around 560 euro's a month, you have to remember you pay there in NOK's. I think you can find cheaper as I heard other students paying 450-500 euro's. The room you get is fine, nothing special. For the public transport you can buy a card which is valid for the whole month for 45 euros and you can take the metro and busses with this card. Just be sure you do not forget to activate your card, which happened to me. The Norwegians are strict with the law, but luckily I could talk myself out of getting a fine. For groceries I paid around 40 euro's a week, it really depends on what you eat and how much. Myself I eat quite a lot but I tried to buy cheap stuff. For example salmon is as expensive as chicken in Norway. Also in bread the prices were from 80 cents to 3 euro's a bread. I tried to join a basketball team, I did the try outs and I was able to join the team. Unfortunately they asked 180 euro's for 3 months with only 1 time practice a week, in my opinion this was too much so I declined this offer. I went 4-5 times a week to the gym, which is in the school. The gym is quite good and the price is decent, I paid 35 euro's a month. For my mobile phone costs, I used my old phone with the same contract. Now a days you have a lot of good offers from your mobile phone company to get some data abroad for a decent price. I paid for 500mb 6 euro's. So after considering all the finance for each month I used maybe 800-900 euro's a month. But if you want to make trips to other places you need some extra money of course.

Daily life

Oslo as a city is not really exciting, you can see most of the city in a couple of days. But if you are a fan of mountains you should definitely travel to Bergen and Stavanger. I did 3 hikes which were really amazing to do. The first one was Trolltunga, this one is in Bergen and is the hardest one to do. It took 10 hours to do the hike, but the view was amazing. I booked the trip by an organization from school and the whole weekend only costed my like 200 euros. This also gives you a good opportunity to bond with some people. The other trip was to Stavanger, which we arranged on our own. We hired a car and booked a hotel room. Also for this trip it costed me around 200 euros for the weekend. In Stavanger we did 2 hikes, preikestolen and Kjeragbolten. The first one was the shortest, 2 hours, and because of the weather the most amazing one. Kjeragbolten took 5 hours and it was quite bad weather, but it was still worth it. I also did another trip to Stockholm which is only a 6-7 hour drive from Oslo. This weekend cost me around 250 euros. Sweden is a little bit cheaper, but not much. Stockholm as a city is more exciting and beautiful than Oslo in my opinion. To rent a car in Norway is quite affordable if you go with 5 people. Gas is not expensive either, since Norway has one of the biggest oil production of the world. The night life in Oslo is sometimes a bit difficult since most of the clubs are 21-23+. The only day you could go out quite easily is on Thursday.