

Travel Report

GENERAL INFORMATION

What was your semester abroad like?

I agree to the publication of the report and attached photos (there are no third parties rights to these photos)	Yes
New outgoing students sometimes ask us for a way to contact former outgoings. Are we allowed to pass on your contact details in case of inquiries?	Yes
My stay (this information will not be displayed if the report is published)	
Academic year	2022/2023
Start semester	Herbst/Fall 2022/23
Duration in semesters	1
Study program at EUF	BA European Cultures and Society
Subject 1 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 2 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Subject 3 (only applicable to teacher training students)	
Host country	Hungary
Host university	Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem

YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How did you prepare for the semester abroad? What should be organized in advance?

How did I prepare? After going through the application process and getting the acceptance letter I checked the university's website one more time to check when are the course registration deadlines and do I need any certificates or extra documents. Then prepared documents, insurance and looked for an accommodation. After that checked how to get to the Erasmus destination, and bought tickets for the transport. In the end I checked some information about the city itself, where is the university, how to get from the airport to the city centre, how public transport works there, checked if my student ID (ISIC) is valid to apply for the student semester ticket, made a list of things I have to pack. What I would advise to do is asking landlord or dormitory where you will be staying what is in the flat/or a room to avoid any surprises – I had fully equipped kitchen and one set of bedsheets in my place, but I had to take my own towels and the second set of bedsheets.

Where did you live and how did you find your accommodation (self-organized/provided by host university, dormitory/private etc.)?

I lived in a shared apartment with 5 other people. I found the apartment on my own on a website, and it was managed by a private host.

Did you participate in events for exchange students? How did you establish social contacts in other ways?

3. I unfortunately wasn't able to participate in events for exchange students during the welcome week due to personal reasons. I mainly established social contacts during lectures with people I was in a group with.

How satisfied were you with the host university (facilities, staff etc.) and the course offer (workload etc.)?

The course offer at the university was great. I liked the fact that I could also choose courses from other faculties. In my case all the courses I took were entertaining, and the amount of work was not too overwhelming. Sometimes there were long readings or works I had to spend more time on doing them, but in the end it was alright. Professors and lecturers I had were professional and understanding, and it also showed in the classes I took, since they were really interesting. About the building itself, there were places to sit down and rest or work in the university buildings which is a big plus especially when waiting for another class around an hour or two. However, one of the minus points - some of the classes, especially big ones, were in the middle of the building which resulted in them having no windows, with bigger groups the classrooms were getting crowded and the lack of windows was causing closeness.

Did you learn the local language? How important was the language for your stay?

I did not learn the local language. In Budapest, where I did my Erasmus, everyone spoke English.

What intercultural experiences/skills have marked your stay?

One of the experiences is the social exclusion occurring among the groups of students. When there were students from a certain country, and one person among them who did not speak their language some people still continued speaking in their language causing an exclusion of another person. One of the important skills is being able to adapt quickly to the new surroundings and let's say "new reality" of living abroad in a different country.

Which perspectives on your host country/home country have changed - and why?

I spent most of my life in Poland since this is my country of origin, I spent a year in Germany as a student, and now I spent few months in Hungary as an Erasmus student. It is hard to say which perspectives have changed after this particular stay in Hungary, since a lot of perspectives in my life, as well as my own mindset, have changed and are still evolving. That is due to travelling, living abroad, and then visiting my home country again. What I can say is, it is interesting to see how big impact culture, tradition and history have on various countries, and how they are visible in daily life, even though sometimes people do not realize that. It would be rather hard to say which perspectives on the host country have changed, since I have only lived in Budapest, and a capital city, at least in my understanding, is not the best for measuring a life in a country. The life in a capital city is always different. Maybe that is one of a takeaways, from what I have seen, or learnt during one of my courses at the host university, in order to get to know the country one has to leave the capital.

How was your everyday life (leisure, shopping, transportation, inclusion etc.)?

Leisure – since Budapest is the capital and touristic city, it is full of museums, nice places for hiking and known all over the world thermal baths. In my everyday life I was usually going for a walk or to have a coffee and work in a nice cafeteria. I also visited few museums and thermal baths during my stay. Doing groceries was weird. I think I can describe it like this. Hungary has high inflation and the currency in Hungary is Hungarian Forint, so it is not as easy to calculate to Euro especially when you have to think fast while paying. I spent around 20 to 30 euros for normal groceries (milk, eggs, cheese, vegetables and fruits) every time. Sometimes doing groceries was not paying off, it was cheaper to buy a meal for takeout in a restaurant than to cook at home. Budapest has great public transportation, getting around the city is relatively easy, there are trams, buses and metro lines going around every 5 minutes or even less. Moreover, Budapest is not that big, and most of the tourist attractions can be reached on foot. Therefore, moving around Budapest was not an issue. When it comes to the inclusion I would say that in Budapest I felt like everyone is anonymous. People were usually a crowd, not single persons. Everyone was minding their business. However in groups from university I would say that people from same countries were rather staying together and keeping together. When being the only person from a different country with a group of people from another one when they were all speaking their language it was rather hard to join the conversation.

How did you manage financially? How much did you spend on visa (if applicable), travel, accommodation (per month), living expenses, leisure activities, other expenses (books etc.)?

Budapest is getting more and more expensive. Accommodation: for a private room in an apartment for 6 people I paid 300 Euro per month + around 35 Euro for bills. I spent around 40 Euro for the semester public transport pass for students. Add to these unexpected payments (such as medicine), and sometimes leisure activities such as going out to grab a coffee or visiting the museum/thermal baths once in a while. Some things (such as coffee in a coffeeshop/takeout) were really cheap. Other things (such as groceries) were more expensive than I thought they would be. It was crazy to see that even though my groceries were similar to the ones I would do in Germany as a student, I was paying more. When, for example, in a coffee shop for a cup of coffee I was paying around 2 Euro.

What was your best/worst experience? Is there anything else you would like to share?

I don't think I can specify one best or worst experience. There were great moments, but there were also bad ones. Something I would like to share to those who are going for their Erasmus: your Erasmus will not be perfect, and I think one should start with this neutral mindset. Like everything in life there will be moments when you will doubt in yourself or classes which will not meet your expectations. There will be parties you will not enjoy, people you will not get along with, Erasmus is not a magical time when everything is perfect, and works as planned. There will be so many amazing moments, your personal victories, laughs, incredible and inspiring people or moments of joy. You will discover beautiful places, lovely cafes, see remarkable landscapes - such as the castle, Fisherman's Bastion or the parliament building in Budapest, which even after seeing it for the 50th time still made a huge impression on me. It felt unreal seeing that building (the parliament), especially during the night. During your Erasmus you are in this new place for roughly 4 to 6 months, you live there. After some time you will realise this is not just a touristic escapade, you are there, you breathe the air in a different country, you are on your own. And it is an incredible experience, real life-teaching experience.

Would you recommend a semester abroad at your host university? For what reasons?

50/50. Organisation of university (or at least my faculty) leaves a lot. Mainly because of the information which were reaching students quite late. One of the examples is the decision of closing the university and switching to online classes and exams which has been made during the semester. In the end it caused some people staying in Budapest or having their rental contracts until the end of January, when the in-person classes ended in the beginning of December. If this information would have been provided earlier I would have planned my semester abroad differently. However, I was very satisfied with the course offer from the university. Most of the classes I took, I enjoyed and found very interesting. In my case professors were nice, and they were able to entertain the students with their topics.

PHOTOS

In this section, you may upload some photos that represent your stay abroad. When selecting the photos, please bear in mind that the pictures will be visible online if you have given us the permission to publish your report.

Photo (1)

Photo (2)

Photo (3)

Photo (4)

Photo (5)

Photo (6)

Here you have the possibility to enter descriptions/explanations for the photos