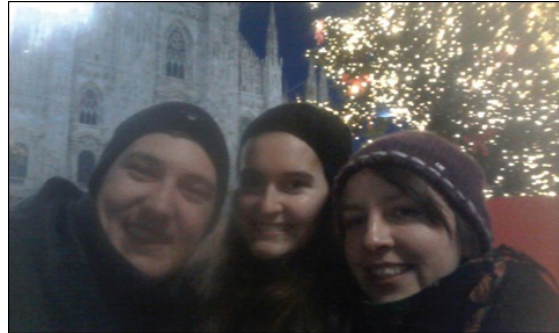


**Italy, Milano, Politecnico. School of Civil Architecture.**  
**Winter semester 2012/13**

During my studies in Cottbus I got to know a lot of Erasmus Students, who became good friends of mine. So, the idea to go to Erasmus myself looked attractive and logical to me. I've chosen Italy, because I wanted to try a new country which would be completely different from Germany on the one hand, and not so far away geographically on the other. Besides I got to know a few Italians among Erasmus students of Cottbus and really liked them and the way they represented their country.



### **1. Planning and Organisation**

The best time for my Erasmus was the 5th semester. I wanted to go for a full year, but after a discussion with my professor I realized, that I'll not be able to finish my bachelor studies in Cottbus in time. So, I decided to take just 1 semester.

Firstly, I needed to choose a School – it was Politecnico di Milano, because of its excellent academic reputation and because I already had some friends in this city. Then I needed to apply for an Erasmus to be nominated in my school – there were not any problems on this stage. After approval from BTU Auslandsamt, I got a nomination letter, and together with other documents (application, transcript of records, certificate of enrolment, CV and passport) sent it to Milano.

After getting a confirmation from Politecnico, I started to search for a language course and accommodation. Unfortunately, I did not get a place in one of free Erasmus language courses, but I was able to subscribe for free 2 week Politecnico courses for international students in Como in September.

### **2. Accommodation**

In Como I was suggested a place in a hostel for 2 weeks by the organisers of the course. The hostel was a nice place with a friendly atmosphere, though, because of lots of students we had to live sometimes up to 10 people in a room. By the end of the second week it was a bit hard.

While being in Como I started to search for a room for myself in Milano. I didn't want to go to University's dormitories, because there were only double rooms and they were not cheaper than average room in the city. As the flats are quite expensive in Milan in relation to the other cities of Europe, many students and other young people, coming to Milan, choose to live by two in one room.

I wanted my own room, close to university, and I found it quite fast with the help of free Internet services. The only difficulty was that the owners did not speak English and we had to communicate in Italian, which was a bit hard for me. So, I lived in a shared flat in Bovisa district, with other 3 girls: Chinese student of Brera, Belgian student of Politecnico and an Italian from Bari, who just came to Milan, relocated by her company.

### 3. Studies

It was my goal to understand how studies differ from that in Germany, so I took a lot of subjects, all studios, because i was not comfortable enough in Italian to pass written or oral exams.

There was also 1 great thing, that I liked – is that we were allowed to take courses from Master level and from other Schools too. So, one of my courses – 3D graphics was from Interior Design school and 2 others – Architecture Project and Urban Project were from Master level. The difficulty on this stage was that not all of the professors spoke English, and some of them didn't want English-speaking Erasmus in their groups, because it meant that they have to explain everything twice, in two languages. Most of the courses were in Italian, and we found only one course, which was fully in English. Nevertheless, on other courses, in which we enrolled, the professors and assistants were very kind to us, gave their tutorials in English and always helped, if we did not understand some information in Italian.

The methods are really very different in Italy, comparing to Germany. I think it helped me to view architecture from another point. In Politecnico normal studio (project) lasts 1 year, unlike in Germany, which is 1 semester. So in winter semester they devote a lot of time to preliminary analysis, studies of references and examples, and it is not much time left for the project itself.

A bit negative was the point that we were obliged to be present during lectures in Italian, which lasted the whole day (for me 4 times a week), so we could not get a lot of useful knowledge from it and sometimes felt like we are losing our time.

I learned a lot about architectural composition, which was new to me, careful analysing of history of the place, some aspects of projecting in a big city. The attitude of the professors was very warm and friendly, so we were all really upset when it was a time to say goodbye.



### 4. Routine and Free time

As I mentioned, we had to go to Uni almost every day and spent there the whole day on the lectures. In some rooms it was very cold, and seats are without backs, which for the whole day is a bit tough. In the evening we went out to meet friends and make aperitivo.

There is a nice Milanese tradition of aperitivo, where you pay for the drink and get snacks, which quality can be really high, for free. This is a favourite way to organise a meeting with friends for all people of Milan.

Milan offers a lot of possibilities for entertaining, and student organisations ESN and ESEG help here a lot. There were a lot of trips, museum and sightseeing visits, parties. There clubs which make 1 day of the week free for the Erasmus students. I met really interesting people from Italy and other countries here, some of them became my good friends. I spent amazing time in Milan, which I will remember for all of my life.