



University of Maribor

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Faculty of Chemistry and  
Chemical Engineering

# Erasmus Programme Report



Erasmus+

WS 2018/2019

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2018, my Erasmus experience begun. Truth be told, I was not excited by the thought of it and the further the time passed by, the further I found myself anxious to leave my comfort zone. However, after spending five months in Slovenia (precisely Maribor), I can tell that Erasmus was the deepest, most fulfilling, incredible experience one should go through.

My lectures started right away on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October in the faculty of chemistry of the university of Maribor. Also, due to some unexpected changes, the lectures were in Slovenian. One teacher, of the name of professor Urban, agreed (with the agreement of the Slovenians corpus of student) to continue his class in English. Hence, the two lectures I had with him, named bio molecular simulations and molecular modelling, were the only ones requiring my presence. The other lecturers I had gave me a topic to write a seminar paper about and a date to present it. I was disappointed at first but realised that it gave me much more time to experience the country, the different cities and time for myself. The English level was really good among lecturers and students. Communication with any of them was really easy. All the requirements for each classes were given to me in the first week and I could promptly design my schedule.

Slovenia is located in the heart of Europe. It is surrounded by Italy, Croatia, Hungary and Austria. It has a continental climate with cold winters and warm summers. Nonetheless, I would qualify the winters as softly cold. Moreover, due to its central position in Europe, it was really easy to reach different countries. Renting a car was cheap (approximately 41 Euros per day including an all-inclusive insurance plus 50 Euros caution given back at the end with Avantcar rental company). In fact, many Erasmus students are thirsty of adventures, travel and discoveries. Hence, not only group trips will be easy to organise but fun is guaranteed to be present. I was able to do wonderful road trips with other Erasmus students in Italy (Venice was only 4 hours away by car!), Croatia, Austria and Hungary. Each of them were wonderful experiences with different people from all over the world. Also, do not forget to visit Slovenia itself. It is one of the most beautiful country you could see. The sea side coast is stunning and the whole country is full of nature and mountains as far as the eyes can see.

Upon arrival, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) which is a non-profit student organisation take charges of all the newcomers and communicate with us through a WhatsApp group or the Facebook group. If wanted, they can assign you a "Buddy" which is a student or a citizen from Slovenia who will answer all your question and help you in every situation. Also, they will organise trips, events and parties throughout the whole semester. If you have any questions, reach out to them! ESN members are usually students who went on an Erasmus semester and decided to help Erasmus students coming to Maribor have their best time as well. Lastly, they will organise welcome weeks which consists of two weeks full of events (SPA, cinema, pub-crawl, Slovenian dinner, board game evenings, international dinner ....) for you to meet many people from your or different countries and get to know each other through funny and ludic activities. I personally missed the welcome weeks due to my late arrival and if it is the case for you, do not worry. You will still meet amazing people and will still be able to participate in future events during the whole semester.

During my Erasmus semester, I was able to find a living community through the websites recommended by the university. Nevertheless, student dormitories were easily accessible and cheap (around 115 Euros per month) but the rooms are shared. I found my living community through a rental house Slovenian website where I emailed (in English) different owners and chose what was the closest to my faculty and the price range that fitted me the most. My room was 25m<sup>2</sup> for 180 Euros per month all included. I was living in the centre of Maribor with two Slovenians students and two Erasmus students. One from Germany as well and one from Portugal. This living community was like a family and we all supported each other the whole semester, went on events together and did numerous kitchen parties!

Furthermore, one amazing thing you should know about Slovenia is there coupon system for students. The government subsidize a part of the meals in a list of restaurant all over the country. Hence, depending on the restaurant, we could eat from a range to 0.50 Euros to 4 Euros maximum. The government gives you 28 coupons per month, accumulable, and students are free to use them as they want. Due to this system, students could try a different restaurant every day and meet constantly for lunch or dinner which was always a blast for low cost and variety of meals. Also, water glasses in restaurant and coffees are free in Slovenia! Additionally, Slovenians speaks English close to perfectly. So, it was easy to discuss with the different chefs, waiters and waitress in bar/coffees/restaurants. The language was absolutely not a barrier in daily lives there.

Finally, January was the month of the different exams and presentation. The teachers were very flexible and, for some lecturers, we could choose our own date. The examinations required quite a lot of preparation. Since it was my own researches, I felt well prepared. I also felt that I learned much more than going to the lecture concerning my topics. The different examinations went all successfully, my departure date was chosen right away. The international office of the faculty was extremely fast and nice so my papers were ready right away. I thought at first that I was sad that the experience came to an end but everything ends at some point and I was ready to go home. Living alone in another country taught me a lot about myself and I was ready to keep the good habits I had started in my living community back with me in Germany. Everyone was starting to do good bye parties and as you can see on the picture below, this was my good bye party few hours before I take the Flixbus back to Dresden from Maribor. Now, one month after, I am still in contact with most of my awesome encounters and we are organising future trips to see each other all over Europe!

