My name is Anna Molnár and I am studying Business Development in Hungarian at the University of Corvinus. I did my Erasmus semester after my third semester. During the past years I have already thought about applying, because I thought it would be a challenge and a wonderful experience at the same time. Gaining extra knowledge, studying more international perspectives, working together with other students from different countries and learning a lot about myself seemed a great opportunity, that I cannot miss during my university years.

In the next chapters I would like to give a quick look into my experiences, from different aspects, but if you would like to ask more questions, write to me freely, I will leave my e-mail address at the end.

The university and its courses

So, first of all my preference was choosing a country from the southern part of Europe, where the weather is a little bit warmer and better. My favourite country is Italy, so that was my first choice, but I also picked universities from Portugal. In Italy, as a business master student I could only choose Milan, more specifically Bocconi and Cattolica. Eventually the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore made it to the top of my list, and I didn’t choose Bocconi at all, because that didn’t seem like what I would imagine for myself. Eventually I got into Cattolica, which I was very happy about!

Although one of my first impressions and what I liked about Cattolica was the beautiful main building, I didn’t have my classes there, but in another building, 20 minutes away from that. I still visited it many times and the smaller building was also easier to navigate in. The university is really well-equipped and everybody was really helpful.

Regarding the classes, Cattolica offers two types of curriculum: International and Academic. The International Curriculum is said to be a little easier, with 4 hours of classes per week, in English language, also requiring paying an extra fee. It
also has a different applying process. Only if you make an International Curriculum course appear on your first course list, you get the application e-mail during summer. Students usually can only choose one of these type, and they are all bachelor courses. These seemed more specific, not as general, as other, more used to courses.

The Academic Curriculum has the more of a regular courses, which the italian students study too. These have 8 hours per week, usually in two or three parts throughout the week. I chose from these, and studied Brand Management, International Business Management and Work and organizational psychology. Brand Management was a really interesting course, with lots of marketing topics, branding and present day examples and cases. We had small group works, including field studies and one big project too. The International Business Management course was dealing with international issues and topics. We worked on a team project, case studies and smaller presentations every week, which analyzed the issues and opportunities of opening a business in other countries too. With Work and organizational psychology, we also had a project and a presentation to do in team, but the in-class activities especially helped gaining knowledge about the subject. Although going through them now, they seem quite a lot, and it really did require continuous work, I think constantly working on these projects helped understanding the material better, and also made it easier to finish our bigger projects, because we already had some knowledge and material to work on.

Most of my teachers were italian, but I also had international teachers, lectures and guest presentations. They were all very helpful, and although the classes were quite long, I really enjoyed most of them, because we many times worked together and discussed the current topics and cases. I learned a lot of new things, from one side about operating businesses, and its many aspects, but also about working together, sharing ideas and creating valuable work as a team. Most of my classes included other international students, but there were italian students from Cattolica too, and they were also very helpful, nice and open. I’m happy to say, that I’ve made friends with them mostly.

The city of Milan

My initial thought was about going to a smaller city on the southern part of Italy, so first I was a little bit afraid about how would I enjoy such a big city, as Milan. I have to say that it all worked out really well! Milan isn’t as overwhelming as other capital cities may be, there are a lot of historical buildings, little local stores and some events always happening around the centre. When I was considering my Erasmus choices, I read some places, that Milan isn’t as interesting as other cities could be, having one or two main sights to see, but otherwise being
quite industrial. After my months spent there I definitely have to disagree with that statement. Usually tourists only visit Duomo and its closest area, (although that is also really spectacular everytime) but if people look further there are many wonderful things to see, around the whole city. Just to have some examples here: Castello Sforza, Parco Sempione, Teatro Scala, Navigli Area or (my favourite area) the Brera district.

Speaking of the surrounding countryside and cities, I can’t have any complaints either. I visited Lago Maggiore, Lake Como and Lake Garda, whilst Verona, Bergamo or Torino is also really close, but people can also plan a trip to Venice, Bologna or Genova, just to say a few. I have to say, especially the area of the three lakes was unbelievable beautiful, which worth visiting many times.

However, even when the weather got worse, a walk around Milan or experiencing the Christmas time and market there, was nice to do. For me part of the whole experience of Erasmus was to fully embrace living in a different country and city, and I do feel like I successfully achieved that.

**Finding accommodation**

If I’m being honest, beside the whole application process and paper-work, finding a place to stay in Milan was the hardest thing to do. Initially everybody offers the website of Spot-a-home and Uniplaces to rent a place, which seemed reliable and probably the easiest way, but the conditions are not always so flexible and the prices are quite high too. So I tried to look further, which I also recommend, looking for dorms, or asking for help at the university or the hungarian community. When I was already there, I asked some people about where did they find accommodation, and most of them looked for alternative options too. Eventually I lived a little bit further from the city, I think if the university is approachable under an hour, it shouldn’t be a problem, if somebody isn’t living in the smallest circle of Milan.

**Transport in the city**

I think the transport was well-working and every part of the city was easily approachable. There are metros, trams, buses, and trains to use, after getting a transportation map, it was easy to navigate in the city. Previously I heard that strikes are quite common, but I didn’t experience that, there was only one time, when some metro lines weren’t operating, and it happened on a Friday evening, so it wasn’t as problematic as I expected.
For a longer stay we can get an ATM card (ATM is the Milanese transportation company), it could be a student card or an Under-26 card too, it’s basically the same. The process of obtaining such card was quite long, the ATM offices are almost always full of waiting people. But afterwards, we just had to charge our cards every month at the machines at every station and we can travel freely with the limits of the certain card (for example: the most basic, and which most people purchase is the urban area card, with which people can travel in the urban area, which includes basically whole Milan, with suburban).

**Activities**

Talking about free-time activities, I definitely have to mention ESN (Erasmus Student Network), which belongs to the university and works to organize a lot of events for the students. Every week there were parties, but they also organized gatherings for the different events in the city, travels to other parts of the country, or free-time activities and get-togethers for us. They were really nice and always happy to help. I do think it was easier and better to visit different events and places in the city with such a trustworthy group of people. Beside these activities, I do think that there are always many things to see and try in Milan, so it is easy to have fun and experience new things by yourself too.

To sum up my short report, first of all I have to say, that an Erasmus experience is something you definitely shouldn’t miss, if you are open to it! It especially adds value to your professional experiences and knowledge, but it is also such a great opportunity to learn about the world and yourself, which I do think we need in this time of our lives, when we grow so much and we are really open to such influences! I hope my report just motivated you to go on this adventure and helped you choosing your target location!

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