



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Forest and Nature Conservation
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	29/08/2022 until 16/12/2022
Country (exchange)	France
City (exchange)	Lyon
University (exchange)	Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture Rhône-Alpes (ISARA)
Faculty (exchange)	Agroecology

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I did not go on Erasmus Exchange during my bachelor's + I wanted to improve my French language skills + Within the MSc Forest and Nature Conservation I have been doing the ecology track that focuses on statistics and solving problems with models. I developed an interest on the biological control of insects, which is one tool to protect crops on agricultural fields. With my current master I have not focused much on the social aspects of biological control of insects (think of the farmer's perspective). The courses at ISARA were part of Agroecology, which did mostly focus on these social aspects.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

I really like France, and I wanted to improve my French language skills. Besides, the Agroecology track that I followed at ISARA in Lyon is part of the double degree of the WUR MSc Organic Agriculture, so I knew that there would be a lot of Wageningen students as well.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

Via the NS-International app/site you can get a trainticket from one of the major Dutch cities. During the trip you usually have to switch trains in Brussels or Paris. Here you get on board of a TGV which brings you to Gare Part-Dieu in Lyon. The airport Lyon Saint-Exupéry is also close.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	S9_AGROECOS-1	4	Group project that focuses on a regional park in France (Le Luberon), including a 5-day stay in that specific region.	3,5	Very fun to have practical education (interviewing farmers in the regional park) and the trip facilitated the process of getting to know your fellow students. However, introductory lectures were very chaotic and the transfer of information was slow-paced compared to the WUR standards. Moreover, during introduction of subjects for group work, the possibility of fieldwork was mentioned. Me and my group made plans to do fieldwork, only to be told a week later that fieldwork was not possible during the 5 days excursion to the Luberon...
2	S9_AGROECOS-2	7	Individual writing of review paper + presentation, you can choose from predefined subjects or choose your own topic. Topic has to relate to Agroecology	4,5	Very individual focused. I decided to propose a self-chosen topic that was more related to my expertise in Forest and Nature Conservation. This gave me much more motivation to work on the review paper.
3	S9_AGROECOS-3	5	Focus on agroecosystems over the world, grade consists of a given seminar and oral exam.	2	It is fun to listen to all the +-32 seminars of your fellow students. However, for me it would have been more useful if skilled professors would teach these subjects to me.
4	S9_AGROECOS-4	6	Focus on policies related to agroecosystems. Grade consists of seminar and debate.	2	See comments in the box above regarding the seminars. Debate was fun, but pretty useless as it did not come near the real life policy debates that are being held. An written exam would be more useful
5	S9_AGROECOS-5	8	Group project which is pretty similar to ACT at the WUR, you can choose between 6 subjects. Here the	3	Very fun course as it resembles a consultancy job. However, This course was planned in such a way that it was scattered all over the

			commissioner is from the university rather than an external company, which is the case with ACT.		semester (the first day of this course was in October, course finished in December). This made it very hard to concentrate on this course.
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

I would say the workload was pretty high (30 ECTS in 3,5 months). For instance, we had one week to get to know the region and to prepare interviews for the Luberon excursion. During the excursion we had 10-hour working days. And after the excursion we had one week to do analyses of interviews, results section, and the whole writing of the report. Lesson material was interesting, but often we did not get graded for the acquired information. For example, during the review paper course we had supplementary guest lectures about subjects like beneficial fungi and bacteria. However, as many students were working on their review paper, together with the fact that we did not get graded for these guest lectures, the attendance of these lectures was pretty low. Regarding examination, I reckon we would have learned more if it was in written exam form. Although, this would not have been possible with the current time span.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

In Lyon (or France in general) there exists some hierarchy between students and lecturers. Engagement with local students can be somewhat harder as they tend to not speak English very well. Therefore, to get to know the French students outside of your class, speaking a bit of French is convenient. However, one way to engage with them was during l'Apéro (Apéritive). L'Apéro was organised on the uni every Monday from 18:00 until 20:00. Here, the beer brewing association sold their beer and the French students were more approachable. ISARA is quite different from the WUR, as every course we had was taught in the same classroom for the whole semester. This gave a more high school vibe instead of an university vibe.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

For €3,30- you can have a decent warm French lunch at one of the many school canteens around the city (take an IZLY-account). There were some sport associations but there was no sports building. Therefore, the sports that were promoted were practiced in different areas around the city (not ideal). There were many other associations, though. I was part of the music association. A vegetable garden association could be found as well. In every residence public laundry facilities could be found. Here students could use the laundry machine for €3,30 per session and the drying machine for around €1,50. I have not used the drying machine so I am not completely sure.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

4 months before the start of the semester, we got asked to rank our preferences of in which part of the city we wanted to live, and what type of housing. Regarding the type of housing we had three options to choose from. A 10m² room (including bathroom) for €271,- per month. There were studios that were around €400, and you could be placed in an apartment with other students. These options were provided by the Crous (student-housing association, like Idealis). Of course you could also look for other options outside Crous.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

Many students tend to have warm lunch at one of the canteens.

The customer service leaves a lot to be wished for and the system is pretty bureaucratic (1. It took 4 weeks to open a bank account, while in the Netherlands it can be done fairly fast. 2. I once bought the wrong subscription for public transport, there was an online option to get the money back. I applied for that but never received a response, nor reimbursement. I tried it by making an appointment at one of the receptions, but I was told they could not do anything for me. 3. The pre-required documents that I had to fill in before arriving in Lyon had to be handed in on paper, instead of digitally).

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

During my stay in Lyon I spent 50% more than what I spent in Wageningen the same period a year before that. This has partly to do with the fact that in Lyon I spent a lot of time at bars as the housing facilities were not very cosy. It did not motivate me to invite my friends in my common kitchen as the only facilities that were there were a microwave and 4 stoves for 20 people. Though, the current inflation makes it hard to compare the costs.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

I travelled to uni with 10 minutes tram ride (can be alternated by a 8 min bike ride) + 20 min metro. I lived in the far north, and the uni was in the far south.

Public transport card costs 25 euro's per month. Public transport bike subscription (vélo'v) costs 25 euro's for a whole year.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

Lyon has quite some cool places to visit:

- Buildings:
 - La Basilique Notre Dame de Fourvière
 - Cathédrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste
 - Hôtel de Ville
- Neighbourhoods:
 - Vieux Lyon
 - Croix-Rousse
- Cultural:
 - Musée des Confluences
 - Les traboules de Lyon
- Sports related:
 - (Soccer) Olympique Lyon
 - (Rugby) Lyon Olympique Universitaire Rugby

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

Every weekend there are street markets. Use this link to find the ones you like:

<https://www.lyon.fr/economie/commerces/les-marches-lyonnais>

Lyon is called cité internationale de la gastronomie. In Vieux Lyon many so-called 'bouchons' (restaurants with typical Lyonnais food) can be found.

For going out check the culturel_lyon Instagram page

(https://www.instagram.com/culturel_lyon/)

Some personal recommendations:

- Hôtel de Ville/Louis Pradel area
 - Ayers Rock (popular music, including French music)
 - Hell's Kitchen (00's and 10's popular music)
 - Barberousse
- Le Sucre (Electronic)
- La Fería (Latin/Reggaeton)

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I did not use a bike for commuting, but took tram and metro instead. It took a while to get used to that. Another challenge was to motivate myself to cook, as the facilities of the 10m2 room were not the best and not very inviting. In the 4 months that I lived in Lyon, I did not get to know my fellow housemates as they were mostly French. My 20 housemates, including myself, had their own kitchenware (pots, pans, cutlery, plates etc.).

What was your best memory abroad?

The best memory I have is that you build friendships really fast as every student in your class, in a social perspective, has to start over again. You get to know customs of different cultures. Another good memory is the fact that my skills of the French language have increased a lot. At the start I mostly knew the tourist-style French. In the end I noticed that I could have pretty good conversations about the daily life. One motivation for going to Lyon was that I would increase my French language skills and I am really happy that in the end this was the case.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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