



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Health and Society
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	03/10/2022 until 12/02/2023
Country (exchange)	Slovenia
City (exchange)	Maribor
University (exchange)	University of Maribor
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Economics and Business

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I was not planning on it at first, but after the pandemic I realized that there is not a lot of time left as a student. I felt like I lost quite some time sitting at home, therefore I decided to prolong my studies, and go on Erasmus. On top of that, it is really an extraordinary opportunity to go abroad, study, make friends and travel all while getting credits and a grant.

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

To be honest, there is not that much reasoning behind it. I just really wanted to visit a country / city that was fairly new to me. So, it was more a process of elimination for me; I knew that I wanted to stay within the EU (because its much cheaper) and as mentioned go to a country I knew little about. Hence, I looked at the list, and just chose the names that I did not know. In the end it left me with a top 3, and after looking at the courses Maribor became my number 1 choice.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Going there I went with plane to Ljubljana, followed by a train by Maribor. As the plain tickets were cheap and I had a lot of stuff, this was nice. But going back the tickets were very expensive (also from other nearby airports) so I decided to go by Flixbus. Even though it took me in total 22 hours, it was quite doable I would say. There was only 1 transfer, and 1 bus was overnight. So, if it is hard to reach by plane, the bus is doable.

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	Business law	5	We learned about legal systems, contracts and their validity, international trades and some laws	4	Sometimes I had to put in a little bit more effort, as I had zero previous knowledge about law, but it was really interesting.
2	Open Economy Macroeconomics	6	We learned about exchange rates, business cycles, recessions and how to calculate these topics	4	The professor explained it well and we practiced the calculations quite a bit. The theory was a bit more dry than business law, but it was a nice course!
3	Alternative nutrition	5	We had to write an essay about a chosen topic from a short list, additionally learn about alternative ways of nutrition	5	I really liked this course. As we had no lectures, and only had to write an essay, it left room to intertwine your own interests with the assignment which was really nice. Additionally, the professors available for questions, which is not that common so that was really nice.
4	Basic concepts of a company	5	We learned about what a company is (traditional and non-traditional firms), how it exists within the market, the theories that can be linked to this, contracts within a firm, risk assessments and property rights	4	This course covered a lot of topics, so I learned a lot of new information but also some overlapped with previous knowledge (for example free rider effect) so this was really nice to be able to put it in the bigger picture of how a firm can act.
5					
6					

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

It was really dependent on the course! For example for the course alternative nutrition, we had different assignments as Erasmus students, therefore we had to do more individual study. I had to write an essay and read a chapter, later I had to orally answer questions about the chapter after presenting my essay. But the other courses I did at the faculty of economics and business, these were only for Erasmus students, therefore I had lectures I had to attend. Besides these lectures there were several assignments / presentations and at the end exams. The academic level differs quite a lot

between the courses but I would say it was a bit easier than in the Netherlands, but I still had to study and put in effort in order to pass.

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?)

The lecturers are approachable during the lecture, but besides that most of them don't respond to emails. Additionally, the Erasmus students were not mixed with the local students so there was little or even no engagement with them. Moreover, the local students did not really go to the university library to study, I think they mostly studied home. It is not like here that people go to university for self-study or stick around after the lecture for group work or something. The local students just attended the lectures and that is it, as far as I could tell.

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

They facilitated housing, which included laundry facilities and a gym (even though this was really old, at least it was something). Additionally, they provided sports such as volleyball, basketball, climbing and ice skating every week.

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?)

There is the possibility to find housing through the university (this is what I did), but also lots of private housing. I decided to go with the university building because it was easiest, and I figured a lot of Erasmus students would go here. If you wanted a private room, the foreign students Maribor group (in collaboration with ESN) provided a list with alternative complexes. In the end, in these complexes there were quite a lot of Erasmus students as well, so this was nice. In regards to pricing: in comparison with the Netherlands it is really cheap, but obviously it is dependent on whether you get a shared room or not.

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

I feel like the Slovenian culture is very focused on the individual, they were not very eager to help or tell you the way. I found them often rude to be honest, for example in restaurants they don't smile or say hi to you and get annoyed if you need help translating. But I think this might just be a cultural difference thing that I needed to adjust to. Additionally, they eat a lot of meat and drink a lot of alcohol basically. But as most of my friends were internationals, my opinion is based on just snippets of interactions that I had with Slovenian people.

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

It was much cheaper, I paid roughly 140 euro per month for a room (with roommate and showers and kitchen shared with the hallway so around 7 to 14 people). The building was a bit old, but it was fine! (another bonus is that a lot of Erasmus people live there, so it makes the money even more worth it).

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 mostly per bike or by foot (bike subscription is 3 euro's for a year for unlimited use, so that was really nice) and the bus ride is 1 euro from a to b, regardless how long you have to take the bus. Taxi prices, I am not sure about because my friends had cars.

6. Free time

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

For nearby destinations I would suggest the Pyramids (for watching the sunset), Pohorje (either hiking or skiing) and in regards to towns nearby Ptuj was nice and cozy. When it comes to destinations a bit further located from Maribor, the Triglav National Park is very nice. We went here on a trip, booked a cabin in the mountains and did some hiking, cooking and drinking. We planned this approximately two weeks in advance I think. We mostly booked our trips two weeks in advance I think, this always worked out for us. Lastly, since some of my friends came by car to Maribor, we travelled to most things by car which was really convenient.

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

I think the majority is in the travel guide to be honest. But I didn't do that much research and just went along with the plans that were being made, so I couldn't say for sure what is worth a visit and not in the travel guide.

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

Since the government subsidizes student meals partly, it was really cheap to go for food. When I arrived it was around 3,50 on average, but after the Christmas holiday around 5,50; for this money you would get a small salad, water, an apple, and a meal. So me and my friends went out for food quite a lot. Additionally, we went to the sport things quite a lot like ice skating and volleyball. Lastly, for partying, we mostly went to the Erasmus parties at Stuk and KMS (the latter is now called Lux I think) during the week, in the weekend the parties were mostly at Tacos and Fuegos, and sometimes we went to Rooster Lent to change it up a bit.

7. Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I don't think I had many challenges, maybe the only challenge was the paperwork in the beginning as it was a little bit unclear what we should do beforehand and what we should do on location with help. But besides this, I think there were not that many challenges.

What was your best memory abroad?

Probably on a trip to the Triglav National Park with my friend group. We had a cabin in the middle of the nature, so it was perfect for hiking, cooking together, drinking and playing games. We continued the trip to Venice to party there for Halloween. So, essentially it was four days with a big group of amazing people just having fun, so this is a highlight for sure.

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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