



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Field of study in Wageningen | Biology |
| Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy) | 17/02/23 until 14/07/23 |
| Country (exchange) | Austria |
| City (exchange) | Vienna |
| University (exchange) | BOKU |
| Faculty (exchange) | |

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I really wanted to get the experience of living abroad, and I think doing an Erasmus exchange is a very accessible option for experiencing this.

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

I wanted to see what it's like living in a big city, since I am from a small town and Wageningen is also not very big. So I was already planning on choosing a capital city. Then I looked into the courses that were offered. In Vienna there were a lot of courses which I found very interesting, also in fields outside of biology, and I was allowed to take all of these courses which made it interesting. Additionally I liked the fact that I speak a bit of German, and could therefore communicate with the people from Vienna. I had never been to the city before, but after doing some short research it seemed very beautiful, and it seemed like a place where I would want to live.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

For me it was very easy to go by train, because there is a direct nighttrain to and from Vienna from the Netherlands. If you have that option I would definitely recommend it, because you arrive at a nice time, in the middle of the city, which I really liked especially with all of your luggage. The train is also cheaper when you travel with more luggage, which you do when you go abroad for several months. And of course it is better for the environment, so I would recommend the nightjet to Vienna to everyone who goes there on exchange. I do recommend to book a sleeping place if you can afford it, it makes a big difference for the state in which you arrive at your destination I think ;).

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 | <i>Biology of aging</i> | 3 | The content described aging in all different aspects, also the strategies to fight aging are being discussed. | 4 | The grading of this course goes just by attending the course and completing the pub quizzes during the lectures. Which makes it easy to take the course even if you have a different background. The lecturers where also very enthusiastic about the topic and really work in the field |
| 2 | <i>Fish parasitology and pathology</i> | 2 | | 3 | |
| 3 | <i>Food toxicology</i> | 2 | | 3 | |
| 4 | <i>Global waste management II</i> | 3 | | 3 | You can get bonus points when you give a presentation about waste management in your own country. Which was nice because it makes the course interactive and you learn something about the other students as well |
| 5 | <i>Hydrobiology</i> | 2 | Limnology, invertebrates, river morphology and fish. It is a week long excursion to a lake in Austria where you do a lot of practical work in biology. It was the most interesting course that I took while I was on exchange. | 5 | When I took this course I took it with another exchange student. We where the only non-austrian students. This might be something to think about since you have to find accommodation for the excursion yourself, so it might be a good idea to ask other Erasmus students to join. |
| 6 | <i>Introduction to the toxicology of pesticides</i> | 3 | Very much focussed on the effects on human health. | 4 | This was an online course and exam for me, you can plan it yourself. A lot of content but very interesting. |
| | <i>Microbiology and disease</i> | 2 | Focussed on research done in this field, everyone gives a presentation on a research paper | 3 | |
| | <i>Recreation in riverine landscapes</i> | 3 | | 3 | |
| | <i>Wildlife based conflicts and their management</i> | 1.5 | | 4 | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

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

It differs a lot per course. Since a lot of the courses are approximately 2 ECTS you can choose a very specific type of program, so I think at BOKU it was different for everyone if they had a high level or not, a lot of presentations or exams. It in general depends a lot on the courses you choose, you can change these until very late in the semester.

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?)

I think the culture was very similar to WUR. A lot of Erasmus students were surprised with how reachable the lecturers were and how easy it was to speak to them, it does not feel like they are so much higher than you so you could not speak with them. I think at WUR we kind of have a similar atmosphere.

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

They offer options for sports, you do however have to choose a sport in the beginning of the semester and stick with it, because you pay for 1 sport only (not like at the bongerd). So I just did my sports outside of the university, Vienna has a lot to offer, and sometimes even for free. The ESN organised a lot of activities for Erasmus students, and sometimes also together with Austrian students. There was a high variety in activities which was nice, there was something for everyone.

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?)

I was surprised with how easy it is to find a room in Vienna, and cheap as well, I paid less than I pay for my room from idealis in Wageningen. I registered for OeAD student housing, but there are also other sites where you can find something. I am very happy that I looked into the location, they have a lot of options and I chose to live in the city center, which I enjoyed very much.

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

The culture in Austria is not that different from the Netherlands I feel like. Viennese people are known for being rude but that is really just the (touristic, but sometimes also in other places) cafes and restaurants. I have found the Austrian people to be super nice, friendly and welcoming. And they were also very willing to speak English, because I could often not understand their German because of the Austrian accent.

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

About the same or cheaper, for the most people I heard that they paid less. If you want something very big you of course pay more.

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

You can buy a semester ticket for 70 euros which you can use in all public transport in Vienna for the whole semester, so this is very cheap I think. It takes you about half an hour to get everywhere, was our general rule.

6. Free time

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

I would say it is a must to do at least one trip from Vienna, because it is so central that it is easy to reach other cities/places. For example I did a trip to Croatia with some friends by car, which is super affordable, and a city trip to Prague. Also Bratislava is only an hour away, it is not super big but I would recommend doing a day trip there.

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

I would say the parks are very nice. I personally lived close to Votiv kirche, which I think is a very nice church (and I think much nicer to visit than the Stephansdom). If it is summer I would really recommend to go to donauinsel for a swim. And when you are there during the free donauinselfestival you can not miss that!! Also donaukanal is nice for relaxing in the summer or going for a run.

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

The croissants at l'amour du pain, definitely deserve their hype. For coffee I would say go to café from see, it is so nice and super cheap (for Vienna), also you pay the same price for a flat white as for a cappuccino. Liebling is a nice bar. The hills around Vienna are also a must visit, I went on hikes there several times and it is so beautiful, you also get a nice view of the city. When spring arrives, you can go to a heuriger in the vineyards, and have a drink there with your friends. Mayer am Nussberg is a nice one, and next to that you have heuriger Sirbu am Nussberg, also nice. I also did a lot of bouldering, which Vienna has so much options for

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I think the biggest challenge was getting all of the documents at the right place at the right university. It sometimes took a lot of effort, but it was all worth it.

What was your best memory abroad?

It is really hard to say, because I experienced so much and made so many new friends. I can think of so many things. The donauinselfest and the afterparties were definitely a highlight, but also the outside cinemas that they had in Vienna were super nice. And all

of the brunches and dinners that I did with my friends. Or the trip to Croatia. I really cannot choose, there is so much.

8. Contact details (optional)

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Is the reader allowed to contact the writer? | yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | no <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Name/e-mail | Lieke.michielsen@wur.nl | |