



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Molecular life sciences
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	20/02/2023 until 07/07/2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Slovenia
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Ljubljana
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Univerza v Ljubljani
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Biotechnical Faculty

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Ever since I started university I wanted to do an exchange, it seemed like such a cool experience, living abroad for a semester. When the time came to decide if I still wanted to do one I didn't even hesitate. I really wanted to experience living in another country where things are going differently, where the culture is different. I also wanted to see more of the world and improve my English.

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

I mostly choose Slovenia because it felt right, there was something attracting me towards it. I think it was because Slovenia is really different from the west of Europe since it is Balkan, yet it is still very progressive and EU. I also knew, from a vacation ten years ago that the nature was absolutely beautiful and I really wanted to experience that. The idea that Ljubljana was the capital but that it wasn't as big as some other capitals in Europe also sounded right to me.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

From Amsterdam there is quite a good connection to Ljubljana Airport but since the airport is very small it can be quite expensive while flying on Venice and even Zagreb is just as good. From those airports you will have to take the flibus or some other type of car transport service but it will only cost you around thirty euros.

## 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	Pets nutrition	3	A course about different types of animals their digestive systems, the best feeding but also their intolerances/allergies	4	A really nice course! It was short but that is to be expected of three ECTS. It was really nice to do something different for once
2	Toxicity testing	3	A course about how toxicity is measured in the field of biology/chemistry, general experiments are explained and what kind of impact toxicity testing has	4	A very good course, it made me realize how important toxicity testing is. It gave me some background knowledge about it that I will for sure be able to use in the future as toxicity testing is often mentioned in my courses
3	Animal tissue culture	6	A course about how animal cells are cultured, what aspects are important and the impact of cultures on modern medicine. Lots of experiments are done to get first hand experience in culturing cells	5	I loved this course. In Wageningen I worked with cell cultures multiple times but we never had a good background on it. Here I learned about why certain protocols around cells exist and how we can make those cultures ourselves. I even did so myself, doing the experiments was always very enjoyable and I learned so much during this course
4	Food chemistry	6	A course about the chemicals in our food, about the good ones and the bad ones and what kind of impact that they have on the food that you eat. Experiments are about how to measure certain contents in the food	3.5	A pretty good course. It was really interesting to learn about the different chemicals in food. I had the background chemistry knowledge but the application on food was something I never had in my course and it was really interesting.
5	Immunology	6	A course about the immune response of your body, you learn all about the cells and the mechanism of your body. While also doing many experiments about how to measure the	5	This was my favourite course of my whole Erasmus. I'm really interested in going into biomedicine and this course taught me all about the immune response in our bodies, how those cells and mechanism work in great detail. The course had an

			immune response in the body.		amazing set up and the professor and lab assistant were the same as in animal tissue culture, they are clear and always willing to answer your questions.
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**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

The study in Ljubljana is different from Wageningen in the way the courses are given, in Wageningen we have periods with two courses at the same time, in Ljubljana we followed the courses for several weeks or months and had only one or two classes per week. There is something about both ways that I like. In Ljubljana I noticed how it was really nice that the study pace was a bit slower, it was more relaxed while I still learned a great deal. The lesson material was interesting, a bit more broad than in Wageningen and less specific but I really wanted that so for me that was ideal. The examination here was shorter than in Wageningen, there are no three hour exams, they are around an hour and a half which made it a lot easier to concentrate during. I also had two oral exams here which I really liked, in an oral exam you can really explain your point and if you're blanking for a little bit your professor can help you on your way. Overall I had to get used to the system the first few weeks but if I look back on it now I like how Ljubljana did it.

**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 culture in the biotechnical faculty is not too different from the WUR, I don't know about other faculties because the faculties are really separated in Ljubljana while in the WUR we are all together. In my faculty we were in separate English courses because the Slovenian students followed the course in their native language. Because of this I had no interaction with local students. During the courses sometimes the schedules had to change and because the courses were small this was always done with the students so that the professors could make sure everybody could follow the course. The professors were also very understanding in that you may not have the appropriate background knowledge and adapted to the class. They are very approachable, especially because the classrooms are smaller than I was used to in Wageningen. When sending emails to professors using a respectful informal tone was more than enough. I loved how the professors worked with the students here whereas in Wageningen you often just have to accept how things go because the courses are bigger and so the schedules are more set into stone.

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

They do offer sport programs but I didn't really look into it that much, I like to go to the gym but theirs was really small and only a very limited amount of people could sign up at very limited amount of times. But if you are more into sports, friend of mine did rock climbing for ECTS in the sports faculty so I do know that there are lots of great options.

## 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?)**

Housing was not the easiest thing, there are a very limited amount of dorms especially if you are coming in February like I did. There also isn't a general housing organization like we have Idealis in Wageningen. This makes looking for a room tricky because you will have to filter the scams out, I did hear of people being scammed and that it really is a thing. You can only start looking for a room maximal of two months before you are going to it can be a bit stressful to find something in time that is close to your faculty. There is also the fact that most rooms that are offered are dorms. Luckily for me I found a nice place, I paid around €410 per month including expenses, this was a bit more on the expensive side because it was a bigger room without a roommate. Rooms in Ljubljana can vary anywhere from €200 - €800 depending on roommate, location and size.

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

Slovenia is different in many ways, I don't think I will be able to mention them all but the ones that stayed with me are the following. Even though Ljubljana is the capital it is very relaxed, people are more slow paced then they are in most bigger cities in the Netherlands. There is also more of a day drinking culture, not the students but just the locals but this is probably due to the fact that Balkan people love their alcohol. This Balkan culture in Ljubljana is not as present as in Bosnia where I went on a trip but little things are still there. For example the food, which is really good. The people in Slovenia are very kind hearted and a little bit reserved, when they notice you don't speak Slovenian and need a little bit of a translation they always spring to your aid or start speaking in English.

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

Most people expect Slovenia to be cheaper, it really isn't, at least not food wise. The student rent is about the same as I pay in Wageningen. And the groceries are the exact same prices as prices in the Netherlands. The beer when going out can be a bit cheaper and going out is cheaper especially with the student meal system that the University of Ljubljana has implemented. But overall I my living costs were only slightly lower but not much. It also isn't very fair to me that Slovenia is placed in the same grant bracket as Polish and Czech Republic because when I spoke with my friends from those countries they said Slovenia is much more expensive then their countries.

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

As a student you could get a transport card for Ljubljana for only €20 each months and then you could take the bus as many times as you want, otherwise it is only €1.30 for a ticket with which you can travel for an hour and a half. You can also easily get a card at a machine and load money on that, that is what I personally did because I didn't take the bus that much. This is because biking in Ljubljana is quite popular, they have bike lanes in most of the places. And it is not the Netherlands but overall I was very pleased with how easy it is to bike in Ljubljana. There are also rental bikes all over the city which are really easy to work with and very convenient as you don't have to look for a bike. Then there are the taxi's, there is a company that is quite cheap but I honestly never took one

so I can't speak from experience. What I did do a lot is taking buses all over Slovenia, there are also trains but their train network is a little less wide spread than their bus lines. The trains are very nice and not expensive at all. The buses however are even cheaper, in the weekends there are insane discounts and you can get all over Slovenia with them, visiting beautiful things.

## 6. Free time

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

I made many trips in my Erasmus, some must-sees in Slovenia are definitely the Skocjan Caves (most beautiful place I've ever seen), Piran (a cute coast city), Bled and Vintgar Gorge, Bohinj and also Ptuj is really nice. Outside of Slovenia I recommend visiting the Croatian coast at least one time, Zagreb and the Plitvice lakes in Croatia are also awesome. And while you're close Bosnia and Herzegovina is incredible and made a special kind of impact on me.

**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?)**

A really good going out place is Tiffany's at Metelkova. Metelkova is the alternative party place and if you're into alternative genres maybe you can find your preferred one in a club there. I liked Tiffany's the most, it is a gay club and most of the nights the atmosphere is really good there. They also have a little techno room which I adored. I can probably help you with a lot more questions, just shoot me a message! I can imagine how it can be really nice to get some tips on the country before going 😊

## 7. Challenges & best moment abroad

**What was a challenge you have experienced?**

A challenge for me was being away from all that I had known, it was really weird to pack up your life and move to a country where you knew nobody. In the beginning every thing was new and it made me a little bit anxious however after a few weeks you get used to the new life and you can really start enjoying it. And now I loved that I get to experience a new country, a new way of life.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

My friends, I made life long connections with such special people. I had the most amazing trips with them, enjoyed their company with drinks and food and did all kinds of fun spontaneous stuff with them. I think those spontaneous moments are my fave, where I went with a friend to the Skocjan caves and saw the most beautiful scenery or when I said yes to a party and had an absolute great time.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

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