

Erasmus Report

Student: Kamilya Mustafina

University: RISEBA University

City/Country: Riga/Latvia

My first acquaintance with Riga started with the airport. I did not know yet that 5 months later on 6th of July I will be crying in the same airport saying Bye to the city in which I left the piece of my heart. The next day after arrival, I had an orientation day where I met the girls with whom I spent the next 5 months of my life. One girl was from Munich, Germany and another one was from Prague, Czech Republic. They stayed at the center of the building and I approached them, lost and frozen. It was January and the weather in Riga did not welcome the newcomers. It took a time for Riga to change its mind and to stop showing off its stubborn and grey character before showing its shining smile. Coming back to the orientation day: just couple of minutes later, students from all part of Europe start gathering into the round building and we finally entered the hall. This was the start of my Erasmus. I started with exploring Latvia as it has many beautiful places which are worth visiting; I have visited Jurmala, Kemeru National Park, and Sigulda. Apart from that I travelled to Estonia, Lithuania and Russia making an unforgettable memories.

My university in Riga was RISEBA University with the Masters's program called International Finance. The Master courses are mainly held during the evenings as many local students who study Master's are already working. The professors in International Finance program are mainly practice-oriented, so they teach with the focus on future practical applicability which I find extremely helpful. We had many interesting projects and tasks during the semester and even though I was taking 11 courses, I was enjoying the studies and Erasmus life. Many Erasmus students choose International Business program which resulted in me being the only one Erasmus student in International Finance. I did not regret that decision as the group was pretty small consisting of 6-8 local students which allowed us to become closer. We were helping each other during the projects and gathering in the cafes to study together. In Riga, I had a project for the Portfolio Management and Analysis course which the professor highly valued and based on this work, I was honored to participate and to present my paper about sustainability in the banking sector in the 10-th Annual Scientific

Baltic Business Management Conference ASBBMC 2017 'Sustainable Organizations: Creating and Managing in Turbulent Business Environment'.

RISEBA also organizes many events for Erasmus students like picnics and trips, so we could also learn how to dance the national Latvian dances which are extremely joyful. At the same time, the cost of living in Riga is relatively cheaper compared to some Western European countries. The cost of accommodation is around 300 EUR and transportation costs are relatively cheap. For example, the prices for the taxis average to 3-4 euros in the center and to 8-14 EUR to get to the Airport, the monthly ticket for unlimited trips on public transport costs around 16 EUR.

What is Erasmus for me? Erasmus is not only about studies, it is all about impressions, people, new cultures. It is about going out of the comfort zone and discovering new yourself: who you are and what you are. Every moment in Erasmus was joyful and priceless, every experience and every person allowed me to learn more and get to know more about the world around and about myself. Erasmus is an amazing mix of diverse cultures connected altogether in one place that allows integrating various experiences and views. I was present in many international dinners organized by different students where I could taste food from different parts of the world. I was drinking the Latvian beer in Ala bar with the representatives from Mexico, Slovakia, France, Spain, Dominican Republic and Brazil.

To sum up, I highly recommend Riga as an Erasmus city for the experience of the Latvian culture and people you meet.