

Report after Erasmus Program to University of Vienna

This report aims to support prospected future Erasmus students on their preparation, application and upcoming stay in their new city. Based on my experience, I would like to write down small advice how to find friends, accommodation, study, everyday life at the host university, especially in University of Vienna where I studied.



Preparation

As the home University, there is registration period online. What I have figured out later is that many of the students in my host University assigned themselves as many interesting courses as they can and then drop after they participated to the first or second classes. For some course, I had to submit the motivation letter to be able to get in to the class. I also registers for the buddy system both from the University and a student organization. They were very kind to answer to my questions to settle down to a new city especially at the beginning. I could meet a mentor who is from completely different study field through the student organization. The organization seemed to have a lot of events targeting international students. Tandem system officially from the University was also a good way to meet locals and students. I got huge amount of request emails and could practice very well. Not forget, The preparation for VISA or residence permit would be better to be earlier if you are the one who needs it. I have struggled a lot on the application process.

Accommodation

The difficulty to find an accommodation happens not only in Berlin, but in Vienna as

well. First of all, I have visited all the website informed officially by University of Vienna. In each page, I have made preferences of the dormitories they had. Although many got back saying all occupied, one of the organization found a room for me. They charged fees for the arrangement and booking, but I decided there because I really liked the room and felt pessimistic to find another good deal at that point. My accommodation was well organized and kind compared to any ones I have experienced before. Office of the student dorm was very close and I could go and talk if I have a question or help.

I would recommend to start searching for student dorms at least five months before your stay, while availability of WGs for the same term show up online usually a lot later, like one to two months before. Another recommendation is to contact the student dormitories directly, not through the large online accommodation provider. If you are planning to stay longer, it would be a lot easier to go to the office of your willing dormitory after your arrival and ask for the vacancy. My friend changed a room after her stay for three months which process was securer and easier.

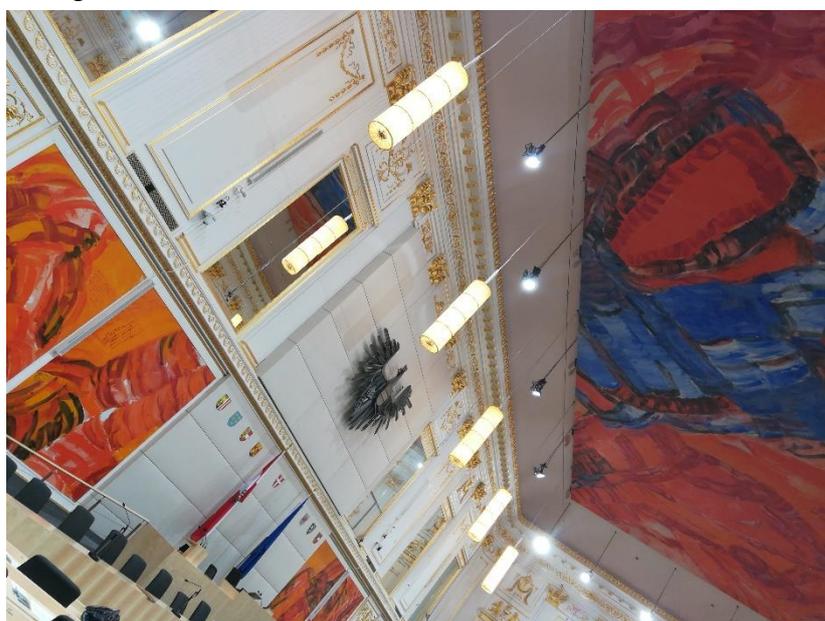
Everyday Life

In Vienna, every district are closer each other especially at the city center than they are in Berlin. City center has most of Universities, the opera house, museums, local market and shopping street, and famous coffee shops. The area of the real Donau liver (Alte Donau) has beautiful view, huge shopping mall, lots of events, bars and restaurants in summer. Viennese foods and drinks such as sausage, schnitzel, cakes and breads tasted good. Coffee is a big culture as well. Many of my Viennese friends had their coffee machine, sometime the huge professional one in a real cafe. They also made me a cup of coffee from the coffee beans.



Study

The best part of my study was classes I have not experienced. Since I could pick any classes I want, I could follow my interest and profession. My faculty in University of Vienna had another topics of the class and strength of the area. For example, I could study about nuclear energy and health while the same topic will not be available as a class in my home University. Also, I have asked for listening some classes without taking credits even in another faculties which deepen my knowledge as well. Which study-area the University put the importance on can very vary and was the most important factor for me to determine my destination when I was choosing which country to go. The students are also different from my home University. It was very nice to get to know them well through a group work I did at a class. There are few students who are willing to learn advanced statistics although the host University whereas there are many and I was one of them in my home University. I was also very satisfied that I could join to a STATA class about quantitative statistics in a small group at the host University which would have been very full if the same kind of class happens. It was also interesting that I could learn about Austrian culture and history through friends, mentors, and attending some city tours and visiting museums.



However, professors in the host University were very busy taking care of the students from University of Vienna, at least in my faculty. I could not reserve a part of office hour of a professor when I asked for advice for my project which disappointed me very much.

All in all I appreciate the opportunity for the Erasmus, I could study, experience, and enjoy a lot!