

Field report semester abroad

Please do not mention any personal data (name, e-mail address, etc.) in the field report.
Photos (with description) can be inserted at the end of the report.

I agree with the publication of the report and the inserted photos:

Yes No

Study programme at the EUF
European Cultures and Society
Combination of subjects (for Educational Students)
Country
Belgium
Partner university
VIVES Kortrijk
Semester abroad (e.g. fall semester 2016/17)
Spring 2019
Duration of the semester abroad (lectures and examinations)
January- June (5 months stay)
Preparation
<p>Besides making the mandatory agreements with the receiving university, you will have to make sure to fill out the application for a room in the student residence, if you have decided to live there. For some people it took a bit longer, that the responsible person responded, but there should be a room for everyone.</p> <p>For some study programs it is necessary to hand in an extra application or a motivation letter. When I decided for my study program in Kortrijk, I contacted the person indicated on the right side of the website of the program, they told me the requirements right away. Check out their website here: https://www.vives.be/en</p> <p>At some point the interns of the international office in Kortrijk invited me into a Facebook group for dealing with times of arrival, the welcome week and offered help</p>

with anything that comes up. If you tell them your time of arrival, someone will pick you up and help you find your new home.

Studies at the partner university (e.g. period of lectures, language of instruction, courses offered, type of examination)

For me classes started in the end of January with introductory classes, followed by a culture week with city trips, welcoming events from the cultural organisations and venues of the town and of course a lot of fries. The last part of my practical exam was on the 21st of June. I didn't have any other essays to write after that and got my grades the following week.

As an Erasmus exchange student at VIVES you decide before your arrival, which study program you are going to follow. I can now only speak for the S.P.A.C.E. program, Social pedagogical Art & Creativity Exploration, but there are also others in the bigger fields of business management, informatics, engineering and health care, depending in which semester you want to come to Belgium.

<https://www.vives.be/en/exchange/programmes>

The S.P.A.C.E. program is situated in the field of Applied Social Studies and included a variety of classes from Method classes (Drama, Dance, Visual Arts and Sound), Theory about pedagogical approaches, where we read a book and discussed it, Study Visits, where we visited a variety of socio cultural organisations in Belgium, and a class called Global Issues, where the erasmus students of other programs joined us and discussed current topics. My program consisted of only 20 students, majority Erasmus students and 6 Belgian students from the university. The language of instruction was at all time English. In April we had exams: one bigger portfolio presentations, short written essays, an oral exam about the book and smaller oral presentations. I spend the last two month in smaller groups in an organisation, where we had the chance to conduct our own project and present it in the end. I enjoyed that part a lot because we had a lot of freedom and could show what we had learned in the first part of the program. In total I would say, that the program is for people, who want to try out different techniques and acquire some skills of how to work artistic with different target groups. If you already have a lot of experiences in the art field, then the challenge in SPACE is not as big. The cultural exchange in class was quite interesting, especially when talking about different school systems and upbringing. The group really grew together, which additionally resulted from living together in the student residence.

Sadly not every study program offers an additional language course in Dutch, which would have been very helpful to really have a base to get to know the country more. Knowing German, Danish and English really helped me to get around, but English was totally sufficient too.

Life in the host country (e.g. living, shopping, leisure, costs)

The European Student Network, ESN, is quite active in Kortrijk and organises day trips and parties throughout the whole semester, additionally you can ask the volunteer questions regarding Belgium/doctors/transportation etc and they are happy to answer.

Kortrijk offers a big variety of local bars, cultural events, parties and green hangout places. It is a really good starting point for bike tours along the river Leie or for day trips to other Belgian cities like Brugge (one of my favourites), but also Ghent, Antwerpen, Oostende or Brussels as well as to Lille, France, which is a 40 min train ride. In Belgium make sure to use the Go Pass 10 to travel, so each ride you take wherever you want only costs you 5,20 Euro.

Favourite Bars: PAND.A, DeDingen, Gainsbar (Ask the barkeepers for recommendations, I was impressed by their commitment to the range of beer, often they let you try some beers or give you their favourite, always worth it!)

There is a big cultural center and cinema called "Buda scoop", it is located on the island Buda. They offer dance performances, international movie screenings in English, have a Café and further information about events happening in town. It has a really open atmosphere like the whole culture island.

The big shopping center "K in Kortrijk" is situated close to the big market and the town house. Lidl and Colruyt, for groceries, are close to the train station. From the student residence everything is reachable by foot. Though I advise you to rent a bike from "Fietsencentrum Mobiel", where you only pay 5 euros per month as a student and get around faster.

Practical tips/conclusion

At VIVES we used the first names of the academic staff, they are very friendly and appreciate open communication. VIVES is a university of applied science so in general they work more practical and on examples, keep that in mind when choosing, it can be a great chance, but for some it might not be academic enough.

When moving to the student residence, you need to bring or buy the kitchen utensils you will need during your stay. Be prepared to quite some noise on Thursday nights, when parties are going on in the basement.

All in all I can say I had a very good Erasmus experience, there is a lot to explore and if you are interested in culture and exchange, then you will enjoy Kortrijk too.

Photos: I hereby declare that there are no third party rights to the photograph(s) specified below and I authorise the EUF to use the photograph(s) Yes No



The stairs next to the two towers of Kortrijk, connecting the city center to the Buda island, is a popular hang out place in the summer.