

Final report

Only for anonymized publication

(Erasmus+ Internships – SMP)

general information on the internship

Subject of studies:	Course of studies (Bachelor/Master/Staatsex.):
Philosophy of science and Logic	Master
Time of internship:	Place of internship:
9 months	Vilnius, Lithuania
Internship at the University of Vilnius, Faculty of philosophy	

1. Planning and preparation

I have decided to undertake an internship abroad after the pandemic had begun. Due to the pandemic, whole teaching became online-based and thus, I thought, it is a great opportunity to use this situation for my advantage and experience something I had not been able before – study at LMU and intern in a foreign country at the same time. I started to search for opportunities. I have decided to contact Vilnius University as it has been made public that they are always welcoming students from foreign universities if the students are able to ensure a local supervisor. Since one of my career goals at that time was to prepare a publication, I have found a lecturer at the philosophy faculty in Vilnius university who has been the most active with international publications and asked if he would be willing to supervise my internship. After discussing possible topics of publications, he gladly agreed to supervise me. I then contacted the administration of philosophy department in Vilnius and my own faculty back at LMU. I had to wait a little bit till I have found the right people to contact and, I had to delay internship due to a total lockdown in Vilnius, but after a few months I was able to start preparing for the stay abroad. People at the “Studierendenservice Internationale Praktika” were very helpful and sent all the required documents and information, thus I had help all throughout the application process. Alongside preparations of the documents, I had to organize my physical relocation to Vilnius. I have found a room listing on www.aruodas.lt/en for which I had to pay 300 euros per month, plus 300 euros as a deposit. I have also contacted local students for tips on my future stay. This was particularly easy since I knew the local language and could communicate without any difficulties. I wish however that I had spend more time preparing for the work I was supposed to do. As it turned out the insufficient preparation for the internship caused a delay in my performance and I know now that I could have delivered better results were I more prepared for the start of the internship.

2. Internship

I was entrusted with developing and writing out my ideas for publications. I decided to work on topics I had worked before, so it seemed that I will only need to polish my writings. I was fully occupied with the tasks and was never left without work, especially because it turned out I am quite a perfectionist regarding academic paper. It also helped that I was responsible for the organization of my work and so even if at some points, I had to wait for feedback on one of the articles, I was able to work on another.

My typical working day had been waking up at around 7 am, taking a bus to the library (In Vilnius district called 'Sauletekis', there is a very nice library for students which I really recommend, just google it and you will see how cool it is) and arriving at 8 am. I then would start my work by checking email and analyzing the feedback if I had received any. I would then go on with reading the required literature for the publications, updating the publications, organizing feedback sessions with local students and similar. I would also take time to simply think about the contents of the publication, possible counterattacks, possible structure of the article, possible journals for which I would submit the publication and would proceed with analysis the usual writing style of publications published in the chosen journal. At some point I would take a break in a libraries cafeteria which was reasonably priced and had simple, tasty food for lunch. At 4:30 I would start planning my next days work and would leave at around 5.

During first couple of months, every Monday I would have sessions with my supervisor to discuss weeks work. After a couple of months, I began to feel stuck, and the meetings became scarcer as I was unable to report on any developments. It was the first time I was faced with a professional academic working style and was a bit overwhelmed by it. It started to feel that I was unable to produce a satisfactory work as I knew that there was so much, I did not yet know. I would say that my biggest achievement was not that I learned a lot about the field I was working in, which I undoubtedly did, but at the end I started to learn to overcome this overwhelming pressure.

3. Accommodation in the host country

I was able to find a nice room in the city center for 320 euros per month (350 on average with utilities.) There were cheaper options available but only for minimal 1 year stay and, in my case, I had to find accommodation fast which also did not help. If not for these circumstances, you would be able to find a room for 250 per month. Though one more thing to keep in mind, is that the prices will be higher if you start your internship in September. From August to November the flat prices in Vilnius increase significantly.



My landlord was a very friendly Lithuanian girl who took good care of the apartment and us, however as everywhere I have heard stories about landlords who are cold, slow when reacting to emergencies at home and so on. In general, Lithuanian people are very friendly and still relatively active on Facebook, so my advice would be to post a message on a Facebook group for accommodation 'Flats in Vilnius' or any other and would write a message saying something like 'Hello, my name is X, and I am looking for Lithuanian friends. I really would like to know the culture better, learn a little bit of language and just to befriend someone, so please don't hesitate to leave a comment or pm me if you would like to meet'. When you befriend someone, they can help you with giving various tips about where to shop, how to look for an apartment and similar.

The room I have found was very nice and in a nice location. I particularly wanted to rent a room and not a flat to save money, of course, but mostly to be able to live with local students who became my very good friends.

4. Social interactions

I was unfortunately unable to form a stronger bond with any other members of the faculty except from my supervisor due to the pandemic. University had very strict pandemic regulations as no one wanted to risk the health of the members of university community. Therefore, I have restricted my overall presence at the university to the meetings with the supervisor and occasional meetings with local students. I have however spent a lot of the time outside and was able to meet a lot of local people on hikes and simple walks in the park which seemed an appropriate form of meeting people during the pandemic. I have also joined a local folk ensemble and learned traditional Lithuanian singing styles, songs, and dances. I have started volunteering as a data analyst in a local ancient woods' foundation (www.sengire.lt). I have managed to connect to many fascinating people by doing this.

Lithuanians say that they are as bad at small talk as they are good at becoming your best friend, and it is quite true. Lithuanians like to form deep connections, that is, talk about deep, intellectual topics, prove their friendliness by helping each other, talk openly. They do rarely get offended and are quite good at telling and receiving information in a straight manner.

5. Everyday life and leisure

local public transport system is very cheap, especially for students. They can get access to all public transport inside the city of Vilnius for only 6 euros. Since I wanted to commit to my 9 months period, I got it even cheaper as if you buy a 9-month ticket it will cost you 47 euros (just over 5 euros per month). And this covers all public transport within Vilnius area, which, I must tell you, is big. With the ticket



one can go to visit outskirts of Vilnius where you can find regional parks, lakes, botanic gardens, and other attractive locations. The International Vilnius Airport is also within Vilnius district (and is close to the city center), thus no super expensive taxi rides there. I suggest exchange students to buy the Vilnius transport card for the whole duration of their stay (for me it was 9 months) just after you land. You can do it with an app, but for it, I think you need to have a local sim card. Also, for the discount you need to have an ISIC student id, which you can make while you are still back in your country.

Concerning the transport which goes outside Vilnius it is also cheap, though again, you will need your ISIC here as with it you will get 50 percent discount on all transport outside Vilnius. There are a lot of routes to choose from and you can choose to travel by train or bus. As everywhere trains are more expensive, but you get what you pay for. Vilnius seems like a very modern city, however the busses for interregional travel are what remains of the Soviet occupation. Trains, on the other hand, are usually pretty modern, though one time I did have a ride on a rather old one, but there was nothing uncomfortable about that, so I highly recommend train rides. Though again, at least once I suggest taking an interregional bus just to get a taste of something exotic.

6. Financing

Vilnius is a cheaper city than Munich, that is for sure, but don't get your hopes too high. While it is on the edge with the eastern Europe, there is a reason Lithuania is classified as a northern country. The economy, the people the whole cultural climate in general is closer to Germany or Sweden than to Poland. That is the overall evaluation, but it is more informative to part it into certain areas. A room in Munich city center I would say gets close to 600, here closer to 300. Which is a big difference. Transport in Munich is much more expensive, in Vilnius as a student you get it almost for free.

However, food costs in Vilnius are much closer to Munich than you'd expect. At restaurants as well as in supermarkets. As for restaurant or bars, the cheapest option is a place called 'plus, plus, plus'. The cheapest supermarket, just like in Germany is 'Lidl'. If you can find Lithuanian speaking friends, I highly suggest going to a local market for fresh vegetables. One market is especially close to the city center, it is called 'Hales turgus'. It is a fun cultural experience to go there and a good place to get the veggies. There are also options to order fresh veggies from local farmers. For example, 'heart made farm' has subscription-based deals where every week (or once in two weeks) they can deliver a box of fresh seasonal vegetables to your door. Though one must keep in mind that as everywhere it is hard to get decent vegetables in winter.

Since I did not receive financing apart from Erasmus grant for my stay, I had to dive in into my savings. The grand would have been enough if I would have restricted myself to only eating at home and buying



cheapest food. However, from time to time I wanted to go to a bar, enjoy a more balanced meal and travel around. I would say that for a extremely restricted lifestyle 500 euros per month could be enough, however if you want to enjoy something from time to time it gets closer to at least 700-800.

7. SINIK: Intercultural Seminar at the LMU

I did not attend intercultural seminar at the LMU, however I highly recommend taking advantage of such an event or anything at all you can get your hands on before deciding on a final destination as well as before leaving.

8. Internship and studies

My internship was at a university and my job was mainly research and so I have applied all the skills I had learned in academia. Writing papers, communication, everything. I feel that this changed how I look at my studies now. I now better understand what to worry about and what is not with it. I also better understand my prospects as an academic researcher.

9. Conclusion

I had high expectations for myself when I started the internship, and I was quite disappointed. I realized I am very good at building the foundations for my work but not good at all at finishing it. However, the expectations for receiving and sending institutions were all met. Everyone was friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed it here and if I had not have faced financial difficulties I would have stayed for longer.

The main challenge of the internship was completing the papers I have written, and I did not achieve that. I went on and produced new foundations for other future papers, but I had not submitted a single paper. I know I must concentrate on that now.

I highly recommend undertaking an internship here in Vilnius. How to? Find a person you are interested in and simply reach out. LinkedIn might be a good place to start.