

## Experience Report

### 1. Ihr Name



### 2. Land und Partnerhochschule

Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Italy

### 3. Studienfach

Economics

### 4. Betreuungspersonen in Freiburg und an der Gasthochschule

Dr. Steffen Minter - in Freiburg

Léa Senn, Associate Director International Education - in Milan

### 5. Anmelde- und Einschreibeformalitäten

The process was quite easy and all the guidelines for the application were provided. The response has been sent quite fast.

### 6. Vorbereitung auf das Auslandsstudium

The preparation only consisted of looking for the apartment, learning basic Italian words and looking for an optimal way to get to Milan with all the luggage. As the result I chose to travel by direct train and found a room using the website [housinganywhere.com](http://housinganywhere.com).

### 7. Sprachliche Vorbereitung

My English did not need any improvement for the Erasmus semester as I already study in English in my home institution, and as all my classes were going to be in English, I did not need to study Italian. However, I took A1 course of Italian language throughout semester just to get some basic skills and introduction to the language and culture. I enjoyed the course and it was quite helpful, with the only minor disadvantage that some students, especially those who were obliged to take the course, seemed not very interested and involved despite all the efforts of the teacher. Therefore, this fact lowered the general spirit and motivation of the group.

### 8. Belegte Veranstaltungen, also Kurse / Seminare / Vorlesungen / Praktika / Exkursionen an der Gasthochschule: Thema, Namen der Dozenten, Anforderungen, Eindrücke, Bewertung

I took 3 courses:

- 1) Finance And Risk Management (professor M.Botta and professor A.Acquaviva). The course lasted one trimester and consisted of two modules. The first module covered numerous topics in finance and included application of some financial calculations, mostly related to company valuations using different methods and under various scenarios. The second module was comparatively more theoretical and a little bit more interactive, mostly providing relatively

broad insights into various fields and issues of risk management, such as insurance basics, risk estimation etc. The exam for both modules was quite demanding requiring theoretical interpretations, situational questions as well as calculations. The exam for the first module required very good time management, especially in the online version of the exam because it included calculations from financial statements which were available on a different tab of the browser, thus making the retyping speed of the student one of the criteria for the success in the exam (in general, the same can be said about all questions requiring typing long answers).

- 2) Corporate Finance (options, Futures And Derivatives) (professor Caprio Lorenzo).  
The course was extremely useful for me in understanding many financial concepts and tools. It was very well organized and clear guidelines for studying were provided, and therefore the studying process was interesting and enjoyable despite the fact that this subject was the most challenging of all that I took in my Erasmus semester. The only imperfection in this course was caused by the necessity to have the exam online – the exam was in oral form, and I think that knowledge of a subject that requires so many financial calculations was not assessed as well as it would have been assessed in a usual written form (before switching to online examinations due to the lockdown this exam used to be in a written form and consisted mostly of calculations and their interpretations).
- 3) Transnational Business Law (professor L.Boggio and professor S.Dethridge). The course consisted of two modules and lasted for two trimesters. I was mostly interested in the first module which covered transnational financial law and regulations. The course almost entirely consisted only of lectures and overall was very theoretical and broad. The exam consisted of five very detailed theoretical open questions that were quite challenging, but the grading was fair and the students with nearly perfect attendance had an opportunity to write a paper in order to earn extra points. The second module covered other areas of transnational business law and was a lot more practical and engaging. Almost each lecture was followed by group works on case studies and all topics were explained in the context of real-life events and examples. The exam was planned to be a mix of open questions and work on a case study, however, due to the lockdown the format has been changed to multiple choice questions. The questions were very detailed and some of them were related to small case studies. In addition, the opportunity to earn extra points by writing a paper was available to the students with nearly perfect attendance in the second module as well.

## **9. Unterschiede zum deutschen Studiensystem**

The system is quite different:

- 1) The assessment is not always based on one final exam that contributes 100% to the grade, but usually students have a choice – either to have one final exam or a midterm plus a final exam and some other components in some cases. Students are sometimes encouraged to choose the latter option by means of earning bonus points or writing an extra paper.
- 2) Students have an opportunity to improve their grade by retaking an exam multiple times, not depending on the grade they got (it does not need to be necessarily a fail, it can even be 29/30 and it can still be possible to take the exam again and improve the grade). For me personally, the approach was helpful for strengthening the acquired knowledge – after retaking some

exams in order to improve my grade I realized I have learned the same subject a few times and feel like the knowledge is strong now, while normally I would have stopped after getting my first grade without an opportunity to improve it.

- 3) Concerning the teaching process itself, it seems more applied and less oriented on students who aim to go into academia, and more on those who need knowledge and skills for working in the field. While I think both types of programs have their advantages, I enjoyed the contrast and tried to take the subjects that would give me skills I would not be able to get in my home university.

#### **10. Umsetzung der eigenen Studienplanung an der Gastuniversität**

Initially I planned to take different courses and had to change some after arriving in Milan as there were some conflicts in schedule and at the same time some of those classes seemed not as interesting to me as their previous description. However, it was not a big problem to find the substituting courses as the selection of courses is quite broad.

#### **11. Anrechnung von Studienleistungen**

The process is still going on; thus I cannot say much about this.

#### **12. Sprache: Kurse vor Ort, Zurechtkommen in der Sprache des Gastlandes**

As mentioned before, I took an A1 Italian course which was quite helpful to get basics of Italian language.

#### **13. Verwaltungsstellen und/oder Studenteninitiativen, welche sich um die Freiburger Studierenden kümmern**

These issues were handled by the Erasmus office in Freiburg.

#### **14. Universitäres und kulturelles Rahmenprogramm**

ESN Milano provided a program for Erasmus students for most days of the week, including trips outside of Milan. This definitely makes the whole experience better, makes it easier to get to know other people, the city and the country.

#### **15. Anreisetipps**

I travelled to Milan and from Milan a few times and in different ways: by train, by car and by bus. All three options are quite convenient, with train being the fastest alternative and bus being the cheapest. In general in my opinion bus is the best option (if you have maximum two suitcases as that is the limit according to the Flixbus policy) as the traveling time is still not that long – starting from 6.40 hours, but it is significantly cheaper than most trains.

#### **16. Möglichkeiten, eine Unterkunft zu finden; Zimmersuche, Mietpreise und Mietzuschüsse**

Looking for a room probably is the most problematic issue that students going to Milan for Erasmus face, not only based on my experience but also on what I heard from all other international students there – almost everyone had problems either with looking for an apartment, living conditions, their landlords or even all of the above.

It is common in Milan to share a room with one or more people and even that can be quite expensive, even in dormitories, especially in a good location. Private rooms in apartments with other people with shared kitchen and bathroom are less common and are more expensive. Renting a single apartment can cost a few thousand euros, even in bad locations. I was relatively lucky to have found a small private room in an apartment with three other girls which was in a quite old building but renovated inside, for 450 euros without utilities. However the apartment had a lot of disadvantages: it was located on the outskirts of Milan, 20 minutes by foot to the closest metro stations (there was a bus to get there but the timetables were not regular and reliable with buses being very crowded) and I needed minimum 50 minutes by metro to most important places where I ever needed to go. Moreover, me and all my flat mates had numerous problems with the landlord. Shortly after moving in we discovered that the flat was full of cockroaches in all rooms and even in elevators. The landlord told us he would address the problem only if we pay for it and that we would have to leave the place for the days of the disinfection (what we did) and later made us pay for it without providing any bills. However, the problem did not disappear and continued being an issue. Further he also made us pay for other things, like a broken item that has been broken before. In addition, 100 euros from deposit have not been returned without a clear reason being provided, and after moving out I also found out that one of my flat mates ended up hiring a lawyer and suing the landlord for multiple issues.

Moreover, I heard similar stories from other students, and thus would recommend future students going to Milan to be very careful with landlords, rental contract formations, paying deposits and other expenses in cash and etc.

#### **17. Kontoeröffnung und Kontoführung im Gastland**

I kept using my German bank account and thus cannot contribute much on this topic, but in some banks, it is necessary to have an Italian fiscal code.

#### **18. Lebenshaltungskosten**

The cost of life is extremely high in Milan for a student. Besides exceptionally high rent prices, it is quite costly to eat outside of home, groceries are more expensive than in Germany, as well as most other things. I spent at least 1000 euros on average in Milan.

#### **19. Besonderheiten bei Mobiltelefonen, Telefonanschlüssen, Einrichtung von E-Mail, Postzustellung**

I did not deal with most of these issues, except for buying an Italian phone number. I could recommend "Ho" provider as it has good package offers that are well priced and does not have many specific requirements to sign up.

In addition, a common requirement is a fiscal code.

#### **20. Obligatorische und empfohlene Versicherungen (Haftpflicht-, Unfall-, Krankenversicherung)**

I had the same insurance plan as in Germany; thus I cannot contribute to this topic.

## **21. Möglichkeiten der Freizeitgestaltung, Tipps**

- 1) Aperitivo, an experience all students are recommended to get in Milan, is indeed very enjoyable and relatively affordable. Eating out can be very costly in Milan and aperitivo offers in the evening allow people to get a drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) along with limitless access the buffet, which is full with very nice food in most cafes and restaurants, for a price of 8-12 euros. It can be cheaper in some cafes or bars but in those cases it might mean that drinks just come with some snacks and not the access to a buffet.
- 2) The nature around Milan is very nice, for example there are nice lakes and mountains to the north of the city that are definitely worth visiting.
- 3) Museums in Milan are free on first Sundays of each month.

## **22. Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel: Preise, Verbindungen, Zuverlässigkeit**

Students usually get a student pass for transportation in Milan which costs 22 euros per month. The pass is suitable for metro, buses, trams and trains within Milan. Metro seems the most reliable option in general as it works perfectly according the schedule but closes at a certain hour in late evening and gets replaced by buses which are a lot slower and less frequent. In general buses, as well as trains are not very reliable and punctual.

During rush hours in the early morning and evening all kinds of transport are extremely crowded.

In addition, almost every month there are strikes of workers of transportation on certain days, what means some types of transport stop working. Usually the time of the strikes is known in advance.

## **23. Deutsche Vertretungen in der Nähe: Konsulat, Botschaft**

I do not possess any relevant information as I did not need to use the services of any of these institutions.