

Experience Report – Four Solaire CNRES, Font Romeu Odeillo Villa, France

- Preparation, Travel and arrival - I started my planning one month before the travel since the cost of tickets are less as compared to late booking, also I opted for green mobility, so I booked my bus tickets in the manner Oldenburg – Amsterdam - Paris - Perpignan- Font Romeu. The tickets from Oldenburg to Groningen is free of charge but since we had lots of luggage, we booked a direct ticket to Amsterdam. Also, since journey by buses are quite hectic and tiring so we took halts in each of the aforementioned cities. It gave us a chance to explore and embrace the culture of each city.
- Accommodation: You should start looking for accommodation at least 2-3 months before your travel since Font Romeu is an isolated place with very less population, the probability is quite low to obtain a house with reasonable rent. Most of the houses have very high rent. Luckily, we were able to get a house for 350 euros per month. Also, you can contact your coordinator and ask for advice.
- Studying at the host university (courses, academic performance/ credits, support, credit transfer) – The courses vary from core fundamental subjects such as Radiative Heat Transfer, Combined Heat and Mass Transfer, Solar Fuels to broad spectrum subjects such as Electricity Markets, Solar Cooling, Innovative Materials etc. All the subjects that were taught have been important towards the exposure and building of

foundation towards Concentrated Solar Thermal. Also, it is advised to have a very strong background in Mechanical Engineering subjects such as Thermodynamics, Fluid Mechanics, Heat Transfer and Refrigeration. I struggled a lot since I had a background in Electronics and Telecommunications in my Bachelors. In order to obtain good credits, one must have a grasp of all the fundamental aspects and their real time applications. The faculty in CNRES PROMES consists of very highly qualified researchers but some lack teaching experience. You have to give ample time for self-study.

- Everyday life and leisure time – Since Font Romeu is located on the mountains, you'll have plenty of opportunity to explore the area and do various activities such as trekking, camping, mountain climbing, visiting nearby cities/towns such as Perpignan, Puigcerda, Livia, Barcelona, etc. It is quite mandatory to have a car there because mobility otherwise is very time consuming and difficult. Even the shops are far away from residential areas. So please make sure that you have a car for everyday conveyance.
- General experience, credit transfer, conclusion (tips for other students, Dos and Donts) - Try to obtain good marks in the exams since the credit conversion is quite disheartening. Bring lots and lots of warm clothes, snow proof shoes, jackets, woollen gloves, caps since it snows in Font Romeu as late as the month of April. Try to eat lots of protein and leafy vegetables. In general, the experience will change your life. Since we had no car for

most of our course, we used to climb up and down the mountains regularly to visit the furnace and then back home. Although it is not advisable but it's not impossible either. Also buy sunscreen since the DNI there is very high and during summer it'll burn your skin.

- Coordinators – Dr. Quentin Falcoz
Quentin.Falcoz@promes.cnrs.fr