

Erasmus Report Groningen, Netherlands Academic year 2016/2017

I would like to share with you the events of my Erasmus, that I spent in Groningen, Netherlands.

My home Universities Oldenburg and Bremen, which coordinate the institution I study at, the Hanse Law School, have an exchange history with the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. So when my mandatory Erasmus period came up, I decided to check out the options. As I am working towards a bachelor in Comparative and European Law, I wanted to do something in Europe. Furthermore I fancied the Netherlands, as I'd already learnt some Dutch in preparation for integration in case I ever studied there, although all courses would be in English. The partnership with Groningen definitely helped in my decision making and also Groningen's ranking, as it is within the 100 universities. So I applied a full academic year Erasmus at the RUG.

Naturally, I was happy to be accepted and all application matters were solved very swiftly and by a kind administration. Finding courses that fit into my course catalogue was not hard. Later I had to make minor changes to my learning agreement, but that was mainly my fault and due to changes in interest for other courses and not because the courses were not listed in time or were conflicting.

It has to be made clear, that the Groningen institution has a great administration. This is also reflected in how quickly they have exams ready and corrected and organization for resits are also swift.

My courses were all in English, which did help a lot. I am not sure I could have achieved as much if I had studied in Dutch. But for all those who are interested, it is possible to study nearly all courses in Dutch too. They were also interesting and well organized, with the exception of one overly hard course. The Dutch block system is, in my view, preferable to semesters. Think of it as splitting a semester into two parts, thereby you have double the exam periods, for which you need only prepare half as much (preparing for 4 exams at a time instead of 8). Accreditation was also not a problem. The academic year officially ends August, which gives enough time to prepare for the beginning of the Wintersemester back in Germany.

Groningen also has a great international community. You will find yourself immediately welcomed and at home. This diversity is not only interesting, but a fun environment in which it is possible to hone one's social skills. The Dutch people are also a very open and warm people. It is great to show them you know a few Dutch words, after which they will usually start speaking English to you, as they are generally fluent. I think, the Netherlands and its people have also made me a moral outwardly open person.

AuslandsBafög and an Erasmus+ Grant really helped in funding me, as the Netherlands are comparably pricy environment.

I can only advise anyone with interest to go to Groningen and do an Erasmus period. Be prepared for the high price and to study hard!