

## Personal Report

### Mykolas Romeris University Lithuania, SoSe 2021/22, 1 Semester FB4 – Social Work: transnational - Bachelor

#### Language

##### **Which language did you use? How did you communicate with your fellow students?**

I used English in all classes and in communication with my peers. Luckily the university also offered a Basic Lithuanian course which allowed me to learn a bit of Lithuanian.

##### **How well were you able to follow classes linguistically at the partner institution? Did the partner university provide language classes?**

I could follow classes very well. Language courses were offered during the semester.

#### Accommodation

##### **Did the host university arrange for accommodation? How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?**

Yes, they provided rooms in a dormitory and the quality was good.

##### **How high were your overall monthly costs for accommodation (in euros)?**

200€

##### **How well was the accommodation situated? How long did it take you on average to reach the partner university (in minutes)?**

The dorms are really close to the university (about 5 minutes on foot) and surrounded by a lot of opportunities to buy groceries and more (supermarkets like Iki, Lidl, and Rimi are close by, also there are huge shopping malls like Akropolis nearby). However, it's not very close to the city center (40-50 minutes by bus).

##### **Which websites, forums, Facebook pages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?**

The university has a website that also provides information about accommodation outside of the dorms. Some of my fellow students found some Facebook groups and got their apartments that way.

**Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)?**

The dormitory is located in Didlaukio gatvė 57 and in a not very central district of Vilnius. As stated before, it's close to the university and shopping opportunities. The last bus goes before midnight, but staying in the city center for longer is possible since the taxi services provided by Bolt are very popular in Lithuania.

**Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation**

**Which is the best arrival time?**

I recommend arriving at the beginning of the introductory week or even one day earlier since getting settled in the accommodation, doing paperwork, exploring the surroundings, and buying basic necessities take time. Also, it helps to get to know many fellow Erasmus students from the beginning. In the first week, we went out every day and it was an important phase of our social life there. Additionally, a lot of essential information is given in the first week.

**How did you organize your arrival? Were all important questions answered? What did you have to find out yourself? How fast were you able to get in contact with the domestic students?**

I arrived in Lithuania by bus and booked a hotel for the first night to get some rest before a busy and exciting week started. The introductory week had a schedule that even included giving us time to settle in the dormitory, so I arrived there early in the morning according to schedule. All important questions were answered and we always had the opportunity to ask questions. Finding supermarkets and understanding the rules of the dormitory was something we had to figure out ourselves, which was actually really fun. The services for exchange students were absolutely sufficient.

Sadly, I barely got to know domestic students, since only one of my 5 classes had 2 Lithuanian students and this class was online. Most domestic students at MRU seem to not take classes in English.

**Living Abroad**

**Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad? What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad?**

The costs were about 75% less than in Frankfurt. I can recommend Lidl and Rimi since they are usually a bit cheaper. Pepco is really cheap and sells all the basic necessities like clothes and cutlery, but the quality is not very good. Additional expenses mostly appeared in my free time, since I wanted to explore a lot and paid a lot for traveling, eating out, and entrance fees.

**How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on campus? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?**

The semester ticket is really cheap (5.80 Euro each month with the student discount) and valid for the whole city (Vilnius). It's a great city for students with a lot of opportunities to go out. The cafeteria of MRU is very small and only has one vegetarian option each day which is always pretty similar. The costs for a meal were usually higher than at the FRA UAS, usually around 3 Euro. The library can be used for free and offers computers, group rooms and a lot more. There is Wifi everywhere on campus and study rooms can be found there or at the dorms. The university has a sports program and as far as I know, almost every course was free of charge.

## **Studying at the Host University**

**How would you describe the academic standard of classes compared to Frankfurt?**

Less challenging.

**Did you experience any difference in teaching methods/ class structure? Which were the difference regarding your expectations and your experiences at the partner university?**

Surprisingly, the grade in each course consisted of participation during the seminars, tasks during the semester, and usually an exam. This way the exam only makes up 50% of the grade, which I appreciated a lot. Active participation is way more encouraged and a bad exam doesn't mean you'll automatically fail. Also, most professors were really technologically advanced and allowed students to join the in-person lessons online. However, their English and their teaching methods were sometimes insufficient. Since all of my courses almost exclusively were joined by Erasmus students, almost all professors were really understanding and not too demanding, especially concerning English skills.

## **Final Remarks**

**What should future exchange students know/ do/ avoid? How would you overall rate your exchange experience? In what ways have you benefitted academically, personally, and linguistically for your future career?**

In my opinion, the most important and universal advice is to be open. Even when you try to prepare everything perfectly, as I did, you will be confronted with unpredictable events. Just know that everyone felt anxious in the beginning and that it is valid and normal to take some time to settle in. Considering that I was very skeptical about whether a semester abroad could be a good experience for me, I am really surprised by how much I loved it. It gave me the opportunity to learn not only about Lithuania but also about the countries of other Erasmus students. We cooked, danced, and sang together. It's a unique experience that I recommend to everyone. Another thing I realize only now is, that an international network of people is incredibly valuable. Whether I want to travel for myself or for academic purposes, I know people from every corner of the world to whom I can talk to now. This experience reignited my wish to travel and explore other cultures. Summarized, the exchange semester changed my self-perception, challenged my view on what I can and can't do, and brought me closer to people I would have never met otherwise.