

Persönlicher Erfahrungsbericht **ERASMUS 2009/2010**

Partnerhochschule: *Univerzita Karlova v Praze*
Charles University in Prague

Land: *Czech Republic*

Fakultät (Universität Karlsruhe): *Faculty of Biology*

Aufenthaltsdauer: 01.09.2009 - 31.07.2010

Für den Aufenthalt nützliche Links:

Student Information System (to search and register your courses!):

<https://is.cuni.cz/eng/studium/index.php>

Faculty of Science, *Charles University in Prague*

<http://www.natur.cuni.cz/faculty-en/studium/study-abroad/erasmus>

International Club | Charles University

(organizes Orientation Week and various social and cultural events)

<http://www.ic-cuni.cz/>

Charles University Official Webpage

<http://www.cuni.cz/UKENG-1.html>

Seznam and Mapy (a more actual! czech version of google-maps + more)

<http://www.seznam.cz/> <http://www.mapy.cz>

Academy of Sciences of Prague

<http://sun2.biomed.cas.cz/>

Login to Proxy Server of the Charles University (to search Full Papers)

<https://login.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz>

Transport around Prague:

<http://www.dpp.cz/en/>

Transport system around czech republic:

<http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusy/spojeni/>

Cheap international and domestic bus transport

<http://www.studentagency.eu/index.de.html>

My own Maps (where to find the institutes and more,...)

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&msa=0&msid=114095165517300060952.000474aab491fac591d35>

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&msa=0&msid=114095165517300060952.0004755a9f2037ab06e8d>

<http://www.nelso.com/beer-price-map-of-prague/>

Before I was coming to Prague I would have never believed how much it was changing me!

The first impression before was. „Oh my god how can I find all this information and courses to fill this Erasmus documents???”.

But after all I was really happy that I did it and I learned that it's not so hard as it seems and you can find everything if you really want to!

And then the day was coming to go to Prague. So rapid packing everything in one big Bag and the overnight Train will hopefully bring me to my new life, in my new big city.

Where I will understand no word! 8D

First morning “Praha hlavní nádraží” Main Train Station throwing this huge heavy bag out of the train and trying to keep it moving. *tip1 you don't have to carry it downstairs this station has ramps!* but unfortunately too late for me ;-).

So how to get to the dormitory “Kolej Hostiva “,

Being far away and carrying huge Heavy Bags = Taxi! But where can I find one?

The parking space was renovated and the hand made taxi signs took us around the whole train station in a circle. Then suddenly one old guy who was watching us all the time wanted to show us where and didn't want to leave until he was leading us to a “Taxi” which looked more like a civil car. But we had been lucky because he was driving us all together for 600kc fixed price directly to our dorm. *you can also get a price of 500kc if you speak Czech* so it was still ok. *after you used your money you changed before better than all other changing methods to “Czech koruna” is only withdraw from your German bank account a lot at once because of the fee about 5,- Euros at least much more than 160,-€*

Arrived in the dorm we had to show our printed accommodation voucher otherwise you can't get a room. Bad luck that my friend forgot to print it... but they accepted even the electronic version on her own Net-book.

From now on we lived in a huge complex of 7 towers each 7-8 floors of 7 rooms with own shower + toilet and one roommate living with you in the same room. So in each floor 14 people shared only one small kitchen. *with one sink and 2 hotplates*

But that was totally enough for the first time and you could easily make lots of new friends who are all sharing a big thing.

Probably nobody can speak perfect English but you will learn it fast! Try to learn Czech in the same EILC language course and to study for the first time in one of the oldest universities in Europe - the Charles University.

I really have to say that this one month in the “Albertov” language course was one of the best times in my whole life!

We have not only learned Czech and got to know all of the 50 people of the course because of a lot of nice games and tasks.

Every day we had also another special activity!

A Boat trip over the Vltava,

an official welcome meeting in the old town hall with the Mayor of Prague,

private Concerts and meetings with famous Czech people: Violinist “Pavel Šporcl”, Writer “Iva Pekárková”, Artist “David Černý”, Singer and Songwriter “Jarek Nohavica”, Manager of the theatre “Laterna Magica” with backstage tour, Czech Theatre Legend “Jiří Suchý”, Painter “Jiří Anderle”,...

a visit of the beautiful Prague ZOO and his Director.

On the weekends we had City Trips to Český Krumlov, České Budějovice and its brewery „Budweiser Budvar“, Litoměřice with its Bezděz castle,...

And on every Wednesday a private cinema showing and afterwards meeting the actors or author for further questions...

And if it wouldn't be enough, at the end everyone could choose one out of 11 special activities (e.g. canoe trip, wine tasting, Museums, take a look at the historical organ in the Saint Ludmila's church with private organ concert,...)

Then suddenly everything changed, we wrote the exam got the certificate with the points and tried to find a new flat closer to the city center as soon as possible *together with 4 other friends from the course* and not like that from the Hostiva 45 minutes via tram to the center.

And we had been lucky, very lucky....

Because of some friends who found a flat only 10 min. away by foot to the center *with the help of the internet* we got the other flat underneath. Now we had to pay much more for the rent (Total around 9000,-CZK), had to manage some more Czech than English contracts and a strenuous landlady but this was worth the trouble.

From now on we could really feel free to live in Prague and do something in the center whenever we wanted to do without having problems to come back in the night, in contrast to the friends who stayed, we could be much more active and not only staying in the room or on the floor for e.g. drinking.

After some weeks of free time and preparing the apartment "unfortunately without internet connection!! First after that month" my first Semester started and I will soon find out which important detail I have forgotten to do.

One week before the lectures get started everyone can register via internet all subjects they want to and try to get all this subjects managed in the same timetable. And that's exactly! What all Czech students are doing in the first 1-2 days!

So all subjects are full! When you are not fast enough and you have no chance to get inside anymore except of one small trick ...

So when the lectures get started all students can take a look inside and find out if they want to stay or not for exact 2 weeks. After that you can't change anything anymore in your registrations. And that's the trick!

If you really need to sign into some subjects you couldn't get inside! Try it on the last day "the decision day" on Sunday before 12 o'clock in the night.

Suddenly all barriers are gone because lots of the students are disappeared from the course as it was supposed to be for you ;-)

it can give exceptions but all subjects I needed I could get latest like this!

So I got all subjects about Bioinformatics and Biotechnology in English for that I was coming to Prague and even some more interesting, too.

And I had still forgotten one important detail!

But first of all what are these strange numbers? (B5, GAL, CH5, 222, UMG AV R,)

And can I really find with them the right lecture room?

Yes they have a sense but not so easily find out so it took a while till I got all information and decided to make a map of it (see links above)

tip you can find most of them in the SIS under Schedule → Lecture rooms

Now finally I was prepared for my first lectures. So get ready early in the morning and try not to be late while searching all around for the right building and room.

Succeed! I was sitting just in time and all around me I'm hearing everything in Czech. But what's this! The Professor is coming insight and is speaking... Czech!!

Where is my English? What have I done wrong?

The lecture was supposed to be in English or not? Yes I have double checked it!

But I was too shy to ask directly during the lesson so I got a free Czech language course for professions.

"Oh dear! Now I understood." So he described me his dilemma that when there are Czech students who absolutely don't want to change it to English he can't do something now without asking the students for the next time only if he knew it before. So I had two more language courses this day. But with the last lesson I was suddenly very, very lucky ...

The students who have seen me today in the previous lessons *which also heard my dilemma* started to talk to the others of this course and suddenly all! raised their hands. Then it passed through my mind how lucky I was in this moment. They explained me *mercifully in English ;-)* that they voted for me and this lesson will be held in English next time with Czech PowerPoint presentations.

And that was perfect fine for me! With this I could understand everything and even learn a bit more Czech.

Unfortunately I haven't been so lucky with all my lessons. But when it was only in Czech the Professor offered me for every second week a private meeting and will answer all my questions about the topic and his slights. And I didn't need to fear at the end all exams had been in English of course ;-).

Afterwards I was also talking with my friends from the language course about the other Faculties (Law, Music, Theology, European studies, History ...) and for the most other fields of studies Charles University provided special Erasmus courses only in English. In History even some in German. But then also totally without Czech Students and no Czech contact. After this lesson the Czech students even invited me for a beer. So I was the first and only one from our EILC group *for a long time* with real Czech friends because the Students there are all very friendly and talkative but also very shy with their English and don't want to speak with somebody when they are doing mistakes. So I got very good and important information from them.

- That this problem with English lessons is mostly in the biochemistry Faculty. So I shall try to ask for all courses I would like to have if I could have it in English even the Czech ones. And only have email contact long time before to change it in English. They are also planning to change the whole system to have more + a set rate of English lessons and even to change the whole language of the Charles University to English.

lucky I had still my 2nd semester ;-)

- But much more important for me was this information...

That for Biology! much less official internships is provided because the most students are employed for the whole studies in one laboratory, are helping there in the research and get even a small salary for that.

After all that information my second semester went perfect for me.

I had with all Professors from my courses email contact before! And they had been sooo friendly to me that I had even two private lectures.

(Yes a full lecture with English presentation and only me and the teacher)

Oh dear! I have never learned so much before than in these two lectures! But it was also quite hard to answer all questions alone and never miss a lesson otherwise they will probably notice it ;-)

Then! Some nice idea was going through my mind when one Professor could not provide me a biotechnological course because of the fact that I was the only one signed in. So I was asking him via email if he could help me to get a practical work.

Jackpot!

He was the head of one Institute in the Academy of Science. We had a meeting with each other and he gave me directly a place to work.

So suddenly I was employed there for 4 month, I got a research project and was fast integrated in his very friendly research team.

During my whole Erasmus year I was now touring around and visiting several capital cities like Budapest, Berlin, Bratislava and even Rom with the help of my friends abroad. *because of Prague as a capital city and the airline "WizzAir" we got very cheap flights. :-D*

And I really have to say I loved Prague till now most of all not only because of his beautiful castle by night, the great opportunities to have fun and his central location to travel around. But especially for all my great memories I got and can share now with all my friends abroad. I will miss Prague and will definitely come back soon! ;-)