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I had the great opportunity of spending a semester abroad in Madrid. I chose to do Erasmus to meet great people, have loads of fun, improve my language skills and grow personally. The selection fell to Madrid, because I wanted to experience living in a large city, where people speak understandable Spanish. My Erasmus experience was phenomenal, I had the best possible time during these 5 months.

The Universidad Europea de Madrid is, unlike what the name implies, not actually located in the city. It is situated in a small town called Villaviciosa de Odon, which is a 40 minute bus ride away. The bus leaves every ten minutes from the metro station "Principe Pio", so commuting from the city is no problem. I chose to look for a room in an apartment in Madrid, because I wanted to get a feel of living in such a huge and exciting city, which I absolutely enjoyed. Madrid is very lively and has many fun things to offer. Where to live of course depends on one's preferences. Many Erasmus students from Europe lived in Madrid, whereas nearly all students from South America stayed in Villaviciosa. I think both places are fun, Villaviciosa is a real student town and therefore there are mostly student parties at people's houses, whereas in Madrid there is a lot going on and the big clubs to go out. Villaviciosa is generally cheaper to live and the apartments usually a little nicer. If deciding to live in Madrid I would recommend getting there a little in advance in order to search for a place to live and to actually have a look at the rooms in person, since some offered online may be terrible. Area wise I would recommend living close to the center (Sol/Plaza España/Tribunal) or in the student area (Argüelles/Moncloa), however I would avoid living in the southern part of Madrid. Rooms in shared flats can usually be found for prices from 300 - 400 Euros.

The University has a very beautiful Campus, a nice gym (membership for a month ca. 45 Euros), two Cafeterias and nicely equipped computer rooms and libraries. It has a very strong international orientation, accounting for approximately 700 International Students, most of which being from either Mexico, Brazil and Italy. But the UEM also has partnership agreements with nearly every European country. With this many International students it was very chaotic in the beginning. To speak to a coordinator one had to arrange an appointment, at which there was hardly any time to resolve the issues or ask any questions. Also most courses were already full, so there is no guarantee if the desired course will be available. Important is to not get frustrated and try to be flexible when it comes to the schedule. I was very lucky, my earliest class started at 12.30 and the latest went until 8 p.m., while I had Fridays off. Some courses are offered in English, so it is no problem if a student can't speak Spanish. I had some pre-knowledge so I decided to choose nearly all subjects in Spanish. At the beginning it needs some getting used to and lots of concentration, but after a while I was able to follow the class very well. Also teachers are understandable and don't expect a perfect use of language, and the exams are very doable. Spanish students unfortunately mostly keep to themselves, but once I made an effort, I was able to get to know some of them. But mostly the International Students associate amongst themselves, with so many people from abroad, I met loads of people from all over the world and made some very dear friends.

I definitely enjoyed the Spanish way of life a lot. The day generally gets started later than here and

people stay out until very late. Dinner time is not until around 10.30 after which people start heading to the bars and then clubs until the early morning hours.

I also decided to try and travel around Spain a lot. Bus tickets are usually pretty cheap, train rides a lot quicker but also more expensive. I travelled to Valencia, San Sebastian, Salamanca, Segovia, Granada, Ibiza and Lisbon. Each of these places was definitely worth the visit!

I did not require a lot of help from the HTW during my semester abroad, I generally was able to resolve all issues I had at the UEM on my own with the coordinators there. But I was always aware of the fact that I could have asked them anything anytime.

My Erasmus semester was an experience I will never forget and would repeat without hesitation! It is a great way to meet and learn how to approach people with different backgrounds and make international contacts for later in the professional life. Anyone who has the opportunity should undoubtedly grab it and I can also highly recommend choosing Madrid and the UEM!



At UEM



Last Studentparty



Pre-Christmas in Madrid



Mexican Concert at Plaza España



With American Friends