

My Erasmus-semester in Madrid

My name is Domenica Wilhelm and I am studying tourism at the HTW Chur (Tou09a). I am now in my second year of studies and I took the opportunity to go abroad for one semester. The country I wanted to go was Spain, so I had to choose between Barcelona and Madrid. Although Barcelona is a very nice city I took Madrid, mainly because I was afraid to start confuse Catalan and Spanish.

The partner university in Madrid is “Universidad Europea de Madrid”, which is situated outside of Madrid in a nice little town southeast of Madrid. Although it is 40 minutes from the busstation in Madrid to the University I decided to live in the city. I didn't mind going by bus but some people had their problems with this. The buildings of the university are very modern. On the campus are a lot of trees and as well little lake. In the UEM there are a lot of Erasmus students and it was a bit hard to get in touch with Spanish students. But I have to reckon that most of my courses were tough in English and of course most of the students in these courses are Erasmus. What caused a bit of confusion was the enrolment for the courses. Most of the courses taught in English were already full and the coordinators told us to come back several times, then the courses just didn't take place and so on. As well the first couple of weeks were a bit confusing because we didn't really know when the courses start or teachers were still on holidays. But after a while it was all organized. The coordinator from our faculty was always very helpful, when we still had problems. What was a bit sad, is that there was no welcome day for all the Erasmus students to give us information. This definitely something they should do. It would have avoided a lot of problems. In the first week the HTW gave me a good support and helped me to choose the best options for the classes.



As mentioned above I decided to live in Madrid instead of Villaviciosa de Odon. Madrid is a very lively open-minded city and it offers a lot of opportunities. It is a great city to live in. First you have to get used to the Spanish way of life. Especially eating times are quite different to Swiss eating times. And if you decide to go out around eleven, you will be the alone in the club. I really enjoyed going out in Madrid and spending times in the crowded streets.



Now there are only a few days left before I have to go home. Leaving Madrid is very hard for me; I really fell in love with this Spanish way of life. This semester here in Madrid definitely learned me a lot. It is not even something you can measure; it is the experience of another culture, another university, just arriving as a complete stranger and build up a new life. Seeing how things work here and by meeting other people on Erasmus you can learn so much about very different cultures. Of course I could improve my Spanish and my English but I think an Erasmus makes you more open-minded and independent. I think this half a year had a great impact on me and I will take a lot of things with me. I am sure that these experiences will help me in the future.