

Experience Report – ERASMUS in Brno (Czech Republic)

By Luna Nürnberger

lunanuernberger@yahoo.de

1. Host University and the City of Brno

During the final two semesters of my "International Business" degree, I had the opportunity to study at the Brno University of Technology (BUT) in the Czech Republic. I chose this university specifically because it allowed me to specialize in Finance and Financial Markets.

Brno is the second-largest city in the Czech Republic and is a vibrant hub for young people. It is often referred to as the "Silicon Valley" of the Czech Republic due to its high density of tech start-ups and innovation centers. The city itself is incredibly beautiful, surrounded by nature, and offers a perfect blend of historic charm and modern lifestyle.

2. Academic Life and Course Selection

The academic approach at BUT differs significantly from that of FH Trier. The courses are highly practical, and the learning outcome is intense. The typical structure consists of a 2-hour lecture followed by a 2-hour exercise session. While the workload during the semester is higher due to numerous projects, the exam periods are much more relaxed.

Recommended Courses:

- **International Finance:** Deep insights into global markets.
- **Financial Management for Small Companies:** Very practical for future entrepreneurs.
- **Business Intelligence:** Hands-on experience with tools like PowerBI.
- **Strategic Brand Management:** Working on branding strategies for real-life clients.

The practical relevance is exceptional. I gained experience in PowerBI, BPMS modeling, building an e-shop, and creating comprehensive financial plans.

3. Preparation and Application

The application process was entirely online and went very smoothly. BUT is technically very advanced, which made the administrative part easy to handle. As an EU citizen, there isn't much paperwork required. I would just recommend checking if you want to take out additional international health insurance, as the standard European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) provides basic coverage.

4. Accommodation

I stayed at the university dormitory, which I highly recommend. You should apply early, as spots are extremely limited.

- **Cost:** Approximately €200 per month (including utilities).
- **Private Market:** A room in a shared flat (WG) or a private apartment starts at €600 - €700.
- **Life:** The dorm is located right across from the faculty. Since most international students live there, it is the best place to socialize. You usually share a small apartment (bedroom, kitchen, bathroom) with one or two roommates. While sharing a bedroom with a stranger is an adjustment at first, it often leads to "friendships for life."

5. Living Costs and Expenses

- **Rent:** €200 (Dormitory).
- **Laundry:** Approx. €5 for washing and drying.
- **Food:** Grocery prices are slightly higher than in Germany. However, eating out in restaurants and bars is significantly cheaper.
- **Transport:** Public transport and event tickets are very affordable.

Important Note: Due to inflation, the Czech Republic is no longer the "cheap" destination it once was. If you do not get a spot in the dormitory, your total cost of living will likely be equal to or even higher than in Germany.

6. Daily Life and Leisure Activities

My schedule was well-balanced; I even had two days a week completely free in both semesters.

- **Activities:** Brno has a fantastic bar and café culture (the Czech beer is a must!). There are street musicians and markets throughout the year.
- **ESN (Erasmus Student Network):** They organize regular events and trips.
- **Sports:** The university offers various sports programs, and there is a gym nearby.
- **Travel:** Brno's location is unbeatable. You can reach three capitals (Vienna, Prague, and Bratislava) within two hours. Budapest, Krakow, and Dresden are also close by.

7. Benefits and Positive Experiences

The biggest advantage was meeting people from all over the world and making lifelong friends. Professionally, I learned a lot more than I expected due to the project-based teaching. The city's beauty and the affordable nightlife (especially cocktails and beer) made the stay very enjoyable.

8. Challenges and Negative Experiences

One downside was that I did not receive Erasmus funding for my second semester. Additionally, some older locals can be a bit unfriendly or reserved if you don't speak Czech. For vegetarians: Traditional Czech cuisine is very meat-heavy. However, Brno has great options now. I highly recommend "Forky's" (a vegan fast-food chain) and "Vegalite" (which offers vegan versions of traditional Czech dishes).

9. Recommendation for Future Students

If you have to go abroad, definitely choose Brno! You will learn a lot, but you will experience twice as much. It is a part of Europe that many people don't have on their bucket list, but you will be positively surprised by how modern, green, and lively this country is. It was the best decision of my studies!