1 General information

- Kristian Vukadinovic
- Master of Science in Urbanism
- Delft, The Netherlands
- Czech Technical University in Prague, Faculty of Architecture
- Period abroad from 05/02/2015 to 27/06/2015
- Urban Planning design project and electives

2 Preparation and contact with your own faculty

Before going to Prague, I have done some research about the available Erasmus Universities and their cities. I already obtained all my credits at the faculty of architecture in Delft and therefore I had more freedom in picking a University. The city and its student life and the cost of living were important, because I didn't want to lend even more money. Doing this experience meant taking an extra year. I was therefore less strict in choosing a University with a high quality of education. In the end the quality was indeed less than in Delft and I recommend students to pick this university only if it is part of an extra curricular programme or when it is part of a bachelor programme. I went there as a Master student and the master programme resembles a bachelor programme. All the necessary information is provided and you don't need to have any worries when departing. You are welcomed and have introductions and even have an extra week to explore to city.

3 Study programme

Having done the first semester of the master in Delft in the track Urbanism and coming in contact with many international students, it made realise that I wanted to have such an experience as well. Knowing that Delft has a high reputation, I decided to do the experience abroad as an extra curriculum programme. That way I could follow the whole programme in Delft and still be an Erasmus student. I wanted to experience living in a foreign country and gain new knowledge and different working methods. An international career is something that has always interested me and this can be seen as a perfect start.

Looking back, I gained knowledge in how important differences in culture are when working in an international environment and I recommend everybody to experience it as well. The differences in education has also struck me. In Delft you have much more freedom in deciding how to set up your project, especially in the urbanism track. At the CVUT I got the feeling that students could have no opinion sometimes and that the opinion of the tutor was the rule. This really disappointed me, but can be seen as a cultural difference. The working method in Delft is also much more academic and creativity is seen as key and it is achieved many times by giving creative freedom to the students. At the CVUT, the projects are less creative and much more rational. The tutor even has to decide for you how to set up your posters. The overall level of the programme is much lower than in Delft. The level of the studio really depends on which tutor you have, but listening to many other Erasmus students it is sometimes a joke. The Urban Planning studio had a reasonable level, but it was not urban planning it all, it was merely urban design. This and a limited freedom, resulted in I being I had discussions with the tutor about this, but my opinion was not appreciated.

Another thing is that there is no specialisation at the faculty like in Delft. You have one track and within that track you can freely pick a design studio and electives. This way you are not really becoming a master i.e. specialised in a certain field if you have to deal with all these different fields. The set-up resembles a bachelor programme and not a master programme. Also many electives had weekly homework and the homework was sometimes really childish. The university lacks individuality and setting up your own path in life.

Looking back I am really glad that I did this programme as an extra curriculum programme. This way I did not have to miss anything in Delft. When going to Prague I would recommend to do the urban planning elective. It is a lot more work than 2 ECTS, but I learned a lot. The lectures of ecology were also interesting but the exams are too easy. I have chosen the more difficult subjects and challenging subjects but many students have chosen only the easy to obtain courses. This way the quality of your diploma is not really guaranteed. One semester is definitely the right amount to study at this faculty and I would not recommend to study any longer.
4 Funding and prerequisites

The only fund I applied for was the Erasmus fund and I managed to obtain it. Although there is a lot of paperwork, it is not that hard to get the fund. The information is provided and you can get to your destination without any worries. The cost of living is a lot lower than in the Netherlands. Things are on average twice as cheap. Restaurants can be even three to four times more cheap. I never cooked at the dormitory and always just went eating out because of this. Going to the cinema is twice as cheap. Tickets for the theatre and orchestras are also cheap and I recommended seeing their shows. Only the supermarkets and clothes are comparable in price. I applied for an insurance through the TU Delft and my own medical insurance covers the Czech Republic. You can pay with cash almost everywhere and also with a debit card, but still I recommend to take a credit card with you.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td>€ 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td>€ 250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance</strong></td>
<td>€ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local travelling costs</strong></td>
<td>€ 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textbooks/course material</strong></td>
<td>€ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment</strong></td>
<td>€ 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language course</strong></td>
<td>€ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parties</strong></td>
<td>€ 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>€ 685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Accommodation

The accommodation was arranged by the host university. Before arriving to Prague, emails were sent in which you had to give your preference of the many available student dormitories in Prague. I have picked the Masarykova Dormitory, because it was on campus and the facilities were great. After arriving I was glad I had picked it because it was indeed the best dormitory. One of the worst dormitories is Strahov, because it is located far from the campus and it has no facilities in the neighbourhood. Masarykova on the other hand is rather enormous and you are living in an apartment with three rooms. With in total seven people in each apartment. It are small rooms which you have to share, but it is doable because I was almost never in my room. The city is beautiful and there are so many things to do. Sitting in your room therefore is a waste of time. Plus you are never lonely. Coming on your own to an unknown country is a big step in your life. Having many people around you form the start makes it much easier. Therefore I recommend not to rent a private apartment. You are sharing your apartment with all kinds of people, erasmus students, students from outside Europe, national students, and even students that came to do their PhD. There is a relaxing room in the dormitory, a game room with billiard tables, study rooms, common rooms where you can have dinners etc. The apartments were cleaned every week by cleaning ladies and you have the possibility to pick up clean linen, washed and ironed, from the reception every week (which you have to change yourself). The dormitory is not very quiet, because it is really crowded, but there are available study rooms. Plus the university has a great library. Payment was done every month and you have to deliver cash to the reception. Almost everything is done by hand. So a lot of paperwork. Washing machines are located in the dormitory as well. Seven machines in total and you can rent a key for the room for the price of one euro per hour.

![The common room for dinners](image1)

![The rooms in the dormitory](image2)

6 Language and Culture

One of the downsides of the Czech University in Prague is that they have separate programs for national and international students. The national students have their lectures in Czech while the internationals have it in English.
Therefore it is hard to meet any Czech people, because you are completely separated. In the faculty of architecture you are only combined in the design studio. You have the possibility to learn Czech. There are Czech language courses at the university and you will get credits for it (3ECTS). Plus the student organisations also provide language courses. I did not pick any of these courses because for me it was rather useless to learn Czech. I was not planning to stay in the country and outside the country the language becomes rather useless. Plus the people in Prague, especially the young, have a decent level of English. It is not like in The Netherlands, but on the other hand also not as in Spain or Italy. The knowledge of English can be called average. You can manage to live in the city without knowing any Czech. As stated before, coming in contact with local people is rather hard. You will most probably end up having a group (a really large one as well) of international friends from all over the world, who you will meet everywhere. At the faculty, your dormitory, the trips organised, the student organisations and the many parties. Making friends is really easy and it was one of the most valuable things from the university. There are some cultural differences present, also really noticeable at the faculty. Everything is a bit less organised and done less efficiently, printing for example is done by handing in your usb stick. The students have a little voice in the university as well. I am used to students raising their hands and giving feedback to tutors. This is less appreciated.

7 Free time
One of the great things of studying in the Prague is the very low cost of transport. Therefore you have the possibility to make a lot of trips. The students organisations organise trips to cities in Prague but also to Germany and Poland and Hungary. I went to some of them, but many of the trips I have made with the friends I have made. Renting a car for example to Vienna and Budapest. Hitch hiking to Poland and going by bus to cities in The Czech Republic. There are also many thing to do in Prague and the Public. The transport in this city is extraordinary. There are many cinemas, the amount of restaurants is incredible etc. I went to football matches, went a a 4 day ski trip, saw a World Championship Hockey match, go karting for example, played paintball and many other things. Clubbing in the city is also a great plus. There are many weekly international students parties and the price of a half a litre of beer is only one euro. In the beginning we went clubbing 4 times a week and were drunk many times. The night public transport network is also incredible. Many night trams that can bring you home without any additional costs. All included in the ten euros that you will pay for all the public transport for a month.

8 Travelling
The Public Transport in Prague is very good and also really cheap. You will use the metro and trams a lot. The frequency of the transport is also really high. You can go to the outskirts of the city really easy. To stadiums, shopping outlet centres, nature etc. The metro lines pass underneath the old town as well, so you can get easily to the centre. The Campus is only three metro stops away from the centre. Prague is really a safe city so you do not have to be precocious and overly worried about your belongings. A friend of mine left his apple laptop in the touring bus and he could pick it up the next day. Using a bicycle is not recommended in the city. Maybe in the near future they will try to make the city bicycle friendly, but for now it is not.

9 Other
There is a realistic opportunity to find a job at a graduate engineer level in the country. For architects it is a lot harder, but for the others it is really reasonable. I met three people that wanted to stay in the country and they found a job. One guy was from Costa Rica and he managed to find a job as an engineer without even having a master title, because his country does not follow this system. I myself do not see a future in the Czech Republic and therefore am not seeking to find a job there. I would rather go to countries like Germany and England, or do the complete opposite and try China for half a year.
The added value that you will gain is that you will gain a lot of knowledge about culture differences, how other universities are performing and their working methods. You will learn how to manage things on your own, be independent. But you might also appreciate the country where you grown up in more like I do. I have learned that I should be glad that I am studying in Delft.

The experience can be put in one sentence as : An experience that I will remember for the rest of my life, in which I have gained many new friends, learned a lot from all the differences, have done new things almost every week and enriched my life.

My recommendation is to go and do an Erasmus experience, now while you can.