

Saint-Petersburg State University
International Relations Office

EXCHANGE STUDENTS' REPORT

Please complete this form and send it to Scientific and Academic Cooperation/Students Exchange Dept.
nechaeva@ir.pu.ru, fax +7 /812/ 3240788. Thank you.

TO BE FILLED OUT ELECTRONICALLY

The international experience you have gained while the exchange period at St.Petersburg University is the unique practice you will remember all your life. It can also help other students when they are planning for their exchange. To make sure that prospective students have a chance to learn from your experience you are required to submit the **Exchange Students' Report**.

Please complete the form and **return by email to nechaeva@ir.pu.ru**.

When filling in the returned student report try to remember the sort of things that you wanted to know before you went on exchange, be honest in your responses and try to avoid simply giving yes/no answers.

Please do not hesitate to contact Scientific and Academic Cooperation/Students Exchange Dept. staff if there are any issues you would like to discuss regarding your exchange experience.

Name:	Kruglyakova Elena
Home faculty at SPSU	School of International Relations
Exchange Study Period	09.09.2009 - 04.02.2010
Host Institution	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Faculty of Theology)

Do you give permission for prospective exchange students to contact you if they have questions? **Surely**

If yes, please give your preferred email address: e-krugliakova@yandex.ru

The Host Institution

What influenced your decision to select the host institution that you went to?

It wasn't my direct decision, as it was grant committee who gave me an opportunity to go there.

Please describe the location of the host institution.

University is located in rather small medieval town Leuven. It is about 3 km in diameter and you could cycle all the town around in 22 minutes. Leuven is situated in Flanders, 15 minutes by train from Brussels.

Please describe the courses that you took while on exchange. What were their pros and cons?

I took courses which were only in English from two faculties: Theology and Literature.

This is the whole list of my subjects:

Literature, Religion and Art in Europe

Christian Latin

Basic Concepts of Canon Law

Old and New Testament Exegesis: Prophets/Paul

Women Studies Religion and Theology

Religious Topics in Hellenism

Seminar Contemporary Islam.

It is difficult to compare them as all of them, as they widely differed from each other.

How did course content, class size, marking, etc compare with St. Petersburg State University?

I suppose that K.U.Leuven is better electronically equipped than St. Petersburg State University, as there in every class you can find projector, computer and Wi-Fi (everywhere!!!). Also I like round auditoriums, which we don't have on our faculty in St-Petersburg.

Did you find the academic and international office staff helpful?

Yes, indeed. Their work was very efficient, fast and indispensable. They took under control all important questions, tried to solve all problems in the shortest periods. And I'm very grateful to them!

Please describe the resources available to exchange students (i.e. computers, the library).

All resources of the University are available to exchange students, as on the rights of the full member student: libraries, computers, sport-center, free-buses, all sorts of discounts.

Did you experience any language or cultural difficulties at the host institution?

Yes, period of adaptation existed but it was quite short, around a week. I think the only thing to do to avoid it is to speak and communicate more, and more, and more, and not to be afraid.

Do you think that going on exchange contributed to your academic and personal development? If so, how?

Yes. Completely!

Practical

Accommodation

Please describe the accommodation options available to exchange students.

In Leuven exists very useful department of university: Housing Service. It has particularly complete base of all dwelling in rent, in town and in the nearest suburbs. So you can rent room, flat, studio, house, whatever you want, limiting by your finance. For example, I rent a room in university residence. It is the cheapest type of accommodation, by far not the worst!

How expensive were the accommodation options?

Hostel – 17 eu/night
Rooms – 200-250 eu,
Studios – 300-600eu,
Flats – 450-...

What type of accommodation would you recommend?

I'd recommend a room in a residence, as only then you can completely feel the atmosphere of student life. Also you can communicate with people of different cultures in the daily life, direct on your own common kitchen, practicing your international cooking and language abilities.

Food

Did you have self-catering facilities or were meals provided with your accommodation?

In the residence we have got kitchen (as I have already said!), where everyone cook for themselves. Also there are a lot of university canteens ("Alma") around the town, where you can eat for the best price.

Was food expensive?

Cafes and restaurants are more expensive than in St.-Petersburg, even fast food. But I couldn't say the same about food in a shop, naturally it depends on the place where you do your shopping. Nightshops – are the most expensive ones. Prices for products could be in 3 times higher.

Where is the best place to shop?

The best shop, for me, is "Coloryut". Also "Lidle", "Aldi" – food supermarkets. "Blokker", "Vibra" – some other thing for living.

How much does it cost to eat out at a local restaurant/café?

Average bill in:
Alma – 3/4/5 eu,
Turkish cuisine – 5 eu,
MacDonald's – 7 eu
Pizzeria – 10 eu,
Restaurant - 15/20 eu.

Transport

Please describe the local transport options.

All town cycles!!!
Also you receive a free bus-pass.

Was it expensive to use local transport? Please give an example of the costs.

I payed only when I used train.
For example, to go to Brussels costs 5 eu. But if you travel a lot in different directions it is better to take travel-pass. It costs 50 eu. but give you an opportunity to go 10 times around Belgium in every way. (5 eu – for any destination – it is good!)

Personal Safety

Did you find the city in which you stayed safe?

Yes.

Do you have any safety advice for other exchange students?

Do not keep your bicycle unlocked!

Highlights

Briefly describe the highlights of your exchange experience.

All 5 months were unforgettable!

Problems

Briefly describe any problems you experienced and any suggestions you may have to help others avoid them.

I've got a little problem with my id-card. It was preparing during 3 moths (quite long). So if you need your id faster for any purposes you can buy it for 100 eu, and it will be ready in 3 days. It is an official information, and nobody will consider it as bribe.

Other Comments

Do you have any further comments?

Take your time and enjoy the life!

The information given in this Report CAN BE PUBLISHED on the Internet _____yes_____

Thank you for taking the time to share your exchange experiences in this report.

Please save your report as a **Word document** and email a copy to nechaeva@ir.pu.ru

Date: 15/02/2010

Name: Elena

The idea and the model of this form is taken from the University of South Australia web pages.