Dear Mr. Ducatelli,

I am a double-degree master student in IT law at Leibniz University Hanover. As an obligation of the program that I enrolled, I spent my second semester at the University of Oslo. When I graduate, I will have two LLM degrees: one from Leibniz University and one from the University of Oslo. In this report I will write about my experience in Norway with sub-titles.

A. THE LAW FACULTY

a. The Teaching Quality

I had three courses in the exchange semester which were all compulsory for the master program: E-Commerce Law, Data Protection Law and Cybersecurity Law. E-Commerce and Cybersecurity Law courses were new for me. We had two lecturers. One of them gave both E-Commerce and Cybersecurity Law courses.

I find only the Data Protection Law course well-structured and rich in content. The E-Commerce and Cybersecurity Law courses included different topics in the program but the teaching quality was poor. The lecturer mostly outsourced his classes to assistants, academicians or people from industry. This may sound like a nice idea but not every lecturer was good at giving lectures. Therefore, this application disrupted our learning process.

Especially in E-Commerce Law course the professor could not give a proper answer to my question about an assignment that we had to write. When I asked him what he was expecting from us for the assignment and which aspects of the topic he wanted us to mention, he told me that he was not the one who gave the topic and was not going to read our papers. Even though, he was the professor of the lecture, in my opinion, he was not caring about the course.

b. Academic Events

The Norwegian Research Center for Computer Law (NRCCL) is the second-oldest institution in the world for computer law. Despite its reputation I could only see one academic event during the semester.

(Please be aware that I am speaking of only this institute. The other law institutes were more active than ours).

c. Student Associations of the Faculty

If you check the website for student associations, you will see many associations related to law. They maybe be many in quantity, but they are bad in quality. Some of them are inactive. When I talked to the active ones and asked what they were doing, the only answer that I got was “We have a cabin in the mountains. We organize trips there. We also organize parties during the buddy week”. They did not mention any single academic event and stated that they do not organize academic/professional events.
B. STUDENT LIFE

The student life is organized by a private entity which is called “SiO”. It offers accommodations in student villages, gym facilities, student cafés and canteens, health services, student associations and laundries. Therefore, the student life in general is well-organized.

The only problem that we had was that they were offering services with high prices. For example, the food and beverages (including coffee) were overpriced in student cafés and canteens and poor in quality. Not only me but local students as well, we were complaining about SiO’s price policy.

a. Health Insurance

In SiO’s health centers, I always paid money and for some reason they did not ask my EU-Insurance Card. One of the friends whom I went with to Oslo told me that their card reader cannot read our cards. Another friend of mine (again from our group) went to a SiO doctor for an ear infection. The doctor asked her to go to a hospital and see an ear specialist. In that hospital, she was told to call the German insurance company to make an appointment, otherwise she had to pay more than 1000 krona for a single appointment. The German insurance company told her that they cannot make any appointment abroad.

There are definitely problems regarding health insurance for EU Insurance Card holders.

C. LIBRARIES

The thing that I liked the most about Oslo was the libraries. The libraries were big and rich. The databases that we could reach in English were many! Also, the physical books that I could find were many too. I could use three different libraries: a general big library, the library of the law faculty and the library of NRCCL.

D. THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN OSLO

Oslo is extremely expensive! It was a very hard journey for me. I had to spend money only to survive. I think that one can live here by spending 800 or 900 € per month but that life would be really basic and lack of social life. Indeed, the expensiveness of life pushed me not to expand my social circle. As you can imagine, once you meet new people, you want to maintain those contacts. To do that you must be willing to go outside and spend money. So, not to run out of money, I had to run out of new contacts. Although I could join some free and discounted meetups and events, I believe that I could benefit more from the social life in Oslo if it was not that expensive.

The Erasmus grants for Norway (or at least Oslo, because it is one of the most expensive cities in the world) must be higher than 300 € per month, if the participation of students to social life is aimed.
Against this argument, one can argue that working in a part-time job might be a solution. However, finding a part-time job is a hassle especially for exchange students. Many employers require a good level of Norwegian even for student jobs. Also, the citizens of non-EU countries cannot work until they get a residence permit which takes approximately 2 months to be issued. Still, the biggest problem is the language barrier.

E. CONCLUSION

All in all, I believe that I had a pretty isolated life in Oslo. I did not experience many things as I expected, and I did not benefit from many things as I imagined before I went there. However, I think that at least I could see the difference between a non EU-country and EU countries and understand a bit more what actually the European Union is and what it brings.

Best Regards,

Esen ESENER

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