
Travel Report - Exchange studies in Hungary

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Degree program: Environmental engineering

Semester: Autumn 2010

School: Szechenyi Istvan University, Győr

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Szechenyi Istvan University	3
3. Dormitory and campus life	4
4. Living in Hungary	8
5. Food.....	8
6. Studies.....	9
7. People in Győr	10
8. Travelling/Leisure time.....	11
9. Friends.....	12

1. Introduction

Since I started my studies in Teku I wanted to study abroad. In the beginning of 2010 I went to speak with international studies coordinator Laila Seppänen about my changes to study abroad. She was helpful and encouraged me. She told me about different kind of possibilities and countries to study. Erasmus studying seemed the easiest and the best way to study abroad. I wanted to study in English and Laila gave me the list about the universities where it's possible. Among those universities I chose Szechenyi Istvan University in Hungary. The University is located in Southern Hungary city called Győr. Map of the area in picture 6. In spring we send my application to the university and on June I received positive answer. I went to Győr in the beginning of September.

2. Szechenyi Istvan University

Szechenyi Istvan University Campus is located by the river Danube. Surroundings are really beautiful. There are about 12000 students in the university. The Campus is compact and familiar. Though buildings were old everything worked well. I really liked the campus. There were everything close: class rooms, restaurants, bars etc.

In Szechenyi Istvan University there is possible to study in different fields of study. For example law, economics, engineering and arts. I was studying in faculty of engineering. The department was environmental engineering. The structure of engineering studies in the university was a little bit different than in Teku. A local student has to study at least five years before graduating. There were also differences between courses that they have to take.

The main buildings of the university are located in the center of the campus. There are classrooms, auditoriums, laboratories, library etc. There were also some buildings of university around the city. Some buildings from the campus in picture 1.



Picture 1. Buildings from the campus.

3. Dormitory and campus life

Dormitory were in the campus area. There were living about 700 students in the dormitory. There is huge difference between standard of living with Finnish and Hungarian students as I learned to know. Rooms are connected to the next room with bathroom. In every room there are living three students. So in one “flat” there are living six persons.

In the beginning of exchange period I was a little bit terrified with the small room and three young men living there. I thought that my roommates will lose their nerves with me or vice versa. But as I got to know my roommates my fear was vanished. I got the best roommates ever. Turkish guy Kenan and Georgian guy Levani. We really understood each other. I and my roommates are posing in picture 2.



Picture 2. Kenan, Levani and I.

We shared our bathroom with our neighbors, Hector and Miguel. They are Spanish. I spend lot of time with those two boys. I learned a lot from them. Their mentality about the life is interesting and different than mine. Me, Miguel and Hector in picture 3.



Picture 3. Miguel, Hector and me.

All Erasmus student`s flats were in the same corridor. That was really good. Because it was easy to get know with everybody. We were close group. There were students all over the Europe (Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, Spain, Italy, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, Portugal and Poland). Every day I met the most of the people. I learned lot of things about different culture and habits. Every once in a while we used to have a national dinner in dormitory common kitchen. Everybody had a change to make their traditional food for other students. I cooked makaronilaatikko and minttukaakao. Minttukaakao was huge success. In picture 4. there are our Erasmus group having a house party in my room.



Picture 4. Erasmus group.

Almost every day we went together with friends to have lunch in restaurant called Daniel`s. The restaurant served traditional Hungarian dishes with cheap prices. The visit in Daniel`s was always one of the high points of the day. Every day they had something different. Before the meal they served some delicious soup. Every time I got my stomach full there.

The heart of the campus for the students was Aquarium. It is a bar where students can spend time between lessons and in the evenings. It is really nice and special place. Service was always friendly and the personnel are funny and nice people. Aquarium was our place to spend time. There were change to play table football and darts or only just hung around and chat with other students. It was interesting to realize that students could

take a beer between the lessons and it wasn't a big deal. I wonder how it would work in Teku?

Wednesday night was the party night in the campus. One of the lunch halls turned out disco during the night. There were also two other discos in the campus. Lot of students went to party on Wednesdays. It was good opportunity to make contacts with local people and have fun. I had really nice and crazy nights there.

As I mentioned the surroundings of the campus was beautiful. It was possible to jog or make long walks. There were two sport halls in the campus. During the semester there were football tournament in the university. There were student teams playing. We had also our Erasmus team. We were invincible. Our Portuguese players were amazing with the ball.

As a whole the life in the campus were enjoyable and easy. I think that kind of campus is very good way to organize students living. Everything is near and it's easy to make friends with other students.

4. Living in Hungary

Standard of living in Hungary is lower than in Finland. Rent that I pay there was about 80 €/month. Food in shop is 2/3 from prices in Finland. Prices in restaurants are about half from prices in Finland. Spending night in pub or club is way cheaper than in Finland. Glass of wine is cheaper than mug of tea and bottle of beer is about one euro. Clubs in Hungary were also much cooler than in Finland. It's possible to find special and unique places and have unforgettable evenings. Good example is one nice "club" in Győr. In daytime it's a little cinema and cafeteria. In some evenings it transforms to really nice club. There are all kind of music played. I experienced there rock concert, normal dance music, some fast electro music, crazy folk music party etc.

Other common services that I need to use in Győr worked well. I had doctor, copy shop and laundry room in the dormitory. There was also 24 hours security in the main entrance of the building so I felt safe. Pharmacy and all kind of shops were near of campus.

5. Food

Hungarian food is really interesting and delicious. There is used a lot of chicken, pork and beef in Hungarian kitchen. Paprika is also very normal in Hungarian dishes. My favorite dishes were all kind of soups (I think that they have over 100 different soups) and stews. Their way of use paprika is really nice. Sometimes it is sweet and other time really spicy.

6. Studies

My supervisor in Szeged Istvan University was Marta Meszaros. She introduced us to the studies and helped with everyday life problems.

I had six courses during the semester:

- Hungarian language course
- English course
- Europe`s Environment
- Environmental Information Systems
- Environmental Assessment and Management
- Hungarian Folks Dance

Language courses were nice and educative. In Hungarian language course we only studied basic phrases and vocabulary and it was only for Erasmus students. I also got know lots of things about Hungarian culture. The purpose of English course was to improve verbal skills. I held a short presentation and we made conversations with other students in lessons. The teacher was Canadian and we spoke only English in lessons. The course was for the local students and exchange students.

I had three courses from my own degree program: Europe`s Environment, Environmental Information Systems, Environmental Assessment and Management. The courses were intensive. There were only two students in those courses, me and Estonian girl Mari-Liis. She studies environmental engineering in Tallinn technical university. We got private teaching from professors. I learned some useful knowledge within those courses.

In Environmental Information Systems course we studied some cartography. We had a little bit of theory of cartography, some computer software`s and practical training in campus area. In the end of the course we had an exam.

Our main task in Europe`s Environmental course was to write an essay about State of Europe`s Environment report. It is publication of European Environmental Agency. I wrote an essay about one chapter of it; biodiversity.

Our professor in Environmental Assessment and Management course was the head of the faculty. He taught us some theory of environmental management and assessment. I had to make an project about how different ways of transportation effect to the Hungary`s and Europe`s environment.

The Hungarian Folks Dance course was the most special for me. Dancing was totally new subject. There were five Erasmus students and others were local in the course. We

practiced the basic moves and trained for the performance which we had in the end of the course. In picture 5. our dance group.



Picture 5. Our Folks dance group.

All in all studying in Széchenyi Istvan University was pleasant. It was a little bit pity that I didn't have a chance to study in bigger groups with local students.

7. People in Győr

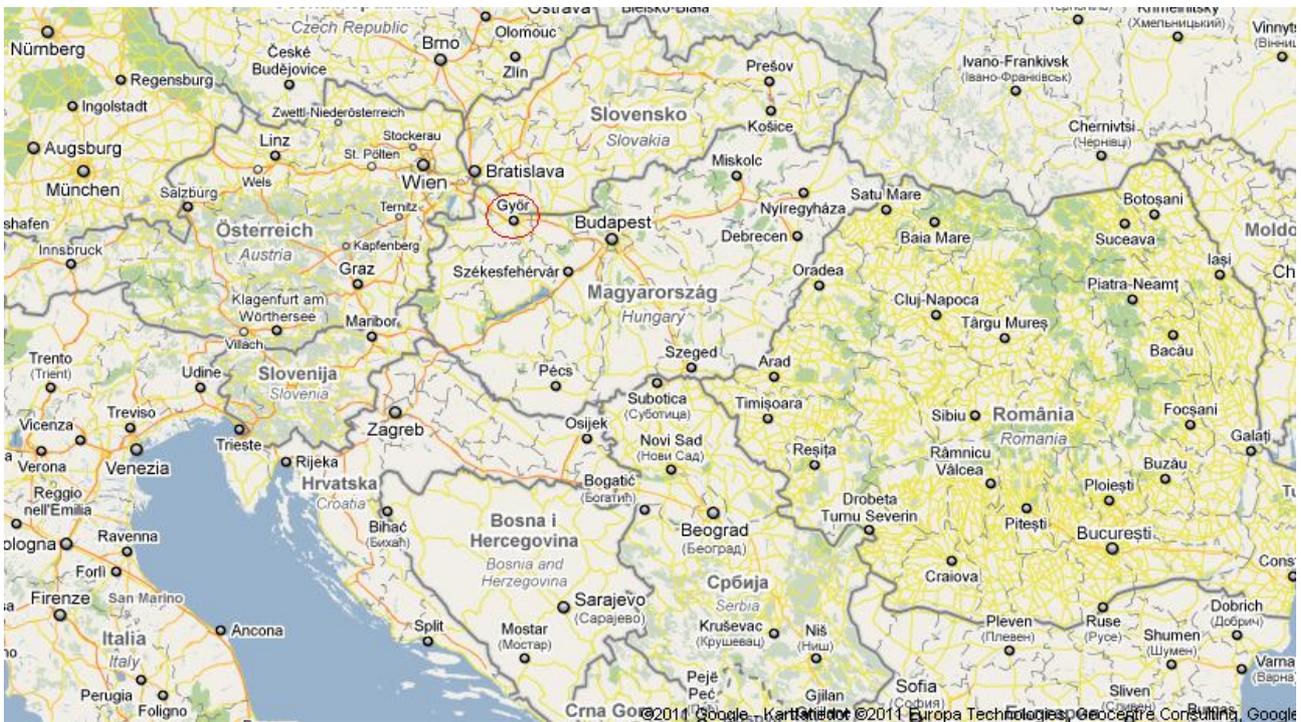
Most of the people in Győr were friendly. People in Hungary are quite similar than in Finland. Maybe they are a little bit easier to get know. But all in all they are calm and helpful. I got some Hungarian friends during my stay in Győr and I think that we will meet again.

8. Travelling/Leisure time

I had a lot of leisure time during my stay in Hungary. I spend my time mostly with friends. We cooked together, played some sports, played table football or darts in Aquarium etc. I also liked to wander around the city or walk in the forest.

Győr is located in the center of Europe. That's why it is easy to travel to different countries from there. Hungary has seven neighbors: Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Austria, and Serbia. I visited Slovakia, Austria and Slovenia (picture 6.). It's easy to take a bus/train or rent a car and cross the border. I also made a little round trip in Milan and Paris. Ryanair operates from Bratislava so it is cheap to go all around Europe from there.

I visit a couple of places in Hungary. Three times I was in Balaton lake. In September we had with our group a camp there. There were Erasmus students all around Hungary. It was an unforgettable weekend. I visited Budapest several times and two times I visited Pecs. Pecs was European cultural capital 2010.



Picture 6. map of the area.

9. Friends

As I already mentioned we had a tight Erasmus group in Győr. There were approximately 30 exchange students. I really enjoyed spending time with the people. It was interesting to spend time with them because all of us have different roots and habits. I learned different life-styles and got my mind more open. I got there some long lasting friendships.