

EMMIR university of Stavanger SoSe23

I am a student in the Master's program European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations - EMMIR. In this Master's, mobility is a mandatory part of the program, and the second semester was spent at the University of Stavanger (UIS), Norway. Because I went to my home country – Portugal – to spend Christmas, I opted out for traveling by airplane, due to the far distance from Norway.

In Stavanger, I stayed in student housing, which was really a good option to help manage my finances, since Norway is a very expensive country. In the dormitories there were residents from very different cultures, which made my staying there a good chance to meet and interact with people from different backgrounds, learn about them and how things are in their home countries. Perhaps the most difficult aspect that required some adaptation was the lack of daylight during wintertime. In January, there were only six to seven hours of daylight. Combining that with the fact that it was the beginning of my staying in Norway, it required some mental control in order not to feel depressed.

The learning environment at UIS was very healthy. Teachers were able to break barriers with students and engage them in a meaningful exchange of ideas. Teachers invited students from EMMIR to their house to have dinner, and also for barbecues at the university. A considerable number of classes were given by invited experts in specific areas of knowledge within our field of studies, which was an added value to our academic experience in Stavanger. Apart from the traditional classes in the classroom, the classes also consisted in visits to museums, going to the cinema to watch movies related to migration and intercultural relations, recording podcasts, and going to Coffee Around the World. Coffee Around the World was a weekly activity in the UIS which consisted of a person or more making a presentation about their country, accompanied by free coffee.



Other activity that had place a few times where organized dinners with food from a specific country. In the picture, our colleagues from Lebanon invited 20 people and cooked food from her country, with sponsorship from the UIS.



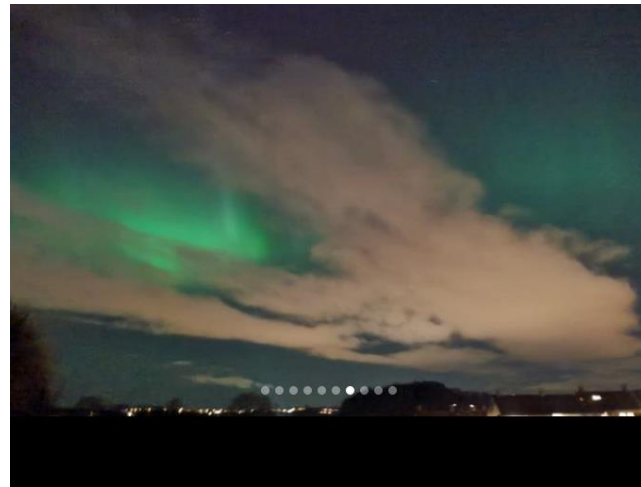
As a student worker, I did not have as much time as I would like for leisure time. Nonetheless, I still found time for social events. The most common would be to go to each other's dormitories and cook something together.



Hiking in Norway was also a very good option for the weekend. I also had the opportunity to travel around the country and enjoy the magnificent view from the fjords.



I and my colleagues planned a trip to Tromso to see the Northern Lights, but we ended up giving up because of the high cost of the trip. Fortunately, we were lucky enough to see the Northern Lights three times during our stay in Stavanger.



I and my colleagues were also able to do some trips to the Scandinavian and Baltic countries, which was a great opportunity to get to know countries that I seldom hear about.

I wish I would had had more opportunities to interact with locals in deeper ways. The fact that I work full time did not leave much time to get involved in local activities. But I do advise future Erasmus students to do so.