

## Student experience

Host University: University of Nova Gorica, Nova Gorica, Slovenia

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### ➤ Preparation (planning, organisation, and application to the host institution)

Students of the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR) are free to decide their last semester for the thesis writing. I spent one semester at the University of Nova Gorica (UNG) in Slovenia for the 2020's winter semester. Because my thesis supervisor is based in Slovenia, I decided to extend my stay there for one more semester. Since I was already enrolled as a student in UNG in 2020, I didn't need to enroll again for the extended semester.

### ➤ Travel and arrival

Due to the Covid situation, I went to Slovenia by car. It is also possible to go there from Germany by bus or train, which will take you directly to the city center. For the bus running inside Ljubljana, you must buy a card called *Urbana*, which is sold at the main bus station or the tourist center. It is necessary to have this card for the bus since they do not sell any single ticket neither on the machine nor on the bus.

### ➤ Accommodation

During my study, I stayed in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, since I took classes in the research center in Ljubljana instead of in the UNG. Finding accommodation in Ljubljana was a little bit hard at the beginning because of the large number of students and the high price. I would suggest contacting the Erasmus student group in Ljubljana once you decide to study there. They will provide you a list of accommodations. Contacting the landlord or student dorm as early as possible since those options with the affordable price might be taken immediately. You might also try to negotiate with the landlord in Airbnb or a hostel. I found the accommodation in a hostel, which cost 300 euros per month (all bills are included). The hostel staffs were very helpful and friendly. It might also be an option to stay in the hostel at the beginning and then find the accommodation later.

- Studying at the host university (courses, academic performance/credits, support, credit transfer)

This semester, I do not have any classes. This semester is more like individual work since I need to finish my master's thesis. Although I do not have a class, I still receive support from the host university. My thesis supervisor is always willing to give advice. And the administrative coordinator is also very helpful.

- Everyday life and leisure time

Being a student in Slovenia, the best thing is you can get a food subsidy in plenty of restaurants. The student meals system (we always call it Boni) provides you 22 coupons every month. It might take some time for the registration at the beginning. For those having a Slovenian SIM card, it is much easier. The procedure is to register online and go to the student office at Pivovarniška Ulica 6, 1000 Ljubljana. In the student office, the staff will check your ID, and then ask you to dial a number. Once it is connected, you can enjoy the student meal coupon. My friend and I took more time to finish the procedure since we do not have a Slovenian SIM card. For international students, I would suggest going to the international student office first, which is close to the



student office. In there, you can get a Slovenian SIM card for free. The staffs are willing to help you with everything. I am not sure whether it is necessary to have a Slovenian SIM card or not. According to the staff and some friend studied in Slovenia before, they both said it is not

mandatory. However, all my friends with German SIM cards could not finish the procedure with our German number, we had to ask for the Slovenian SIM card from the international student office. After the registration, you just need to download an

APP called *Prehrana*. When you order in the restaurant that offers student meals, they will have a machine specifically used for *Boni*. You have to call the machine with your APP. Once they receive your information, they will ask you to show ID and then you should be fine to enjoy your student meal :) The best thing about *Boni* is there are plenty of options. Some restaurants also provide *Boni* meals for delivery service.

- General experience, credit transfer, conclusion (tips for other students, DOs and DONTs)

In general, I have had a good time in Slovenia. Most people in Ljubliana speak English so I do not have any trouble communicating. Since Ljubliana is a city full of students, it is easy to find interesting activities for a student at a cheap price or even for free! Erasmus Ljubliana will share information on their Facebook page. I joined several activities and met students from other countries. It is a pity that I do not have much time to enjoy the country since the first semester the whole country was in lockdown due to the Covid outbreak and the second semester I am focusing on writing my thesis. But overall, I will recommend Slovenia for natural beauty and diverse life.

Another good thing about Ljubliana is its location. It's easy to visit the surrounding countries, for instance, Italy, Austria, Croatia. I went to Italy once with my classmate. From Ljubliana, there's a direct train to Trieste. We took the earliest train there and stayed there until the afternoon. In the afternoon, we took another train to Venice. If you are based in Ljubliana, it is a nice idea to spend the weekend in Italy.



Besides, Slovenia has an amazing nature view, which is worth to explore. There are many places for hiking and enjoying the nature. Driving a car might be more convenient,

but some places are reachable via public transportation. For instance, this is the picture I took in Smlednik, which is not far from Ljubliana (around 25mins by car). There are many things to see in the region, such as the nice river view or an old castle on top of the mountain.



**View from Smlednik Castle**

Another option is the Rašica, which is ideal for hiking. There is one bus directly go to Rašica from Ljubliana's city center. In Rašica, there is a viewing tower. The route is very beginner-friendly, which might take 1-2 hours to reach the top of the mountain. When I was there, the ground was very muddy, which took much time for us to hike. Around the viewing tower, there is a house selling food and drinks, which is a place to take some rest before climbing the tower.



**View from Rašica**