Personal report on ERASMUS in Kalmar, Sweden 2017

When I heard about ERASMUS, a lot of people told me that they had a lot to do with all the other ERASMUS students and less with the local people of the country. So I thought that is always a matter of attitude and I will try harder and get more in touch with the Swedish people.

In the end, it turned out to be quite exactly what people told me before: my semester in Sweden was in total a rather international experience than one about the country I actually stayed in. However, this was emphasized through the fact that I had mostly distance courses with only up to three people sitting in the lecture and the others staying in different cities. Also, there were basically no “mixing” events of international and local students. However, the times when I actually got in contact with Swedes I made the experience that the people were very friendly and polite and once you “break the ice” you get really open-minded conversations and we had a lot fun! The times where I actually came in closer contact with Swedish people were while doing sports and coincidental meetings at the university that led to having “fika” (Swedish coffee that can be taken at any time of the day). However, even though we didn’t have much to do with the Swedes, we were very lucky with the international group!

I also tried to practice the language which I had learned in Germany already. This turned out to be difficult since I didn’t talk so much with Swedish people and if they always spoke English with us. What helped me was that I had the lecture of the second period in Swedish! It was hard to understand everything but I am glad that I had the opportunity to follow the course in the original language!

The experiences I had during the lectures were also very interesting because the focus was different from my German courses and I learned a lot!

Walking on a frozen river in Abisko National Park

One of the most beautiful experiences was definitely the trip to Lapland!! Even though it was a guided tour and we had only four days, I am super happy that we travelled there and
experienced this part of the country a little! We did all the cliché stuff – watching the Northern lights, riding snowmobiles and going into the water at -15°C. A personal highlight was when I went on a small hike while the others went to Norway for one day. I included a picture although it can’t express what you feel while walking on a frozen river. ;)

Additionally the countryside in Kalmar is truly beautiful, too, and I had great times just walking or cycling around Kalmar and enjoying the nice weather. We had bonfires at the beach, played games and talked nights through. I didn’t know before that Kalmar is such a beautiful place with very nice weather in summer, it has even been voted the “summer city” of Sweden this year again. Walking on the ice in winter and jumping into the sea in summer and watching sunsets or sunrises in the sea will always be a big part of my memory of our stay in Kalmar.

I lived together with Swedish people and people from our ERASMUS group as well as people from USA which was also a very nice experience for all of us!
I already visited two of the friends I made there and I am optimistic that we will stay in contact which makes me very grateful!

So even though I have not experienced so much about the country itself, I can say that it was one of the most important experiences in my life and it will help me in the future through conversations I had and as a result being more open minded and knowing people all over the world!

In the end, I think it also depends a lot on the people you are with during your stay abroad but I also think that in most cases you will find a lot of people you will find interesting and even call friends after finishing the semester! All in all it was a very important half a year of my life where I met a whole lot of new people and learned a lot about other cultures and made friends in many different countries!