



**ERASMUS IN MILAN, ITALY
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POLITECNICO DI MILANO**

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Introduction

My name is Kawun Ghawsi, 22 years old, and I am a third year 'Architectural technology and construction management' student from KEA University in Copenhagen. On my fifth semester I went to Milan to spend almost 5 incredible months at Politecnico di Milano as an Erasmus student. Why did I choose to go abroad? – I wanted to challenge myself, get out of my comfort zone and broaden my horizon, not only socially and culturally but also professionally. To improve and expand my knowledge and obtaining new tools that could be useful in the Danish industry, but also to give myself the opportunity to grow and be shaped as a person. In this report I will share some of my reflections and experiences on my Erasmus program in Italy. I will also try to give a view of the life, Politecnico di Milano, studying and the culture.

Profession experiences

The Politecnico Universities of Milan are the largest technical university in the whole of Italy. It carries around 40.000 students and was founded in 1863, which makes it the oldest university in Milan. The Politecnico consists mainly of two main campuses, Bovisa and Leonardo.

At the beginning of your stay the university offers you the opportunity to choose your courses according to interests and preferences. I ended up with the following courses: Building technology studio, Urban planning, History of architecture and Heritage preservation fundamentals.

Even though this process sounds very lucrative, I can assure that it is very stressful and can end up being not fulfilling at all. The university offers a very limited amount of courses in English and even more limited spots for these courses. So as a non-Italian-speaking student you should be prepared for the possibility of you ending up with an Italian course, which much likely would be one of your biggest courses, Studios. In the beginning I ended up having my studio subject in Italian, but luckily managed to find a free spot in the English version. Beware that the administrative office can't or won't do anything to help you with this problem if it should occur. This can give the students a very chaotic start and is definitely one of my bigger concerns and critiques of the school.

But it is definitely not all critique and negativity. After a short period of time you get used to the slightly chaotic administration and figure your own ways around – and that's when it gets fun! The school and its surroundings are super cool and gives you every opportunity to grab a beer and chill after or in-between classes. The Leonardo piazza is always lively with plenty of opportunities to grab some cheap street food and maybe a Spritz. Leonardo, indeed a very beautiful campus with a great feeling of Italy!

The courses were quite different compared to back home, very theoretically, except for the studio which worked more as a workshop and by far the subject that craves the most time. The teachers are very helpful with guiding your projects to the right directions, and with the different deadlines provided by the professors, they definitely make sure that you don't fall behind or out of track. The professors are also very good at making small "out of the house" trips to different museums,



sites, landmarks and even different cities which makes the more theoretical courses more interesting and understandable.

During this semester I've improved not only my linguistic skills, but also my learning skills and working together with people with different backgrounds and cultures, giving me a different point of view on projects and the daily life.

Cultural and social experiences

By participating in the Erasmus program in Milan I got the chance to experience and interact with a whole new culture and surroundings, and get to know one of the best cities of Europe.

At first glimpse Milan can seem like 'not that special' city, but when you scratch the surface and find the hidden gems, you will truly understand the beauty of the city – even till this day I keep

discovering places that amazes me. Milan is a very fashionable and lively city with impressive architecture, amazing food, great nightlife and beautiful culture, all which can be reached very easy with the public transport system. The people are very enjoyable and will always try to help even though English isn't the best of their skills. There is always happening something in Milan, either musically or culturally. The city of Milan frequently puts aside whole weeks for design, architecture, food and much more. Especially the Design Week here was a very memorable week with good weather, loads of great exhibitions throughout the city (which are free) and amazing parties.



Also the geographical location of Milan is very favorable, giving you the opportunity to easily visit other parts of Italy such as, Como, Turin, Bologna, Genova, Verona, Florence and more , and bonding more with culture and the country. Trips can easily and cheaply be arranged using the Italian interrail system, and is a great opportunity to use your weekends in different environments.

Practical experience

Milan is a very coveted city, not only for tourists by also for students and workers. Therefore finding accommodation in Milan can be very hard and expensive. Approximately 2 months before arriving I had the chance to find a big room only 10 minutes away from Leonardo campus, paying 650€ a month through housinganywhere.com. But not everyone was this lucky. Some people even had problems finding accommodation in the very outskirts of Milan, forcing them to rent extremely expensive Airbnb's or live at hostels. So my recommendation is to be out in good time and not being afraid of living a bit far from school, cause with a metro card, for only 20€ a month, every part of the city is easily accessible.

Although Milan is a city of high standards and expensive accommodation, the cost of living is quite similar to northern Europe. It is very possible to buy the everyday groceries and supplies you need

without having to limit yourself. Also there is plenty of opportunities to try traditional cuisines and events at very low prices.



Conclusion

Looking back, taking an Erasmus program in Milan was definitely one of the best choices I have ever made. The program gave me a lot of tools and the opportunity to experience myself in a different university, culture and society. But most important, it gave me connections, relations and friendships which I would appreciate for life!

I would like to give a big thanks and show my appreciation to Erasmus, the university and to everyone that made it possible. Definitely a once in a lifetime experience that everyone should try at least once in their studying period.