

## ERASMUS Final Report (WS I3)

### Ms.c. Organic Agriculture and Food Systems

First, I would like to say thank you to my home university, Hohenheim University, for that I had a chance to go to Copenhagen University for an exchange semester. It was very valuable experience on my academic development as well as my personal improvement to go one step further on my future.

Below, I write about my specific study life in Copenhagen University for 1 semester and try to give practical information.

#### **1. Preparation – planning, organisation and application at the guest university**

For preparation, it was very important to find a proper university which can offer interesting courses that fits to my studying direction. I am majored in Organic Agriculture and Food Systems in Hohenheim, and I wanted to more focus on Food Science part so that I can be a specialist on food product development in Organic Food industry. For that reason, I chose Copenhagen University and two other universities which are well-known for Food Science or Food Technology. After deciding the directions for studying and career, it was also clear for me to write the motivation letter for an application.

Also, I strongly recommend to look for the courses from the university websites, and reflect those information when choose the exchange university. From my experience, it was important to enjoy the lectures and be able to follow the different education style during exchange semester. Particularly, in Copenhagen University, the lecture style was quite different, which was very interactive between lecturers and students and discuss many different fields. In all lectures I had the project work which was considered very important and examination styles were also quite various. Considering specific module plan and examination types will be a good way to decide the right university and those are informed already on module-catalogues.

#### **2. Accommodation**

I was provided a small studio from the university which costs 800 euro per month including everything. It is one of the most expensive ones among the student residence, but I decided to take it because it was almost impossible to find other room by myself. For winter semester, there are many new students than summer semester, so it is very hard to find a good one which is close to university and has a nice condition. Although it was very costly, I am satisfied with my former place (Nordre Fasanvej Kolligiert) from the university because it was only 8 minutes from school by bike and it was also close from the city centre so that I had much better quality of life for last 6 months. However, Copenhagen University also offer the shared-flat and it costs around 500-600 euro per month and I assume that it is

reasonable price compared to the normal rental price in Copenhagen. One of the most important things that should be considered when looking for a room in Copenhagen is the distance, whether it is possible to ride a bike to school since the public transportation is very expensive. Also, sometimes the toilet and bathroom are separated from the flat, for example it is possible that they are in the basement, so that it should be also counted.

### **3. Studying at the guest university**

In general, I am very much satisfied with my academic results. I have acquired lots of knowledge that I had desired and also learned a lot by doing the small research work in a group or project work with the support from the companies. It was very nice combination of theoretical information gain through the lecture and practical experiences through solving the problems by ourselves.

Copenhagen University offers the courses within two-block system in one semester, and normally one block lasts two and a half months with 1 or 2 modules. One module takes 7.5 ECTS and there are also thematic courses which take 15 ECTS.

I took a thematic course "Gastronomy and Health" in first block and "Bioactive Components and Health" and "Sensory and Consumer Science" in second block.

The first module "Gastronomy and Health" was a special one as the last sum-up module for the Master students in 'Gastronomie Science'. From the module, the normal lectures about Food Chemistry, Sensory Science, Consumer Behavior and Choice, and Business Model Generations were provided, and 10 kitchen exercises under the professional chef's supervising was conducted. After 1 month of lecture period, all students were doing the project work to develop own food products with supports from the companies or public institutes. It was very demanding and time-consuming work because we had to work a lot in the kitchen and do our own consumer test and build the business model for the products. However, I had learned significantly a lot in many topics by doing myself not only about the knowledge but also about the specific way to analyze the data or running the sensory software. It was one of the best courses I have ever taken and I had so much fun with the hard-working time. Also, it was nice chance to get along with other internationals and Danish students.

For the second block, it was more theoretical lectures but combined with many exercises that I could learn about how it is applied in the legal authorization or industry. Also the project works were given in both modules. Since it is team work, it was very important to communicate with the students from different backgrounds and cultures, and sum-up with one voice.

In Copenhagen University, the basic textbook is a very thick book containing many lecture-related articles, and it is not necessary to read them all but it is recommended to read. In some modules, it was essential to read those articles to prepare the exams. Normally one single lecture a day suggest 2-3 articles, therefore the workload was very high during the lecture period that I had to read at least two articles daily during the week. It was not easy to organize my time schedule for doing

project work and reading the suggested articles, however, I have learned a lot through reading the most articles in my whole studying time and I strongly recommend following the suggestions.

Generally, the number of students in the lecture was around 20, so the communication between professors and students were very active and also among students. Also, it is very multicultural. About half of the students in one class were international. Lectures include many discussions which make students to think and criticize, which I found it very interesting and helpful to broaden my thoughts.

#### **4. Everyday life and leisure time**

Copenhagen, the city is always full of exciting and dynamic experiences. There are continuously up-coming events through the whole city such as music festival or film night. Many lovely cafes and cosy bars are giving nice atmosphere for enjoying the afternoon and weekends. Though it is expensive to eat out or drink, there are always the places for low-budget students (still more expensive than Germany). For eating at home, the food stuff is also more expensive than Germany but it is reasonable price compared to other countries. Average expense for food stuff for a month for me was about 150 euro. Every student brings their food to the lecture and there were not many occasions for eating-out, thus the expenses for food were not so much than expected.

One of the things that I most appreciated to my life in Copenhagen was riding a bicycle. Everyone is riding a bicycle to commute. There is special signal system in the road, so it is very safe as long as the bikers follow the rules. I was riding a bike at least 30 min a day and I believe it was very helpful to keep my health. Also, the view from riding a bike is very beautiful at day and night. I could reach almost everywhere in Copenhagen by bike and it was very flexible and convenient.

Danish people are keen on food. Especially there are many places which serve creative and novel cuisine and people are very open-minded for new food. It was very interesting for me to experience new Nordic cuisine and exchange the opinions about food system, new food, and healthy diet with young Danish people.

I didn't learn Danish because simply I didn't need to learn it. Almost everyone in Copenhagen could speak very good English and there was no problem to live there only with English. Of course, all lectures in university were also given in English and the level of English among internationals was very high.

When I think back, I am very happy that I had my third semester in Copenhagen University. It was a big challenge for me to adapt in new environment again after 1 year in Germany and to manage all administrative stuff. However, it was the best decision ever, since I have learned a lot in various topics and I had a beautiful and unforgettable time with open-minded international friends in lovely city. Through this experience, I could understand better about European culture and broaden my views for the world. I would strongly recommend experiencing this if somebody has a chance to do it.