

## **Report on internship abroad ERASMUS + in Madrid, Spain; Bremen 02/25/2018.**

### **1. Preparation**

It is important to know which country you want to visit and to take care of everything in good time, such as language, language courses, do I need a visa or residence permit? (If you don't come from the EU) etc. Next, it's important to visit the International Office and find out everything about conditions, exchange programmes and budget in order to clarify the financial situation right from the start. All information is available in the International Office. Of course the deadlines are important!!!

Well, you have to deal with contacting the companies yourself. To do this, you should have a current CV and research what each company is looking for and what they expect and offer for each area. A portfolio is very helpful in most cases, although I didn't need one myself. However, I uploaded the short films I made during my studies to YouTube and Vimeo so that interested companies could watch them.

Then came the difficult phase of finding an employer within the deadlines. I really wanted to go to Madrid or Barcelona. I searched Google for audio visual companies and found a long list, then started calling and emailing. This process can be very frustrating because many companies only answer once or not at all and the few replies are mostly just rejections (the audiovisual sector is a bit more complicated than others) but you don't have to give up. From about 20 companies I wrote to, I only got 4 answers: two rejections, one "maybe" and one yes.

The positive reply came from an advertising and audiovisual agency "The Ant Company" in Madrid. I responded immediately and spoke to my future boss. We had to clarify everything about the conditions. The first contact was in June, then we said that I could start in September, because in Spain the summer holidays usually take place from July to September.

### **2. Formalities**

I started the process in the International Office even before I found the internship position, because it is important that you are included as part of the entire intern group for the year. Now I had the confirmation, then I informed Ms. Schmidt and she gave me the relevant documents to fill out, such as "Before the Mobility" etc., which I had to fill out with my employer. You also have to pay attention to the deadlines! If one of the documents is missing, it can lead to problems with funding.

One of the things that is also very important to clarify is health and accident insurance abroad, which must be offered by the employer; if not, you have to buy one yourself. It is one of the most important requirements. In my case, my boss in Spain first told me that the company paid for everything and a few days later he said that only the liability insurance was covered but not the accident insurance, which I ultimately had to pay for myself. This cost around €60 for the 6 months and after I had acquired the insurance, I received the ERASMUS funding.

A local bank account makes total sense. I didn't open one in Spain because I didn't know if I would stay there long-term. However, it made everything a little more complicated when I needed cash, because I was allowed to withdraw money from the ATM with my German EC card, but I had to pay €6 each time. I was able to do online banking, but everything was a bit limited.

As soon as I had an offer, I started looking for a room, because in cities like Madrid it is very difficult to find a good affordable room unless you are able to spend a lot of money on it. Luckily, I found a cheap room in a good, relatively central area fairly quickly and easily online. It was a 3-room apartment with 2 young people from Spain. Living together went well and did not feel as an arrangement due to financial needs only.

### **3. How the internship went**

I started my internship in September. But I moved to Spain a month before because I wanted to settle in and get used to the city. Getting to know the neighbourhood, the shops, my office, the traffic, etc. The question came up, how do I get to work? It turned out that I had to take the subway to work and the monthly pass cost me €54. Since it is a relatively high amount and I would be doing an unpaid internship, I agreed with my boss that he would cover these travel costs. So my monthly cost for Madrid was around €650. I paid for part of it through Erasmus funding and the rest with savings and family support.

So, I started the internship. The working atmosphere was very relaxed. "The Ant Company" just consisted of about 4 people who worked temporarily, depending on the orders. There wasn't much to do in the first few days because many customers were still on vacation and also because the competition was fierce. Accordingly, I used those days to orient myself with the tasks and the team and to get used to the place. I was given a computer and first looked at what they had been doing there in the last few months to get to know a little about the work.

Mostly they had worked on small advertisements for the internet, short videos for Vodafone, a television station from Spain and image clips for video makers. There were two agencies in the office. In addition, there was the company XXX that was responsible for graphic design and exhibitions. They were primarily our clients, so the other companies hired them and they commissioned us to produce the videos.

The first video was about a Zen day at a company where employees received massages from a physical therapist and took part in other physical activities such as yoga and thai chi. I was there as an assistant. At first I was responsible for carrying the equipment, i.e. the cameras and backpacks. During the shoots I also had to take photos and occasionally shoot video myself. It was very relaxed, but you learn that you have a real mission and that everything has to be done within a certain time.

A normal day started at 10 a.m. I sat down at the computer and looked at everything that needed to be done, then I discussed with my colleague what had to be accomplished and in what order and started doing that. I took short coffee breaks and went out in the sun and at lunchtime we ate together. I continued working in the afternoon and was the first to leave. They were flexible with the working hours so I left the company around 4 p.m. and when I had to do an errand, I was allowed to do it.

In the days that followed, I had to deal with the video clips, sort them and start editing. This was a bit challenging at the beginning because all the cuts I've made so far have been my own work, but this time I had to deliver a finished product for a customer. I was responsible for even finding the appropriate music for the film. On the one hand, I had a lot of freedom, but on the other hand, there were certain expectations from my colleague (my mentor) that we had to discuss several times. Sometimes we had different opinions, but he had been active in this industry for a long time and I learned something from that, like how to work faster.

It went like this: I looked for several songs for the video and showed 2 or 3 different cuts that we all watched and discussed together. The XXX employees gave their opinion and chose the song and cut they liked best. Then I finished the work and handed it in. One of the difficulties of being a creative employee there was to come to an agreement on the product with my mentor.

He always wanted to shorten the videos a lot, much more than I wanted or was able to do when I tried to put all the important information into a clip. For example he wanted an event video to last 2 minutes and my first cut with all the important images included came in at 5 minutes. Well, sometimes it was difficult for me to edit the video down, but that was the task and that is what I had to do.

Overall, the next few weeks went well, but there were a few organisational problems in the agency regarding customers or orders, so that on some days I didn't get much or almost nothing to do. At these moments I acquainted myself with the programmes they used for image and video editing. I can say that I have learned to edit for tempo and to discard unnecessary images. You develop an eye for image videos, because in the following months we made other image videos for the same company such as football tournament, Halloween party, Christmas party, etc. and the more I worked on it, the more routine the work became, so that the final videos were created faster.

A big event we were present was "Fruit Attraction" in the exhibition centre in Madrid (IFEMA), where many representatives of agriculture and seed companies from all over the world meet. It lasted 3 days and we were there every day, all day long. There we were responsible for the company's pavilion and had to record the going ons there down to the smallest detail, interview participants and film the entire exhibition.

I had to handle a lot of material from the event afterwards. I had to look at everything for hours and start with an edit. We spend days selecting clips and putting them together and creating a final cut. We matched the music and the fine details to this until the end of the video and submission. The result can be seen on YouTube at "2017" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDSKbVRNAmc>).

I generally had good relationships with my work colleagues. Besides work, we did other activities together. They invited me to Christmas dinner, go-kart rides and we went out together. The time generally passed quickly and I left the agency satisfied and they kept their doors open for future employment.

There is currently a relatively large project pending for the company; If everything works, I might take part as an employee. The company is in the process of looking for a new office with a better location for the upcoming project.

If any student would like to gather information and experience about Spain and the internship, they are welcome to contact me at [ricardo.restrepogonz@hfk-bremen.de](mailto:ricardo.restrepogonz@hfk-bremen.de)

All information about the agency is available at: [www.theantcompany.com](http://www.theantcompany.com)