



Praktikumsbericht

ERASMUS+ *EuroMobility*

Persönliche Daten: Olena V.

Ausbildung zum: Kauffrau für Speditions- und Logistikdienstleistung

Ausbildungsbetrieb Bolloré Logistics Germany

Europäischer Kooperationsbetrieb: Bolloré Logistics Netherlands

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Zielland: Niederlande



Internship in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (16.07.2016 – 14.07.2016)

My name is Olena Vygnych. I am in the second year of my apprenticeship for a merchant of forwarding and logistic services at Julius Leber School in Frankfurt-am-Main. The Bolloré Logistics Germany is my training company with its seat at the International Airport Frankfurt-am-Main. According to the apprenticeship plan I was supposed to accomplish several weeks of training in a forwarding/logistic company abroad.

PREPARATION

Since the German company where I work, is a part of a French investment and industrial holding group which is represented in many countries all over the world, I could choose which country to go to where Bolloré has its representative offices.

Of course it makes sense to consider in which country I could get advantages for my residence from the point of obtaining certain occupational skills and new experiences. I have chosen to go to Bolloré Logistics Netherlands in Rotterdam, where office deals mainly with a sea freight business. The Bolloré Logistics in Frankfurt offers forwarding and logistics services in the air freight business, nevertheless other modes of transports are included into my final examination. That's why I stopped my choice on Rotterdam. The choice of the company depended also on the possible expenses which I could face. Of course the money earned in the apprenticeship time is not enough for a long-term residence abroad. I found out about the possibility to apply for a scholarship from the Information Centre for Occupation-Related Time Abroad in Wiesbaden (for more detailed information check the web link <http://www.bwhw.de/angebote/pool-projekt-euromobility/>).



After successful interview, accomplishing all the formalities and documentary for scholarship application I could proceed with organisation of my trip to

Rotterdam.

Going to a new country first of all each of us has to take into consideration everything to make one's stay comfortable and productive. I have started to plan and make a list of all things I might need in the Netherlands. Fortunately it's possible to get much useful information in the Internet.

PLANNING A TRIP

Looking for an apartment I took into consideration the location of the office in Rotterdam in order to save time and money on public means of transport. It was useful to have a look at Google Maps to check the distance between places I wanted to go to and even to check the right train or bus, which stations and stops to take. I looked around for shopping possibilities and other attractions which would make my stay both amusing and educational.

I had also to get an electronic card for public means of transport in Rotterdam because buying the ticket for each city trip is not convenient and even problematic. In order to avoid any misunderstanding and stress I informed myself in advance how all that works.

I booked my apartment on the website Airbnb.com. There is a wide platform for all possible apartments and conditions where you want to stay. When I found my apartment I paid attention what is offered in the room or whole apartment (kitchen utensils, dish-washer, hair-dryer) or what I could use for additional payment (to do laundry or to have meals in the house). I was lucky with my host family and I had only to bring my personal belongings and other small things for personal use. Fortunately, I could use all electronic devices in the host household as well.

Secondly I cleared with my mobile phone provider the possible options to use my SIM-card outside Germany. I will not go here much into details because there are numerous tariffs from different service providers and each of us has to clear it really individually. It's possible also to make an investigation and to find out if it's also cheaper to buy the SIM-card in the country you go to and to use the local tariff.

Being still in Germany, I called also my insurance company to clear if they cover my expenses in case I am sick or have an accident abroad. My insurance company informed me that I can go to the doctor in the Netherlands and at the end I have to pick up a bill and send it to the insurance company when I am back to Germany. The insurance company would not cover expenses if I used the services in the private medical practice.

It makes sense to clear with your host company abroad all kinds of additional information about working schedule, dress code and other details about office life and habits there. There should be also a learning agreement with listed practical activities and skills to obtain in the office abroad.

PUBLIC MEANS OF TRANSPORT

RET is the public transport operator in the Netherlands. You have to get OV-Chipcard (public transport chipcard) to use it each time when going by Metro, bus, tram, train or even the waterbus. First you have to buy an empty OV-Chipcard (it cost me 7.50 Euro) and charge money on it either at the automated stands or at the Info-Service Desk at the main station. Use the web links below for more information:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OV-chipkaart>

<https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/apply-1/anonymous-ov-chipkaart.htm>

It's very important to do check in/check out entering/leaving the transport. If you forget to do check-out leaving the bus/tram then you will get 4 euro booked from your Chip-card instead of for example 1.70 Euro for the stations you drove through. So keep in mind CHECK IN/CHECK OUT ☺ FREE WI-FI!!! ☺ The passengers in the RET transport may use WI-FI for free. I booked a roaming tariff from my German Internet service provider, but I could save my Internet volumes and connect to the WI-FI in the tram especially when it took time until I arrived to the place I was going to.

If you want to be flexible in the city and find out the route you need to go, you can load the App called 9292 where you can check the routes for your trip and which bus/tram to take.

ARRIVAL

I arrived in Rotterdam two days before I had to start my work on Monday on the 18-07-2016 in the new office. I took time to drive the route to my work, to check time I needed in order to be in time on my first working day.

Honestly, I was enchanted by the city very fast.

Rotterdam is a home to Europe's largest port and has a population of 630,383 people. It possesses a particular charm due to numerous small channels cutting the streets in the middle of the city life and bridges which can open the way for ships and barges. The car drivers are of course irritated to wait on the other side of the bridge until the vessel passes by and the traffic can flow again. But I was fascinated much about it. The city looks also very artistic due to modern futuristic architectural solutions together with traditional and historic impact. I noticed that there are many artistic public events involving the citizens and guests of the city. For example I have witnessed there an annual summer carnival with bright street parade, nice Latino American music and diversity of food.







BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE

The Bollore Logistics Netherlands is located near the port of Rotterdam. On the first day I was met with a warm welcoming greeting. I was introduced to the team of colleagues working there. It was a significant relief for me to meet such open-hearted, friendly and cheerful colleagues. Most colleagues work many years in this company. It made me feel a favourable and pleasant working atmosphere, strong distinct corporate goals and proper interaction between the workers and directory.

The office Bollore Logistics Netherlands is divided into several departments:

- Oil, gas and industrial projects
- Customs
- Customer service
- Export
- Import

During my training program I was explained the tasks of each department and I could also look more detailed into the sea freight forwarding procedures. Under the guidance of the colleagues I could also experience in practice the average working days of a sea freight forwarding agent. To switch from air freight to sea freight meant to meet new professional terminology and operations such as 20 ft /40 ft /45 ft high-cube container, Full Container Load (FCL)/Less than Container Load (LCL), VGM (Verified Gross Mass), Waiver Certificates, Shipping Line etc. After digesting all these sea freight specific features I could plan and book the most appropriate routes for shipments overseas by the shipping line, arrange a shipment pick up to the port of loading, check and prepare export documentation (e.g. issuing the house bill of lading), maintaining communication (sending emails, making phone calls) with the shipment related parties.

The office in Rotterdam works with a different freight forwarding computer software as the one we have in Frankfurt. I was very curious to obtain practical skills working with the new program and to specify the advantages/disadvantages of it. I liked the software very much because it helps to issue, amend and save all files and documentation related to a separate shipment without printing too much on paper, scanning or following a long operation algorithm.

Before I met my colleagues in Rotterdam I was wondering how it would go with the language and communication. Would the colleagues speak Dutch and switch to English just from time to time to explain me the work? Perhaps the colleagues would find it annoying to talk English. Fortunately, there was no problem at all. All colleagues can speak fluent English. Moreover there were many phone conversations and email correspondence in English. I was also curious to learn some

Dutch. I managed to memorise and use some word-combinations and sentences from working with different templates or written instructions.

I am not sure if I could notice and differentiate the mentality of the people in the Netherlands, I guess the time was too short to make such conclusions, but I like the approach to work which I have witnessed in the office in Rotterdam. There was none who started the working day in bad mood or complained about much work, stress, misunderstandings between each other etc. The work was done in a proper way and in time. There was no trace of rush or hectic. The work was done skilful, fast and qualified. I admire such attitude because it shows that a person takes good control of his/her work.

I paid attention to the ergonomic working places. The chairs, desks, computer monitors are all movable to make one's working place most convenient and healthy. The office gets a box of fruits delivered every Monday and every colleague can enjoy fresh pear, apple, banana, orange, etc.

Moreover the colleagues never left me to feel lonely. They took good care of me involving me into small-talk conversation, showing interest and respect to me, offering tea, coffee, fruits or getting something to eat for lunch. Also my colleagues always gave good pieces of advice about the places to visit, coming events and general tips to make my stay in Rotterdam comfortable and interesting.

I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues (especially to Geert Hoek, Monique Smeets, Ed Bakker, Naïma Fatih, Adrienne Weijdeveld, Bruno Dupuy and Kim Mahie) in Rotterdam office for their support, sharing experience and kind attitude to me. I am looking forward to the next possibility to work and stay there again.

EXPLORING LIFE AND CITY'S ATTRACTIONS

I stayed in a marvelous area called Schiedam in the near of Rotterdam. This area offered me also a good transport connection to the city.





(Here is a view on the backyard from my room. There was a small channel with several cute boats as you can see on the photo)

I did not get any feeling that I was staying in some suburb. I did not meet any obstacles to find my way around. I could easily ask people in the streets to help me. As for me the Dutch language is the mixture of the English and the German language with its own pronunciation and phonetics. If you can speak English, you will not get lost in the new surroundings. The signs and marks in the streets, in public transport, restaurants and cafes were not complicated to understand to get an idea what this or that word means.

I had also luck with the host family where I booked my room. We found a common language very fast and the atmosphere was domestic and relaxed. Of course every one respected each other's private sphere. We could also cook in turns and eat dinner together, drink tea and have good conversation. They introduced me also their friends and we had several nice evenings outdoors.

During the week before going home after work I took a walk in the city, choosing each time new routes to see as much as possible. On weekends I visited museums, art exhibitions and other places of touristic interest. I have been to Maritime Museum, *Wereldmuseum*, Museum Park, Euromast (an observation tower) and the village Kinderdijk (it belongs to UNESCO World Heritage due to the unique collection of 19 authentic windmills).

I went on harbor tour by ship and could explore an impressive city skyline, shipyards, docks and the modern transshipping of numerous sea containers.





I took advantage of my location and visited also such cities as the Hague and Amsterdam. The Hague is a city located in the western coast of the Netherlands on the North Sea. There is the International Court of Justice, seated in the Peace Palace. Besides the Dutch parliament is located in the Hague as well. The city attracts with remarkable architecture, historic impact and called also a Royal city. Staying in the Hague one does not miss the opportunity to go to the sea side. I did not miss that opportunity as well.



I have spent also one day in Amsterdam. During this short time I could get only a quick look at the city because it possesses much more attractions than I have managed to see. I have been to the *Rijksmuseum* which is a Dutch national museum dedicated to arts and history in Amsterdam and also most visited museum in the Netherlands.

Unfortunately, the four weeks of my stay in the Netherlands came to the end. Full of impressions and inspiration I had to go back to Germany. I am proud to learn so much about the country because the Netherlands is not only the country of tulips and orchids fields, cheese and windmills.

I hope my story inspired you on thinking about training program abroad and obtaining new occupational and cultural experience. It's a good chance to improve intercultural skills in the international workplace, gaining knowledge of social and cultural features in the foreign country, ability to adapt to changing circumstances.