

One Semester in Gothenburg

July 17, 2015

For this review I'm trying to write down some general information about e.g. the application procedure, finding accommodation, the university and so on as well as some very subjective but maybe helpful impressions of Sweden and in particular Gothenburg.

1 Application at Chalmers University of Technology

In Gothenburg there are two big universities, the Chalmers University of Technology and the Gothenburg University. The application at Chalmers is one of three parts one has to do in order to go abroad through the Erasmus-program. First, there is the application at the home university, then the application for the Erasmus-program and finally the application at the guest university.

My feeling is that all parts are quite straightforward. I had no problems to deal with the bureaucracy. If something does not work as it should, the three responsible persons: Axel Köhler (LUH), Per-Anders Träff (Chalmers University) and Francesco Ducatelli (Erasmus-program) should be able to help you in any case.

2 Finding Accommodations

In Gothenburg there is one big organization called bostader, which organizes the public housing market. However, for students the first address is the sgs housing, which organizes the student housing market. If the application at the Chalmers University was successful, one gets access to the websites and has the chance to apply for different offers of the student buildings. It is advisable to check the different student houses at the sgs website before applying ;) In Gothenburg nearly all students live in these student buildings. The ones I saw during my stay were all very nice. In my house (ostkupan, which means cheese dome in Swedish) I shared an apartment with four other people. We had two bathrooms and one kitchen. The building also had a gym and a sauna, which one could use all the time. I really appreciated that! Usually people say that it is very hard to find affordable accommodation in Sweden. I did not make that experience. Since I did not like the system of getting housing through the websites (at one fixed time there are offers online and the one who clicks fastest on the offer gets it) I decided to deal with the accommodation in Sweden. I went to the sgs office and had a choice between 5 or 6 different apartments then. Maybe one should say that I was in Sweden nearly half a week before everything started and in the summer semester, when much less students are coming to Chalmers from abroad. Anyhow, it worked and I payed around 300 EUR per month :) Paying the rent works over the sgs website via a foreign bank transfer. I was very happy with DKB, since one can pay every amount of money in Euros or Swedish Kronas for free with the DKB credit card. It is quite funny in Sweden that a lot of people pay with credit card, even very small amounts

3 The University

Chalmers has one big campus at Johanneberg. I think the area is very nice and one can find everything needed for daily student life: nice coffee shops (not only one, so check out all on the campus!), which really look nice and have a lot of sweets, teas and delicious things. BTW, the Swedes have an own expression for drinking coffee and having a small cake, they say "doing fika".

And that was really one of my favorite things in Sweden :) Also notable is the food in restaurants. My favorite meal was the Gröna Vägen, which a vegetarian meal. I don't want to spoil too much, but it's simply amazing! At the university, there are a lot of things going on. Students are organizing in so-called committees different events. This goes from arranging job fairs, over fun sport groups or a choir to a committee which tries to build a user-to-user connection from a brewery to the university.

There is, of course, also a committee, which cares about the student from abroad, namely the CIRC.

They organize a lot at the beginning of the stay: parties, games, a Swedish Sittning (that's really nice!) and even more.

4 Sweden and the Swedes

Being in Sweden, I had the feeling that nearly all people are very kind and relaxed.

Although the system and living in Germany and Sweden are really similar, there are some small differences. Swedes don't use the "Sie" in their language, although they have that word. Everybody is just "du" and that really makes a difference while talking to each other. For me it lead to a more direct connection to other people. The nature in Sweden is unbeatable: At Ostkupan, I lived near to a big lake in the southeast of Gothenburg, the so-called Delsjön. This area is really nice and beautiful; perfect for a run, a picnic or just a walk ;). I also spent a lot of my time at the Slottskogen, which is a park in the southwest of Gothenburg. This park is just amazing, since one can find a lot of animals there (also elks) and one can run, chill, read and so on. I really recommend grabbing a bicycle (for that case see <https://www.facebook.com/cykelkoket.gbg>. Here you can choose a bike for free, repair it and drive away ;)) and just drive through the city. Gothenburg is really nice and one can find a lot of nice shops, coffee places or other stuff. A last comment on the nightlife: I really liked it in Gothenburg and when one knows where to go it's also not too expensive to go out. My favorite bar was the "King's Head" at the Andra Langgatan. There are also a lot of other bars (like the Queen's Head and so on). For clubbing, I liked Pustervik (also has a lot of nice concerts and a ping-pong-party each Monday ;)), Yakida (4 floors and at the top is a piano man playing :)) and Sticky Fingers. There are also a lot of organized parties, which are really nice. I hope this small paper could help you a little. There are much more things one could tell about Gothenburg or in general going abroad.