

“Georg? What the Hell? Are you stupid? Tallinn, Estonia? Where is it? In the 3. World?”

LONG WAY TO TALLINN

This or something similar-sounding were the first words from my friends and some acquaintances at university in Germany when I informed them that I want to go to Tallinn for studying one semester abroad.

The facial expression from my parents was a mixture between horrified faces (if your grandparents would watch SAW I–VI in a row) and the expectation that I am only kidding. But I didn't make any joke! On the same day they tried several times to convince me to go to another country – a well known country where English is the native language. But while my parents asked themselves what went wrong during my education the last two decades and where they made the big mistakes I already made my decision which was irrevocable. It took about long time to think about which city I should choose but at the end I acted on instinct.

Before I decided to go to Tallinn I wanted to go to East Europe. It should be something different because as an business administration and economics student in Germany the first choice for going abroad is an English speaking country like Australia, UK, US or Canada. Then as second choice most of the students at my faculty (and I guess at most other business faculties in Germany too) decide to go to Southern or Western Europe.

Riga, Ventspils, Kaunas, Siauliai and Tallinn. These were the potential options for me. The first thoughts I had when I heard the name Baltic Countries were severe Coldness, Molotow-Ribbentrop-Pact, North-Stream Pipeline, Members of the former Soviet Union, strong economic growth, so called Baltic Tiger and Singing as a famous hobby. After these first thoughts I was not quite sure anymore if the people there would welcome me with open arms.

Maybe it would be a better decision to go to a country in the South of Europe. Italy is the most visited country of Germans for vacations, I have been there several times and in fact in the winter it

is not so warm like in the summer but it is better to get frozen to death in January in the Baltic Countries. So I had to find more information to make a decision. I went to the responsible professor from my faculty and tried to speak with him. I told him that I want to go to one of the Baltic Countries and he said “Oh, yes, it's a good choice, every country is great”...Hmmmmmmm, OK after this really helpful discussion I did not take any important step towards my study abroad. The first I had a several phone calls with different people who studied or worked in one of the Baltic countries. Everybody had great memories and a good time and everybody recommended his country as first choice for me. Finally I decided to take Tallinn as first choice. I cannot say why I chose Tallinn at the end. After all the articles, books and discussions with other people my suspicious mind maybe commanded me to Tallinn.

After completing 2.000.000 Million of documents for my home university I started after a 6 month internship at the end of august to Tallinn. A few month before the first impressions from Estonia were great. Riin Kobin in the International Office helped me with documents and with the questions I had. Also my tutor was very helpful and tried to prepare for the ERASMUS Life in Estonia.

The first weeks took place like a time lapse. Thousands of events were organized for us. Sometimes we were handled with kids gloves. Every took care about us. Everything was organized for us. But for some people it was necessary because without any some of the Erasmus Students would still not find the way from the airport to the academic hostel without any help from the tutors. When I had problems to find a printer Riin Kobin offered me to print in her office. If I would go to an office at my home university and would ask if I could print in their office the people in the office would ask me if I ran too much with my head against a wall or if I am drunk.

Before I arrived here I really wanted to go everywhere and to go to every event which is organized. But this is impossible for me. For me it is absolutely new that I have to make homework for the courses and that I have to be present at the courses. In one case I passed a course without ever seeing the professor a time. So if I have to prepare for every course at least some pages and if I also follow other events besides the university then I cannot go to every Sauna-, Skating- or other random event.

Some things were completely new here in Estonia. I am the biggest Fan in the world of the ID and VISA Electron Card. Things we will not have in Germany in 2 Million Years. Things are going on so easy with the both cards here in case you have sufficient funds on your bank account.

Beside all the activities which are organized from the TUT International Club and ESN Tallinn I attended some many events and trips with people from foreign countries who have a completely other cultural background and culture like people from Georgia or Austria.

It sounds a little bit weird but after these few months here I learned a lot more about life and people then the last years in Germany. The country is difficult to describe, if anybody in Germany would ask me if I liked it here or not I would not be able to explain in 3 minutes. It would take about more than a week to explain everything that anybody is able to understand what experiences I made here.

I never regret one second that I chose Tallinn for studying abroad. ■

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