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Studying Abroad Experience Report

- 1) **Are we allowed to publish your report anonymously on our webpage (without your name and e-Mail)?**
 Yes [] No
- 2) **Are we allowed to forward your report and contact information to a Viadrina student on request?**
[] Yes No
- 3) **Please confirm hereby that you did not mention names of a third party (lecturer, landlord etc.)**
 Yes [] No – in this case your report won't be published
- 4) **Please be aware that all the published photos in this report have to be taken by you and are not the property of a third party. By sending this report you are giving us the legal right of use for your pictures (if we publish the report). The copyrights still belong to you after all.**
 Yes, I confirm that all photos are mine.

We would appreciate it if you could include the following topics (the report should be at least two pages long, there is no maximum):

- **Preparation:** Recommendations about preparing to leave, for example (if applicable) Visa, insurance, travel? How was the application process at the university abroad? Were there any introduction events? Were they obligatory and when did they take place? Was there a Buddy program or tutors?
- **Accommodation:** How did you find your accommodation? Any tips about mistakes that should be avoided? Were there any special student accommodations? The cost of rent? Which area of living would you recommend?
- **Studying at the university abroad:** How was the day to day life on campus? Was the attendance mandatory? Which courses did you take? Were you allowed to take courses from different faculties? Please attach links to the course list if possible. How did the exams take place? Were there any language courses? What is your overall opinion of the university in general? How well did the university take care of international/exchange students?
- **Day to day life and free time:** How high are the costs of living in total? How much money should be accessible monthly? How much does the public transportation cost? What can an exchange student do in their free time? What did you do?
- **Conclusion:** worst and best experience
- **Suggestions/Feedback:** In your opinion, how can we improve our exchange program especially considering consulting, information, application process at the Viadrina? – This section is just for the department of international affairs of the Viadrina and will not be published.

Preparation

The preparation to leave Germany was rather easy for me as I am French and joined Viadrina as an international student. I already had a French health insurance and did not need a Visa. For my journey to France, I first went to Köln and spent a few days there, and then took a bus to Paris. It was quite a long journey, but I got to see a bit more of Germany before leaving. The application process at the university abroad was quite simple, it was done through a website. There was an online meeting after we got accepted by the partner university where they explained everything (especially regarding the COVID-19 regulations that were in place) and where we could ask our questions to them directly.

At NEOMA BS, they organize the Welcome Days before classes officially start, which are designated for all international students joining the school, with some activities and a short tour of the school to get to know your future (international) classmates and the school facilities you will be using. There are usually two different dates for the Welcome Days depending on when your program starts. Then there is a day where you will have to attend a presentation to mark the start of your program, where you will get even more information.

Accommodation

For the accommodation, sadly I cannot give any recommendations/advice because I chose to stay at my family's house which is in a small town near Rouen, to be reunited with them and to save costs as well. They live almost an hour away from the school, but it was of course much better than staying at a student dorm! Thankfully my classes never started earlier than 9:30am so I did not have to wake up earlier than 6:30am every day. Student dorms near the school allow you to wake up much later though! However, I had to miss out on a lot of hangouts and activities with my classmates because the last trains/buses to my small town were very early.

Studying at the university abroad

Attendance was mandatory as we had many group works and presentations. I did a Double-Degree with the International Project Development track, so I was not able to choose my courses, but they were all very interesting and interactive too for the most part. With this track, I also passed the PRINCE2 Certification, and I took part in the X-Culture project with students from all over the world which was very interesting. I did not take any language courses, but they had many choices. As for the exams, it was different for each class but your average for each course was always comprised of some sort of group work (oral/written), individual work and attendance. Some courses had a final exam, some didn't.

Day to day life and free time

The transportation card was 62 EUR for me monthly, but it is much cheaper if you live in Rouen or Mont-Saint-Aignan. If I am not mistaken it is 28 EUR/m. If you like to go out a lot and eat out you will probably need around 1000 EUR per month including your rent. In your free time you can visit the city of Rouen and nearby places like Etretat, Le Havre, Honfleur, Mont-Saint-Michel, Acquigny, and of course Paris. I worked part-time so I did not have a lot of free time.

Conclusion

What I loved about my exchange was getting to meet people from all around the world and also taking part in the X-Culture project. This allowed me to gain experience working with people from different countries and learning about their cultures and way of working. Being back home after the COVID-19 lockdowns felt great too! What I loved less was the food served at the school cafeteria/canteen. The sandwiches were delicious though! Some of our important deadlines were also quite close together so you will have to manage your time well!

Here are a few pictures I have taken of Rouen, the school and also Acquigny during my exchange:

Country: France
University abroad: NEOMA Business School
Beginning of lectures and end of exams abroad: 02/10/2021 until 28/04/2022
Study path at Viadrina: International Business Administration [] BA [X] MA



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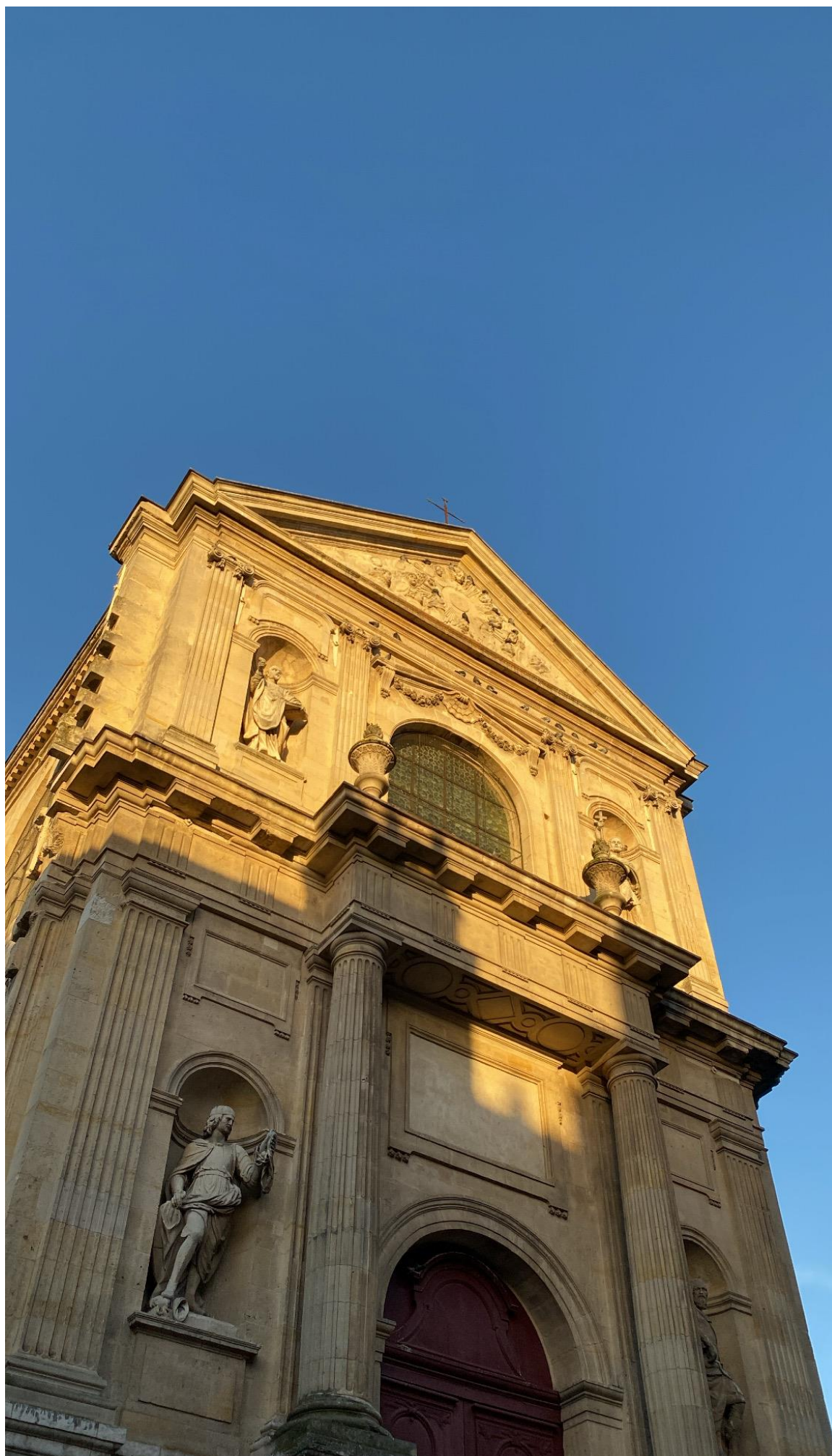
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