

Experience report

That I will do my internship abroad was definitely clear.

But the final question was “where”?

Finally I went to Malmö, Sweden.

I did my internship (which belongs to my studies) at E.ON Sverige AB in Malmö between 1st of August 2011 until 29th of February 2012.

Since I worked several times between 2009 and 2011 at E.ON AG in Düsseldorf in the semester vacation I was already known by some E.ON employees. Therefore it was easy to get in contact with the Swedish subsidiary in Malmö.

After my formal application I got a positive answer on the same day so that I organized the journey and a flat by myself.

By the way, my name is Annika Ehmann and I study International Business Administration at the University of Applied Sciences Nordhausen in Germany since 2009.

In my internship at E.ON Sverige AB I was implemented as a resource in the project “GLOBE” in the department “Project Office”.

My tasks were basically organization and management stuff such as maintain time reporting of the employees, control/check of the project budget and organization of meetings and its location.

In general I felt really comfortable at my work place. My colleagues are friendly, helpful and open-minded.

Working in a project also means that some days/weeks can be quite strong and stressful. There was a high level of responsibility and pressure and people can be quite busy and stressed. Deadlines and working on different tasks are common.

At the beginning it was a big challenge for me but after a while I got used to it.

Now I see it in a positive way since I learnt so much about business and myself.

My personal development increased a lot in this period. I learnt how to handle stressful situations in daily business life as well as taking responsibility and solving problems in different ways. Collaboration and communication are key points in a project; in this case the team spirit was amazing so that the working level was quite high and effective.

I really enjoyed being a part of GLOBE and its spirit. And I am also proud to be allowed to be a member of this huge project. Finally I learnt a lot of about business and working life - after GLOBE I know how business works.

Moreover the work ethic is different from the German one. There is no hierarchical structure. That means that every employee is more or less equal. Employees are more free and flexible in doing their daily work/ tasks since they do it in a responsible and temporarily way. The employees have also flexible working times. Moreover they don't use the polite form of address to each other so that the working atmosphere is quite relaxed. In general it says that the control is lower than in Germany.

During work, the commercial language was English.

Hence I just spoke English. But I also learnt a little bit Swedish by myself.

Due to development, life experiences and social contacts I also learnt a lot of in my spare time.

Concerning an accommodation I can recommend the platform www.blocket.se.

Here I found my accommodation for the last month: a room in a house. I lived together with two other women in the house.

I felt really comfortable at this place and I enjoyed living in a community.

In general my first impressions of Malmoe city and surrounding were quite positive.

The city offers a lot of activities and attractions – especially in the summer time.

Malmö's new city district attracts people with its exciting architecture, lovely beach promenades, green spaces and a fabulous view over Öresund.

Malmö offers also a wide variety of flora and fauna. Moreover water is a vital element of the environment, expressed in canals, ponds, small craft marinas and swimming beaches. The Western Harbour was once an industrial area where Kockum's world-famous shipyard operated, now replaced by Malmö University and companies in the IT and telecommunications industries.

There is also Santiago Calatrava's spectacular apartment building in the Western Harbour. At 190 metres, Turning Torso is the tallest building in Sweden. It consists of nine cubes with a total of 54 stories, with a 90° twist from base to top.

Next to the Western Harbour, there is the sandy beach of Ribersborg - or "Ribban" in the vernacular. The water stays shallow a long way from the shore and there are wonderful, expansive green spaces for play, games and sporting activities such as basketball, football and volleyball. But also walking, Inline skating, jogging or biking is quite common on the promenade as well as having a picnic on the green space. The beautiful Kallbadhuset from 1898 is a popular destination for swimmers and café guests alike, who can enjoy saltwater swimming and a wood-fired sauna year-round.

Specifically short walking distances within the city are comfortable.

Since Malmö's city centre is so centralized, you can reach every place easily by bus, car, bike or feed.

In general the infrastructure is well established. Especially the infrastructure for biking is amazing and during the summer I have never seen so many people biking in a town.

In some corners you have also stations to pump up your bike and an automatically counter which counts how many bikers pass the street per day.

Moreover the train connection to other cities such as Copenhagen or Goteborg is quite good. Since they have the Öresund Bridge to Denmark it is easy to travel over – even just for a daytrip or to go out in the evening. But you can also reach different places by bus. Therefore you can describe Malmö as a “central hub” of travelling.

Back to the city centre, the pedestrian street offers a lot of shops and small fashion boutiques but also coffee houses, bookshops and refreshment kiosks.

In the old town you have two main places, the lilla torg (small square) and the store torg (big square) which are surrounded by bars, pubs, restaurants, designer shops and small fashion boutiques.

There are also small streets and half-timbered houses which make this area pretty nice and create a cosy atmosphere.

In the South of Malmö there is the old part which is called "Möllevången". In this district you can find Malmö's chocolate factory which produces typical Swedish chocolate since 1888. The district is like a "melting pot" which offers different types of bars, restaurants and discos. But be aware that the bars have to close at 1:00 pm and the discos at 5:00. The discos always have an entrance fee and the minimum age to enter is 21, in some cases also 23 or 25.

When it comes to food and restaurants, Malmö offers a variety of bars, restaurant as well as big supermarkets with unique fish and cheese counters. The system of the supermarkets is quite good: They are organized but also individual.

But keep in mind that living in Sweden is quite expensive in comparison to Germany. The value added tax is 25 %.

And the Swedish policy is quite strict. The supermarkets are not allowed to sell alcohol over 3,5 percentage. They have extra shops which are called "System Bolaget" to buy stronger alcohol. People who are less than 21 years are not allowed to buy alcoholic drinks.

It is quite common to pay everything with credit card so that you mostly don't have so much cash with you.

On the one hand the city seems to be calm, tidy and pretty nice but on the other hand Malmö has a high rate of crime and burglary. During winter time break-ins are quite common.

It was November 21st, 2011 when I had a break-in in Malmoe. I came back from work and my room was totally empty except furniture and clothes.

The next day I moved out to another apartment. The first days after the break-in I did not feel as safe and comfortable as at the beginning of my stay. I avoid being out alone in the evenings and I am more carefully with my stuff outside than before.

Since this day I learnt more from life than I have ever expected before this journey. Alone in a foreign country without your personal belongings, trying to organize all the trouble with the moving, the police and the insurance company within a couple of days, it was quit hard but also effective for my personal development. Now I am more independent, self-confident and much stronger than before.

Finally I had a huge financial damage. But the worse is not the money; it is the personal stuff such as jewellery, photos, documents and papers. All the memories are gone.

During my free time I nearly explored the whole part of Skane. I got in contact with a lot of friendly people such as other interns from the company and an interesting impression of all the Swedish habits and traditions.

Of course, I will miss a lot of typical Swedish things such as Fika (typical coffee break), the tasty Swedish food and the melodic language and Swedish nature (especially the windy sea and the screaming of the seagulls every morning).

All in all, I really enjoyed working and living in Malmoe.

For sure I will never forget this period and its memories.

There is nothing left to say but "Tack sa mycket!"

With kind regards,

Annika Ehmann