

Erasmus+ Staff Training Week, Tallinn, TTU, 2017

As early as the year 2014, I started a research project that is closely linked to my research at the FernUniversität in Hagen, which is the main reason for close international contact with my colleagues from Tallinn. In addition to the Yale University in New Haven, the St. Petersburg State University, the University of Brighton, the TTU mainly owns a focus of my research. Therefore, my first visit to Tallinn was in 2015. It turned out that the Erasmus + Staff Training Week was a great opportunity to get to know the host university and at the same time to keep in touch with their colleagues there who have also organized the conference in 2015 in Tallinn where I was invited as one of the speakers.

The Staff Training Week aimed to reflect the connection the TTU has with schools, companies, alumni and private persons. Every year, the Erasmus team is organizing a staff training week at the TTU with different topics, so that a multiple visit to the Training Week could be worthwhile. Besides cultural activities, a campus tour incl. a visit of different academic and administrative units of Tallinn University of Technology, esp. TTU Mektory School of Technology, was performed on the first and last day. On the second and third day of the Staff Training Week questions such as how to keep the students interested in their studies and how to improve the quality of teaching through the usage of technology and making the teaching processes more interesting were discussed.

However, there have been enormous differences in the mentality of the two universities, the TTU and the FUH. These differences also related to the different education systems in both countries and to the basic requirements in Estonia and Germany. Whereas Germany has a lot of students and graduates in all different kinds of science, Estonia is looking extensively for new students in order to satisfy the many different professional requirements of the small country. Estonian universities try to bind young people to the university at a very early age. They also try not to break the contact with their students.

In many respects, Estonia is far more advanced than Germany in many technological areas: For example, many government offices can be run digitally and the broadband internet connections are also perfectly developed in rural areas. To get to know these similarities and differences, the Staff Training Week is a perfect opportunity. This has also shown how future research projects between the FUH and the TTU can be further developed in order to take into account the fact that the universities focus on different topics, even they share the same research projects.

For future participants of the Staff Training Week in Tallinn, I can summarize the following: train and bus connections are perfectly coordinated; Accommodation can be booked well in advance. Nearly everyone I have met in Tallinn is speaking English, also in small shops outside the city centers. At any time, a contact person is available from the host university. Especially the old town is very worth seeing. A visit of the forest trails in the south of Nõmme (3 bus stops from the TTÜ) is much recommended. And a unique experience is the taste of the original healing water of Vytautas and Väska. Nägemist (Goodbye)!