Gastunternehmen
Name des Gastunternehmens: EC Language Centre/ Malta
Ansprechpartner vor Ort: Chiara Francica/ HR Administrator
Straße/Postfach St. Julian's Business Centre, Elia Zammit Street
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Ort: Saint Julian's
Land: Malta

Erfahrungsbericht
Since the Intercultural Project is a compulsory part of my master studies, in February 2013, I started to search for an internship abroad. The only rule in choosing a country was that the official language should be English. I was guided in my research by Dr. Helga Quadflieg, my master coordinator. I searched on the internet and applied for many companies abroad. In March, EC Malta responded to my application and since the conditions were convenient I accepted to start the collaboration with them. By starting this internship I was hoping to improve my intercultural competences and my English language skills. All of my expectations were absolutely fulfilled. EC Malta is a melting pot and here I had the chance to meet people from all over the world, I had the opportunity to improve my communication skills and to work in an international company in a professional environment. In order to prepare for this internship I did online research about Malta, i.e. reading about history, customs, traditions on websites and on expat blogs like Internations.org or Expat-blog.com. During the five months while I was working for EC Malta, my main duties were:
- Booking registrations using EC's booking system, Konnect-It-Lab OS;
- Input bookings by checking courses availability and allocating accommodation;
- Collect medical reports for checking the students’ health condition;
- Review travel details and support Visa applications for students;
- Collecting waiver forms, medical reports and visa letters;
- Build and maintain excellent relationship with EC's agents by providing quick and proper replies to their problems;
- Excellent knowledge of all EC English programmes around the world;
- Running weekly reports in order to assist EC's Waiver Form collection process;
- Running weekly reports in order to assist EC's Visa Letters collection process;
- Student pre-arrival services, handling Welcome Packs and information about the courses booked;
- Assisting the Junior and Adult Admissions Pod with my support in all other tasks/ duties on weekly and daily basis;
- Correcting English language tests for placing students at the appropriate language courses;
- Allocating accommodation for students using Konnect-It-Lab OS.

The knowledge gained during my studies and the experiences I had during my previous positions did help me in fulfilling the tasks I was given at EC. In the first weeks I was just learning how to deal with my new tasks and responsibilities, but after the first month I started to be given more and more responsibility and my work became more and more interesting. The first week I was trained by my supervisor and other employees from the Junior Admissions Department. EC Malta is employing during the summer interns from all over the world that is why the working environment was always a pleasant and dynamic one. I can not say that I had problems related to my work, but I encountered one peculiar issue regarding my accommodation. Before coming to Malta, I knew that I will share the room with another intern, but due to a mistake of the HR department, we were not provided two single beds, but a double one and for one week I found myself in the awkward situation of sharing the bed with a completely unknown person. At EC Malta I had the opportunity to be in contact with the Maltese employees and this turned out to be an enhancing experience, having the chance of working in a completely new environment. Since Malta is a former British colony I had also the chance to work with people from London, thus turning out to be a great asset for my English pronunciation and vocabulary. I really enjoyed my stay in Malta, so I highly recommend to other students to come and do an internship here. Malta is a country with a huge cultural heritage and a history of thousands of years.
There are many places to be visited: museums, caves, natural pools and megalithic structures. Regarding sports - Malta is well known for its climbing club and boulder: www.climbmalta.com. The traffic here is hectic and there are no special lanes for cyclists, this is why biking cannot be practiced on the island, unless assuming some risks. In order to keep contact with my relatives I opted for a Vodafone pre-paid card. Vodafone has the best network on the island. For going out, Malta has a famous district called Paceville, populated with nightclubs, pubs and restaurants. During the summer there are many nice festivals like the Bubble festival, the Earth Garden festival, the Beer Festival. Every weekend somewhere on the island is a village Festa, usually ending with amazing fireworks.

Via Internations (www.internations.org) I managed to meet and make new friends. Internations is an online community for people who live and work abroad. Here I met people from my own country and discussed about common issues that might arise when you are abroad. I highly recommend this website since here you can get in contact with people with comparable interests and needs.

During the five months that I spent in Malta, EC provided accommodation for me. All the costs were included. The apartment was at 10 minutes walk away from the company in a nice and quiet neighbourhood. It was a large apartment with 3 bedrooms, 1 big living room, 2 bathrooms and two balconies. I shared this apartment with my colleagues from EC, students from France, Ukraine, Japan and Latvia.

Even if Malta is one of the smallest countries in Europe, it has thousands of years of history and many attractions for tourists. The island has numerous recreational areas, architectural and historical monuments, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites like the Megalithic Temples (Tarxien, Ggantija etc) which are some of the oldest free-standing structures in the world, older than the Egyptian pyramids. Valletta, the capital, is a mix between many architectural genres and contains building from the 16th century onwards, narrow streets, impressive churches and museums. The capital was severely damaged during the War World Two. The country gained his independence from the United Kingdom in 1964 and became a republic in 1974; now it is a member of the European Community.

Malta has two official languages: Maltese and English. At my work at EC I was in contact with many native speakers of English and I can say that my vocabulary increased significantly and my pronunciation improved as well.

This internship helped me to acquire experience in the administrative domain and gave me some ideas for my master thesis. I also gained knowledge in working with new operational systems like Konnect-It-Lab OS. After the end of my internship I will stay in contact with my supervisors from EC and they will provide the necessary information for writing my thesis.

This was an unpaid internship but they provided accommodation and since the apartment was so close to my office it was not necessary to pay for transportation. The atmosphere at EC is a pleasant one, with many interns coming from all over the world. EC is the biggest English Language Teaching school in Malta, with quarters in Cambridge, Oxford, Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles and Cape Town. I highly recommend this school for the other students searching for an internship.