



Liebe Freunde!

Germans know it as the *Tag der Deutschen Einheit* (National German Reunification Day), but for me the 3rd of October of 2019 was the day I officially moved to Berlin for my exchange programme at the Technische Universität Berlin. Although I spoke a bit German and had visited some cities in the western part of the country, it was my first time to explore its capital.

Honestly, like probably most of you, I did have some prejudices about Germany: Bier, Lederhosen und Schlager. Berlin is nothing of that and turned out to be one of the most diverse and multicultural cities in Europe where everything is possible. In the winter, the weather is cold and harsh but Germans are warm people, especially after a glass of Glühwein at one of the countless Christmas markets!

With the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin (former GDR), Freie Universität Berlin (former FRG), Universität der Künste (art), the TU Berlin is one of the four universities located in the German capital, which means that there are many students around. As with many other facilities like libraries and malls, the number universities still shows the historical division of the city during the Cold War: usually there are two of everything in Berlin. The TU has everything, from classic technical disciplines as natural sciences, electrical engineering, computer sciences, and architecture, to humanities and economics. The last one is the faculty with which TPM has an exchange agreement.

Unexpectedly, studying in Berlin was very different from Delft. The lectures are more traditional for example: the professors held a reading and explained the material from thick books (*Vorlesung*), there is less interaction and you have to conclude the course with a three hour written exam. Although there are tutorials (*Übung*), these often broadened the professor's substance and were of limited relevance to the exam. More interesting are the seminars that are given. These often reflect the professors' own passion and are intended to delve deeper into the substance. The format is therefore freer: lessons are given in small groups in classrooms, which results in interaction and personal contact, and you are often allowed to write a paper or give a presentation for your assessment. Keep in mind that most of the courses at the faculty are given in German and that no dictionaries are allowed during the exams, so prepare your language skills in advance 😊!



As well as being one of the political centres of Europe, Berlin is particularly known for its nightlife and art. Although there is no student life with associations and bars as we know it, Berlin has an active nightlife, festivals and lots of culture. On November 9 there was a huge celebration in Germany, because it was 30 years ago that the Berlin wall was brought down and that the Ossis could cross the border to visit the west. Besides the traditional Stammtische, Berlin is well-known for its (hidden) techno clubs. Everybody knows the Brandenburger Tor and Fernsehturm, but the several museums on Museum Island and the rebuilt Humboldt Forum Palace are beautiful. And for an amazing view of the city, I recommend the roof top



of the Bundestag, the house of parliament with a rich history (in which the Netherlands also have played an unfortunate role).



Since the German semester starts later, you have longer summer holidays, but this means in the end some overlap with your second semester in the Netherlands. After twenty weeks of completing all courses with exams or papers, I quickly returned to the Netherlands to catch up with the courses that already started. But in the end, I had fallen in love with this lovely city, of which I still haven't seen everything after half a year. After all, I enjoined to study at the TU Berlin very much. It's a nice university with a fun but hard study culture and, above all, it's very good for developing your German!

Herzliche Grüße aus Holland

Ihre Jesse

