

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**María Reneé Hernández**Year and term for exchange**2020/2021 Autumn**Exchange university**Politecnico di Milano**Degree programme**Sustainable Urban Planning and Design

## Milano, it's all about new discoveries.

### Before departure

I applied for the exchange studies on November 2019, before Covid-19 entered Italy. I wanted to go to Politecnico di Milano because I knew it was a good school, and highest rankings of Architecture universities. I had one more option, but Italy was my first. I was hoping for a "normal" Erasmus experience and to be able to carry out the exchange in presence, to meet new people and to learn from my new courses.

Before going to Italy, and since I'm not an EU resident, I had to renew my student visa in Sweden and then apply for the Italian student visa at the embassy in Stockholm. The process of the Swedish visa can take a while so it's good to do it ahead in time. The Italian visa takes around 1 week. All the instructions are on the Italian embassy webpage.

### Upon arrival

I arrived in Italy one day before my studies began, because my visa took some time. But usually if you arrive one week before, the Erasmus network of students (ESN) have different activities so that the new students can get to know each other. Tours around the city, cookouts, games, etc. To be in contact with them is very helpful, especially if you haven't been in Milano before. Another Helpful platform was YESMILANO, they have on their webpage (<https://www.yesmilano.it/en/study>) very useful guides of the administrative procedures you have to do once you arrive, for example, Codice Fiscale, tessera sanitaria, permesso di soggiorno etc. You can sign up for the Student Newsletter, get a yesmilano student card and enjoy some of the benefits and discounts in Milan.

**ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR ERASMUS ADVENTURE?**

**ESN**  
Erasmus Student Network  
Politecnico Milano

GET YOUR **ESNCARD** & LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN!

Registration in our offices → MANDATORY BOOKING

BOVISA	LEONARDO
Campus La Masa Room L14 (building B12) Wed & Fri, 2pm-5:30pm	Piazza Leonardo Room 5.02, building 5I Tue to Fri, 2pm-5:30pm

EVENTS WITH ALL DETAILED INFO WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GROUP

FOLLOW US ON  
Facebook Instagram YouTube

milanopolitecnico.esn.it  
info@esnpolimi.it

**WELCOME WEEK**  
Offices opening hours from 08/09 to 11/09

Leonardo B5 room 5.0.2		Bovisa B12 room L.14	
Tuesday	14.00 - 17.00	Wednesday	14.00 - 17.30
Wednesday	14.00 - 17.30	Friday	14.00 - 17.30
Thursday	14.00 - 17.00		
Friday	14.00 - 17.30		

**Make sure to register online before coming to our offices**

**ESN**  
Erasmus Student Network  
Politecnico Milano

### Financials

I had a percentage of an Erasmus stipendium given by KTH before leaving for Italy. This was a big help to cover some of the administrative procedures I had to make. For example, the Permesso di Soggiorno (if you are not a EU resident) In general the prices for food and clothing are similar to those of Sweden. The housing might be a bit more expensive, but there are good options too. Many museums have an arrangement with Erasmus for student fees, also if you subscribe to YesMilano, they have different discounts on places and promotions. Also make some Italian friends, they know which the cheapest places are to buy. They can be a great help.

### Accommodation

I lived in a "college di merito" or student residence, because I had a friend already living there, and due to the covid circumstances I wanted to be with someone I knew. It is possible also to get the accommodation through the university. I lived around 30 mins in bike from the university. The housing conditions for the student residence were very good, I had a single

room with bathroom, and then shared common spaces (living room, dining room, study rooms, etc) Meals and laundry were included in the price. It was a very nice experience!

### **University and studies**

Politecnico di Milano is a big school, with around 46,000 students in 2020. Most known for the engineering and architecture programs, although it has more programmes. It is a very technical school, the courses I took were more technical than the one's I had taken in KTH. The schedule differed quite a lot, especially the lectures timing. All of the courses that I took were taught in English and many of the students taking the courses were international students. Polimi offers an Italian course, is not free (costs around 100 euros), the course is taken 2 times a week. This year the course was given online due to the circumstances.

### **Courses**

During the semester I coursed in Polimi, I took 4 courses. Metabolism of City and Landscape, Housing & Neighbourhood studio, Contemporary City: social change and policies and Transport planning and Economics. I was given the opportunity to choose from the catalogue of courses offered by the program both for 1st and 2nd year from the urban planning and policy design master's program. Within the courses offered there were some not available for exchange students (2 weeks workshop). The catalogue offers both English and Italian based courses. The courses that I chose were given in English. The transfer of credits to KTH will be done with these courses will be taken as part of the programme course so they won't be applied to specific courses at KTH. Overall, I had a good experience and enjoyed very much the courses I took.

- Metabolism of city and landscape is a theoretical course that gives an overview of environmental aspects of projects and many reference projects that have been built following sustainability standards. The course is taught by 2 professors
- Housing and Neighbourhood course is a studio or workshop course, so it a practical course, divided into 2 parts, the first part is a theoretical part with lectures and readings about relevant housing aspects, either historical or modern aspects, specially from Italy or Europe; Also, a set of individual assignments related with the topics. The second part developing of a project in a south peripheral neighbourhood of Milan. The project is related to housing strategies. At the end of the course there is a compilation of reports from all of the groups following the course and a final seminar to present the projects developed over the time of the semester.
- Transport planning and economics is a theoretical course that gives an overall view of transport systems, tools, references and mobility plans. Different study cases are analysed through the course and also exercises to apply the knowledge. The final exam consists of 2 parts, a written essay analysing a mobility plan previously approved by the professor and an oral exam.
- Contemporary city, is also a theoretical course, divided into 2 parts, first gives an introduction to the development of cities and the different strains and schools of planning that have appeared through time. The second part is left to study the

phenomenon of gentrification. For both parts there is a written assignment to apply the concepts seen in the course. The tasks from the course are worked in groups

### City and country

Milan is a beautiful city full of life, history, culture, fashion and modern. People are warm and welcoming. For me it felt very much like home from the beginning. The language was easy to pick up since my mother tongue is Spanish.

I had the opportunity to travel to a few more destinations in the first 2 months of my stay, each city has its own magic of history and culture to discover also depending on what you want to see. The culture of food and aperitives is very big, many things revolve around the food, and each city or region has different typical food. Due to the circumstances of the pandemic, travelling was not possible, but I plan to come back when it is possible.



Turin, Italy





Lake Como, Italy



Bocconi University, Milano





Assisi, Italy



Duomo di Milano, Italy





Politecnico di Milano, Leonardo Campus

### Leisure and social activities

Polimi offers different clubs and leisure activities and access to sport facilities or activities like polimirun that happen 1 time in the semester (sports offered by Polimi can be found here <https://www.sport.polimi.it/>). ESN Erasmus student network also offers different activities, like tours around the city, food nights etc. Yes Milano is another platform that promotes activities and help tourists and locals to explore the most interesting places of Milan. Milan offers a great number of museums and other activities. During this semester due to covid restrictions some activities were not available, and some activities were done online.



#### Other recommendations and observations

Other recommendations is to plan your activities with time specially the most famous ones like the visit to the last supper from Leonardo da Vinci which needs to be booked in advanced. Search and ask for discounts for students or for Erasmus students.