

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**Leonard HökbySpring 2022**Exchange university**Politecnico di Milano**Degree programme**TTGTM

Geoinformatics in Milano

Before departure

I've always wanted to go to Italy. In fact, I chose my program with the criteria that there would be an exchange possibility in Italy. I just adore the food and language since I first saw an episode of "Komisarie Montalbano", a crime series based in Sicily.

Upon arrival

First recommendation comes here: when you fly to Milano, go to Linate or Malpensa airports, not Bergamo. The connections to Milano are best from Linate, and worse from Bergamo, particularly during early mornings and late evenings. Either way, I arrived one week before the courses would start, having time to settle in and buy food etc. I also used this first week to meet up with some other students from KTH, there was quite many of us.

Financials

Food was around the same price in Sweden, both in restaurants and groceries. Accommodation is also quite expensive (more on that below) meaning that even though you can get a bigger than normal loan from CSN and the Erasmus grant, you will probably spend more money than you will earn, meaning that you should have some money saved up. How much is hard to say, since accommodation can vary greatly in price and your spending habits will also differ. I spent maybe 2000kr a month more on average than my income (CSN + Erasmus grant), but it as I said, this number varies greatly.

Accommodation

I got my accommodation through Air B&B, where I found a studio apartment in walking distance to the campus for the whole stay. Pros you ask? I did not have to search accommodation while there, never had to move, lived close to school and in a reasonable apartment. I also had the flat to myself, making it easy to host visitors from Sweden. Cons on the other hand? Well, maybe around 200€ a month more expensive than a dorm room and living with other people seems like a good experience: that way you'll make new friends and always have stuff happening around you. If you go this route, consider asking your landlord if you could make a contract outside of Air B&B (After you have stayed for a while and trust the landlord). This might save you around 15% on your entire stay since that is Air B&B:s cut. Watch out for terms around up front payment and deposits though.

University and studies

Politecnico di Milano is a very big university, but the geoinformatics master is not the biggest. This means that there is a good opportunity to get to know others in the master, since you will be studying at least half of your courses with them. Speaking of courses, there are a lot of choices available, both connected to the master and not connected. Most of the geoinformatics courses have their equivalent here on the other semester, guaranteeing that you will miss something and get double of something

else. But don't worry, there are a lot of choices you could make to supplement your program. For example there is a (quite tough) course in Machine Learning that is a very good complement to geoinformatics courses. Also do check out the courses for the second year students and for other disciplines that you are interested in. However, it will be easier for you if you only choose courses on Milano Leonardo campus and not Bovisa, since travelling between them in a day is not easily done. Course content is usually quite good compared to KTH but pedagogy is not, meaning it is more on you to learn and there is less support to get.

Courses

So I chose courses to be more directed towards software development since that is what I am interested in: Software Engineering for Geoinformatics, Web and Hypermedia and Geoinformatics project are such courses that I do recommend. I elected to not take the GNSS course available to make this space. The included Business Information Systems and Computing infrastructures courses is however not very good courses that I should have dropped. Lastly I chose a course in Communication and Argumentation to try something different. One course I wish I took was the Machine Learning course I spoke of earlier.

City and country

Italy is still the shit. I like the country even more now that I have seen the northern parts as well. Genoa, Florence and of course Venice are all mandatory visits. Regular visits to the closer cities Lecco, Como and Bergamo is also recommended, especially for someone who likes hiking since there are many beautiful routes to take. This is however the biggest advantage of Milano, how well connected it is to Italy by train and Europe by airplane. The city itself was not in my flavour, being both interior and flat, without any large bodies of water. If you on the other side are interested in culture like museums and architecture, Milano will offer plenty to do.

Leisure and social activities

In my free time I mostly went around northern Italy exploring places and most of the time we were a group that wanted to do these trips together so that was nice. Otherwise there are a lot of cultural things in Milano like museums etc. but most of the social time was spent in bars having "aperitivo".

Sustainability

Nothing special to note. Not very much garbage sorting, Travelled there by air. Inside Italy, the railway covers very well so you can pretty much go anywhere by rail and public transport is cheap. No special initiatives from the university.

Other recommendations and observations

I trained boxing in Sweden before going, so I signed up to a "masterclass" they had at the university sports centre. This was super worth it and it was a place where I could make some Italian friends (apart from my buddy). I recommend very much to take on some extracurricular activity for this reason.