“If it doesn’t challenge you, it won’t change you”
My Exchange semester at TU Eindhoven

Before departure
I always like to explore new options, visit new places, challenge life in some manner that would help me build myself. According to me, a student-life is the perfect time to do that. This made me look for options I had with me at KTH. Thanks to Malin, the International coordinator at ICT school at KTH, I was able to narrow down on TU Eindhoven. I do not remember any specific reason to choose TU Eindhoven, but I do clearly remember that I had chosen the Netherlands just for being able explore the bicycle capital of Europe and probably of the whole World.

Upon arrival
A student would usually take a flight to travel from Sweden to the Netherlands. I preferred a bus journey! Yes, you read correctly, I completed the 1600 km, 20+ hrs journey in a Bus from Stockholm to Eindhoven via Malmo-Copenhagen-Hanover-Amsterdam-Eindhoven, crossing Denmark and Germany enroute. The University is very close to the Eindhoven Railway and the Bus station. I reached a week before the classes started at TU/e. Unfortunately, I had missed the arrival days and the welcome party which was arranged by the student union, but I was lucky to have my flatmates who had attended it and they helped me to get along. The procedure to register for the courses was clear from the documents provided to me. The schedule was also made available before, which helped me to plan my courses. The International coordinator made the students register at the Town-hall. The appointments were already made for me prior to my arrival.

Financials
It’s a difficult section to analyse, but I will try to put it as clear as possible. The house rent was comparatively higher than it was at KTH. The supermarket rates in Eindhoven were slightly lower than they were in Stockholm (based on Lidl supermarket). The Bread, Milk and dairy products were less expensive in Eindhoven. The Erasmus scholarship from University didn’t help much. My monthly expenditure was about 550 Euro (5261 SEK) including rent. The students cannot work part-time, as it
requires a different visa, which is usually not given to Exchange students. KTH has better laws for students in that aspect.

Accommodation
I was one of the lucky students that had privilege to stay in the campus! It was a new building, a 4-star well furnished apartment at reasonable rate. It was so new that it didn’t exist on google maps, nor on the campus-maps!! My room was on the 10th floor and I could see the far-away cities too. My room had a window facing east and every morning, I could catch the colourful dawn colours! I shared the flat with three other Exchange students, two from Italy and one from Spain. The supermarkets and the railway station were easily accessible. The campus itself has a supermarket, which is a bit expensive comparatively.

My Room
I was allotted the housing by the University. Unlike KTH housing, the housing at TU/e is managed by a separate housing company called Vestide. I enjoyed staying on-campus as most of the students around me were exchange students from the Universities from all over Europe.

University and studies
The University has a lot of courses to offer from different departments. I liked their Photonics group and dedicated LED lighting research group under Electrical Engineering. But I wasn’t surprised, as the Philips has roots in Eindhoven. The TU/e students can take as many courses they like, but they must finish their degree within two years. But at KTH, our course limit is fixed, but the tenure is a bit flexible. At TU/e, the day started at 7.00 AM for Dutch people. Whenever I woke up at 7.00 AM, I could see the employees locked-on to their computer screens. From 10th floor, I could see almost the whole campus.

View from my room
Courses

TU/e had many elective courses to choose from several programs. The ‘Biomedical Sensing Technology’ course, offered by Electrical Engineering Dept. ventured into the rather-intimidating mathematics and electronics side. The reason behind opting this course was to explore more into the sensing electronics used for Biomedical sensing and its future aspects. The ‘Designing with complex sensors’ course was offered by Industrial Design department, which means, along with the technical work, I also had to do the user testing, gathering qualitative data, analysing quantitative data.

Drone in the Making-the project I worked on

The ‘Project Management’ course offered by Operations Management was mandatory for me from KTH side. That was the reason I had decided to complete it from TU/e. The ‘Energy Efficient Embedded Systems; course offered again by Electrical Engineering was related to my background on Embedded Systems. It delved more into the software optimization aspects of the Embedded Systems, thus making them more Energy efficient. The knowledge and experience gained will definitely help me go a long way.

The Drone team- I was lucky to be the part of this team
City and country

The beautiful country of the Netherlands will leave anyone spellbound. Like everybody else, I also got myself a cycle to enjoy the red-carpet (cycle-track) laid out for cyclists, all over the country. The Netherlands boasts about being the safest country, which was quite true. The city of Eindhoven is a charming city, as are most of the European cities. The speciality of Eindhoven is the company ‘Philips’. Philips was founded in Eindhoven in the year 1891.

Exchange students usually complain about the rains, but being a nature-lover, I loved the variation in the weather. It snows here too, but not as much as it snows in Sweden. I also found out the typical Dutch fact “The Dutch people like to complain about the weather all the time”. The average temperature in winter circles around 0 degrees. I didn’t have much issues coping-up with cold, as I had lived in Sweden for a year. Experience counts!!

Leisure and social activities

The University Sports Centrum provides discounts to all the students to avail the facilities. I used to go bouldering every week and climbing. Swimming, Squash, Badminton, Basketball, Judo, Tae-kwon-do, Boxing, Kick-boxing, Swimming are also included in the membership and of course, Field-Hockey and Ice-Hockey too. I used to go bouldering and climbing with my friend from Czech Republic. When not climbing, we would go running along the lakes behind the campus. I also enjoyed the start-up events, technical talks organised by the responsible departments. The events used to attract faculty and students from all over Netherlands (yes, the Netherlands is a small country, geographically). The GLOW Light festival 2016 in November was the best time for me to be in Eindhoven. During this week, every street
in Eindhoven is decorated with lights and every corner features a light experiment. The excitement continues till the Carnival in February!!

I used to volunteer with a local group to teach the refugees. During my free time, I taught basic Electronics, craftwork etc. to the refugees in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The pic below is the group I used to work closely with. They too enjoyed having my company.

![Volunteer group based in Eindhoven](image)

Other recommendations and observations

I think I like travelling a lot and I usually get along easily with the new culture and new cities. Adopting to study culture of TU/e was hence not much of efforts to me. But my friends (from EIT-Digital) who had their mandatory Exchange at TU/e and other Universities did face some technical difficulties. KTH follows 7.5 ECTS per course system and other European Universities follow 5 ECTS per course. Hence the new students (from KTH) found it difficult to manage the course load.

Making local friends helps, always. I was fortunate to have a group whom I could spend my spare time. I got acquainted with the new place very well. All in all, I do not regret any move I made from my end. I loved it all. I am very much glad to have undertaken the European Exchange opportunity which brought me closer to such amazing people in my life. Also, my special thanks to Malin Hedberg and all the team, coordinating the Exchange students from KTH and TU/e. This exchange was one of the best moments in my 2 year Masters Programme at KTH.