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Reflective Portfolio

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Erasmus+ Sweden Exchange

Martin Mathew
Technische Universität Dresden



eUTOPIA

About the EUCI & My Erasmus+ Journey

EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalisation (EUCI)

The EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalisation (EUCI) is a recognition of significant international and intercultural engagement.

It is awarded to students who demonstrate:

- **Reflective Learning** – the ability to look deeply at one's own experiences, evaluate personal growth, and consider multiple perspectives.
- **Intercultural Awareness** – understanding and reflecting on relationships between different national cultures, languages, and ways of thinking.

Key facts:

- **Activities:** At least ~30 hours of substantial international engagement.

My Erasmus+ Exchange Semester

- **Host University:** Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden
- **Period:** September 2024 – March 2025
- **Focus Area:** Master's thesis research – "On the Hydrodynamics of Foiling Craft: Development of Control System for Controlling Hydrofoil using PID Controller"

Key Activities:

- Conducted advanced Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulations in a multicultural research environment.
- Collaborated with Swedish and international peers on marine hydrodynamics.
- Participated in cultural exchange events and student networking activities.



Reflective Cycle – My Erasmus+ Sweden Experience

Description (What happened?)

During my Erasmus+ exchange, I conducted my master's thesis research at **Chalmers University of Technology** in Gothenburg, Sweden, focusing on CFD simulations for hydrofoil control systems. My work involved collaborating closely with both Swedish and international peers in a dynamic marine hydrodynamics research team. Beyond research, I participated in academic seminars, workshops, and informal cultural exchange events that enriched my overall experience.



Feelings

I felt a strong sense of excitement about the opportunity to work in a state-of-the-art research environment and to apply my technical skills in a real-world setting. However, in the early weeks, I experienced some uncertainty about how I would fit into a new academic culture, particularly given the different communication styles and expectations. Over time, as I became more familiar with the team dynamics, my confidence grew, and I became increasingly comfortable sharing ideas during multicultural group discussions. I also noticed that my feelings changed over time—starting with excitement, then some moments of doubt, and later growing into steady confidence. Each positive interaction, whether in a meeting or a casual chat, made me feel more at home and encouraged me to speak up more often.

Evaluation

Looking back, there were many positive aspects to the experience: access to advanced simulation tools, exposure to diverse problem-solving approaches, and the warmth and support of my peers. At the same time, I encountered challenges in adapting to indirect communication styles, a slower pace of decision-making, and a less hierarchical structure than I was used to in Germany. These differences initially required adjustment but ultimately taught me valuable lessons in patience and adaptability.



Analysis

The Swedish emphasis on consensus-building had a profound effect on our group work dynamics, fostering inclusivity but often slowing down decision-making. The open office culture encouraged frequent peer consultations, which created a highly collaborative environment and improved knowledge exchange. My initial hesitation in contributing ideas was partly due to differences in academic hierarchy expectations; over time, I learned that influence in such settings is often built through trust and active listening.

Conclusions

This experience has significantly enhanced my adaptability in intercultural research environments. I have learned that diversity in perspectives can lead to more innovative technical solutions, though it requires patience and understanding. I also realized the importance of first observing and respecting the local work culture before attempting to influence it, which ultimately leads to more effective collaboration and mutual respect.

Action Plan

In future international projects, I plan to engage earlier in cross-cultural discussions to build rapport from the outset. I will continue applying inclusive communication strategies that I developed in Sweden, ensuring that all team members feel heard and valued. Additionally, I intend to integrate the intercultural insights I gained into my thesis writing and future CFD projects, using them to foster stronger, more collaborative working relationships.



Intercultural Insights – Lessons from Germany & Sweden

Academic Culture

- **Germany:** More structured and formal in academic settings; clear hierarchy between professors, supervisors, and students. Meetings often follow strict agendas and timelines.
- **Sweden:** Academic culture is more relaxed. Professors and students interact on a first-name basis, and input is welcomed from all levels. Group discussions tend to focus on consensus rather than quick decisions.

Social Culture

- **Germany:** Social interactions are polite but can be more reserved, especially in new relationships. Punctuality is highly valued in both social and academic contexts.
- **Sweden:** Social interactions may start quietly but can become very open once trust is built. Fika (coffee breaks) are important for informal bonding and are often as valued as formal meetings.



Personal Intercultural Growth

Adaptability

- Learned to adjust to a slower, more consensus-focused decision-making process without feeling frustrated.
- Became more comfortable working in flat hierarchies, where ideas are valued over seniority.



Communication

- Developed skills in active listening and allowing space for quieter voices to contribute.
- Learned to express disagreement politely and constructively, in line with Swedish communication norms.



Overall Growth

- Realized that intercultural collaboration requires patience, flexibility, and empathy.
- Gained confidence in navigating cultural differences, which will benefit future international research projects and collaborations.



Evidence & Hours



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Erasmus+

Dezernat Studium und Weiterbildung International Office

- Anhang I zum Diploma Supplement -

Appendix I to the Diploma Supplement

Im Rahmen einer Erasmus+ Mobilität zu Studienzwecken hat

In the frame of a Erasmus+ student mobility for studies

Martin Mathew

Geburtsdatum / *Date of birth*: 01.03.1998

erfolgreich an der Partnerhochschule:

has successfully completed an exchange stay at the Partner university:

Chalmers tekniska högskola / Schweden

im Zeitraum von:

in the time period of:

02.09.2024 bis 31.03.2025

einen Austauschaufenthalt absolviert und an oben genannter

Partnerinstitution folgende Ergebnisse erzielt:

The student has achieved the following results at the above-mentioned partner

institution:

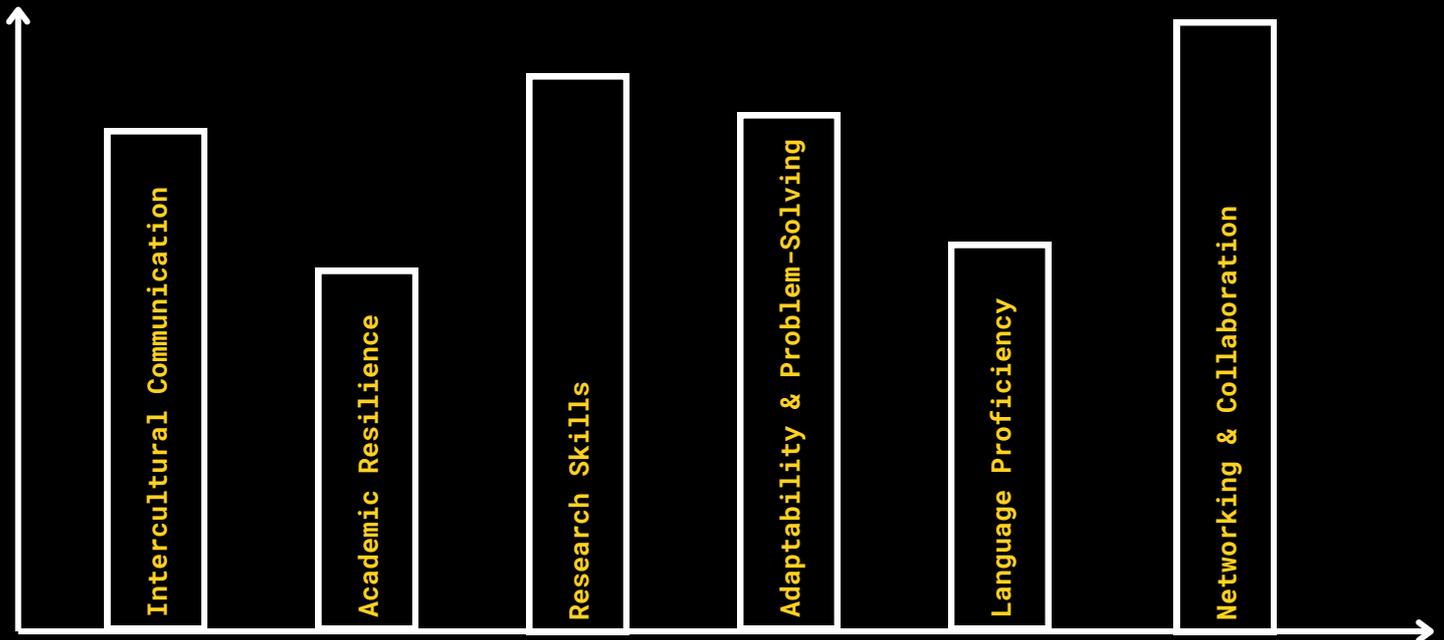
30,00 ECTS*

* unabhängig von den zur Anerkennung eingereichten und bewilligten Auslandsleistungen
erfasst / regardless of the study achievements submitted and approved for recognition



Participation > 30 hrs

Skills & Impact: Growth Through Exchange



- **Intercultural Communication:** The ability to effectively engage, understand, and collaborate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- **Academic Resilience:** The capacity to persist through academic challenges, adapt to new educational systems, and maintain motivation under pressure.
- **Research Skills:** Mastery of methodologies, data analysis, critical thinking, and effective presentation of scientific work.
- **Adaptability & Problem-Solving:** The ability to quickly adjust to changing situations and creatively resolve obstacles.
- **Language Proficiency:** Improved command of a foreign language including academic, social, and professional contexts.
- **Networking & Collaboration:** Building and maintaining professional and personal relationships in academic and multicultural settings.



Future Goals & Action Plan



Milestone 1 – Short-Term Academic Goals (0–6 months)

- Integrate Swedish academic sources and case studies into my master's thesis.
- Apply research methods learned abroad to ongoing CFD projects.
- Share technical insights from exchange via blog articles and short explainer videos.



Milestone 2 – Medium-Term Professional Development (6–18 months)

- Collaborate on joint research publications with international contacts made during exchange.
- Leverage intercultural communication skills in upcoming research group projects.
- Expand my blog into a knowledge-sharing hub for CFD and student exchange experiences.



Milestone 3 – Long-Term Career & Cultural Goals (2+ years)

- Build an international research network in marine hydrodynamics and fluid simulation.
- Pursue career opportunities where technical expertise and cultural adaptability intersect.
- Continue producing educational YouTube content to inspire students to explore both engineering and global learning opportunities.



Thank You & Reflection

Acknowledgments:

- Gratitude to mentors, professors, and research supervisors at both home and host institutions.
- Appreciation for peers and friends who made the cultural and academic experience rich and memorable.
- Thanks to the exchange program coordinators who enabled this journey.



"An exchange isn't just about studying/ moving abroad—it's about transforming how you think, work, understand, and connect with the world."

Moments to Remember!



Connect with me!

For more insights and experiences from my Erasmus+ exchange, visit my blog by clicking the thumbnail below.



MARTIN MATHIEW
#ERASMUS+
DAYS | 14 x 19 of October 2024
Göteborg

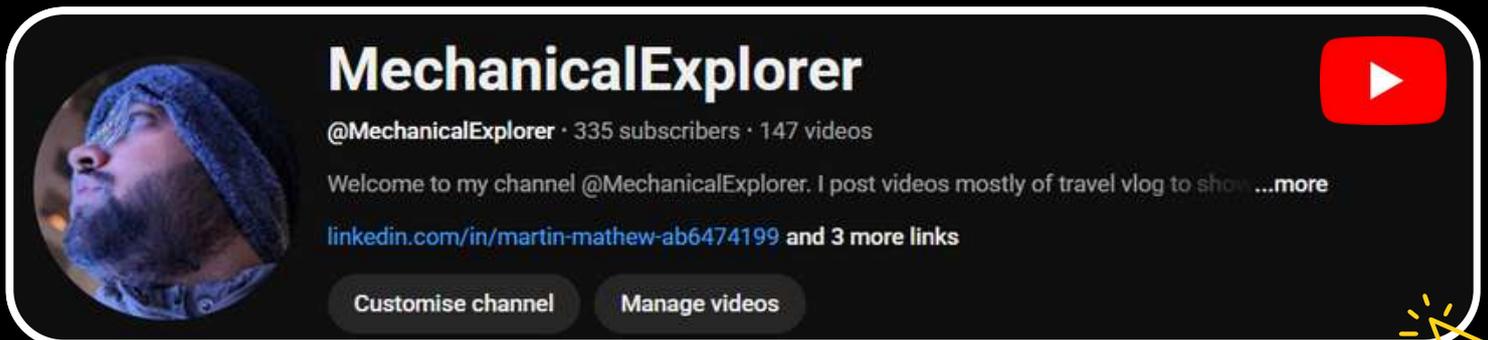
HOME | WHY ERASMUS? | ERASMUS JOURNEY | GET IN TOUCH

Welcome to my Blog! | Willkommen in meinem Blog! | Välkommen till min blog!

About me
9/7/2024

Author
Mechanical | Simulation Engineer
3 Comments

I have also compiled a series of vlogs on my YouTube channel during my stay in Sweden. You can watch them by clicking the picture below. If you enjoy the content, please consider sharing and subscribing—it would mean a lot to me!



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Martin Mathew
*/martinmat13

