

## Erasmus+ staff week at Luleå tekniska universitet (Sweden) in March 2023



*Fig. 1: Luleå in March 2023  
©Gladys Espejo*

### **A field report by Gladys Espejo Uribe (International Office, HHU)**

As part of an Erasmus+ staff week, I was a guest at Luleå University of Technology (LTU) in Luleå (Sweden) from 13 – 15 March 2023. The UNIVERSEH coordinators on site had created a varied, exciting programme for us and organised everything so that we had a productive and great time. We were a group of 35 participants who had travelled from three universities in Toulouse (France) and one each in Krakow (Poland), Luxembourg and Düsseldorf.

Eleven staff members represented Heinrich Heine University (HHU). Our group was a diverse one, as my colleagues came from many different administrative departments at HHU.

### **Preparation (application, planning and organisation)**

Some colleagues from my department, the International Office at HHU, had already told me about their positive experiences during past staff weeks, so I had been looking forward to participating in one. When I heard about the upcoming staff week in Luleå at the end of November 2022 via an e-mail from a colleague and few days later from an information letter from the department head, I did not hesitate and got approval for my application after checking with the department head.

At the beginning of December 2022, I contacted the UNIVERSEH mobility coordinator at HHU by e-mail and registered my interest in participating in the staff week. A few days after that, we had a virtual coffee break (a.k.a. "fika") with the UNIVERSEH mobility coordinator for LTU and the other interested participants, where we had the opportunity to learn more about LTU and their staff week. A few days later, I was happy to receive a confirmation e-mail that I had a place on board the HHU team for Luleå. This was not guaranteed, as the number of interested people exceeded the number of available places for the staff week.

At the end of December 2022, I submitted the business trip application for the staff week in order to obtain financial support through the Erasmus staff mobility programme and, after approval, I completed the online application through the move on website.

In the time leading up to my departure, the Swedish organisers repeatedly sent us e-mails with specific information on topics such as travel, accommodation, the programme and preparation for our stay there. Before departure, I created a short presentation in which I introduced the degree-seeking area of the International Office.

### **Travel and accommodation**

There are two ways to get to Luleå in northern Sweden: by train and plane. I chose to fly. Direct flights from Düsseldorf to Luleå were only available on Sundays in March 2023; on other weekdays, you can reach Luleå with a stopover in Stockholm. The city of Luleå offers hotels and accommodation in all categories and price ranges.

### **During the stay**

The primary goal of the training programme was to offer all administrative staff the opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from each other at a European level with other colleagues from UNIVERSEH's partner universities. The staff week proved to be an excellent platform for this. During the three days of the programme, there was an in-depth exchange about the work at the universities, the goals of the respective administrative areas and their concrete approaches.

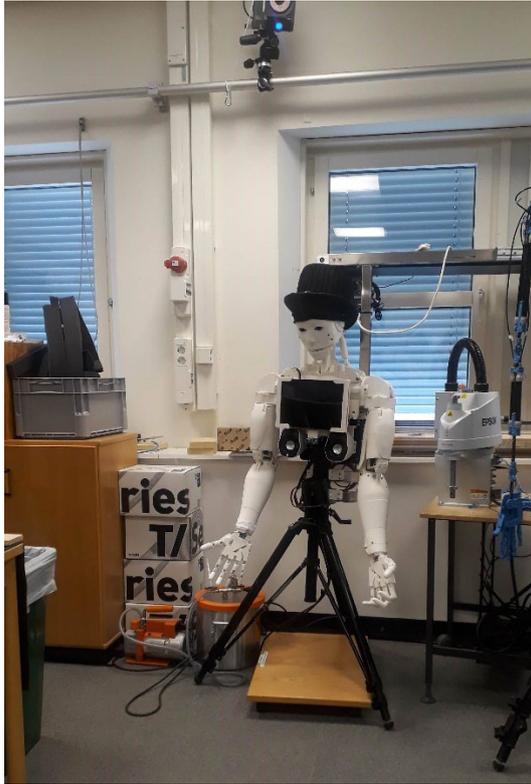


Fig. 2: Staff week programme

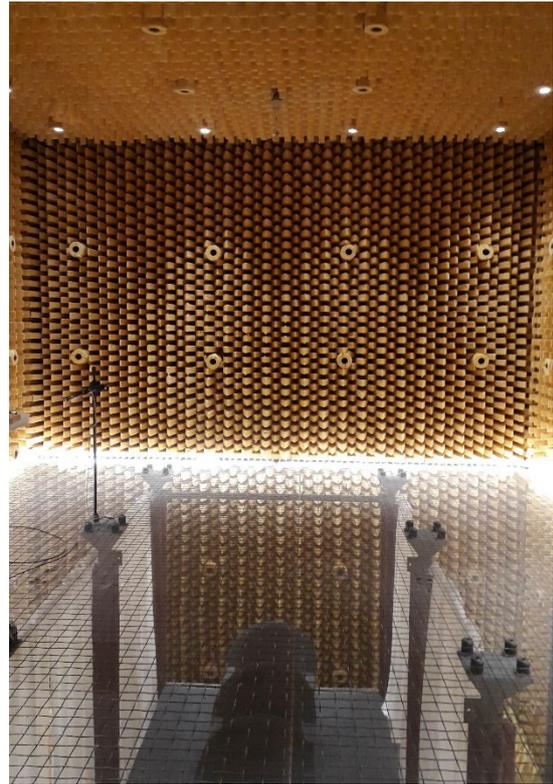
During the workshops, we formed groups on various subjects such as the International Office, student and examination administration, communication, library, etc. Here, everyone had the opportunity to present their work field. In our workshop group, we had discussions and collected new ideas that could be implemented at the universities.

In exchange with staff members from other International Offices, I not only had the opportunity to present myself, but also to learn from their work and challenges, and what concrete support and help looks like, for example, in the areas of leisure, networking, accommodation and immigration authorities. For the degree-seeking area of HHU, I was able to bring back so many useful things from Luleå.

Overall, the organisers designed the programme in a very diverse way. Besides the cheerful host's welcome and the productive workshops, I also liked having the opportunity to visit two research laboratories at Luleå University of Technology (LTU) with the focus on robotics and sound and vibration, which gave us a good impression of what is done at LTU.



*Fig. 3: Robotic Lab, ©Gladys Espejo*



*Fig. 4: Sound and Vibration Lab, ©Gladys Espejo*

Thanks to the cultural activities organised by the host university, the group grew closer together and all participants were able to expand their network. One of the daily highlights of the Swedish culture turned out to be the fika, a typical coffee break with a chat and delicious sweet pastries. Sledding on Luleå's Ice Road and a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Gammelstad church town completed the great days in Luleå. The perfect ending was a dinner together, after which we went outside to see and marvel at the amazing northern lights.



*Fig. 5: Fika, ©Gladys Espejo*



*Fig. 6: Gammelstad church town, @Gladys Espejo*



*Fig. 7: Ice road, @Gladys Espejo*

### **Language skills**

The communication took place in English throughout the staff week, as all colleagues and the host spoke English. I found it very positive to be able to communicate in English for three days. It allowed me to refresh my language skills.

### **Conclusion**

I found the Erasmus+ staff week in Luleå a very enriching experience. I can wholly recommend participating in it to everyone. In my opinion, the programme developed by the organisers was the perfect combination of networking, interesting insights into the work of colleagues and cultural

programme. Everything together made Luleå an unforgettable experience for me, for which I am very grateful. I will definitely apply for a staff week again.



*Fig. 8: Staff week participants ©AnnaCarin Larsson*