

---

# Five Exams in One Week? It Can Be Done, Says 10,000th Outgoing Erasmus Student

---

## Five Exams in One Week? It Can Be Done, Says 10,000th Outgoing Erasmus Student

20. 9. 2011, by P. K., category: Students

Pavĺina Sýkorov decided to take advantage of the Erasmus exchange programme and spent ten months at the law faculty of the [Universit Lille 2 Droit et Sant](#) in the French city of Lille. At the beginning, she was being surprised all the time – by the dormitories, the food, the exams, and also by the libraries. Everything was so different from what she was used to at her home university. In the Charles University records, she is the Erasmus student number 10,000.



**Why did you choose to study law in Northern France?**

I wanted to spend some time abroad and found myself attracted to Northern France. Once you've been learning a language for some time, you establish a relationship with its country. In Prague, I selected French as my compulsory second language of expertise and took some other related courses, so I was well-versed in the terminology and had some knowledge of French law. Also, I'm not into hot weather. If I was better in English than French, I might have gone to Scandinavia instead.

In the end, I found Lille based on database references and personal recommendations and I am very happy for it. It's a very pleasant city and so is the region. When I was applying for Erasmus, there was more interest among the students in the French-speaking regions than in the previous years. The number of positions for outgoing students was being reduced and eventually, only twenty of us got in.

**When you came to Lille knowing that you will spend two semesters there, weren't you a little afraid?**

It reminded me of my first year in Prague five years ago, when I also came into a new city that I didn't know that well. You're on your own in a strange town, carrying a huge luggage, not knowing where anything is. You might have a map, but the reality is completely different.

Some people from the faculty's student organization were waiting for me in Lille. I was an hour later, but luckily for me, they were patient and eventually we found each other. They saw a girl with luggage and guessed it was me. For the first two days, they were helping us get around, which was a huge relief.

**How did you like the dormitories?**

I was looking forward to having my own room, but at the beginning, it felt a little strange. For five years, I had lived at the Hvězda dormitory, which is probably Charles University's worst one, but I never complained. I grew fond of it, because in the end, it's not the looks but the people and the atmosphere that are important.

In France, it is common to have your own room; you also have a small enclosed shower, in which you can barely turn around, your own toilet and a kitchenette. I missed a communal kitchen, which is usually the site of social life at dormitories. At the beginning, I felt a little lonely, maybe because I was used to a more lively atmosphere. But eventually, once I had got to know my neighbours at other activities, we even did cook together.

**French bureaucracy is just as famous as French cuisine. Which one of these surprised you more?**

Some of the initial administrative problems were my fault, but all in all, it was all a little disorganized. The way they run things is a little different – I only have words of praise for the Charles University Faculty of Law in this respect. In Lille, we received information about various events at the faculty via email. But signing up for exams was more difficult: we had to check the notice boards in front of the international office regularly, sometimes the information was even wrong. The biggest shock was to find out I had to do five exams in one week. I had three in a day, and what's worse, two exams at the same time! Then I learned it's not a huge problem, you just switch the lines. People are waiting in lines for the exam and somehow it works out. It shocked me in the first semester, but the second one brought no more surprises.

The library had some surprises in store for me, too. There was a guard walking around the library, watching out for disorderly conduct. He was even checking if there was actual water in your water bottles. As for food, the dining hall had a wide selection of food for three euros – you could choose not only the main dish, but also pick your choice of appetizers, desserts or fruit.

**What did you learn in the course of your stay in France?**

I learned to find my bearings in a new environment, where nobody knows me. I had to establish myself. You have to figure things out yourself – you get into situations and meet people that you might not understand, so you have react to all kinds of unfamiliar situations. It has lots of pros, while the con is that sometimes you might feel sad, but that usually passes very fast.

Pavλίna Sýkorová, 5<sup>th</sup> year student of the Charles University Faculty of Law: "I think I've spent enough time in school, so I'd like to get a job in the field. I find prosecution very interesting, but let's wait what the future has in store for me."



