

myEUROPE Chats

A shortened transcript of the second Chat:
Studying in Europe

Detlev Clemens, expert - The European Commission
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Participating Schools:

German Language Highschool, Sofia, Bulgaria
Carmen Sylva Highschool, Eforie Sud, Romania
School Eforie Nord, Romania

GLHS-Kamen: Why students go to study in other countries?

Clemens: You can do it for private reasons but especially for your professional qualification. You want to meet people and see other countries.

GLHS-Ivan: How much should I pay to learn in another country? Do I have to learn the language which is spoken there? Where will I live there?

Clemens: Preferably yes but there are many countries now where courses are offered in English. Normally host universities will give you help for example places in dormitories or the like.

GLHSNicky: What scholarships are available for studying computer sciences in Germany?

Clemens: There are a range of scholarships available e.g. ERASMUS student grants but possibly also national grants. You should enquire at your university about which partner universities they have and what kind of grants are offered.

GLHS-KAMEN: What do you need to be admitted to an Italian university?

Clemens: See my answer re. Germany.

GLHS-Ivan: If I go to study in Germany is there any organisation that can help me to find a place to live and a job?

Clemens: Normally all universities have offices for international students to help them find accommodation. You should contact them through you home university.

GLHSRADO: How much money do we need to study in Germany?

Clemens: That depends on your standard of living! It may not be cheap.

GLHS-Ivan: How will I be treated in Germany if i go there as a member of the German population or as a visitor?

Clemens: Difficult question: let's hope that you will be treated as a very welcome guest.

Eforie: There is not much info in Romania available to students who want to study in Europe. How can these students learn about admission to other schools, scholarship available and requirements for study?

Clemens: First contact point for you should be the international office at your home university. Of course there is much information on line, for example about the European programmes. (see f.e. the DG Education and Culture website at: <http://>

europe.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html)

GLHSNicky: Are there any accommodation services we can find on the web (Germany in particular)?

Clemens: Yes there may be, but for foreign students I would recommend to go through the international office at the host university. See answer above.

GLHS-Ivan: Will I have the right to go out? I mean to visit clubs discos and other places where young people gather?

Clemens: Yes, of course.

GLHSRADO: I actually wanted to ask whether there was an obligatory amount of money, which we have to show in a bank account.

Clemens: For ERASMUS: no. As far as visas are concerned, students from non European countries have to give evidence of certain amount of money available for their stay abroad. The embassy of the intended host countries will give you precise information.

GLHSNicky: What requirements are there for studying in the Netherlands?

Clemens: My answer that I gave about Germany and Italy applies to all European Union countries.

Eforie: What are the basic criteria considered when universities are conducting the application process?

Clemens: If you are talking about ERASMUS scholarships you must be in the second year of your studies. If there are many more requests than grants available universities will have to select according to grades or other priorities they want to apply.

GLHSNicky: What does the EU do for equalising European education systems?

Clemens: The EU does not want to equalize European education systems, but it wants that your studies abroad will be fully recognized by your home university.

Eforie: The Romanian system of education is not one in which students can make many choices about the subjects they study. Does this pose a problem for students who want to study in another European country?

Clemens: No it does not pose any problems.

GLHSNicky: Hi, Petru and Mr. Clemens. It is pretty hard to have some hands-on activity right now (Violeta)?

Eforie: How is a student punished if he doesn't respect the rules?

Clemens: Normally students are not "punished". In the worst of cases they may not be allowed to do exams or continue their studies.

Eforie: What are Western European Countries' perceptions of the Romanian system of education?

Clemens: My personal impression is that in European countries people don't know much about the Romanian system of education.

GLHS-Ivan: What are my chances to find a job abroad that matches my education?

Clemens: Your question is too general. Please be more specific.

Eforie: Can students study in countries like Germany or France if they are not fluent in German or French?

Clemens: Normally not but for ERASMUS students language preparation is part of the grant.

GLHSPhillip: Is it easy for a foreign student to find a job in a European country?

Clemens: If she/he is from a country outside the European Union it may be difficult.

GLHS-Ivan: Can we get grants after our graduating from high school?

Clemens: Again, for ERASMUS grants you have to be in at least the second year of your studies.

Eforie: Is it possible for a student, after the Secondary school to study in colleges in Italy?

Clemens: That depends on their personal preferences and circumstances (money available).

Eforie: Does second year of your studies mean that you apply at the end of the first year for ERASMUS grants?

Clemens: Very good question, you should not wait too long before applying for an ERASMUS grant at your home university. For example, if you want to take language preparation courses you should apply early enough even in your first year.

GLHS-Nicky: Is it allowed for foreign students to work and study at the same time in the Netherlands and Portugal?

Clemens: I don't see how this could be possible.

Eforie: Do most grants cover the costs of housing (for most Romanians, they will need to rely almost entirely on grants)?

Clemens: The European Commission and the Romanian authorities are aware of this problem. You must inquire at your home university how much the ERASMUS student grant actually is and whether this will be enough to cover the costs for studying at the partner university you choose.

GLHS-KAMEN: Will be there better opportunities for Bulgarian students to study in Europe after Bulgaria has been integrated in the EU

Clemens: GLHS-Kamen, Probably yes, but already now students from Bulgaria have the right to fully participate in the European programmes such as SOCRATES, LEONARDO or YOUTH.

GLHS-Ivan: Do we have the right to work during our study?

Clemens: Normally you are not allowed to work officially without a work permit.

GLHS-Ivan2: How can we get a work permit?

Clemens: GLHS-Ivan2:, Normally you don't get a work permit as a student, but go to the consulate/embassy of the country you want to go to and ask.

Eforie: How many applicants win ERASMUS grants each year?

Clemens: About 100.000 ERASMUS grants are awarded by the home universities each year.

Eforie: Are the opportunities for High School students to spend time studying abroad in another EU country?

Clemens: Eforie, Within the action COMENIUS there are possibilities for pupils to go abroad in the framework of transnational cooperation projects. But you cannot go on an individual basis.

GHLSRADO: Now, when the visas for Bulgarians are no longer needed, does that mean that we may study abroad without long term visas.

Clemens: I don't know I only learnt from you that visas have been abolished.

Eforie: Is there a standardized test like the SAT (US) which is used by EU universities in the application process?

Clemens: I don't know all universities may apply different procedures.

GHLSRADO: What papers do we generally need to study abroad (we are most interested in German speaking countries)

Clemens:: Check with the international office of your university. Also there are so-called SOCRATES National Agency in your country which you can ask for information. You will find the address through the SOCRATES home page.

GLHS-Ivan2: For which majors is the Leonardo given?

Clemens: You can apply for a Leonardo grant when you undergo professional training. For more information you can go to the website of the European Commission <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/progr.html>.

Eforie: The exams in the first year of a Romanian university are valid in a same kind of university in EU?

Clemens: The decision on academic recognition of exams lies in the sole competence of the (host) university. Therefore, a general answer to your question cannot unfortunately be given. But the more similar the courses are the easier it should be that your exams will be recognised.

GLHSPhillip: Could you give me more information about grants in the countries, where university education is free, as in Germany?

Clemens: GLHSPhillip, Sorry I cannot answer for all the different universities/countries. Please go to the international relations office of your home university. Or contact your national agency for SOCRATES (see my answer above).

GLHS-Nicky: Have you ever been to Bulgaria?

Clemens: GLHSNicky, No unfortunately not, but I would be glad to come one day.

Manowar75: What are the requirements of the EU for students who want to receive grants?

Clemens: Manowar75, You must first check whether your university takes part in the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme. If yes, they will tell you about all the requirements; for the EU, the only requirement is that you come from a country participating in the education programmes such as SOCRATES and that you are in the second year of your studies when you go abroad.

Eforie: Is it possible for a student from Romania to study in EU university after graduating the BAC in Romania?

Clemens: Generally yes.

GLHSPhillip: Which institution should I apply to if I want to receive a grant when I go to study in Germany for instance?

Clemens: Contact the international office at your university first. ERASMUS grants are handled by them.

GLHS-Nicky: Where can I learn more about the Erasmus grant?

Clemens: Ask at your home institution or go to the following website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/erasmus/home.html>

Eforie: Do you know of University-level collaborative projects that students can participate in prior to applying to an EU university?

Clemens: There are many projects in the framework of the ERASMUS and COMENIUS actions also in your country. For details you should ask university whether it is involved in any such project.

GLHS-Ivan: What are the requirements for students who want to receive grants?

Clemens: See my answer above.

Manowar75: Is it possible for students to start their higher level of education in their own country and finish it elsewhere in Europe and where can I find INFO about universities, which enroll students from Bulgaria?

Clemens: ERASMUS student grants do NOT normally allow you to take your final exams at the host university. Of course, with your own money or a grant other than ERASMUS, you may be free to choose the country where you want to take your final exams.

GLHSPhillip: Can we have exchange for one semester or one year with high-school students from an EU country?

Clemens: The education programmes funded by the European Commission do NOT foresee such exchanges.

Manowar75: What kind of grants does the EU give?

Clemens: There is a wide range of grants available under the programmes SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and YOUTH. For details please check the DG Education and Culture website at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

Eforie: Do you know if the Romanian baccalaureate is recognized in other countries?

Clemens: For get detailed information please contact the NARIC contact point in Romania:

Ms S. BADULESCU

Ministry of Education

Str. Général Berthelot 30

Ro- 70738 Bucharest

Tel: 40/1/615.74.30

Fax: 40/1/312.48.77

GHLSRADO: Would you recommend me some universities in Germany?

Clemens: In Germany it is impossible to make general recommendations. It very much depends on the subject you want to study. The German weekly newspaper Der Spiegel regularly sets up university rankings according to the different subjects.

GLHS-Nicky: What do we have to do to get some info on studying in the Netherlands?

Clemens: A useful website could be <http://citizens.eu.int>: where you find specific informations about working/living/studying in all EU member states.

Clemens: Please contact me personally under detlev.clemens@cec.eu.int. That's an invitation for all participants. You can also write in German.

GLHS-Ivan2: It was a pleasure for us to be involved in this chat. Thank you and have a nice day!

GHLSRADO: Bye, we were impressed and pleased

GLHSPhillip: In Germany university education is free, therefore I don't think there are any grants or any other financial aid.

Eforie: We have to go. It was interesting for us to participate. Thank you, bye!

Clemens: Eforie, No not necessarily.

Manowar75: Mrs Tsoneva kicks me! Bye and thanks!

Clemens: Manowar75, Bye to everyone, thank you for chatting with me. Hope this was helpful.

Eforie: Thank you....

Petru: Thank you to Mr. Clemens!

GLHS-Nicky: Mr. Clemens, on behalf of our students I would like to thank you for spending some time with us in Chat 2. Hope to talk to you in Chat 3 soon. Violeta