



STUDENT DETAILS

University department / faculty:	Facultät für Humanwissenschaften
Field of study:	MA in Peace and Conflict Studies
Home university:	Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg
Nationality:	Colombia
Duration of traineeship (<i>from ...to...</i>):	from April 14 to October 13 2022

TRAINEESHIP INSTITUTION

Country:	Belgium
Name of traineeship institution:	International Crisis Group (ICG)
Web page:	https://www.crisisgroup.org/
Address:	Av. Louise 235/5th floor, 1050
Contact person:	Camille Le Tallec
Telephone / E-Mail:	+32 2 502 90 38/ cletallec@crisisgroup.org

EXPERIENCE REPORT (*approx. 3 pages + more photos if applicable*)

1) Traineeship institution

Please give a brief description of your host traineeship institution.

The International Crisis Group is an independent organisation working to prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world. Crisis Group sounds the alarm to prevent deadly conflict. Their research aims at building support for good governance and inclusive politics that enable societies to flourish. ICG engage directly with a range of conflict actors to seek and share information, and to encourage intelligent action for peace.

2) Searching for a traineeship

How did you find your traineeship? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?

The Crisis Group was on my radar when I was looking for an internship because I do research on conflict and the ICG is one of the largest organisations in this field. So I regularly visited their website: <https://jobs.crisis-group.org/>. It is important to remember that most medium and small organisations do not advertise their vacancies very well. So I recommend regularly visiting sites like LinkedIn or their official websites. An Excel document with all the URLs of the ORGs I was interested in also helped me to keep track of job and internship advertisements.

3) Preparation

How did you prepare for your traineeship in terms of language, intercultural, professional and organisational aspects? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?

The work at Crisis Group is very international and English is the main working language, so I did not have much problems on that end. Moreover, Brussels is a very international city where you can use English for most of the aspects of daily life! If you are interested in a multicultural and international environment this is definitely the place to be! However, there are some things that need to be taken into account beforehand. First, finding accommodation can be quite tricky given that on each country there are specific rules and alternatives for accommodation. As a tip that I would give is always to ask your manager and your colleagues in the city for helpful advice, they usually know the best ways to get accommodation or general advice that can make your life easier. A colleague of mine recommended me to look on Facebook groups of international students living in Brussels, those groups helped me estimate how much I would have to pay for a room. Don't pick the first one! There are many options and sometimes agencies try to make you pay the most expensive price.

4) Accommodation

How did you find your accommodation? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?

I was lucky to find a tenant by asking friends of friends. I posted on Instagram I was looking for a room in Brussels and a friend of mine replied saying she had a friend living in the city, perhaps he could help me. That friend ended up introducing me to Tania, my landlady now, a former colleague of his. I think that was optimal given that she was sub-renting the room and wanted to find someone she can trust. Me, on the other hand, wanted to find a full furnished apartment in a shared flat, so it worked for both of us. The only problem was that the flat was far from my office, and since it was relatively cheap, I did not dare look it up on a map! Students should take this into account as big cities can make a big difference in terms of transport from your home to the office! (it took me nearly 50 minutes with several changes)

5) Traineeship

Please describe the tasks and / or the projects carried out during your traineeship. In which way were you mentored and integrated? How were the working conditions? Did you have especially positive or negative experiences?

I was in charge of:

- 1) Assisting the Research Unit in preparing and publishing the monthly CrisisWatch bulletin, a bulletin that assesses the security situation worldwide. I was in charge of writing the Latin America entries: Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua. During the course of my internship I was also assigned two more countries in Africa: Mozambique and South Sudan.
- 2) Contributing to the preparation of the Research Unit's regular horizon scanning briefings to policymakers;
- 3) Researching and drafting background materials on conflict issues for the Research Unit and other Crisis Group staff upon request;
- 4) Contributing to monitoring & evaluation tasks as directed;
- 5) Maintaining and updating the unit's databases;

Working conditions: conditions were great, I had my own office and computer. I managed to get to know other teams and members of the organisation

6) **Acquired qualifications**

Which qualifications and skills could you acquire or improve during your traineeship?

- Fact-checking in investigative journalism.
- Learning who to write op-eds (Editorial articles).
- Database management and editing of webpages.

7) **Country-specific features**

Are there any specific traineeship regulations in the target country that affected you as an Erasmus trainee (e.g. France: housing allowance, convention de stage)? If yes, which ones? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?

NA

8) **Visa, residence and work permit (only for international students)**

Which prearrangements had to be made in terms of visa, residence and work permit? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?

for registration to the city in Brussels and types of residence according to different periods of time:
<https://www.brussels.be/student-registration>

9) **Other**

Is there anything else you want to let other students know?

One must create a budget, especially when going to cities that are very expensive, like Brussels!

10) **Conclusion**

What is the conclusion drawn after your traineeship experience abroad?

I really liked it. I am very grateful I could come here and get to know my team in person, especially since meetings online are so transactional and one can feel really alone and unaccompanied. I totally recommend it and wish many students will benefit from this scholarship too!

Declaration of consent

I hereby agree to the publication of this report on the website of the Leonardo Office Saxony-Anhalt.

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Please send this report by email to angela.wittkamp@ovgu.de!
Acceptable file formats: [.doc], [.docx], [.rtf], [.odt].