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ESCP Europe – Paris

Fall 2016 (September – December)

- I studied in ESCP Paris between the months of September – December 2016.

Paris is one of the most beautiful cities I have seen in my life. It is full of great restaurants, amazing markets, good food, incredible wines and the prettiest and most famous galleries and museums.

- ESCP stands for "École supérieure de commerce de Paris", and it is located in the 11th quarter, just between the famous République and Bastille squares. The area is very popular, full of great bars and restaurants, and it is liveliest during the evenings. In the weekends, there are many great clubs open in the area.

The school itself is compiled of 5 buildings surrounding a beautiful typical French courtyard, quite small, but definitely magical, and it looks like it was taken from a fairy tale story.

The school is very international, and students who study there are from all over Europe. ESCP Europe has 5 campuses in the continent- Berlin, London, Torino, Warsaw and Paris. Students who wish to finish a degree from ESCP business school, are obligated to do it in at least 3 different campuses through their studies, which makes it very international. The school is one of the only places in Paris that the majority of the people speak English, a fact which shouldn't be taken as granted.

When I studied there, we were around 150 exchange students, coming from all over the world (not mostly from Europe, as most of the permanent students in the school). The majority of the students were much younger than me (I was 32 when I studied there), between the ages of 22-26, while the exchange students were even younger.

- Courses and professors- I took 6 different courses in marketing, consulting and finance. Some of the courses were very intense and included many assignments in groups (a great experience by itself, is to work with students from all over the world and witness the differences between cultures). Other courses were easier, and only requires an assignment as a presentation in the end, and a presence in class of at least 80% of the semester.

I think that the level of teaching and studies in Tel Aviv University is better and more demanding than in ESCP.

I advise to take courses of half semester if possible – those courses are easier and less intense.

Sports – the university offers many sports courses, from basketball to rowing and even KRAV MAGA. Take the courses, it is worth it. It cost around 80 Euros for the whole semester (for most of the courses) and it is a great way to meet new people (especially if taken teams' sports such as soccer etc.)

Integration course is given (mandatory) in the first week of the semester, for all the foreign exchange students. The course' purpose is to integrate you to France and especially Paris. Some of the classes are very interesting, and some are not, but it is definitely important. There is a test in the end of this course. Also, for the first time, when I studied there, there was a mandatory course of integration and business in France, which took place once a week.

- Accommodation – I moved to Paris with my girlfriend, so we rented an apartment together in the Marais (the Jewish area, very touristic and very expensive). For me, looking for an apartment as a couple was easier than for a student looking for an apartment with roommates or alone. Finding an apartment in Paris is hard, especially when doing it from Israel, and it should be done few months before moving. We rented a fully furnished apartment through a website for short term sublet called www.parisattitude.com. The rent was high compared to what we could have found, and we needed to pay commission to the mediator, of more than a 1000 Euros (a lot of money). I think it is a very expensive way to find an apartment, but it did save a lot of problems.

The university will send a handbook of all the possibilities to find an accommodation few months before the beginning of the semester, which is very useful.

I applied for a scholarship called CAF, which is provided to students from the French government. I had to have a French bank account and an address in Paris in order to apply for it. It requires a lot of patience (like every coping with the French bureaucracy) and all made in French (I used the help of my girlfriend and the secretary in the exchange student's office). In the end it helped and I recommend using this scholarship if possible.

- Visa – Israelis need a visa if staying more than 3 months the Schengen area (which includes France). Going out of the area and coming back doesn't extend the possibility to stay (it is counted as 3 months within 180 days' period). The visa is needed when opening a bank account and for other procedures requiring some paperwork. It is quite easy to get the visa – an appointment in the French consulate, bringing the letter of acceptance from ESCP and after a month (without the passport which is deposited in the consulate) and the visa is ready.
- Transportation – I lived 15 minutes walking from school, so as long as the weather allowed it, I walked. The metro system in Paris is amazing and very efficient (and unbelievably big). The metros work until 1 AM, and after that a cab is required (the

city is huge, and it can be very cold). In general, it is possible to buy a card called NAVIGO (all you need is a passport picture), which costs 73 Euros, and allows free transportation within most of Paris. Pay attention, the month begins every 1st of the month and not from the day you charged the NAVIGO. In general, if you plan to travel with the metro more than once a day, the NAVIGO is cheaper (one ride in the metro is 1.9 Euros).

- Insurance and Health Services – insurance is mandatory in ESCP. I subscribed to the more expensive private insurance, which covers doctors and accidents. ESCP will send a detailed document specifying the health insurance needed and payments before the semester starts. The prices and the procedure are different for students in different ages. Health insurance needs to be done in Israel, before leaving the country.
- Living expenses- The rent is very expensive, as in every big city in Europe. Restaurants can be cheap or expensive, depends what you eat and where. If you decide to cook, you will save a lot of money. The prices of most of the groceries in supermarkets are cheaper than in Israel at about 30% (especially the wine and the cheese, and don't forget the baguette). I recommend to buy food in one of the many markets (shuk), which take place in different days in different places. In the markets, the food is amazingly fresh (especially meat, fish and vegetables) and significantly cheaper than the supermarkets. It worth the effort to travel a little bit far for the markets.
- Night life- the nightlife is great, and the city is full of bars and parties, especially in the weekends I recommend the Latin Quarter, which is very hip and full of students, as my favorite bars area. Also, there is a bar at school, which hosts great parties at Mondays, and it is very (very) cheap.
- Tips –
 - Bring copies of papers with you- the French love papers and will ask to take copies of health insurance, passport, rent contract etc.
 - Some of the students I know were robbed and pickpocketed. Stay safe and be aware, especially in the metro.
 - After the terror attacks of 2016, there are awareness and presence of army and police in the streets. It looks normal for us, as Israelis, but it is very not normal for the French.
 - Bring doctor approval with you from Israel, in English, stating that you are allowed to participate in sport activities in school, if you want to otherwise, scheduling an appointment to the doctor takes a long time.
 - Study French before moving to Paris, at least the basis- it will make your life easier.
- Studying in ESCP is one of the most amazing experiences I had, not only studying wise. Take this opportunity to travel in France (which is beautiful, and easy to travel)

and in Europe. I tried to travel in the continent as much as I can, and Paris is a very good place to travel from. You can find trains from the center of the city to many places in Europe, and it is cheap and convenient.



