

# **Santander Group Staff Exchange Programme Report**

**Mr. Pablo Díaz Jubete**  
**University of Cantabria (Spain)**  
**International Relations Office**

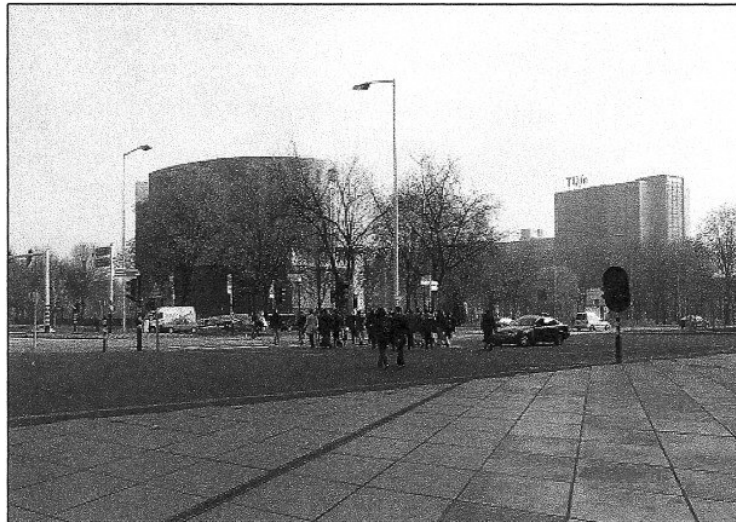
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## Introduction

I work at the International Relations Office of the *University of Cantabria* (Spain) and I have visited *Technische Universiteit Eindhoven – TU/e* (The Netherlands).

Our office deals, among others, with the Erasmus Programme, which now also provides students with the possibility of spending an academic period carrying out internships abroad. Thus, my main interest in this visit was to get to know the way *TU/e* manages internships abroad in order to pick some useful ideas to put into practice.

I would like to thank both the Santander Group staff and all the colleagues at *TU/e*. To the first, for letting me enjoy an exchange in the framework of this programme and of course, all the support; to the second for the warm welcome and all their efforts in making my stay the most fruitful possible.



Technische Universiteit Eindhoven campus

## Walk around TU/e campus

After arriving at the *TU/e* Regional Leonardo Office and having introduced myself to Ingrid van Orten (information for students of the *TU/e* and the Design Academy) I was taken to Mrs. Drs. Anneroo's Dijkhuis' office, with whom I walked around the university campus.

Mrs. Dijkhuis gently showed me every single building of the university and talked about the particularities of them and of the university in general as well.

## Meeting with Mrs. Marjo van der Valk

I met then Mrs. Van der Valk (Manager *TU/e* Regional Leonardo Bureau) who was, by the way, my host at Eindhoven. Some interesting conclusions obtained from that meeting are the following ones:

1. Cooperation with firms requires a change in the way we work. At the university we can utilise terms like “academic year” but firms do not care about this; their main goal is to earn money. They have certain needs and it is the intern’s task to get adapted to the firm’s policy. Internships should not be necessarily embedded in the academic year.
2. Universities should not make all the paperwork and formalities for students because in real life, once they try to look for a job, they will not have any help.
3. Technische Universiteit Eindhoven is a member of the LEO-NET network. This name stands for “Leveraging Education into Organisations – Network”. Universities and firms collaborate in this network by means of an offer list for placements which, although designed and created for members at a first stage, is open for everyone. Marjo van der Valk is agree with keeping this tool accessible also to non-members since she thinks that it is not ethical to hinder the search for the best potential candidates. Should a candidate be the most suitable for a post, the firm should then get him / her (even if he or she is not a LEO-NET member).
4. There is a project for including an offer list (fed by the same data base that provides the LEO-NET one with information) in the Santander Group web page so that people identifies the logo and layout of this web and they better trust in this tool.



Meeting with Mrs. Marjo van der Valk

#### Visit to Hogeschool Utrecht

I had the extraordinary opportunity to travel from Eindhoven to Utrecht to visit its University of Applied Sciences thank you to Marjo van der Valk’s daughter who is currently working at the International Relations Office as Coordinator for Grants and Scholarships.

Elke van der Valk introduced me to Marianne Goes, International Relations Officer, to whom I talked about our respective universities and our exchange programmes. She was interested in some kind of cooperation; however, our universities, so far, have only the possibility to exchange students within the field of Labour Relations.

The International Relations Office of Hogeschool Utrecht is located in a very nice area downtown in a former hospital. Most of the university facilities are located outside the town though, at *Uithof* campus, where they have 5 of their 6 faculties. Elke invited me to get in a bus to visit two of them.

Once there, our first visit was the faculty of Economics & Management, where we had an appointment with Mr. Gert Lijkendijk (internship coordinator). Students from this faculty must carry out two internships during their academic life.

The first one takes place in Holland when they are in their second year; this internship is intended to let them familiarize with labour market. The second one (in fourth year) provides them with more credits than the other one and can be held abroad. This second internship lets students to show and put into practice all what they have learnt at university. Both internships represent 45 credits.

Mr. Lijkendijk explained me that the faculty has its own intranet on which a list with all the placements available is published.

Even though a vacant is satisfied they let the information remain published; they prefer that every firm itself communicates students whether the offer is still available or not: this gives more transparency to the whole process and everybody can know what sort of internships are offered or could be offered again in the future. On the other hand, perhaps a firm does not need an intern at one specific moment but maybe it will interesting to have a pool of candidates after current interns finish their internships.



Hogeschool Utrecht. Uithof campus

Mr. Lijkendijk undertook to e-mail us a set of the documents the use for internship management. We agreed to help each other find internships for our respective students. It seems that Spain is nowadays a hot spot for Dutch students.

Concerning the academic management of internships, depending on the country (especially if they are not very far away –because that implies higher costs–), they send teachers to visit the firms where their students are carrying out their internships abroad. The purpose of these visits is to strengthen links between firms and the university and, of course, to oversee interns' performance.

After this meeting, I had an appointment with Mr. Richard Versmissen (internship coordinator at the faculty of Communication & Journalism).

Mr. Versmissen has a totally different opinion considering whether their offer list of internships must contain as much information as possible. For instance, they ask the firms, when sending the documents for every student dossier, if they want the university to offer an internship at their premises next time.

To find firms, as well as turning to teachers' contacts, they pay attention to the places where interns have previously stayed undertaking their placements. Thus, they elaborate a data base with those firms that historically have turned to provide with good results.

#### **Meeting with Dr. Ir. Martin Bastiaans**

Back in Eindhoven I met Dr. Martin Bastiaans, the departmental coordinator for the faculty of Electrical Engineering. Their student sending procedure, in the framework of the Erasmus programme, is completely different and teachers are who propose brilliant students to spend a period of their studies at a foreign university where these academics have already contacts.

Dr. Bastiaans provided me with an Internet address especially created by him for incoming students and kindly asked me to spread this information back at the University of Cantabria.

He also said that he prefers fifth-year students (as younger students do not have enough experience to benefit their stay) carrying out internships (no less than three months). Bachelor students are not suitable because bachelor courses are held in Dutch.

Finally, he also mentioned that he does not care if the amount of incoming students is balanced with that of outgoing students; that is not a priority.

#### **Other meetings**

Finally I met Mrs. Karoline Duijvesz (Advisory Centre for subsidy and contracts) with whom I had a nice conversation talking about our respective universities and Petri van der Vorst, from the International Relations Office, to whom I agreed to send the contact details of *BCU*, a centre that provides foreign students with support in finding accommodation in Barcelona (one of the favourite destinations for their students).