

Una Europa Live my life: report by Raisa Asikainen (Helsingin yliopisto) and Benjamin Langer (Freie Universität Berlin)

Berlin stay: 14–18 November 2022; Helsinki stay: 21–25 November 2022



Beautiful: the view from the coffee break room in Helsinki with snow.

It was a dark time of the year when we visited each other at our universities in November 2022. But this did not detract from the added value of the experience, and in Helsinki even heavy snowfalls brightened things up – at least from the German guest’s point of view.

During the Live my life experience, we focused on how to combine a multitude of work tasks and balance them in everyday work. If there are exchange agreements waiting to be signed while at the same time there are project funding applicants urgently waiting for guidance, which comes first? How are agreement signatures arranged? Do they need to be handmade? Or would it be possible to work in a paperless office with Una Europa colleagues in the same way as colleagues do in Helsinki? Which role do automated workflows play? How is teamwork organized? And what’s the deal with coffee breaks, anyway?

We learnt a lot about how each university works which will help with writing joint project funding applications – we now understand much better about the timetable and processes at both universities. Through reciprocal camps tours, we deepened our knowledge about each other’s university’s history, identity and structure. And, last but not least: We got to know each other better and made the acquaintance of other colleagues, thus tightening the bonds between our departments. Although it was not always easy to balance Live my life and the very mundane everyday tasks that needed to be done, it was a truly enriching experience.

What comes next? Hopefully a joint coffee break once a month, even online, including some of our key colleagues if they are available, to catch up on the latest mutual work tasks and experiences.



Caught Raisa’s attention: the carpet with FUB’s seal in the entrance area of the building where Ben’s office is located.

Helsinki and Berlin in December 2022: Raisa Asikainen and Benjamin Langer