1. Preparation
In September 2013 I already started to search for information about possible universities. I was particular looking for the offered courses available on each university. This was very important for the Learning Agreement to get my course being credited and I was communicating with Mr. Thoben – the Erasmus- representative of my Faculty- a lot. Finally I found convenient courses and was so applying on the 15th of January 2014 for the Erasmus program. After that I did a language course, wrote about my motivation participating the Erasmus-program and did the other organizational steps which were necessary.

2. Apartment hunting
According to the apartment hunting it has to be said that it is really difficult to find a flat. There is an organization called the “housing office” that is procuring flat for about 300€. In this student houses a room cost around 370€. I can highly recommend at least to try to find a private room via Facebook groups (Groningen rooms, Kamers Groningen, etc.). I had luck and found a cheap room via a “Skype-Meeting” and thus had not to go to Groningen for the apartment hunting.
Because I just stayed here for one semester I did not open a Dutch bank account. I got my money via my Visa-card in order to pay everything cash.

The University
Since the University of Groningen was founded in 23th of August 1614 and has actually more than 29000 students, it is one of the oldest and biggest universities of the Netherlands.
I studied at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB). Since this year this faculty has two prestigious international hallmarks excellence: AACSB and EQUIS. That is why the FEB ranks among the top 1% business schools in the world.
In the university complex from FEB, which is located 10 minutes (by bike) from the city centre, there is fast Wi-Fi everywhere available. In the same complex there is the economic based library with fast computers. The main library is in the city centre which is the point where the most students study for their exams.

Study:
In contrast to Germany there are two periods in each semester. At the RUG there are just courses available that counts 5CP. It is normal to write exams in the end of each period (8 weeks) in one or two weeks. Additionally there are often assignments to finish (in a team) and at least one book and several articles to read. As an Erasmus-student I appreciated to write assignments, because of this teamwork you got in contact with different Dutch or international students and built up friendships easily. In general I can summarize that the proficiency level is much higher than in Germany. It is not difficult, but the fact of a lot of learning matter makes the study very time-consuming.
But in the same time it is very interesting, because of reading many practical articles and books about a topic instead of just learning lecture slides by hard. The assignments are also very
interesting. Besides learning how to work in a team, the student gets more practical inputs about a topic. In Innovations management for instance we had to write about the innovation activity of a real firm. Thus we had to travel to Amsterdam to interview a design agency about their business activities. But for students just want to study life, culture and people, the RUG is not a suitable university. Because of learning Spanish, visiting lectures outside my regular study like Psychology and Astro-Physics and the higher proficiency level, I had to reduce my plan of taking 25CP’s to 20CP’s: 1) Teamwork: Theories, Design and Dynamics 2) Purchasing & Supply Chain Management 3) Innovation Management B&M 4) Topical Themes in Development Studies

The university is well-organized. There are a lot of information-desks and the employees are motivated to help.

Student life and free-time:
As mentioned above I really enjoyed to study outside of the box and utilized the huge offering of different courses.
Additionally the RUG offers an amazing offering from sports. The fee for one semester is 39€ and there if everything offered from Adventure Race to Zumba (see more at http://www.aclosport.nl/en/sports/). In summertime you can also do a Kite- or Wind-Surfing course for free. I was climbing which included an international climbing certification, playing tennis, snorkeling/ diving and practicing Krav Maga.
Besides sports Groningen is an amazing student town. Because of these many students there are many bars and nightlife. Regarding to its size there are a lot of things to explore. The Dutch way of going out is to do bar-hopping instead of going to one, special club. There are theaters (students price around 7€) and a lot of bars with live-music.
But if you expect a new culture, it is not the right place to be. The Dutch culture is kind of similar to our culture.

Transportation:
The mass transportation medium is the bicycle. By cycling you reach every point in Groningen within a maximum of 15 minutes. That is why you should first buy a bicycle and good locker (high rate of thieveries). I bought my bike via the Facebook group “For Sale in Groningen” or “Bikes in Groningen”.

Living costs:
Although Erasmus-students have the advantage not to have to pay for study-fees and to get the sponsorship, the normal cost for a student is higher than in Germany: Groceries and rents are more expansive and thus I would estimate the living cost at around 700€.
Conclusion:
It is a nice experience to study in Groningen. The city is full of life and a cute, little student city. Nevertheless you should know that it is not a “chilled” semester without work. For course that is 5CP you probably need to invest more time than you are used to, but in the same time it is more practical and interesting. By living in a new and unknown place you learn a lot about yourself, the way you want to live your life and get in contact with other cultures. These things you will probably experience in every semester abroad, but because of the good student conditions and the vital student life Groningen is a good place to be!