

# Final report Cross Move – C. Hornemann

## PREPARATION

The decision to go abroad was made early. As soon as I knew that we could go abroad soon, I got in contact with a colleague from Kaunas from my previous department. She gave me the contact for the communications and trainings department, where I made a fast contact with Ieva and Laura. Both had been really happy that they can help and offered me the opportunity to go abroad as soon as I want. So everything else from the German side had to get figured out and after two weeks my Cross Move was approved.

The week before my flight I was really nervous; I made everything clear with my apartment in Germany, say goodbye to my family, the handing over of my project of my previous department to another colleague and finally packing my back for the next 70 days in East Europe.

Ready, steady, go – to Lithuania!

## CROSS MOVE

The trip began on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April at 5:20 a.m.: Check-In to the flight to Vilnius, Lithuania, transferring after a four hour delay in Amsterdam finally to Vilnius, where I arrived at 5:30 p.m. in the capital Vilnius.

Vilnius itself is a beautiful, historical and sovjetic city next to the border to Belarus, Latvia and Poland. In the capital live half a million people from all over the world. The official language of the country is Lithuanian (which is an own language and with nearby no similarities to the Russian language), but the older people mostly speak as their second language Russian because of the historical background of the country. The younger generation speaks English, but if they can speak it, most of them are really good in this language. The mentality of the most Lithuanians is pretty strong, but they stick in their groups and act a little bit “cold” to foreigners, but also to people they do not know good enough.

The first day at work started for me pretty “early” in the morning, because I need to get to Ieva’s house who lives more in the south of the city. Together with Laura, we started our one-hour ride to Kaunas. During this time, I got to know them a bit better and both work couple of years at Continental and even longer in the communication field.

Kaunas is the second biggest city in Lithuania. Here the industry is growing in the last couple of years and this year it is one of the European cultural cities. Here live around 300’000 people and there are six universities located. Continental is the biggest German company in Kaunas; therefore, Continental is here very important for student graduates and new employees with growing numbers of employees for Continental Lithuania.

The plant is in a new industry park in Kaunas and around the plant are only fields which will be in the next years hopefully filled by other companies. Right now, it looks like Continental Kaunas is somewhere in the nowhere, but with a lot of space, something

like a green garden between the buildings. The “green garden” is directly in front of the building with some trees and a little water fountain. You really see that it is a new plant – everything is green and new design.

The whole plant is a “Green Plant” which means that the whole plant was built with the aim to be in the future up to 100 % environment friendly. Also, the employees treat their plant with a high level of respect, keep it clean and like to work in this area.

The colleagues at the plant (which are 20% foreigners) made it for me easy to feel welcome. My team included me into their tasks, and I became a look into communications, event management and (for me the most important) how a good team should look like. The tasks and the work in general had been creative and full of fun during these 10 weeks.

I was able to join my first (during Covid and the start of my study program not possible) Town Hall Meeting in Kaunas (which was luckily completely in English due the plant manager is from the U.S.), I joint some events with middle school students, but also some engineering students from the Kaunas Technology University. Further I was able to join a recruiting workshop and wrote some articles for the internal magazine “Success Stories”.

The whole working experience in Kaunas showed me again how big Continental is and how many different people work here. Kaunas with all its different people, the modern and open work areas, the will to change something makes the work itself easier and really senseful in my eyes.

## CLOSE UP

The experience at Kaunas plant is the best decision I could have made. The whole plant is dynamic, changes a lot and are full of young and smart people. Kaunas plant will grow in the next years and it is amazing to see which job the people are doing here.

During the past 10 weeks I met so many international people in Kaunas and Vilnius, and the different work climate showed me how working in the future can look like. Also working in an international team with the locals, but also with other foreigners made my Cross Move special.

I really appreciate how my team included me with everyday business and gave me the opportunity to operate tasks on my own. The work here differs a lot from what I used to in Frankfurt, but definitely not in the bad way.

After 70 days in Lithuania, some broken language skills, many new expressions, and things I have learned, I thank Ieva and the team very much to include me.

My greatest thanks are going to my supervisors and team in Kaunas Ieva and Laura as well as my trainers Nicole Mandrisch and Maik Schmidt, which had been supportive before and during my whole Cross Move.