

DANIEL KELLY - BCL LAW WITH FRENCH LAW

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE



My year in Aix-en-Provence has been the highlight of my time in university. Aix, a relaxed student town in the south of France, is full of cafés, markets, and cultural attractions. It is also located near the Mediterranean, forests, and national parks.

My Erasmus has allowed me to experience studying in two different academic environments. In Ireland, emphasis is placed on critical engagement with the material from day one; the French system instead focuses on understanding the material in great detail and with more of a focus on legal philosophy and history. Ultimately both approaches lead the student to understanding and critically engaging with the law.

In studying EU Internal Market Law both in Dublin and in Aix, I experienced how the same subject is approached in different manners by different legal systems. In Dublin, much emphasis was placed on the caselaw of the CJEU whereas in Aix, more focus was placed on EU legislation and harmonisation. This is reflective of the central role of caselaw in a common law system like Ireland, in contrast to a civil system like France, where judge-made law only plays a minor role.



Life in Provence has been an incredibly enriching experience. Much more socialising happens over a coffee than alcohol when compared to Ireland (although Aix boasts four Irish pubs) and the warm, dry climate allows for much more outdoor sports. For example, I was able to take beach volleyball classes this semester, a great opportunity to meet French students whilst getting some exercise and a tan. Additionally, Aix is located near some great hiking spots, such as Mont Sainte-Victoire and the Calanques national park.



This year has allowed me to study subjects I wouldn't otherwise have been able to, to look at subjects with a broader European focus, and to more generally look at law from a different point of view. As someone interested in EU law, the French I have learned here will be invaluable in the future, as well as my understanding of the civil legal system.

After my Erasmus, I have a much better idea of what I want to do after graduating from UCD. I look forward to studying subjects such as European Competition Law and Financial Law next year, with a view to an LLM in EU Law post graduation.

