

Interview with Remko Schellingerhout

Internship at Zorlu Foreign Trade

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Remko Schellingerhout is studying International Business at HES, Amsterdam School of Business. He explains that in Zorlu Holding, where he works for the representative of the Dutch market, there are 2200 employees. And he cannot help but compare the size of the company with the population of his town in Holland: *“I come from a little town of approximately 3000 inhabitants called Koudekerk aan de Rijn near Leiden. Almost the size of the ZORLU factory!”*

He first came to Istanbul a few years ago, to study one semester at the Boğaziçi University. He says: *“Dutch people say straight forward what they think and they do not promise what they cannot do. Turks instead, promise a lot, but they do not necessarily do what they have promised. They have good intentions though.”*

“Life in Istanbul is different than what we have in the Netherlands. Istanbul is very big. You leave your home at seven o’clock in the morning and you are hardly home by eight in the evening. There is all this time that you spend in traffic. Once you are home, you are exhausted and you don’t want to leave anymore. So, it is not easy to meet up with friends after work. This is not the pace in Holland, even in Amsterdam.”

Remko is following Turkish language courses during weekends. He says that there are so many people around him, both in his company and out on the streets, who don’t know English. *“To learn Turkish is therefore a necessity if you want to do business with Turks.”* It is remarkable how much he learned in just a couple of months. Remko’s enthusiasm in learning Turkish must have a lot to do with his very good Turkish friend in Holland. And another reason seems to be related to his plans for the future as he includes Turkey in it somewhere: *“I will first have to finish my last semester in school. Then this summer I would like to come back again to Turkey both for holidays and to continue with my language courses. I consider my experience in Turkey and my knowledge of Turkish as an advantage when I am looking for a job. It will be a plus point in the Dutch market. I hope to find a job in a company that works or is ready to work with Turkey.”*

When asked how he sees himself five years from today he easily comes up with an answer: *“married with children, and hopefully with a job also! Who knows, maybe I could be working in a company in Turkey! I would really like that”*

Before concluding our little chat, we ask him if there are any changes between the Istanbul that he visited a few years ago and today. He says that there are fewer Tofaş cars on the streets: *“less Tofaş cars and more shopping malls!”* Well, if Remko’s observations are correct, it may be interpreted as a sign of the new economy and a well planned automotive industry.

Leaving the interview with Remko, I could not help thinking: we should learn not to promise more than what we can cope with!

Interview by Elif Yarsuvat
