



Antonio Farfán Vallespín, Spain

"In Germany the students are much more self dependent and responsible."

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Toni is late for the interview. A few days ago he became a father. Maybe he didn't get enough sleep last night? When he finally arrives at the Europa-Café at the University of Freiburg it turns out that his lateness has nothing to do with the baby: Antonio has just received several phone calls and emails offering him various positions as a professor's assistant. Now he is spoilt for choice.

Having worked in industry for five years, the Spanish finance expert decided to change his career from business to academia three years ago. He opted for a master's degree in Freiburg, a picturesque university town, famous for its warm climate and relaxed atmosphere. Today he is happy to be in demand professionally and some weeks ago, he submitted his thesis about "Atomistic and non-atomistic beliefs. A behavioral approach to rationality".

Antonio Farfán discovered the beautiful town of Freiburg on a holiday trip with friends. He met the the love of his life and decided to come back and stay in Freiburg. "The international atmosphere, the tolerant, peaceful and calm but still inspiring mood of the town is quite a contrast to my exciting, busy, crowded and polluted home Barcelona", Antonio says.

Having to be independent and responsible is a very special aspect of German university life which makes academic life in Freiburg very attractive. The 32- year old researcher certainly enjoys this independence: "In many European countries, student life is similar to high school life. In Germany the students are much more self dependent and responsible. Nobody tells them what to do, and when. Some of my course fellows had difficulties with this approach in the beginning, but they soon got used to it and enjoy the new style", Toni reports.

Since his goal is to be a professor at one point, he has to think about where he wants to do this: "I can very well imagine staying in Freiburg for some more years," he says. Cheap flights from Basel to Barcelona help him to cope with homesickness and keep his child familiar with her Spanish roots.

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