

Edition 2017



# IAESTE Belgium

## Internship Booklet



Are you ready  
for the  
international  
experience?

## IAESTE IS ALL ABOUT INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS.

IAESTE provides a fun way to discover the world, by working abroad. In this internship booklet you can read stories written by students, just like you, who went abroad last summer with IAESTE. The goal of this booklet is to give you some impressions, to remove all doubts and to give you the chance to get this great experience for yourself!

IAESTE is active in Ghent, Leuven and Brussels. The co-operating institutes are UGent, KUL, VUB and ULB. If you are in your 3rd Bachelor or master in engineering, bio-engineering or sciences at one of these institutes you are able to participate in IAESTE.

Enjoy reading and we hope to see you on the next IAESTE activity; sometime, someplace, somewhere in the world.

*Gert Weutens, Jelle Lanting  
and Liesbeth De Ryckere*

LC Presidents 2017-2018



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*"I can say that on my internship I had more than one mentor, the whole office has put effort into my learning. It was a memorable experience and I would surely recommend it to every student who wants to learn new things about ESD solutions and have a good time."*

Rebecca Grancaric, our IAESTE student 2016

Interested?  
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# CZECH REPUBLIC

ANDRÉE DE COCK

My name is Andrée. I study bioscience engineering at the university of Ghent. Through IAESTE Ghent I got the opportunity to do an internship at the University of Brno. Brno is the second largest city in Czech republic and I totally loved it. I was an intern at the faculty of chemistry for six weeks during summer holidays.

This IAESTE internship was such an amazing experience! Not only did I gain some more knowledge on educational level, I lived in another county by myself for the first time. This gave me the chance to discover the Czech culture, to meet new people, make new friends and to develop myself as a person.

The different topics and projects, I was involved in at the faculty of chemistry, gave me an overview and idea of the subjects the faculty deals with. This stimulated my interest to get to improve my knowledge in this field. In this way it certainly helped me to widen my view on “my” master specialisation, which is chemistry.

Also I learned that working in a high standard scientific organisation is not only about scientific knowledge and analytics. It is a lot about people and communication. My supervisor and colleges were very kind and helpful. They trusted me in what I was doing and took time for me to explain me new tasks and



answer my questions. I am very thankful for that, and will probably cherish this insight for the years to come. It was also very interesting to integrate and work in another university. In this way I discovered different habits, rules and behaviour of the people working at the faculty of chemistry.

An IAESTE internship is, of course, not only about the internship. I did so many great things and made such amazing memories apart from my work. I explored Brno, the city I lived in for 6 weeks. It was a calm and quiet city in the summer period because there were no students. Although there were still some nice organised events like a beer festival, open air movies, beer yoga, art

exhibitions,... During the weekends we made some trips with the interns to some places nearby, such as Vienna and Prague, both beautiful cities! Also, IAESTE Czech republic organised a kayak weekend on the Vltava river. Here I discovered the crazy drinking habits of the Czech people. They get up and have a beer, drink the whole day and rest of the night... Never seen anything like that. And did you know Czech beer is cheaper than water.....?! Not only the beer was cheap, Czech republic, in general, was a cheap place to live. Restaurants, café's, public transport, cinema... And also the room I stayed in, located in a student resort, was half the price we pay in Belgium for a room.

Also, during my internship I discovered step by step the Czech culture. In my experience, Czech people are an introvert population. They were almost never the first one to show interest in me, as a foreign person. Although after a while I noticed that they opened up when you show them you are sincerely interested in them. And then they are absolutely prepared to tell you everything about their life style, habits, educational system, must visits in Czech republic, beer and wine suggestion etc. One thing I must admit.. I did not really like the Czech food

culture. Not so healthy and a lot, really a lot of meat. And yeah... I am kind of vegetarian so not the perfect combination.

During this internship I met a lot of awesome people from all around the world. Mexico, Bosnia, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Colorado, Scotland, Macedonia, Russia, Turkey,... Those six weeks went by so extremely fast. I wish I could have been there for a longer period. I can only say: Don't doubt, just do it!!

# CZECH REPUBLIC



# ECUADOR

ANNELIES VANDEKERCKHOVE

After coming back from an amazing erasmus experience in my first master year I realized I couldn't get enough of the international experience. Unfortunately a second erasmus during my master was no option so I decided to wait until I would graduate to go abroad again. In June that moment had finally come and immediately after my graduation I left to Quito for a 3 month internship. And wow, it has been an amazing summer.

When I arrived in Quito everything went very smoothly; Johanna from the Ecuadorian IAESTE committee was waiting for me at the airport with a name tag and gave me a warm welcome. Soon we were heading to the hostel which was my home for the past 3 months. It was a one hour drive on which I immediately was impressed by the amazing views around Quito, being surrounded by the immensely high mountains of the Andes. The neighborhood where our hostel was located was very nice, on a steep hill with nice views and around the corner we had little local fruit, vegetable and meat markets, which were very convenient during my whole stay. The hostel was rented only for IAESTE trainees so I was living together with more or less 15 other students from all over the world. It was pretty cool to come home and always have friends around, cook together, chill together, listen to music, practice Spanish with my roommate etc. No need to tell you that we had the best time ever in the hostel and I wouldn't have wanted to live in any other place.



Quito,  
Ecuador

My internship was in a company called Grüntec. They provide environmental services to other companies, for example analyzing waste water or soil samples from food or petroleum companies to check whether they respect the environmental guidelines. Grüntec was founded by a German couple, and this reflected in strict working hours and rules. Every day I worked from 8 til 5 and I really learned a lot. They gave me the chance to practice multiple analytical methods and even develop and improve one method which was quite new in the company, e.g. cyanide determination in soils. Definitely, I can say that I gained a lot of knowledge from this experience and would recommend it to anyone. I really liked working for Grüntec, all my colleagues were extremely nice and we became

really close friends after spending all the lunch breaks together. Alejandra, my best friend at work even invited me on a family event, with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins etc and this was a really cool opportunity to experience the real Ecuadorian family culture.

After work, there was no time for rest, I took Spanish classes, which for me added a lot of value to my stay. After some time I could converse with my colleagues that didn't speak English and of course in general it made every day life so much easier. In the evenings, we sometimes went to clubs, dancing to reggaeton all night long, well at least until 2 am as the clubs in Quito closed pretty early.

Every single weekend, we made a weekendtrip with the whole hostel group. Sometimes far, then we left on a Friday evening and took a night bus, sometimes closer, and then we left Saturday early morning. One thing was for sure, the weekend was not meant to rest! We went to Cotopaxi, Quilotoa, Banos, Puerto Lopez, Isla de la Plata, Montanita, Mindo, Rucu Pichincha, Cuyabeno, Guayaquil,

Salinas, Otavalo, Cuicocha, Tena, Mitad del Mundo, Papallacte, Riobamba and Chimborazu. As you just read, we have almost seen whole Ecuador, which is very cool. On top of that, I took some days off to visit the famous Galapagos islands. It's expensive but believe me, so worth it!

No words can describe how awesome the past 3 months have

# ECUADOR



# POLAND

ANNELIES VERHEIJEN

Last summer I did an internship in Łódź, Poland. A city nobody has ever heard of and everyone pronounces wrong. It was the best time of my life!

The flight took only two hours. By chance, there was another person from Belgium on the same plane who was having an internship in the same city. Once we arrived, we took the bus to Łódź. As soon as we arrived at the station, someone from IAESTE picked us up and showed us the way to the dormitory to leave our luggage. After that we explored the city and went to a colour festival. In the evening I met the other IAESTE trainees. There were people from all over the world, around 50 people in total. All of us had a room in a dormitory of the university. It was nice that we were all in the same building, as it made it easier to get to know each other and organize activities in the evening. I shared my room with a girl from Thailand. She was doing an architecture internship as well. Although she was raised in another part of the world, we discovered that we had the same thoughts and interests. She would be one of my best friends there!

The city I was living in, Łódź, was the centre of the textile industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As an architecture student, it was interesting to see the old factories, workers' houses and palaces of factory owners, which were all over the city. Some



Łódź,  
Poland

of them were still in the original state and abandoned, while others were already transformed into another function.

My internship was at an architecture office which was located in the main street of the city. As there are many old buildings in Łódź, the office only did renovations and didn't design new buildings. I worked together with another IAESTE trainee from Spain. Every day we took the tram together to go to work. Our task was to measure old workers' houses and draw plans of them. We had to go on site as well to measure the flats from the inside. It was interesting to see how the people lived there, because the flats were very small. Most of them didn't even have a sleeping room.

After work, I went to the supermarket (everything is extremely cheap in Poland) and cooked my meal in the dormitory. My roommate loved cooking as well, so I had the chance to taste Thai food many times. One day, we organized an international evening with all the trainees. Everyone prepared some food from their home country. I had the chance to taste food from China, Japan, South-Korea, Spain, the USA, Switzerland, Iran, Romania, Mexico and many more.

Also, in the architecture office we had an international lunch one day. I tried the typical Polish food (many sorts of dumplings, pickled cucumbers and cheese cake), but also tortilla de patatas from Spain and a desert from Romania.



Of course, after a week of working, it was time for the weekend! And when you say weekend, you say travelling. Transportation is very cheap in Poland so it was easy to travel around. I took part in two weekends that were organized by IAESTE: one in Poznań and one in Warsaw. These weekends were great, because you had the chance to get to know trainees from other cities in Poland as well. Many activities were organized: kayaking, city games, a jumping area, amazing parties, ...

I visited other cities too with friends from Łódź: Wrocław, Kraków and Toruń. When people think about Poland, they mostly think about the grey concrete buildings. They exist, but there is so much more to discover. The main cities all have a beautiful market place with colourful houses and other historical buildings. You can also go to the mountains in Zakopane and to the sea in Gdańsk.

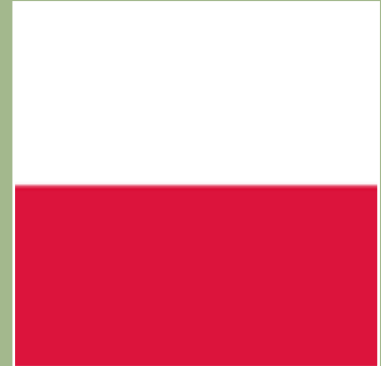
When my internship was finished, I had some days left before my plane

took off to Belgium. This was my chance to go beyond the borders of Poland: I went to Prague with my roommate. This weekend I enjoyed the most. Prague is a beautiful city, and walking around there with the best company I could think of, it was perfect!

It was hard to say goodbye to people, knowing that they live at the other side of the world and that you won't see them soon. But I'm sure we will meet again in the future. Friendships overcome distance!

If you're thinking of going on an IAESTE internship, I would say: go for it! It will be a life-changing experience without any doubt. Also, go a little longer than the length of your internship. This will give you the chance to travel more. And if you think that 8 weeks will be too long, don't worry, it will be over before you even realize!

## POLAND



# SOUTH KOREA

BERT VAN RAEMDONCK

*“En we gaan nog niet naar huis, belange nie, belange nie!”* Imagine singing this song giving your best impression of a drunk person, assisted by people from all over Asia giving their best impression of the Dutch language. Picture tall buildings all around you, decorated with colourfully lit signs, a church with a bright blood red cross piercing the night sky and the ominous silhouettes of hills barely visible in the distance. You’ve just had a wonderful time in a bar enjoying a glass of clear fluid (whether it’s water or soju is up to you) and using your by now divine chopstick skills to devour at least four delicious Gamjajeon pancakes. With K-pop playing in the background, you talked about education in your country, about geopolitical problems, about Kakaotalk’s way too bizarre emoticons and about how you secretly steal cardboard boxes from the trash of convenience stores for your internship.

Sounds amazing, right? Then you haven’t even heard what else we did! We visited ancient Korean villages where we made traditional biscuits, held our breath decorating our own fan and learned to prepare bibimbap: now I know how to cook at least one dish by myself!. We lived in a Buddhist temple complete with complicated dinner ceremonies, lessons to become sunmodo warriors, an awe-inspiring statue carved out of the rocks and the ritual of the 108 bows, which is not as bad as it sounds, considering you had to bow one thousand times



Ulsan,  
South Korea

if you were late! We explored bustling Busan with the Copacabana of the East. We saw many Korean stars on a vibrant K-pop festival with a stage that puts that of the Eurovision song contest to shame. And our engineering hearts jumped on seeing the huge car factory and gargantuan shipyard of Hyundai, which we learned to pronounce like Hyon-dé.

Yes, we interns at UNIST did a lot of unforgettable activities together and formed a multicultural but tight group. Each of us shared a room with a Korean student, so we learned a lot about the culture. We watched movies together, ate noodles and of course kimchi together, and suddenly sporting became fun to me because we did it together. All of that happened

against the background of a super modern and well-funded ambitious university with equipment from Samsung and LG everywhere. Some of us were more interested in their work than others, but no one was as motivated as me. Wouldn’t you be if your job is to design a kind of LEGO out of cardboard aid relief boxes (that’s where stealing from convenience stores comes in) to give some emotional relief to children in disastrous situations? Wouldn’t you be if your work involved what you do for a hobby, if you could use fancy equipment in an environment full of knowledgeable people, some with and some without a taste for knock-knock jokes, and if those people would often take you to restaurants at the expense of the university?

When leaving for Korea and leaving my parents behind in Schiphol, I was scared. I would be alone at the other end of the world, I would go from a student to an employee and I had already accidentally put my utility knife in my hand luggage... But then one miracle right after the other happened: the people from IAESTE Seoul were so helpful, I received a text to show to the taxi driver to take me to UNIST, I accidentally met my roommate, I ended up in a wonderful group of welcoming people, even though I had a lot of trouble remembering

their names and I had a warm supervising professor who even offered me a Ph.D. when I left. IAESTE taught me to also try to be a miracle for others. Because through all those miracles, it took me way less time to feel at home in Korea than it took me to feel at home when I first went to university in Belgium! Thanks to all of those wonderful people, I really meant it that night when I shared our piece of Belgium culture with the Koreans that goes like *"We gaan nog nie naar huis, belange nie, belange nie!"*

## SOUTH KOREA



# VIETNAM

BLERTA OSMANAJ

As my final year at university was coming to an end, I was facing the hard decision of choosing what to do next. I was not really looking forward to the idea of starting to work immediately so I was considering to travel for a year or to do some volunteering. But, while I was browsing through the possibilities of the IAESTE internships one thing popped out for me. It was an opportunity to teach English in Vietnam. As soon as I read the O-form I had already made up my mind to go for it. I had never been in Asia before and Vietnam was definitely on my travelling bucket list, making this internship just perfect for me. In the end I decided to go to Vietnam for 4 months, from September till the end of December.

I was so thrilled to go to Vietnam that I barely slept on the plane. Ergo, huge jetlag during the first days. I arrived in Hanoi and was picked up by another trainee and a IAESTE member. They took such good care of me: took me out for lunch, helped me settle in my accommodation, showed me around the city and introduced me to other IAESTE trainees. I was so happy to be taken up in the IAESTE family right away because to be honest it did take me some to get accustomed to life in Vietnam. I am doing an internship in Thai Nguyen. This is a city which is about 70km away from Hanoi. It is quite big (Belgian standards) and has a



Thai  
Nguyen,  
Vietnam

population of about 320 000 people. Even so, it is very poor and undeveloped. The traffic was one of the things which shocked me the most. There are motorbikes everywhere, nobody uses rear mirrors, if they want to overtake a vehicle the drivers just honk. And I mean seriously honk. As I am writing this report there are constant honking noises in the background. In addition, traffic lights are mainly ignored and the lanes are barely marked on the roads. However, nowadays I ride a motorbike myself and have adapted to the Vietnamese driving style so much that I am afraid that I won't be able to following the rules back in Belgium anymore.

After 2 weeks I had really settled in. As a foreigner you are like a

celebrity over here. Everybody wants to take pictures with you and on the street you are stared at constantly. Nevertheless, you get used to this quite quickly and now I feel really at home in Thai Nguyen. The Vietnamese food is amazing and incredibly cheap. I never cook myself and usually pay less than 1 euro for lunch/dinner. The Vietnamese people are, when not staring or taking pictures, actually very friendly and extremely helpful.

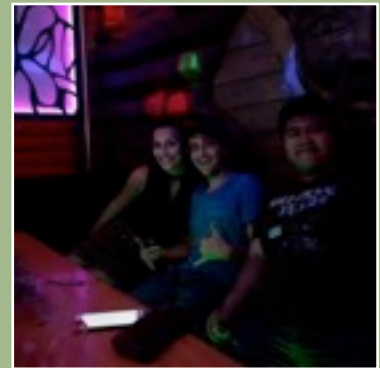
The internship itself has had its ups and downs for me. I have been teaching English to professors at university in the last couple of weeks and I love it. Although their English is very limited, they always try to engage in a conversation and are so enthusiastic. In addition, English teaching is very popular in

Vietnam. There are many English centres where anyone can take up classes. The Vietnamese families tend to invest large sums of money to send their children to these centres after school or in the weekends. I am staying at one of these centres myself. Hence, I also have to teach teenagers (11 to 15 years old) and in the first few weeks I also had a class with little kids (4 to 8 years old). To be honest, the teenagers are okay but even though I love little kids, teaching them is not something that I could do for a long period of time. After teaching, I am having the best time ever with

the other trainees. We are a close group and meet up almost every single day. The only real thing to do around here is going to a beer 'place' (it's not really a bar and not really a café) which is called 'bia hoi' in Vietnamese. The beer is not that good, of course, but it is super cheap. After that we usually go for karaoke, in one of the many karaoke places around here!

Anyway, this is it for now, as my internship has barely begun, but I am absolutely looking forward to the coming months!

# VIETNAM



# ECUADOR

CEDRIC DHONT

The first steps out of the airplane in Ecuador were already amazing. Just outside the plane, I was surrounded by mountains. If I looked a bit further I saw one of the most amazing rainbows I've ever seen. So it was a good entrance with those beautiful views. Leaving the airport was also really easy, one of the IAESTE members was waiting there for me and took me directly to my hostel.

Once arrived in the hostel, all the trainees were chilling in the living room and gave me a really warm welcome. I immediately felt like home and a lot of friendships were made that day. The cool part of living all together in the same hostel is that you get to know people from all over the world. At my first day I made friends who live in India, Argentina, Mexico, Poland, Spain and many more countries.

But now something more about the internship itself. I lived in Quito for (only) 6 weeks. Quito is the capital of Ecuador and has a wonderful historic centre. Each day I had to take the bus to the university where I did my internship. First going for half an hour through the city and then another bus to the city part called Cumbaya. In this last bus, the view was amazing, I passed big canyons with a wild river flowing through, so it was great to experience this scenery inside a big city.



Quito,  
Ecuador

Besides doing my internship at the university I also travelled a lot in the weekends. Sometimes I got a day off on Friday, so I could travel for even three days. I travelled in total 4 weekends. The first weekend I went to Baños for doing some tremendous extreme sports like rafting on a class 4 river, canyoning down huge waterfalls and mountain biking downhill. On the other day we went for the infinity swing and did ziplining. Unique experiences in my first weekend.

The next weekend I went with some friends to Tena, where we enjoyed the beauty of the amazon. We lived one day together with a traditional family and of course this goes together with eating the same as they do. The dinner consisted out of the larvae of beetles, grilled frog

and the heart of a palm tree. I never thought I would say this, but it was really tasty, even the larvae.

The third weekend I decided to do some hiking. On Friday the Pichincha mountain, up to 4650m. On Saturday to Quilotoa, a crater lake which is very beautiful. At last I went to Chimborazo on Sunday, the highest mountain/volcano in Ecuador. We started the hike at 4700m and ended at 5500m. Although the lack of oxygen at this altitude, the hike was fascinating, the view was astonishing and the kick of being above 5000m (higher than the Mont Blanc, highest mountain in Europe) was amazing.

As for the fourth weekend... I don't know yet, because when I'm writing this, I still need to experience this

last weekend. Although the plans are already made of course, I will go to Cuyabeno, a city in the hearth of the Amazon rainforest. As for the stories I heard this trip will be amazing too.

Besides travelling in the weekend, I also went two weeks earlier to Ecuador. In this period I went for 10 days to Galapagos. Very expensive, but it's worth every dollar you spend there. The wildlife encounters are enormous there. In my first hour of being in Galapagos I saw marine iguana's, sea lions, colourful crabs, a school of white tip reef sharks, some golden rays, a pelican and a frigate bird. So you can imagine what the following days were like. I constantly saw new animals I had never seen before or I had even never heard of. When I went snorkelling I was surrounded

once by a school of thousands of sardines, or a sea lion that came to me for playing. Of course we can't forget about all the different colourful fishes that you can see immediately when you enter the water. Next to this I wanted to get my diving license here, because what place is more iconic for its aquatic life than Galapagos? The only thing I can say about this: 'It was the best experience ever!'

I'm going to end this report by saying, I can only regret that I was here only for 6 weeks. There is still so much I want to see and explore here in Ecuador. It's a wonderful country full of surprises and astonishing experiences. As you can notice out of my enthusiasm, my IAESTE-internship was amazing. Once more: I had an unforgettable experience here in Ecuador!

# ECUADOR



# GERMANY

DANWEN ZHU

Already being the international student in UGent, I didn't imagine that I could go for another international internship via IAESTE. When IAESTE organization started to making the advertisements of the internship, I just tried to apply for it. When I got the call from the IAESTE that I was nominated for Dresden, I was so excited that I couldn't believe it. It was a really long time for me to get the final contract from the employer. My documents were checked that I only got the final N5b document in the beginning of July and I was supposed to start working at that time. Although there are various twists and turns on the way, I firmly believe that all the waiting is worth it. The trip and adventure in Germany is delayed but it will never frustrate me.

My employer is the Institut für Leichtbau und Kunststofftechnik from TU Dresden which is one of the best universities in Germany. The task distributed to me immediately when I finished safety introduction and study of the literature. My main task was to investigate the thermal conductivity of glass fiber reinforced plastics (GFRP) with snap-cure matrix systems. Heat accumulation is quite severe in thick fiber-reinforced polymers and will cause the deformation or even microcrack in the final products. In my project, I used thermoset sheet formation (TSF) to make AASET (epoxy resin) and glass fiber plates. After making



Dresden,  
Germany

the plates, hot disk was used to measure the thermal conductivity and made the simulation to find the optimized modules for the heating process thus minimize the overheating problem which will be our next step.

The project went smoothly and successfully. Before I finished my internship, I measured the thermal conductivity of this anisotropic plate and gave a presentation to the whole team which is highly recommended by my supervisor. At the same time, I got quite well with my colleagues who from Poland, Great Britain, Czech Republic, Germany and Spain. We spent quite a lot of good time chatting about the different cultures, different life experience, and of course drinking together for many times. The most

impressed thing is that both my supervisor and colleagues are so kind and helpful. I had a severe trouble with my skin during the internship, but it was really difficult and complicate to make an appointment with the dermatologist by myself, especially when I can't speak German. They tried their best to find a dermatologist for me and helped me with my insurance. I appreciate for what they did for me.

This is the technical side of the internship, i.e. your work, is what brings you abroad and give you a totally new experience of another culture and meet different people. The IAESTE trainees from all over the world, Europe, Asia, South America and Africa, it's a real small international family.



IAESTE Germany and DAAD encourage students to explore the German culture as much as possible, every weekend one city will organize the city weekend, we can even get refund from IAESTE for those cultural activities. The city weekend is another platform for you to meet new people. I took part in Dresden weekend which included a guided city tour, military history museum, Volkswagen transparent factory, hiking in the Bastei, party and enjoy the German beer in Neustadt. During this weekend, I knew both historical and modern life, natural and man-made masterpiece, economic and leisure life of Dresden.

During the week days, there are regular meetings in Club 11 for the IAESTE trainees and members on Thursday, sometimes it's a barbecue party. Every Wednesdays, it's the international dinner, several trainees have the similar culture and cuisines will cook together and

then share the food with others. Before I leave, I have already tried Brazilian, Greek and Cyprus food. There is also a Chinese and Polish dumpling night, I made the Chinese dumplings to them and I was quite glad to have the compliments. Trainees went to hiking, swimming, going to the picnic, watching football game for Dynamo together, climbing, going to Karaoke, travelling, and so on. Every day is full of activities and parties.

It really hard to say goodbye to all the new friends made in this internship, the IAESTE trainees, the colleagues, the supervisor, especially left on my birthday. Friends came and by to say happy birthday and goodbye, I knew it would be quite difficult for all of us meet again to hold party like this anymore. But this experience, the friendship we grew, the life in Dresden will never be forgotten.

# GERMANY



# AUSTRIA

DAVID VERCAUTEREN

When writing this report, I have just finished my 2-month internship in Austria. The past two months have been amazing, and I would like to share this experience with you.

My IAESTE story began in a small city called Graz. On my arrival in Graz Airport, I was welcomed by an IAESTE Graz member who sadly didn't have a lot of time to show me around because he had to leave for one of the famous IAESTE weekends. This was also where all the other trainees and members went to, so my first weekend was going to be a quiet one in which I had time to explore Graz and settle in. But this would be the only quiet weekend that I was going to have during my internship here in Graz.

On my first day, one of the IAESTE members took me to the registration office and afterwards, guided me to my workplace. As a multicultural company, everybody was able to speak English since some employees were not Austrian or German and therefore not able to speak German. But since I wanted to brag with the fact that I am able to speak German, I started telling everybody that they could all talk to me in German. This was about the worst mistake that I made during my entire internship... The reason why this was a mistake is due to the horrible Styrian accent which is almost incomprehensible for someone who only knows "Hochdeutsch", even after eight



Graz, Austria

weeks I am still unable to understand everything they say. But all was well when I heard that my mentor was a German guy from Berlin and most of my colleagues that I was working with were Croatian who had a normal German and English accent.

As a computer science engineer I had to work in many different project that were related to Big Data and Machine learning. The thing that made this internship different from any other internship that I have done before was the fact that I got to actively contribute to the solution of the problem and now they are even using some of my ideas and algorithms in the project.

But that's enough about work, since IAESTE internships are much more than just work. As I already mentioned in Graz another big part of the internship were the IAESTE weekends. This is mainly due to the fact that Graz is very close to a lot of other IAESTE committees in Austria but also neighboring countries. Since I do not have enough time to talk about all the different weekends I'll try to summarize one: The MOSTAR weekend.

Mostar is a city in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is only a 12 hour bus ride away from Graz. Enough IAESTE members seemed to be willing to sacrifice 12 hours on the bus for this weekend. So I joined them and they were right, even with the mind numbingly

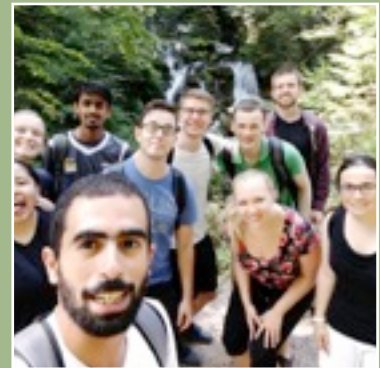
boring bus ride, that weekend was the best of them all. For most trainees, the Mostar weekend started on Friday, which meant taking a holiday and leaving Thursday after work. But since I had already taken all my holidays, another trainee and I went a day later. So, we left Friday at 5 PM in Graz and arrived around 5:30 AM in Mostar. Since we couldn't get any sleep on the bus, we slept for a few hours when we arrived to prepare ourselves for an amazing weekend. Normally the local IAESTE committee plans a city challenge, but due to the extreme temperatures in Bosnia, a city challenge wasn't really an option, instead they showed us a few of the historic buildings in Mostar and then took us to a river to cool off, have a few beers and have a barbecue. We stayed there until the late afternoon and then went back to the hostel to take a quick shower. Dinner was up to us, but the other trainees had already found a place yesterday that was going to be the perfect preparation for the rest of the evening. The final activity of the day was partying at a local club that was reserved by the local IAESTE

committee. I have to say Bosnians really know how to throw a party, and by the way for anybody who has never been to the Balkan, you have to try the Rakija drink. Just don't ask questions and try it, you'll thank me later.

After a long night and a bit of rest we got up and spent our last day at the beautiful waterfalls of Mostar. Our bus back to Graz left at 9 PM so we still had enough time to get something to eat before we left. We arrived in Graz at 11 AM, which meant that we were all late for work, so without a shower or fresh clothes we went straight to work. And that is how my the best weekend of my internship ended.

After reflecting on the entire internship, I have to say that it was one of the best experiences that I've had. The IAESTE people are great and will make sure that you have a great time while you are there. On top of that you might also be lucky and have nice working environment which makes the internship all the better. So, to all people considering I can only say JUST DO IT!

# AUSTRIA



# OMAN

ELLEN BOND

Having the possibility for doing an internship abroad was the most wonderful experience that ever happened to me. When I got the message from Annelies that I was accepted for the internship in Oman I was excited and worried at the same time. Excited in the sense of: exploring a new unknown country outside of Europe, meeting new people from all over the world. Worried because I will be travelling alone: 'what if everything will go wrong, what if I am not social enough to make new contacts, ...'. With that double feeling I took an eight hour flight from Paris to the capital of Oman (Muscat) on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June.

I arrived around seven in the morning and a nice Omani student picked me up from the airport. Twenty minutes later I put my first step in the accommodation where I stayed with the other interns for the next six weeks. I was one of the first students that arrived in Oman and that is why we were with a small group of five to eight people in the beginning of my adventure, which for me was a very nice and easy way to meet up with people and to get them know. My double feeling that I had before vanished all the way when I met those nice people and I really had a home feeling for the next weeks. From in the beginning I knew that it will be hard to leave those people by the end.

I arrived in the Omani weekend, which is Friday and Saturday. So in



Muscat,  
Oman

that way I had the time to explore the capital, make friends and getting used to the summerheat of Oman, which can run up to 45 degrees.

After the weekend I started working in the architecture company called Al Azri Architecture in which I learned a lot about architectural design and masterplanning in the next weeks. Another intern from Serbia, Luka, joined me in the company after two weeks and we worked together on a masterplan for a new department of the Higher College of Technology of Oman. He was already a masterstudent and was very good in design. So I learned a lot from him as well. We both learned how to convince and handle with the client and how a client is involved in the final design.

Also the boss, Samir Al Azri, was really nice and had a lot of trust in us, because he let us totally free in the designing process. So probably our concept will be actually build, which is a really nice start of the career.

For lunch we always ate in an Indian restaurant together with another intern from India, Vinit, because he was working in an office close to ours. Funny fact:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the population of Oman is Indian. He learned us a lot about Indian culture, food and language. He became really soon a very good friend, which I will keep close to my heart and we will surely meet up in the future. That is why I refund my flight back to home and went two weeks to his flat in India, Manipal, after the six weeks in Oman. Vinit

showed me several places in Manipal and surroundings. We went for example to Goa, Kundadri Hill, Serimane Falls, hanging bridge, beach, ... This was ofcourse another lifechanging experience, which made my summer unforgettable and I will surely go back to India to visit the whole country.

So what did I do in my free time in Oman? Ofcourse I tried to visit as much as possible. The university also organized very cheap or free trips to several places, but we also planned trips from our own or with a tourguide. With the university I went to for example Nizwa, Nizwa souk, old Muscat town, the desert... . With the tourguide, Khaled, which was an IAESTE member in the past, we went to the turtle beach, Wadi Shab, ... Also I went with 4 people to Musandam, which was for me

the best trip in Oman. Musandam is the upperpart of Oman, which is not attached to the mainland of the country. It is a very quiet place with nearly no people, but such a nice fauna and flora. So I visited a lot and I could write a whole book about the trips and events.

So as a conclusion I can say that this first IAESTE experience in Oman and also my trip to India were the best things that ever happened to me and also it changed my view about my life and how I think and handle about stuff. Oman is such a beautiful country and the people are really nice and open-minded. I made friends from all over the world and we are still in contact with each other. I will surely try to do another internship with IAESTE next summer. People who are still not convinced: just pack your bags and go!

## OMAN



# POLAND

ELOISE DOBBELAERE

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> of July, ready for takeoff and I was pretty nervous. For the first time in my life I was leaving the country for longer than two weeks. On top of that it would be my first internship ever. As you can see, a lot of things for the first time, so I had a reason to be anxious. Luckily my two lovely buddies Monika and Gosia welcomed me in such a way that I felt comfortable from the very first minute. They helped me with almost everything: they explained me the easiest way to Ikea or they showed the hidden treasures of Kraków city. Without them, my stay would not be that pleasant. But more important, they became very good friends!

During the week I had a nine-to-five job in the architecture office URBAarchitects. I could not image a better office to do my first internship. The Polish colleagues made me feel like a real member of the office. They were so friendly and grateful, it was as if I worked with them for many years. The things that I have learned there, I could only learn them by doing it in practice. I did a bunch of different tasks in AutoCad, Indesign, SketchUp... All those various tasks kept the job interesting and challenging. Although I missed making models (while this is the main activity at university), my computer skills are upgraded to a next level. I discovered a lot of



Kraków,  
Poland

hidden but very useful options in those programs. For sure working for the deadlines will be a lot easier now ;). Furthermore, it was a worthy eye-opener to see how an architecture office works in real life.

Of course this experience was not only about work. There was as well a lot of free time to do all kinds of fun. Kraków is such a vibrant city. There were so much things to do, that I do not know where to start. Actually, the city centre of Kraków has more or less the same atmosphere a Ghent. First, the old centre is an complete pedestrian zone and with the green area *Planty*, it is pleasant to stroll around and enjoy the historic architecture. Also like the Jewish quarter *Kazimierz*, the city never sleeps.

Furthermore, it is a student city as well. Doesn't matter what day or time it is, you can always have some drinks in the cellars or eat *zapiekanka* at the phenomenal stalls in Kazimierz. In no time Kraków felt like a second home town.

Since the fact that the city is so lively, I did not had the longing to travel that much or go far away to other parts of Poland. Obviously I visited all the main tourist attractions in the city, as well as the ones nearby, including the concentration camps Auschwitz and Birkenau and the Salt Mines of Wieliczka. I cannot say that the trip to Auschwitz was an enjoyable one, but it was worth to go there. The harsh history has to be

but it was worth to go there. The harsh history has to be remembered. If you are around Kraków for such a long time, you have to go there, you can see it more like a pilgrimage. Another weekend we went to the Salt Mines. It is really impressive that since the 13<sup>th</sup> century people worked there 200-300 meters underground. All the chapels carved out the rocks and chandeliers are so marvelous, you cannot believe it is handmade.

If you are into nature you can go to Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains, but more close to the city there is the 'secret' lake Zakrzówek. Actually it is private domain, although if you find a hole in the fence, you can swim or have some

drinks on the shores. We did some 'hiking' as well to reach the highest points and had a stunning view!

During the whole summer other LC's in Poland organized IAESTE Weekends. I participated the ones in Kraków and Warszawa. At those weekends I met a lot of other trainees, who were doing their internship in other Polish cities. It was great to meet people from all over the world. Together we did some city games to explore a little bit the city. We had a lot of fun and partied hard.

It was a wonderful experience. I will definitely go back to Kraków to see my Polish friends again and travel the world around to visit the others.  
*Do widzenia!*

## POLAND



# POLAND

HANNAH NOTEBAERT

After four years of studying and (probably) only one year left, the time had come for me to do an internship to make myself more appealing for future employers. I chose to do an IAESTE internship so I could make the most out of my summer while still working. It was an adventure, but I would do it again in a heartbeat.

The procedure starts by choosing which internship you want to do. I took into consideration the subject but of course also the location of the internship. I was immediately convinced by a bioinformatics internship in Lodz, Poland. You can apply for multiple internships, but I took a chance and only applied for that one. Me writing this IAESTE experience story is probably already a giveaway that I got the internship. After doing really a minimal amount of paperwork, IAESTE took care of everything for me (lodging, contract, etc.). The only thing left to do for me was get to Lodz by myself. Travelling by yourself can seem very daunting, but with some preparation (triple check if you have all the necessary documents!!) it isn't the most difficult thing to do. Just remember that if anything goes wrong you will be fine, and will laugh about it later. It makes for great travel stories!

When I arrived in the bus station of Lodz, Martha, an IAESTE member was already waiting for me so I would have a smooth start to my internship. She first guided me to the dorm so I could drop of my way



Lodz, Poland

too heavy luggage. A little tip is to not over pack. You can always do the laundry there, and you need some room for souvenirs! Next we went on a little tour of Lodz, meanwhile showing me where my work is, where the best/cheapest supermarket is, and most importantly where to have fun in Lodz. Martha took good care of me, and I was ready for my first day. Upon arriving there's was some miscommunicating but once the big boss arrived I finally got my tasks. I was processing data from a cancer database. It was really cool to have the opportunity to do something that isn't exactly what I study, but what I'm really interested in. I was lucky that my job wasn't that intensive, so I had enough time to

explore my city and the rest of Poland.

Besides work, the new people you meet is what really makes this experience unforgettable for me. IAESTE is an international organisation, so there are people from all over the world. My roommate was from Brazil, and I shared a flat with girls from Macedonia, Croatia, Austria, India, and Italy. This was only the tip of the iceberg. Every weekend there was an organised weekend by an IAESTE committee in a Polish city. So every weekend there was somewhere to go to get to know a new city, but also IAESTE trainee's like you and IAESTE members. During these weekends I met so many people from literally all over the world. We usually got to know



the city by doing city games. Imagine 50 students divided in little groups running around town doing crazy tasks. I learned a traditional Polish dance in the middle of the city square, which we then performed in front of a lot of tourists. We also piggy-backed through a busy shopping street, and hopped from one monument to another with a cup of water in our mouth. In the evenings there were of course many epic parties who were accompanied with the local liquor. In Poland this means a lot of vodka and beer. The tradition goes that if you drink a beer as breakfast you won't have a hangover. Even though many (Polish) people swore by this method, I didn't work for me personally. I shared so many laughs with so many different kinds of

people, who became friends in such a short period of time. It really is unbelievable.

I hope this sketches an image of what amazing things can happen during an IAESTE internship. You can expect the unexpected. If I learned anything, it is that the best things happen when you least expect it you just have to say yes to it. This sometimes means you can go to Prague with 4 Brazilians you don't know, meeting 2 Columbians guys while roaming the city and have the time of your life.

IAESTE is one of the best opportunities you will get in your life to go abroad in such a welcoming environment. Apply as fast as possible, you won't regret it!!

## POLAND



# MALTA

HANNELORE VAN DE PUTTE

After completing my bachelor thesis, I wanted to finish my bachelor degree in style. I got the first choice of my “top three” internships, so I didn’t hesitate and I left Belgium for an experience of one month in Malta. I didn’t regret my choice.

While arriving by plane, you can see the whole island of Malta as on a map.

It’s a very charming country with lovely people. They gave me a warm welcome. During my stay, a lot of interesting and fun activities were organized with students of my age, from countries all over the world. If you like to exchange your thoughts with people from different origins, an IAESTE internship is certainly appealing.

I shared a tiny room with an Austrian and a Polish girl. After work, we travelled around nearly the whole island. We joined a group with other IAESTE trainees.

Malta has a rich history. They have temples with strange names, such as Ġgantija, Ғaġar Qim or Mnajdra, which are even older than Stonehenge and absolutely worth visiting.

Because of its strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea, Malta has been ruled by many civilizations. The following populations have been dominating on Malta for a certain period: Sicilians, Phoenicians, Punics, Romans, Arabs, Normans and British. After the last domination by the British, Malta



Msida, Malta

became independent in 1964. The Maltese inhabitants do not only have a lot of different origins, but they also live with 423 000 on one of the most populous countries in the world.

My work was varying every day and I was happy that I could practice my academic knowledge. At the time of my internship (July 2017), more or less 800 DNA samples were collected. The samples are analysed and afterwards put in cryoboxes which are safely stored in the Malta BioBank. They are essential for the research about the origin and genetics of the Maltese population and the causes of rare diseases.

After the work, we often walked through the picturesque “three cities” of Vittoriosa, Senglea and

Cospicua or we traversed the Malta capital Valletta. The timing was excellent, as Valletta was in full preparation of being the European Capital of Culture in 2018.

While the eastern side of Malta is busy and touristic, more rest and nature can be found on the other side of the island. We visited the beautiful historic cities of Mdina and Rabat, saw the Dingli Cliffs and the famous Blue Lagoon, well known from the James bond film.

We also went to the small sister island Gozo. The citadel in Gozo was one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. From up there, you could see the Mediterranean Sea on both sides of the island.

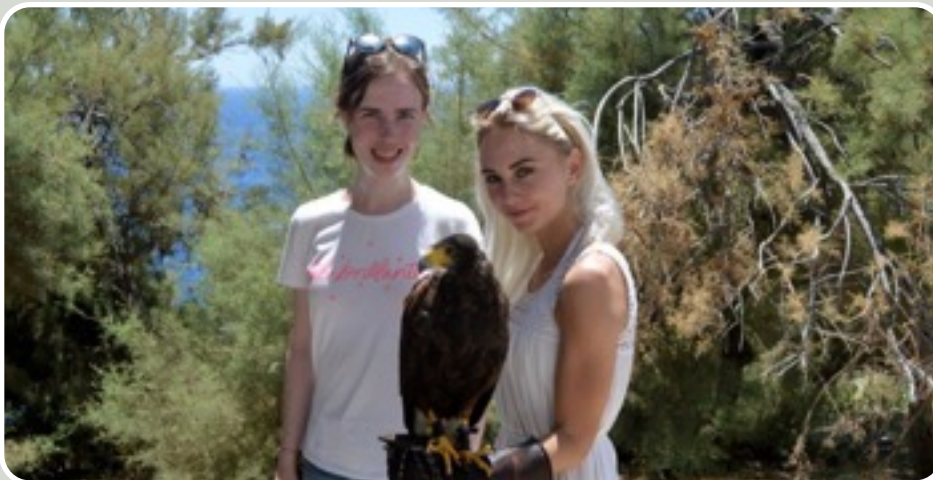
I got the chance to be part of the Maltese culture in a way that is not

possible as a tourist. My warm-hearted Maltese colleague showed me the way to the typical Maltese places. We went to the traditional fishing city Marsaxlokk, where we tasted fresh fish of the day along with new baked Maltese pastizzis. After, we went down to St Peter's Pool. Malta is a great island for water sport loving people as me. You can swim nearby almost all beaches and there are several clubs for doing water sports like diving and even more extreme sports.

In my last week, we attended the fire work in Msida, the region where I stayed. It was a fabulous spectacle. Many churches were lighted, the water of the harbour was sparkling and the firework was spraying around from the fairground.

It was difficult to say goodbye to such a sunny island with such open-minded people.

# MALTA



# SERBIA

HELIX VAN LEYNSEELE

“Why Serbia?” is the question I got asked most often when I told people where I was going for my internship. To be honest, I didn’t have any solid argument. Unlike neighbouring country Croatia, the country isn’t bordered by the sea and isn’t known for its great party places. In fact, I barely knew anything about the country, other than it being the birth place of Novak Djokovic. I do now, and I’ve gathered some pretty solid arguments to get you there on your next IAESTE internship!

July 06, Amsterdam: ready to board the plane towards Belgrade (or Beograd/Београд in Serbian), the city that would become my home for the next month. Upon arrival, I was told to join the IAESTE WhatsApp group, where the other trainees were making plans to go to Ada lake that night. This would soon become one of my favourite spots in Belgrade, not only because of the atmosphere (lots of people having barbecues and parties in the park next to it), but also because it’s the ideal place to cool down after a boiling hot day in the city (that’s right, the temperature dropped below 30°C only twice during my stay). I decided to join, and only then realised how large the group of interns was. During the summer period, there are always at least 30 to 40 other trainees, so lots of new friends are guaranteed!

The first night was followed by many other great ones, not only spent at Ada lake, but at Skadarlija (a bohemian quarter in the city centre), Republic Square or Kalemegdan, the old city fortress



from which you can witness some of the most stunning sunsets you’ve ever seen.

Of course, some work had to be done as well, for me in particular at the university of Belgrade, where I worked with another German intern. After a ten-minute walk from the hostel, we reached the metallurgy and technology faculty, where I’d spend the day helping two PhD students with their research. This could vary from literature study to helping them with the set-ups of their experiments and making calculations. In exchange they’d teach me some Serbian words which were essential to survive a trip to the local supermarket, where English wasn’t really an option. Hvala (thank you) Natasja and

Vesna for providing me with this vocabulary!

In order to discover more of this fascinating country, the local committee organised a three-day trip to the southern part of Serbia. We started by taking a little train through the pristine Serbian landscape, and admired the first of many views we would gaze at during the trip, such as the Drina river, which forms the natural border between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The absolute highlight was a boat tour on the Uvac, a clear blue river that leads you through a wonderful rocky landscape that forms the habitat for some majestic eagles, which aren’t difficult to spot. During this trip, the group of interns bonded even more, and friendships for life were made.

The main thing which will make your internship an incredible experience are the people you meet along the way. I exchanged vocabulary with Spanish and Argentinian people (hearing a Spaniard pronounce our 'g' or 'ch' is truly hilarious). I've had many late night cultural discussions at the dorm, discussing all sorts of habits with Iranian, Omani and Chinese people. I'd continue those conversations with my Romanian and Turkish roommates, who I definitely want to visit again one day. I tried keeping up with a Palestinian and an American guy during a mountain bike trip a little

outside of Novi Sad (Serbia's second largest city). At the international evening, I tried convincing people that fries are not "French", our chocolate is the best (although I had some tough competition of a Swiss guy) and so is our beer (which was heavily protested by a Czech friend). That same evening, I tried food cooked by Indian and Thai people, after they reassured me it was NOT spicy (they were lying). And of course I could not go through the night without tasting the Russian and Polish vodka.

In other words, an unforgettable international experience!

# SERBIA



# BRAZIL

JANA DUPONT

My trip to Brazil was one to never forget!

After a lot of puzzling with official papers and mailing to IAESTE Brazil, I finally departed on my internship. Once arrived, I was very warmly welcomed by someone from the Brazilian IAESTE-team. I stayed the night at her place and took a bus to my home town for the next seven weeks: Araraquara.

In Araraquara we were with twenty IAESTE interns from different countries: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Poland, Argentina, India,... We hanged out together a lot and became a real group of friends. Friends who I believe, I will see again very soon! With these friends we went on trips during the weekends: A citytrip to São Paulo and a day at the beach in Santos, the marvelous waterfalls of Foz do Iguaçu, a rafting afternoon and swimming under a waterfall in Brotas, enjoying the wonderful nature and beaches on Ilhabela (with 20 interns from all over Brazil), getting a tan in Ubatuba, Trinade and Paraty (including a boottrip to the different islands in front of the coast) and last but not least a city trip to Rio de Janeiro, a dazzling city right next to the wild nature on the mountains.

The weekends were amazing and every single time I got to meet new people! During the week, I worked in the lab at the university. The first week I was guided in every step and



Araraquara,  
Brazil

slowly they let me engineer and conduct my own experiments. This internship let me acquire a lot of lab skills and learned my how to think like a real researcher. Thanks to this internship I will have a published paper on my name, which I consider as impressing.

My small fears for the unknown before my departure were completely washed away by a strong desire to return to that colorful country with its beautiful nature, super friendly people, a little to good food and the embracing warmth of the sun! This internship really broadened my view on the world and I only feel like discovering more of this beautiful earth and its treasures! Up to my next adventure!

PS. For those who didn't notice: I advise everyone to do an internship like this one and to just jump in the unpredictable, because it is definitely worth it!



**BRAZIL.**



# TUNISIA

JURJEN DE JONG

Let me start with telling you that Tunisia is a beautiful and interesting country that currently is still undergoing a transformation since the revolution in 2011, but is worth a visit. In this review, I will tell you my story about my 7 weeks there as a trainee.

During my stay I worked at EPPM. This is an EPC contractor, where they focus on oil/gas, water treatment and industrial plants. My goal was to explore the mechanical and process departments and to learn more about engineering. I learned about stress calculations of storage tanks, calculations of pipeline constructions, and almost all the aspects of the process of gas and oil transportation through pipelines. In the end, I had a small project, where I created an excel sheet to calculate stress and dimension analysis of different types of lifting lugs.

The colleagues were friendly and helpful. Almost everybody in the company was interested in my background and reason to come to Tunisia. They taught me some Arabic and I taught them some Dutch. The sandwich bar, where I daily went for lunchbreak for a very richly filled and cheap sandwich, started to greet me with "hello my Dutch friend" and asked me often about the work I was doing and if I (still) liked their country.

Some of the IAESTE trainees in Tunis had to take more than one hour to go to work, but I was lucky, because I could arrive within 10 minutes at work by using a taxi. Taxis are cheap



Tunis, Tunisia

(comparing with taxis in Northern Europe). By sharing a taxi with two other guys I could go to work for around 1 dinar, which is less than 50 eurocents.

I lived in a flat in the region La Goulette in the capital Tunis. The flat was almost entirely in possession of IAESTE Tunisia. So, almost everyone there was a IAESTE trainee from abroad or a member of IAESTE Tunisia. I shared my apartment with 3 guys. One was from Spain, the other from Slovakia and the last one from Belarus. Every apartment was a mixture of people from different countries. Only male and female were separated. The apartment itself was not very luxurious, but had the minimum to survive. Luckily, I lived in many different dormitories before and was used to adapt to different

student house environments. I only had problems with getting enough sleep in the first weeks, because of the heat and the singing mosque at 3.30 a.m.

The IAESTE Tunisia members were very helpful, active and kind. I should thank them a thousand or even more times for everything they did for me and for all the trips and activities they have organized. The highlight was a big trip to the South of Tunisia. Wherefore they even called all our bosses to give us, the IAESTE trainees, a week off and every employee agreed with this. This shows that Tunisian people can be very generous and flexible towards foreign trainees. During this trip, we slept in five star hotels, raced with 4x4 cars through the Sahara, saw the movie set of Star Wars (Tatooine for SW-insiders),



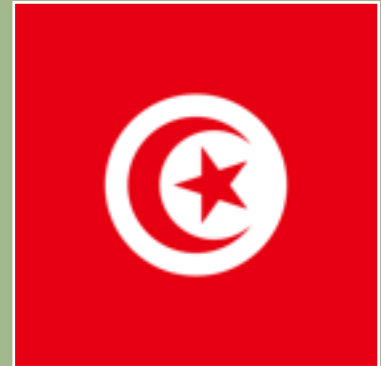
drove camels, saw many beautiful beaches, visited real oasis, saw an old amphitheater, and had pool parties at night, and much more. Everything included for less than 200 euros. Besides this big trip, we had every weekend a small trip and during the week we did almost every evening something. Ranging from playing card games, smoking shisha, drinking beers with nice views to going to beaches and playing football or basketball.

There were also some downsides which I should mention. First of all, there is too much trash in the streets in Tunisia, which could be easily solved by having more trash bins. Secondly, it is strange how Tunisians deal with alcohol. They sell it in special dark shops and give you black bags, such that nobody sees that you are carrying alcohol on the streets. Thirdly, are there too many fast food places where they all sell the same. Besides a few new

things for me, such as Tunisian Brika and Chapatti (which you can consider as fast food as well), is the 'real' culinary side not as special and interesting as I hoped it to be. So, most of the time I cooked for myself.

During all the activities and by living with all the trainees, I obtained many new friends and I have created memories that I will never forget. Therefore, I want to thank everybody who I have met and with whom I shared this experience. I also need to thank my colleagues, because by working in Tunisia with Tunisian people I could step out the IAESTE-bubble and see the 'real' side of Tunisian life all the better. It is hard to describe how special my time here was, because letters on a paper or a screen don't express the feeling that you obtain after being here. I just advice you to visit Tunisia.

# TUNISIA



# MALTA

KAREN DEDECKER

Before this IAESTE internship, I had never been abroad on my own. I did not really know what to expect from my internship and the day before I left I was a bit nervous about all this new stuff, but there was no reason to. As soon as I arrived, Elisa (who works for IAESTE Malta) picked me up from the airport and took me to the place where I would stay the following month. I shared a room with 2 other girls and we got along very well. They taught me a lot about how to get around in Malta, where to go, etc. Also the other people in the house soon became friends. The house had a roof terrace, with an amazing view. During summer, there are fireworks every night in Malta and sitting on the roof terrace at night, we could see almost all of them.

Two days after my arrival, Elisa took me to university (where I had to do my internship) and introduced me to my professor. My project was very interesting and the professor was very friendly and helpful, so I didn't mind at all to get up early in the morning and walk to university for the rest of the month. The project was about optomechanics, which is a field I was not acquainted with before, but I learned some valuable things. The phd-students who were working in the same room as I was, were always prepared to help me out of I had a



Msida, Malta

question. The weather was extremely hot (about 37°C during daytime and no colder than 26°C during the night), so this was even another reason why I did not mind at all to stay inside during the warmest part of the day. Thank god there was airconditioning at the university!

After work, and when the sun had lost a bit of its power, I had enough time to go and explore the country. Malta - though it is a small island - has a lot to offer. I went to many beaches (Tuffieha Bay being my absolute no. 1), with friends or alone, depending on when we got home from work. I also visited some nice towns, such as Mdina (the prettiest, a small medieval town),

went to Blue Grotto (a cave), a crafts village, cliffs and a huge market on the other side of the country (which means that it was as far as 10 km away). Due to this large offer of places to see, there was always a place to go to after work that I had not yet visited.

One week after I arrived, IAESTE organized a kayaking and BBQ event. I went there with one of my roommates (also an IAESTE intern) and for me it was the first time I met the other IAESTE interns in Malta. We had a great evening, the kayaking was awesome and I was glad to have met the other interns too.

During my third (out of four) week of internship, four Belgian friends

(my boyfriend being one of them) came over. By that time, I had already seen quite some places in Malta, so I was able to guide them around to the prettiest beaches and cities. We also did an escape game in Sliema (probably the most touristic city in Malta) for my boyfriend's birthday, which was the best one we ever did.

I have been very enthusiastic about Malta so far, and justly, because it's an amazing country, but no country is perfect. If there is one bad thing about Malta (but Belgium isn't any better), it's the public transport. Even though Malta is a small island, it takes you quite some time to go from one place to another. Don't get me wrong, you can get everywhere in Malta by public transport, but it just takes a while. One time, we went to Mdina, from which you have an amazing view over Malta. We watched the fireworks, had dinner in the city and four of us went home by taxi. However one of my friends - who stayed in another city in Malta - decided he would not pay for a taxi and wait for the night bus. After two hours of waiting, he had to

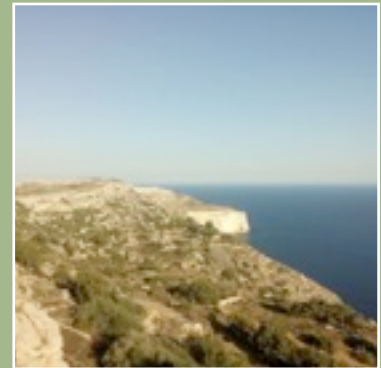
conclude that night buses in Malta are nothing but a hoax...

During the fourth weekend, me and my friends took a ferry to Gozo, which is a small island north of Malta. We rented a car and explored the island, which was really worth the trip. Our last stop was at a beach where once was the Azul Window (known by all Game of Thrones fans). We stayed there for a couple of hours, because it was so beautiful and a great place for diving, after which we wanted to get back... but our car broke down. Someone from the rental company came to help us out and an hour later we were able to take a ferry back home.

During my final week, I bought some souvenirs, went back to my favourite places for a final time to say goodbye and finished my project at the university. Looking back, all I can say is I had a great time and I would recommend anybody to go on an IAESTE internship, as it is a great opportunity for an experience (making a bunch of new friends included) that you will never forget.



## MALTA



# GERMANY

KEVIN DE TEMMERMAN

I chose to do an internship in Karlsruhe for 3 months at the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology. There, I develop species distribution models to do a study on the impact of global warming on tree species in Germany and Italy. Currently I'm halfway through my internship, but I think I can already give a representative summarization of my daily life here.

I have to mention that the LC has played an important part in my experiences here so far. Not only did they take care of pretty much everything administration-related, they also made sure I was fully immersed in the German culture. First of all, there's a weekly meeting, perfect when you're a foreigner trying to meet some like-minded people and trying to get to know the city you're going to spend a considerable time living in. Next to that there's a nice weekend trip planned almost every week. This can be a weekend to one of the other LC's in Germany (e.g. Dresden, Stuttgart,...) so you get to know the bigger and more touristic cities in the country, but it might as well be a visit to a historical or cultural interesting town with our own small LC. Next to the members of the LC there are of course plenty of new trainees I got to meet. It's amazing how much I got to know about so many different cultures in such a short time, since the trainees came from all over the world



Karlsruhe,  
Germany

(China, Brazil, Lebanon, Turkey, Czech Republic,...).

One example of an IAESTE weekend I participated in was the Munich weekend, where I really got to know the Bavarian culture (which mostly includes lederhosen, big beer mugs and pretzels). There was a city challenge as well however, that really showed the best parts of Munich.

Another trip was to the Black Forest, probably one of the most attractive tourist destinations here in Germany; the views are spectacular and with some up and downs (in the most literal sense) I could call this nothing short of an adventure. In the end, I actually visited the Forest three times in three different places, but each location had its own charm,

whether it was an enormous waterfall or some dense forestry, it never got boring. Definitely a must-see!

The people here at work are really kind and welcoming as well. They made sure I was properly introduced and shown around, and I got to know everyone very well both during and after work. The work itself is not really within my field of specialty, but with a lot of patience and effort on my mentor's side, Klara, everything worked out really well in the end. I picked up skills that'll probably be invaluable for writing my master thesis, and got to broaden my horizon as a nice little extra.

Furthermore, this was the first time for me personally to have been on

my own two feet; learning how to do my own laundry and how to cook (with trial and error) and such have been really valuable 'life lessons'. It also makes me appreciate the luxuries I have back at home just that little bit more.

I believe going on an internship like this is great for improving your language skills as well. I haven't gotten fluent at German of course, but my English is bound to get a boost. I even suspect I might've picked up a few words of Chinese (apart from my terrible accent apparently)! As for social skills, I don't believe there's a better way to improve them, since you must communicate with people here one way or the other.

I think lots of people are hesitant of doing an internship abroad since you might get homesick, especially in the first few weeks when everything is new and unknown. For me personally this has been only partially true; I do miss being at home or going drinking with friends, but I looked at it from the bright side. Social apps allowed me to stay in contact with the home front at all times, and I also had my parents and several friends coming over so I didn't have to miss them all summer. This aside, I think making new friends here is easy if you're just willing to make the effort!

## GERMANY



# SLOVAKIA

LEANDER WASIAK

I wanted to go on an internship ever since I heard of it in my first year of university. Now that I was in my final bachelor it was time to make that wish a reality. Seeing that Erasmus had no fun destinations for my course I had to look elsewhere. And that is how I discovered IAESTE.

When I first arrived in Zilina I had a warm welcome from Lukáš, my IAESTE guide. He gave a quick tour and brought me to the dorm where I would meet my roommate for the next six weeks. Another two interns would join us over the rest of my internship, luckily not in the same room. The dorms were very basic but that was expected, I was there to learn, not for an all-in vacation. I was however very glad that the IAESTE guide stayed in the same dorm, because no one working in the dorm could understand a word of English. But even if I say that, the vacation part of the internship was still very much present.

Almost every weekend we made a trip with all the interns to a location of our choosing, both local and in the neighboring countries. And in the week we would just go out in Zilina after work. Thanks to this I got to see Prague and Krakow with someone that spoke the language. We went to Prague for the IAESTE Prague challenge, this is a meeting



for all IAESTE interns from over the world. I had a lot of fun and we got to see the city while doing a city game.

And of course we did things in Slovakia as well. It is a beautiful country to hike. Zilina is very close to the Tatra mountains and we went on several hiking trips, from easy to a bit more challenging. The nature is very beautiful and the country has so many castles sprinkled around so you can never visit them all.

Most people I met were very friendly. One weekend I went to the hometown of my IAESTE guide to hike in the surroundings and I was invited by his parents to stay the night at their home.

Of course it wasn't all fun and games. During the week I had to work for the local university developing code for their in-house robot the YRobot. I studied some existing code and soldered already developed extension modules. After that I more or less had free reign what I wanted to work at. I decided to write a library for a new extension module for NFC. My colleagues were very friendly and would always help me if I had problems. One of those problems actually needed two colleagues and an oscilloscope to resolve.

The food and culture was a plus in my book. They like to eat heavy food with lots of sauce and always

eat soup before the meal. They also love their sheep cheese and eat it as snack like you would eat chips. I actually got a very stern warning to never use it for something like pizza, it just wasn't done. The food was delicious and we often went to eat in a restaurant instead of cooking. But one of the most pleasant surprises was the price of the beer. For me and my roommate (from Belgium and Germany respectively) the beer was very cheap. And we happily made use of that. They once took me to a pub 'Beervana' that served 'flavored beer', it actually reminded me of the beer back in Belgium.

I had the luck to have six weeks of very nice weather. Although the

very first day there it was clear how fast the weather could turn in the evening. With the mountains so close it was possible to go from a normal summer day to a thunderstorm in less than an hour. But this only happens in the evening when it starts to cool down. It did give some spectacular views of the sky.

The internship was a treasure trove of experience both work related and life related. I am very glad I went and I will try to go on one again next year. If you are looking for a destination for your internship and like nature and hiking, I can recommend Slovakia with whole my heart.

# SLOVAKIA



# INDIA

LEVI VUYLSTEKE

Hey there! Glad to have you reading my IAESTE experience of this summer in India. An amazing experience which I will never forget. Last year I went on Erasmus to Porto, Portugal, but my hunger for international experiences wasn't stilled. I wanted to go further. In the big list of IAESTE internships, I found an electrical engineering internship at Karunya University, located in the south of India. Even though I was kind of scared (hearing crazy stories from other students about India), the email that I got accepted was an euphoric moment.

Two months later, I set the first step onto Indian lands. Still suffering from a humid heat shock, they put me into a taxi right into the crazy Indian traffic where I assumed myself death in every turn. If that wasn't enough, the waiter of the first restaurant I went, didn't understand the "non" into the sentence "NON SPICY". Crying in front of every restaurant guest, I realized India is quite a culture shock.

Luckily, arriving at Karunya University, I experienced the first big advantage of being on an IAESTE internship. Being surrounded by interns from all over the world and the helpful local committee of IAESTE, the culture shock quickly turned into tons of fun and laughter.



Coimbatore,  
India

During my six week internship, I did a study about 'Harmonic elimination of cascaded inverters'. It involved a lot of Matlab programming and SimuLink. Every week I met with my supervisor to discuss and correct my research. At the end, I wrote a 20 page long report, for which I also can get 6 ECTS credits at my home university Ghent. But an IAESTE internship is much more than just the internship.

Every evening all the interns went for dinner, played sports/games and talked till the late hours on an amazing rooftop while looking at all the bright stars. Every weekend we travelled and explored India. From meditating in Hindu temples to seeing wild elephants in the forest.

From relaxing on a houseboat on the beautiful backwaters of Kerala to experiencing the overcrowded colourful Indian cities. Creating memories worth remembering.

Every intern got an IAESTE buddy assigned, so that for every question or concern, you could speak to an experienced Indian student. For example when you discover Indian toilet moments don't involve toilet paper or when you need some transportation to a hospital when you get food poisoning (four times).

But also these six weeks changed me as a person. IAESTE gives you the opportunity to go into discussion and to eventually understand each other's culture, belief and habits. The local



committee learnt us to dance Indian style, to taste all the traditional (spicy) food and play their sports. It made me a more tolerable and open minded student.

In the end, I realised that it wasn't the country nor the work I did that made my internship one of the best experiences in my life. It were the people I met. Students, all with different backgrounds, but with the same hopes and dreams. Open minded, social people eager to learn about your culture and thoughts. In these six weeks, these people became like family to me. I still skype them and I started learning Spanish from an Argentinian intern.

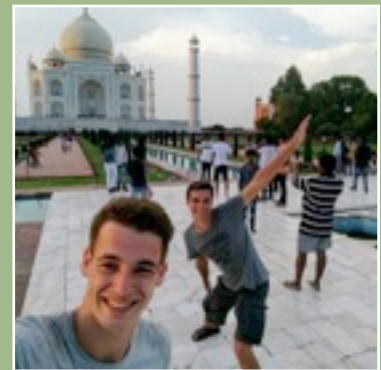
After the internship, my Belgian friend Thomas, who also did an

IAESTE internship in the south of India, and me travelled from the south to the north of India. Despite being hours in overcrowded sleeping trains and buses, we made tons of memories. We drank cocktails and ate delicious fish on India's most beautiful beaches. We saw the huge class differences in Mumbai and scootered around lakes. We saw our first world wonder, the Taj Mahal, and watched the Himalayas on a hiking trip in the north of India.

Nine weeks of my summer, nine of the best weeks in my life.

To the people who are doubting to go on a IAESTE internship, remember: 'Life begins at the end of your comfort zone'.

# INDIA



# GHANA

LIESBETH DE RYCKERE

In the beginning of July 2017, I left my familiar hometown in Belgium for the vibrant city of Accra, Ghana. For almost two months I discovered the contrasting lifestyle and wide culture of Africa for the first time in my life. This experience was definitely an astonishing and unforgettable one for me. Here's why:

My adventure started from the moment I stepped off the plane from Lisbon to Accra. After some hours of waiting and not having any idea of who was going to pick me up, a cheerful, elderly lady showed up with a worn out 'IAESTE'-sign. This spontaneous woman, Beatrice turned out to be my host mum during my stay in Ghana. The same night I met the other trainees that were hosted in her house. The day after, I went to work for the first time. After three hours of waiting at the office I met Felix, the happy operation manager of my company. He invited me to participate in a meeting with all the managers of the company. From that moment on, I finally found out what this road engineering company was all about. The three main activities were the repair of roads, construction of new roads and construction of drains. As you can imagine, road construction is a big business in Ghana and therefore very interesting for me to take part in. Most of the time at work I joined a specific construction team to site or worked at Felix's office to

Accra, Ghana



prepare tendering papers for new projects.

By the end of July ten trainees were living together in Beatrice's tiny but lovely house. Beatrice cooked for us every evening after work and helped us out with all small practicalities. She was for example an expert in the complex tro-tro network (the local transport system of old vans where a tro-tro guy, hanging out of the van, is yelling the destination), this was very helpful in order to arrive approximately at your desired place.

During the weekends, I usually planned a trip out of the city with the other trainees. Some weekends we went to the beach nearby. These beaches were in a big contrast with the very crowded city and perfect to

relax after a 'hard' week at work. Another weekend I went with the other trainees and some people from IAESTE Ghana to the northern part of the country: the greener, scarcer populated area compared to the south of the country where Accra is located. During this four days-trip we visited some nature reserves with wild animals like elephants, antelopes and different species of monkeys. I was in particularly impressed by the miles and miles of driving through 'nothing': no cars, no houses, no people, just nature! Another trip was one to the 'mountains' of Ghana that I organized myself. Simply a breath-taking experience to hike around in this undistorted wild nature with absolutely no one around except the many mosquitos,

maybe some monkeys and a crocodile if you're (un?)lucky.

In general Ghanaian people are very faithful to God and Jesus, the (usually Christian) Church has a significant impact on the daily life of most of them. Moreover, they have a very different perception of religion and faith from the one I got to know in Europe. That's why I was very curious to take part in a mass. I got invited by one of my co-workers to accompany him for going to his Church on Sunday. Therefore, I stayed with some other trainees a weekend in Accra to take part in a typical Ghanaian mass. The expected image we had about these masses were quite accurate: a colourful, popular event with singing, dancing and happy people everywhere around you.

Another aspect of the Ghanaian culture I endeavoured to experience as much as possible was the African food. I explored the local Fufu, Banku, Kenkey, Jollof rice, Tilapia, ... and surprisingly I really enjoyed each of them. On the food-days

(apparently during some days Ghanaians don't eat for three days in a manner of a fasting period), I ate these dishes with my co-workers after work. This resulted in several funny moments since Ghanaian food is in general quite spicy and European people are mostly not used to a lot of spices.

Being back home now, I'm happy and proud to look back on this lifechanging, extraordinary experience that will always have a special place in my heart. I experienced some very funny, joyful moments but at times also encountered some heartbroken feelings and tough situations.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise to all interested students the importance and impact of an internship abroad. From my own experience, these seven weeks taught me so much on both a technical and personal point of view.

# GHANA



# INDIA

## LORENZ VAN HERWAARDEN

Hi there! When I applied for a couple of IAESTE internships in February, I really wanted to go somewhere where I would experience a culture shock and where I could learn something new in a completely different environment. Luckily, I got nominated to go to New Delhi, India. After 3 trips to the Indian embassy and many extra documents, I was able to leave mid-July.

When I arrived in Greater Noida (approximately 1,5 hours from New Delhi), my IAESTE buddy was waiting to show me around and lead me to my hostel. Taking the cab to the hostel was already a shock. The roads were full of cows, nobody riding in their lanes and a lot of ghost riding. In Greater Noida, students mostly stay at a hostel with 1 roommate. Food is prepared 4 times a day and gym facilities are available. Only during the trip to the hostel, I found out that my roommate was going to be a student from Ghent University! What a coincidence. I only talked to Rikkert once before during the International Days, but he became a good friend during my stay in India. We were the first foreigners to have stayed at the hostel and this resulted in quite a lot of staring the first weeks when we were passing by or eating. However, the students in the hostel were very helpful and friendly. I was surprised by how open they were. It was nice getting to learn so much about the Indian culture by talking to them during our meals.



Greater  
Noida, India

Greater Noida is quite new and in full development (hence the many power outages at our hostel). Many universities and colleges are situated there. Unfortunately, this meant that there was not a lot to do in the neighborhood. We went to the nearby market a couple of times and to quite some malls. As most Indians I met don't drink and because it's dangerous to be out at night in Greater Noida, everybody stays inside their hostel after their school day. It was also not possible to go to New Delhi as the trip takes at least 1,5 hours one way consisting of a cab and metro.

Unfortunately, Rikkert and I were the only IAESTE interns and IAESTE Sharda University didn't really plan anything to do except for a dinner. This was quite frustrating. When

you hear IAESTE stories, they mostly consist of meeting many international students and going to many places with IAESTE members. We decided that we should just make the best of it and plan a trip on our own each weekend. We saw quite some amazing things! The best trip was to Jaipur I must say. We went there by plane. We saw some amazing forts, a beautiful city, stayed at a very nice international hostel that organized a pub crawl and had some great meals. We were extremely lucky that we got there because we almost missed our flight! We were stuck in typical Delhi traffic and decided to step out of our Uber and run past the traffic in all the pollution. Once past the traffic we took a Tuk-Tuk. After a minute, his fuel was finished and we took yet another cab. Eventually, we arrived

Eventually, we arrived at the airport 15 minutes before take-off. We skipped all the queues and ran like crazy to get to our gate whilst hearing “Last call for Lorenz van Herwaarden and Rikkert Van Durme”. But, we made it! Among other things we saw the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Hare Krishna temples in Vrindavan. We got to both places by train. Vrindavan is considered to be the center for the Hare Krishna movement and there are no foreign tourists to be found there. The temples were quite unique and we experienced a more rural India.

My internship was at the computer science department of Sharda University. I performed research into online face clustering with neural networks. The difference with other approaches was that it should not require a lot of resources and be able to run on a mobile device. I worked alone and didn't meet my promotor a lot as he is a very busy assistant professor at Sharda. The first weeks

were very quiet at the university due to the ongoing holidays. Fortunately, the holidays were soon over. Sharda University is known for its many international students and Rikkert and I met some very nice and interesting people. It was easy meeting them even though they were not associated with IAESTE because we were both working in professor's offices (due to a lack of any other space for us to work). So students would come by to ask our professors questions and instead we would meet new people and hang out with them.

All in all, it was a great experience. India really surprises you each and every day! I got to work in a completely new environment which was very challenging, saw many different places and monuments, met some interesting and very nice people, ate very good food and experienced a completely different culture.

# INDIA



# GREECE

LUKA LAMBRECHT

My first (but hopefully not my last) IAESTE internship was in Athens, the lively capital of ever sunny Greece. It had been my first choice when applying, and I was very excited I was allowed to go there. My job was to program a basic version of the finite element method (FEM), in order to model, calculate and visualize the stress in mechanical structures subjected to loading, or electrostatic fields subjected to certain boundary conditions. A tip: don't filter the available internships by study program! Mine was categorized as civil engineering, so I would never have found it should I have confined my search to the ones labelled (engineering) physics.

I arrived in Athens about a week before my first working day, so I had some time to visit the city and the surroundings (I had no idea Athens had such lovely beaches), and to meet the people of IAESTE Athens. These people helped me with the necessary paperwork, which comes in very handy in the Greek bureaucracy where most office clerks barely speak English. But of course, this was not their only benefit; they showed me around, made me meet the other interns, took us to visit the Acropolis at sunset and last but not least, they even housed me for two nights since the place where I was supposed to stay was not yet available on my arrival due to a miscommunication.



Athens,  
Greece

I lived and worked at the National Technical University of Athens. It is situated in one of Athens suburbs, so in order to go to the center I had to walk 15 minutes and then take the metro, but it was worth it every time; Athens at evening is always full of people, the temperature has dropped to a mild and enjoyable warmth and there are bars everywhere where bands are bringing the traditional Greek music to life. And all this is supported by a background of the most beautiful and stunning monuments mankind has ever built... This is the good life!

Of course the good life is not for everyone. Every now and then I was reminded to the fact that Greece was hit dramatically by the financial crisis. People lost their job, their pension or even their home. The

streets are dirty and full of graffiti and many a miserable homeless person can be spotted, especially at night. Yet I also witnessed the mental strength of the Greeks and their self-mockery, laughing with their situation and knowing that life will go on anyway.

The university itself was quite abandoned when I arrived. It turned out that examinations were going on and most students do not stay at the dorms during this period. This was a drawback, but fortunately I could still go to the center as I told before. Or if I wasn't in for the journey there and back again, the suburb center where the university was located was a good alternative: watching a game on big screen in the pubs or just enjoying a good meal in one of the amazingly cheap

restaurants. Gradually, as my internship progressed, the university was becoming more and more crowded and lively. The other IAESTE students and me could go and play basketball with some Greek students, or watch a thrilling game in the crowded communal area; one night, the central square of the university even turned into a huge open air rave party.

The Greeks are not really keen on rules and obligations, so I had a lot of freedom in how to complete the internship and when to work. In fact I saw the professor responsible for my project only twice, mostly at the beginning of my stay. Fortunately, the work was very interesting; it perfectly coincided with my interests (however, this was of course also due to the fact that I could in a great extent choose the details of my work myself). But contradictory to the hate of the average Greek for government

obligations, the governments and secretaries themselves certainly do love their documents and procedures. I have spent hours walking to and fro, searching for some hidden offices or employees, then waiting for hours, signing some documents which are of course not available in English and so on. However, the IAESTE committee was really helpful in this respect.

I was in Athens for only one month, which was considered too short by everyone. Though sceptic in the beginning, now I start to understand why this is true: the last couple of weeks flew by and every day I started to love this city more and more.

I am really glad I had the opportunity to do this and I can only encourage people to apply!

# GREECE



# BRAZIL.

LUKAS LIEKENS

The day before the application deadline I was going through the internships and saw that no one was applying for this internship in Brazil. I decided to put in the effort and write my motivation letter. Four months later, I was on a plane to Sao Paulo.

My first impressions of this city were that it was absolutely huge, but in many ways not so different from the south of Europe. I called up some IAESTE people to hang out with and we visited the famous Avenida Paulista, consisting of skyscrapers as far as you could see. We also visited the Sé district which is the oldest in Sao Paulo and goes back to its roots as a Jesuit settlement. After having spent two days in Sao Paulo, barely scratching the surface of this huge city, I hopped on a bus going north.

Twelve hours later, I arrived in the furthest corner of Sao Paulo State in a small city called Ilha Solteira. The city is located along the Parana River, which is one of the biggest rivers in South America (second to only the Amazon), and is home to the engineering faculty of UNESP, a well-regarded university in the state of Sao Paulo.

I was picked up by a Hyago, a Brazilian student, with whom I would live for the next two months. We would live in a small house, together with another IAESTE student from Germany. This however was an exception as most



Ilha  
Solteira, Brazil

people lived in a republica, which is a typical Brazilian student house tied to the university and which houses about ten Brazilian students. Because of this, you are really inserted into the lifestyle of these people and there is no escaping the Brazilian culture or their people. Sadly the same goes for their awful music.

Ilha Solteira had a nice community of “gringo’s” (as they called us foreigners). We were there with about 15 IAESTE students from all over the world: Poland, Jordan, Germany, Hungary, Israel, France, Croatia, etc. There was always someone willing to hang out or go sightseeing. Everybody was spread out over different republicas, which resulted in us meeting loads of new people. We were really part of the

community there for these two short months. On top of that, Brazilian people are some of the nicest you will ever meet. Everybody wants to have a chat and is willing to share their beer.

My job there was to help a PhD student with his work. The goal was to implement a design on FPGA using VHDL. Every day I would spend about four to six hours at the university to work on the project. I could come and go whenever I wanted and taking days off for a trip was not a problem either. I didn’t work that many hours a day, but I really felt like all of the work I did was very useful and with come in handy later on.

During days off, we mostly travelled or went to the beach. There were



few public trains in Brazil, so we did almost everything by bus. Nothing in Brazil can be considered close for a European, so during a trip we spent at least twenty hours on a bus. Fortunately, we got used to that rather quickly as the buses are quite comfortable and we always had sleep to catch up on.

Brazil is home to some of the most amazing natural wonders and we discovered this right on the first trip. This one went to Foz do Iguaçu and was truly amazing. These waterfalls on the border between Argentina and Brazil, located in the middle of the rainforest, came right out of a movie. They are unlike anything in the world and we needed almost three days to visit them entirely.

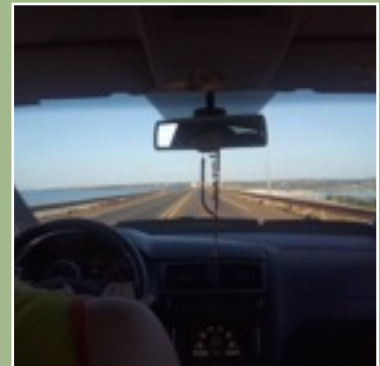
Another great trip we did went to Bonito. This city close to Paraguay houses a lot of touristic attractions: snorkelling, waterfalls, caves, diving, etc. You could spend a good week there if you wanted to. This place really felt like the definition of Brazil. Waterfalls everywhere

and quirky animals to go with them. You saw toucans and parrots all the time, hanging out in the trees. And sometimes you could spot the occasional coati (tapir) or crocodile.

Lastly, I went to Ouro Preto. The old Capital of the Minas Gerais state and centre of the Brazilian gold rush in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of the more historic cities in Brazil and the traces of colonialism and slavery were definitely present here. The city is unique in that it is spread out over the mountains with tens of churches sticking out of the landscape. It is another side of Brazil and was definitely worth seeing.

It is hard to sum this trip up in little over a page. There were so many amazing moments and experiences and somehow the trip managed to be productive as well. South America is truly something different and there is no doubt that I'm going back someday.

# BRAZIL.



# GERMANY

NATALIA DANIELEWICZ

During my first year of master degree I have decided to go on a trip. Since I consider myself to be a quite productive person, I have decided to combine my travelling passion with work. Therefore, I applied for the internship through the IAESTE organization. The idea to go for such an adventure came to me almost at the end of the academic year. So, I was not expecting much. The only motivation I had was to simply learn something and be able to visit another country.

After a month, I have got response that I was accepted! It really came to me then that it is really happening! I am finally on my way to achieve my goals and get some experience, which of course, I will be happy to put on my Curriculum Vitae. Moreover, I will be travelling to Germany...to the land of beer, gigantic forests and juicy sausages.

When I was packing my bag, I also started to imagine how many amazing things I will be able to try and also how my new work will look like. What kind of people I will meet there? Whether I can communicate with them all in English or is it going to be more difficult than I thought? Will I be doing any important research or just making a coffee and cleaning dishes? All those questions, of course, cleared out when I finally arrived to the place.



Karlsruhe,  
Germany

The city, called Karlsruhe, was such a beautifully city. The main thing which attracted my attention was that the whole city was covered with parks and forest lands. People were literally spending whole their lives on bicycle and none of them travel with cars or public transportation. The most important information, however, about this city is that it is very cheap. This type of news will always bring a smile to a poor students face.

The place I happened to live was a bit further in the north-east of the center. The greatest advantage was its location, surrounded by amazing bushy areas. The student dorm was an unique place to live. I had the chance to spend time there with

great neighbors. We shared culinary experience and many times organized a cooking night where each person had to prepare meal from which their country is famous of. It was an easy thing for me since Polish traditional meals are dumplings or bigos and either of them are quite cheap and simple. Our team liked to spend time by walking around the student dorms. We also took a few trips with bikes to the great black forest, which is famous for its very dark and intense green colors. My final dorm experience was to collect mushrooms and also learn which are eatable.

About my work, most days were busy, but well organized. Daily

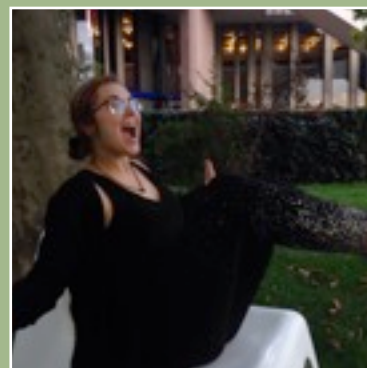
routine seemed to be working pretty well for me. The atmosphere at workplace was always pleasant and each intern and student were helping each other out. Even my supervisor turned out to be a very kind person with a lot of patience. The last advantage was very beneficial for me, since I tend to do lots of mistakes. In the beginning of my internship, work was not easy to understand but once I was introduced to everything I needed to do, it no longer seemed like a big deal. After several trials and failures, it turned out that I completed my daily work much faster. Also, the quality of my work improved. After the busiest day at work, students and interns gathered in a small self-sustaining café where each of them could enjoy a sip of a cold beer or during the windy days a small cup of coffee. Once the day was coming to an end, whole this group usually end up in Oxford. It is a pub-restaurant with a great variety of burgers and so on. I really liked this place since it could sustain my vegetarian appetite.

I think the most important is how to spend your time off. And in

Karlsruhe it seems like it will be a time spend on drinking beers, going to cheap restaurants offering amazing prices and doing looooots of bicycle trips. Each weekend we could travel with IAESTE to nearest cities and sightseeing tremendous places. All this adventure brought me so much pleasure that I am so sad leaving this place and it really changed my life to be here for those 3 months. I will always recommend to visit this place or maybe apply for internship as I did. I am right now full off motivation and really cannot wait for my next adventure. Who knows maybe another internship?

And if someone asked me right now: would you trade your internship back for an exotic and long holiday for free? I will obviously respond negatively. It seems almost impossible to not grab a possibility as this. I cannot simply believe that some people can just spend their 3 month on doing absolutely nothing when there is so much to discover around. So do it guys! They need your work and you will never regret it !!!

## GERMANY



# NIGERIA

NELE REYNIERS

“Hi Everyone! You all applied for an IAESTE traineeship but unfortunately did not get nominated”. Back then, I was terribly disappointed with not getting accepted for my first-choice traineeship, but I didn’t give up and quickly applied for a different internship that was still available: at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun (FUPRE) in Warri, Nigeria. Little did I know that this would lead me to the most eye-opening international experience in my life as of yet!

When I arrived in the domestic airport of Benin City, Otabor was already there to pick me up. He is the national coordinator of IAESTE Nigeria and he has been truly amazing during my entire stay in Nigeria! In the weekends, he took us out on trips and to restaurants and bars, which I am especially grateful for because Nigeria is not a country where you can just easily travel around by yourself or find nice places to eat/drink if you don’t know the system or the state of the roads – especially as an “oyibo” (= white person). Besides taking care of us trainees, he was busy expanding IAESTE Nigeria to other Nigerian universities and companies and getting motivated people involved with the organisation. The newly recruited universities and company I got to visit with him all looked like good places to be for an internship and I look forward to



seeing the organisation grow in years to come.

Ok, time to talk about the elephant in the room. Obviously, I had some serious questions concerning security before going on the internship – it would be foolish not to – and my family, friends and boyfriend were also a tad concerned about me getting kidnapped, robbed or disappearing forever in a puff of smoke and glitter. However, both the university and IAESTE Nigeria take no risk with the safety of us trainees, and I felt very safe in their hands. For several years, trainees at FUPRE have been spending their weekends in Benin City, bringing them together with all other IAESTE trainees in the IAESTE lodge. This was originally done because the security situation in

Warri is worse than in Benin City, but it also became a great way to bring our small group of trainees together for weekend trips and good company! During my weeks spent in FUPRE, my fellow trainee and I were not allowed to go outside the university without the approval of the chief security officer and the company of a trusted Nigerian local. This implied that, in practice, boredom was for us the main disadvantage of being in a country with security problems.

My internship at FUPRE was in the environmental department, researching water quality and later analysing a drainage basin using GIS. To be completely honest, FUPRE was not very well prepared to receive an intern and I had to wait one or two weeks to get a job

and even longer to get a job that was remotely interesting. I didn't really do the field work that was in the job description I applied for, but I did get to experience first-hand how difficult it is to get stuff done when you have no reliable constant tap water supply, there is only electricity from 10am to 3pm in university buildings and the only sources of internet are your own mobile hotspot (with often bad network) and one e-library with extremely slow wifi. During weekdays, I stayed in the university's girls hostel, where we had electricity and tap water from 7pm to 12pm and had a hand water pump for the rest of the day. Obviously, Nigerian culture differs enormously from our own, and it

was really nice that people were always happy to discuss these differences, even when it came to potentially sensitive subjects like religion and marriage.

To conclude, I am extremely glad I did this unique internship in Nigeria and would advise anyone who gets declined for their first-choice internship to not get discouraged – you might still go on the best adventure of your life. What I learned there through experience certainly widened my perspective on the world, made me appreciate European convenience and structure like never before, and last but not least: it made me at least 200% more tolerant for hot and spicy food.

# NIGERIA



# NIGERIA

OLIVIER DEGROOTE

The Nigerian culture is one to discover once in your lifetime, the hospitality of the people overwhelmed me and the positive way of living is a lesson to take back to Europe. 'No wahalla', which means as much as 'Don't worry' is probably the most often used expression in Nigeria, apart from you're welcome.

On the other hand, I think there is no such thing as 'punctuality' in their Pidgin English. Getting used to the slow way of walking and the mentality of 'if not today, then tomorrow' was something to adapt to in the first week.

Nothing is fixed in Nigeria, no planning in advance and no fixed prices in stores as well. Be prepared to bargain during your time in Naija (Nigeria in Pidgin). Although the people are nice to you, everything in Nigeria is about money. The storekeeper doubles the price for Ojebo's (that's what they call all foreigners) because they know it's still very cheap for us. So it's better to go with one of the students to the market in the beginning until you know the prices a little.

Furthermore, less is more in Nigeria. I mean bringing a lot of stuff is no necessity here, you need to hand wash your clothes so just bring what you need and what is easy to wash. And since they expect you to buy one of their native clothes, there need to be space in the luggage for that. Bringing something from home is much



Effurun/  
Warri, Nigeria

appreciated here. Some chocolate or cookies will make everyone love you instantly. And you can return with a bag full of Nigerian clothes for you and the relatives.

There is a great chance that at the point of your arrival, nothing is ready yet. Most of internships are not well documented and if you have an idea yourself, don't hesitate proposing it to someone. They welcome every good idea, especially if it comes from a European. Even if one of the students wants to do a side project together, you can use the facilities of the university for that. Also do not withhold yourself from travelling the first few weeks, there is a lot more to see than the internship you come from. Even if

someone tries to convince you not to go, try to work it out if you really want to go.

Do not forget, they consider you as staff here. You have all privileges of staff and also all the opportunities to come along with the students as well. Best of both worlds if you ask me. What surprised me the most was that even the first year students are my age or older than me. I met no one who was 18 and got into university directly here. Maybe it depends highly on the region or university you're in, I mean the financing part of studying, but in general, people tend to not hurry themselves up in finishing their studies to start a career. They are also most of the times surprised about the knowledge that was built

up during my education, standards lay way lower than in Europe. Like instead of learning concepts of math and then solving big systems with the computer, they need to do all calculations by hand (up to 24 equation systems), even though they are in computer science.

It is a wonderful country, we went to mountains which reminded me of Austria or Switzerland, but there are also exotic beaches where you can surf. The Niger delta with the

Mangrove forests, the oil wells and the local fishermen is really worth it paying a visit as well.

Lagos, Benin, Idanre Hill and Port Harcourt are things in the region to go to, since there is nothing to see in Warri itself. We went to Obudu as well but that was an 8 hour drive for nothing, roads in Nigeria are really exhausting because of the potholes, military check points and crazy drivers. Have fun in Nigeria!

# NIGERIA



# INDIA

RIKKERT VAN DURME

When I left the airport in Delhi and felt the heat and smelled rotten eggs and garbage, I immediately knew I was heading into a most enjoyable time. I took a cab to my IAESTE buddy and together we went to the student dorms to settle in. By that time, I felt lucky to have survived the chaotic traffic. My buddy told me I paid 2,5 times the normal price for the cab ride, but getting ripped off like this reminded me to always bargain before buying. I would learn a lot more during my stay.

In the first weekend I met a second IAESTE intern, Lorenz, also from Ghent University. We heard from the IAESTE local committee that no other interns would come for the next five weeks, unfortunately. Because we were the only foreigners in our residency, some students looked very surprised to see us. Later on, everybody got used to our presence and started talking to us to hear our story. I recommend everybody to learn basic Hindi before going to (northern) India. Many Indian locals I encountered, including the residence staff, did not understand English very well.

After the first weekend, my internship at Sharda University, not far from the residence, began. IAESTE members showed me around and helped me with some formalities at the university. I had to conduct research in solar powered vehicles. The following weeks, every



Delhi, India

working day started in a different way. Sometimes the computer lab was locked and we had to call the professor and go from one place to another for a key. Sometimes the security guards would not let us pass because exams were going on, so we could not reach our lab. This was rather frustrating in the beginning. After only four weeks, we were assigned a fixed place. In the student restaurant on campus we met students from Congo, Mexico, Gambia, Greece and India of course. The service was not organized efficiently, but they offered some tasty meals.

It was a disadvantage that there was not much to do in Greater Noida, where we lived and worked, 2 h away from the city of Delhi.

Students also warned us not to leave the residence on foot after 8 p.m. if we did not want to lose our kidneys.

I need to talk about the food. Four vegetarian meals a day were provided by the residency. For lunch we got rice with a spicy sauce (mostly curry) and potatoes, for dinner we got rice with some other spicy sauce and potatoes. We did not get rice for breakfast which was disappointing. During trips, I ate very tasty Indian dishes in restaurants. In almost every meal I had, there was some spicy element. Be warned. As hygiene standards in India can be low, it is important to be careful what you eat, drink and touch. To lower the risk, I made use of a hand sanitizer and never drank from tap water (unless purified) or



unsealed bottles. Bringing your own toilet paper is not the worst idea, unless you want to go full Indian and use your left hand and a water hose. Fortunately I did not get ill, but diarrhoea was a constant throughout my stay. The idiom “Delhi belly” actually refers to traveller’s diarrhoea, an intestinal infection that keeps you tied to the toilet for a day or two.

It is a good idea to plan trips to spend the weekends with other interns. We have seen beautiful places and buildings, such as the Taj Mahal in Agra, Delhi itself with Hindu temples and monuments and Jaipur, the “Pink City”. These trips are an opportunity to meet more people. It was a plus that India is generally way cheaper than Belgium. We spent much less on food, transport and 4G data.

I can say that I had mixed experiences overall. The accommodation and the traineeship had some issues, but there were enough good moments and encounters to make it worth my while. On my last day, IAESTE planned dinner with the whole team, which was a nice way to say goodbye. After five weeks, I was happy to go home, if only for the weather. I would recommend everybody to go on an internship in India. The experience is beneficial for your personal development and you learn a lot from being in another culture.

# INDIA



# MALTA

SEBASTIAAN DE VRIEZE

When I've heard of IAESTE for the first time, I was already in my sixth year of university. I had never done an internship before so I had to take this opportunity. While scrolling through all the internships that IAESTE offered, one caught immediately my interest. An interesting internship at the university of Malta, a tiny island in the middle of the Mediterranean sea where the sun always shines. What there is not to like! You can imagine my joy when I heard that I could go.

So in the beginning of August I took the plane to Malta. Immediately after I landed I've met one of the kindest professors I have ever met. Even at 1 am the supervisor of my internship waited for me at the airport just to see me for 5 minutes! After my short meeting with the professor, a Maltese girl brought me to my apartment in a car that barely even started. Luckily it was in the middle of the night, because, as I would later experience, Maltese drivers are mad! The first thing I noticed about the apartment is that it was quite hot. You have to realize that during the time I arrived there, a heat wave was scorching Malta with 40 °C. As you can imagine it was quite the challenge for a guy used to the Belgian climate to sleep comfortably with only a fan to cool you. But I had nothing to complain. I enjoyed making my Belgian friends jealous with my sunny pictures!



Msida, Malta

Since I had still some days before my internship started, I could already explore the island a bit. I walked to Valletta, the capital of Malta. A really nice and beautiful "city". They like to call it a city, but in 15 minutes you can cross Valletta. As I have said it really is a tiny island. After spending a hot afternoon in Valletta, the very kind Swiss guy who stayed in the same room as me, took me to a bar where I would meet some other interns. They were from all over Europe and they immediately made me feel welcome. After enjoying a few drinks in the nice reggae bar, I got introduced to the Maltese nightlife! One thing I can definitely say is that Maltese people know how to party! There is district called Paceville that apparently only exist

for that purpose. You can hop from one club to another. This was the perfect way to get to know the other interns. There was no ice to be broken. Actually it was like I knew them already for a long time. It was on this evening that I realized I would have a wonderful stay in Malta. My first weekend consisted mostly of exploring the many hidden beaches, which are abundant in Malta, with my newly made friends.

After reading all this you would almost forget that I was in Malta for an internship. But on Monday my internship started. After a fifteen minute walk in the scorching sun (yes, even at 8:30 in the morning), I arrived at the university. There I was welcomed by the friendly professor

with a big smile. There wasn't a fixed subject to work on for my internship, so the professor let me more less choose what I wanted to do. After discussing this with his colleagues in Maltese, a really, really strange language, they found a perfect subject for me. I could learn how to work with a certain program while on the same time helping them with their research. I was supervised by a post-doc who really was helpful all the time. The other people in the research team were all really nice and I learned to know them better at the barbecues that were organized at the professor's home. Even his students were there. You see how loved this professor is. Oh, and one important thing about the university: they had air-conditioning!

After a whole day of working, a jump in the sea was the perfect way to refresh and in the evening I met up with the other trainees. We went to a bar or cooked at someone's place. There weren't many evenings where I stayed at my place. In the weekend we had more time to explore the rest Malta. We did some trips to Gozo and Comino. Those are the two other islands of Malta. Comino has some of the

most beautiful beaches I have ever seen. Rock beaches where sea has the most intense blue colour and is crystal clear. No wonder the lagoons are called Blue lagoon and Crystal lagoon. The only negative side of this small island are the many tourists, but it is really worthwhile to visit it. And of course a weekend wouldn't be a weekend without some weekendparties.

Unfortunately my stay in Malta would only last four weeks. So in my last week I had to say goodbye to everybody. Luckily I had brought some chocolates from Belgium. This is always a nice way to lure people to Belgium. Because the people that I have met during my stay, I really will see them again.

I would really recommend people to go Malta for an internship. I really learned a lot and gained a lot of experience at my internship, even if I did it only for a short time. Malta is such a beautiful country, with so many beaches. It is like a (really) small paradise. But the one thing why I would never forget Malta are the really nice people I have met there! To conclude: It was AMAZING! Thank you Malta!

## MALTA



# SPAIN

## SHAWNEE WEYNANTS

Well here I am, back in Belgium after an incredible summer in España, the land of sun and costas. I don't even know where to start with all the memories I have in my head. So I guess I'll just start from the beginning. Before leaving Belgium, I imagined two possibilities in my head: or I will die trying to live on my own in a foreign country or maybe I'll have a good time and make a few friends. Well it's obvious I didn't die, but "I'll have a good time" is the biggest understatement of my life. Now I just regret one thing and that's not having the guts to go sooner!

The IAESTE team took great care of everything, the paperwork, the apartment which had a great location just in the centre of Madrid, the welcoming at the airport... They were a great help and it's amazing that an organisation like this even exists for us, students. Everything went great, and when there was a problem, IAESTE would help to fix it. Those guys did an awesome job which I want to thank them for.

I did an internship in an architecture office, called Louis Vidal just in the centre of Madrid. I'm not going to lie, in the beginning it is hard to get to know people because, well, you're "the new girl", a young trainee that doesn't have a lot of working experience in the field. Sometimes it was hard to join conversations between colleagues. But after some time I



Madrid, Spain

made friends, I learned some Spanish and I could join conversations more easily. When I had to leave the office, I even felt kind of sad because I had just met great people and now I had to go back already. Because we worked during the week and travelled in the weekend, weeks flew by extremely quickly.

Now the most awesome thing about IAESTE is that you make incredible friendships in a really short amount of time with all the other trainees that come with the organisation. I remember my first weekend in Madrid, when my two roommates (Polish and Lebanese girl) and I decided to go out and discover the nightlife in Madrid. After that first night together, we instantly got along. We lived

together and shared all our experiences of work, buying groceries and trying to communicate with the Spanish people. Soon we gathered with other IAESTE trainees, a guy from Ecuador, a girl from Serbia, another girl from Dubai and a guy from South-Korea. And before we even realised, we kind of became like one big family. After work we came together to talk about our internships and plan our trips for the weekends to visit other cities in Spain. We cooked together, played games, went to the pool, and we laughed, *ohhh we laughed so many damn times haha*. It was the best summer.

Spain is especially a great country for students to visit. There was everything you would like for a

great summer: sun, playas, great paellas, great fiestas and also really beautiful architecture with a lot of charm and character. Two cities in particular caught my heart. The first one was San Sebastian in the NW of Spain. It's really a charming city and it is a lot greener than the Southern part of Spain, which is much more dry. We climbed to the top of the hill where we had an incredible view on the whole city and the main beaches. We watched the sunset while drinking some beers at Playa de Zurriola and watched the surfers catching those last waves before sundown. Life felt amazing. The second city was Seville. Even though we had 2 days in a row of 40°C, this city just blew my mind with his wonderful architecture. Especially the Plaza de España, with their buildings made of red brick and blue tiles with flower motives. We saw some people dancing the typical flamenco dance and I bought a fan and a big flower to put in my hair. For the rest of the trip, the Spanish

culture had completely took control of my soul and spirit.

Well now, I hope after reading this, you caught the same butterflies in your tummy as I did during my summer. If not, I also made a small video of my trip to Spain that will be online soon (facebook Shawnee Weynants). Not only I learned a lot professionally during my internship, but I completely fell in love with the whole IAESTE experience; I made great friendships all over the world, I collected wonderful memories which I know I will cherish for the rest of my life, but most of all, I grew as a person by having a more open minded attitude towards other cultures and by learning how to live independently, which means a lot to me and which makes me proud of myself. I want to thank all my IAESTE friends and the IAESTE community for this chance and the wonderful moments, cheers to you guys! And hasta la vista España!

## SPAIN



# CYPRUS

## SIEN STAELENS

Hello there, my name is Sien Staelens, a civil engineering architect to be, now going to my 2<sup>nd</sup> master year. Doing an IAESTE internship is about the best decision I ever made. I hesitated a very long time if I should go on an internship or not. But reading the articles from students that went abroad, really convinced me to accept such an adventure. So last year, I started making documents and applied for 3 countries (Cyprus, Spain, Romania). A few weeks later I heard that I was accepted for my first choice, so I could go to Limassol, Cyprus. I was so excited and continued making my files to get further in the nomination process.

A few months later, I left Belgium only a week after my last exam and took a flight to Cyprus. I was so scared and so nervous, flying alone and arriving on my own in a strange country, really exciting.

So that's how my adventure eventually started! Once in the airport, I took a bus to the city centre of Limassol and from there, a taxi brought me to my living place. This was a very nice apartment which I should share with a girl from Serbia. My place was only a 5-minute walk far from the coastline, the shopping street and the old town centre with nice bars and restaurants. I couldn't live at a better place!

From the first day, I met the students from IAESTE that already arrived, which was really nice! So I



Limassol,  
Cyprus

met a girl from Poland who was already at work and guided me through the city. From that moment I knew this was the best decision I've ever made, the people were so nice and friendly. During the first weekend, everybody else from IAESTE arrived too. So I met my roommate, my neighbours and all the other students living in the other building a few minutes away from ours. The first weekend looked like we already knew each other for years. We went to the beach with the IAESTE volunteers, went out, go shopping, having dinner together,..

Monday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, my first day at work was planned. The people from IAESTE Cyprus were very kind and took me to the office to introduce me my new colleagues. That was so kind, because I was a

bit scared to go alone by bus to the office and to a lot of people I never saw before. But that was not needed. From the first moment, everybody was really grateful to me. I had my own desk and after a talk with my promotor from the office, I could start working. In the beginning, it was a bit scanning what I could do because they hadn't a real task already. But they let me choose and speak with them, so I could look and study a lot of files to check the differences and procedures they follow. The technology in Cyprus is not that developed as in Belgium. Everything is on paper in big folders, which was strange in the beginning, but also nice to learn working in that kind of method.

A few days later, I got my own

A few days later, I got my own project to give my ideas about landscape architecture. These projects were not accepted yet by the office and they wanted a second opinion from me. Because it was about landscape design, it was also new for me, but really interesting of course! They always appreciated my work and the images I made, so I felt helpful and they tried to use a few of my ideas in the further process of those projects. In total, I made 5 projects on my own during the 4 weeks of internship and besides that, sometimes I could join a site visit with one of my colleagues.

My colleagues were such nice people, they were all very different but each person was so sympathetic and sweet for me. I even joined a family dinner with one of my colleagues, Yiota, and met her 3 sons and their girlfriends. One of her sons had a Dutch

girlfriend. He was studying in the Netherlands and on vacation that time in Cyprus. It was so nice to meet them and probably I will visit them again in the future.

Besides the daily work, there was so much more to do. Every day after work I was in touch with all the IAESTE students and we went to the beach or to a bar, cooked together, went to yoga and many more. In the weekends we planned a trip further away from Limassol. We visited Ayia Napa, Nicosia, Malindi's beach, Paphos, Kourion... Each one place was beautiful and each time, we visited a lot of things.

I just want to say: if you ever hesitate about going on an IAESTE internship, just do it. You will have an amazing time, a lot of new friends from different countries a wonderful experience and a lot of fun!

## CYPRUS



# IRAN

SIMON DE CLERCQ

‘May I ask a question: how do you see Iran?’ Before my arrival to Tehran to spend two months working and traveling in the country, I would have answered this question by denouncing the bias of western media and recounting the overly positive travel stories that I heard from friends that visited the country. But in fact, I did not really know what to feel for this much-debated yet little-understood country in the Middle East. Neither could I have guessed that conversations initiated by this question would almost become a daily routine during my wanderings around Iran and its capital.

For me, now lucky enough to have visited this beautiful place, ‘seeing’ Iran has become synonymous with experiencing its borderless hospitality. An airport pickup by the local IAESTE committee at three o’clock in the morning, minute-old acquaintances insisting on paying my bus fare, strangers taking an hour of their time to show me the way, people in the street handing out lemonade and biscuits to passers-by, are only examples of what generosity means over here. In an instant, people will adopt you as their guests and take care of you no matter what you are doing or where you are going.



Tehran, Iran

Human interaction, undoubtedly partly due to my European looks, is just a matter of making eye contact (‘Hey mister, where are you from?’). Through spontaneous conversations, I have noticed that Iranians either want to disprove the world’s stereotypes towards their country, confirm their openness for the west or simply practice a foreign language. Being by yourself in public, as a result, is fairly impossible and leads to a quickly growing list of contact numbers who want to hang out.

Besides the borderless hospitality and social spontaneity, what consistently strikes me about this place is the language. That words as well as numerals are written

using the Persian script means that simple interactions such as buying breakfast or taking a bus can become rather complicated affairs. I like it though, learning the basics of a new language is a rewarding challenge and greeting someone with *Salaam, chetore?* never fails to break the ice.

At my work at the Research Institute for Energy Modelling and Planning of the University of Tehran my colleagues luckily speak English. I continue the research that I started during my master thesis and receive feedback and follow-up from other researchers at the institute. The workplace is stress-free and I have a lot of freedom to pursue the topics that I enjoy. It is

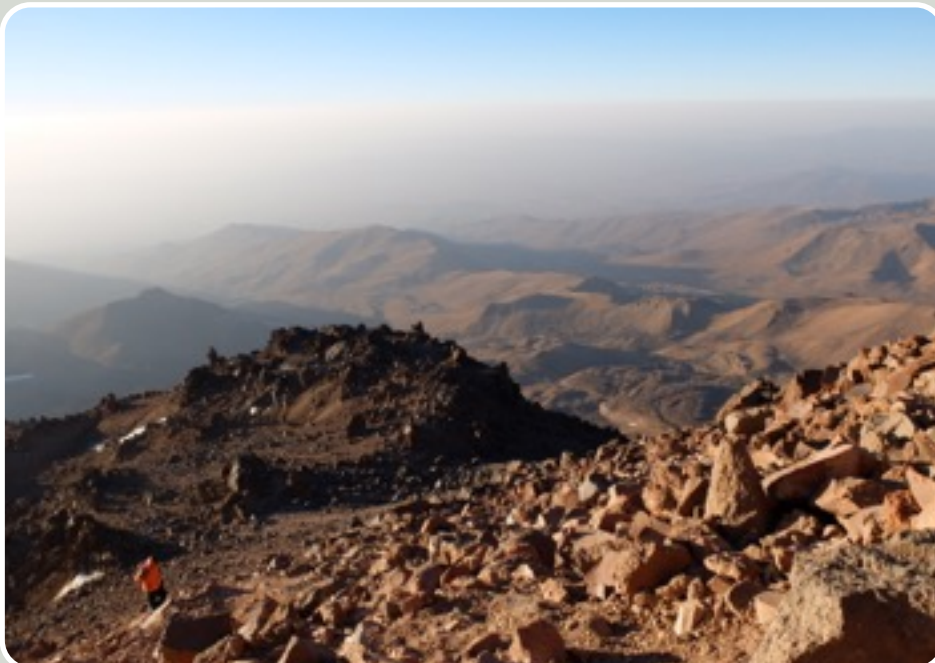


located on the top floor of a high office building with a great view, tea is being served throughout the day and at irregular intervals cake and ice-cream go around. I could not wish for more.

Tehran in summer can be described as an over-populated city that is bustling with people, cars, and cats. Bank managers, university students and mullahs in honking taxis and zigzagging motorbikes, looking for a place away from the heat. Luckily, Tehran's parks are always cool and offer an alluring retreat for a picnic or a Persian barbecue. I also like to spend the latest part of the afternoon in the mountains in the north of the city, a great place for hiking, rock climbing and watching the sun set. No greater relief than the mountainous silence after a few days in Tehran's non-stop buzzing chaos.

The question 'How do you see Iran?' reflects this nation's self-consciousness and global awareness and Iran's richness in terms of cultural and natural heritage is echoed in its peoples' pride. Living here has been an overwhelming experience that has dazzled me more than I could have imagined. Working at the research institute, walking in the streets of Tehran, Esfahan and Yazd, hiking up Mt. Sabalan, spending an afternoon chatting and singing with fellow IAESTE interns; a set of special moments that will stick with me for a long time. Iran is a place that is impossible to understand without experiencing it first-hand, and even then it can be a challenge. I am very glad that I can lift at least a small tip of its veil and have come to understand this part of the world a little better.

## IRAN



# INDIA

THOMAS GELDHOF

“This is the first time you will be staying outside Europe?” I confirmed, and replied the lady from the travel agency: “Yes.. but why?” , “Well, actually we don’t recommend India as a first destination outside Europe, as it might be quite of a culture shock.” Full of confidence, I said: “Aaah don’t worry, I’ve been on Erasmus last semester for 5 months, I’m ready for this!”

We’re going on an adventure! On July 13, I left my cozy home in West-Flanders for something I’d been longing for for a long time: an internship abroad. Destination: Manipal, South-India. It couldn’t start better: for no reason, I was promoted to business-class right before the flight took off. They even called me ‘Herr Geldhof’! After 20 hours, I finally made it to Mangalore airport. An impatient professor from Manipal Institute of Technology was awaiting me with a sign which said ‘Mister Geldhof’. I almost started wondering why I didn’t bring my suit to India. Although it was raining all the time because of monsoon-season, and the temperature sometimes was as high as 35 °C, I was ready to embark on my internship-mission.

The next following 6 weeks, a professor from MIT (not Massachusetts) was my mentor during the internship, which dealt



Manipal, India

about the analysis and modeling of the effect of roughness geometries on heat transfer in solar air heaters. A subject that suits my mechanical energy engineering major very well. As working on the University wasn’t the favorite part of my day, the evenings and especially the weekends made it all up! We were with a big group of about 35 interns from all over the world. Philip from Austria, Susoke from Japan, Ansisha from Thailand, the three Ola’s from Poland; they were all part of the gang. We often went to the beach in Udupi at the Arabic Sea, which was only 30 minutes away from Manipal by bus, and this for only 20 rupees! (= 30 cents). Yes, the transportation in India is cheap, but sometimes very crowded. Oh well, I can tell you

wicked stories about taking busses and trains crossing India, by day or by night. Ask me about it!

The local committee of Manipal really took care of us. Every weekend they organized activities and trips. During one of those weekends, we went to see the tea plantations in picturesque Munnar in the south. The best weekend I had with the other interns was when we organized a 3-day trip ourselves to ‘Hampi’. Cruising around by scooter, getting up every morning at 5am to see the sunrise at Matanga hill, taking the hundreds of steps towards the Monkey Temple. That was a great weekend.

The last week of my internship I filled my evenings planning the 3

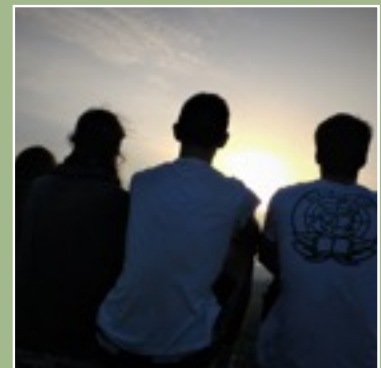
weeks of travelling, which we planned to do after our internship. Together with Levi, one of my best friends from Belgium, I had the magnificent idea to cross India from south to north by public transport (see attached map). It all started with 2 days of chilling in Goa, the party and surfers paradise-state of India. A night bus took us to Mumbai, where we went to see the biggest slum neighborhood in South-East Asia, the 'Dharavi Slums'. The expression culture shock suddenly started making sense. One day after being food poisoned, we headed off to the state of 'Rajasthan' by a 16-hour night train. Cruising around in Udaipur, city of lakes; climbing the walls of Mehrangarh fort in Jodhpur; running up Nahargarh fort hill to see an epic sunset over the capital city of Jaipur. After Jaipur, our first (new) World Wonder was waiting for us in Agra: The Taj Mahal. 1000 rupees to get in, but totally worth it! That same day we

headed to Delhi. The 5 days after we went to the nearby Himalayas for a hiking trip. Food, transportation, guides, everything was arranged! Even though Levi and me spent half of the trip being food poisoned (again), it was a great experience. Before spending our last 4 days in Delhi, we made a quick stop in the holy city of Haridwar, where Hindu pilgrims worship the river Ganges every evening.

9 weeks I spent in India, and I must say it changed me, in a way. I got to learn so much about the Indian culture, about other people and how to respect and appreciate one another, and definitely about myself. It might seem as a big step to take, but going on an IAESTE internship is a once in a lifetime journey you won't regret.

Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.

# INDIA



# POLAND

TIM VANDAMME

After receiving news of having no retakes, I departed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July to Poland for two months (to be honest I would've gone with or without retakes). Destination: Warsawa airport and then the bus to Łódź. I would have an internship of 2 months in the Polytechnic University of Łódź, focussed on image processing techniques. I didn't know what to expect since I'd never been to Eastern Europe before, nor did anyone of my family. One thing is sure now, I didn't regret going.

After arriving at the university dorm, we took a small tour through the city with one of the LC members as our guide. I quickly noticed Łódź was very big, but at the same time it didn't really feel as busy as any of the other big cities I had gone to. This made that it was very pleasant to just walk through the streets and parks whilst sightseeing and taking many pictures.

Our guide learned us the ropes about getting around in the city. We could use the bus, tram or bike. The public transport was always perfectly on time and you could rent bikes for free, as long as you didn't use them for longer than 20 mins. Taking the tram, we were shown a huge shopping centre where we could buy everything we would need for the following months. We finished the day with meeting other LC



members and some other trainees who also were already there.

Work started on Monday with meeting all supervisors and an introduction by my own supervisor to as what I would be doing the following weeks. All trainees, as did I, were assigned tasks to work on in group or alone. Working hours were flexible and all supervisors could be approached if you wanted to shift a day to go on a trip somewhere.

Once the first couple of days had passed I had made new friends from all over the world: Malta, Romania, Scotland, Poland, Mexico, Turkey... Too many people to mention, but everyone came there with the same goal of meeting new people and learning

about a different culture.

Halfway July, and after getting lost a couple of times, we could go around pretty much everywhere we wanted using public transport. So people started organising more city trips and activities. Or we just went to the centrum of the city by night and had a drink in one of the many bars along Piotrkowska street, which is the main commercial street. It became our favourite street in the whole city very quickly.

At about the same time work started getting more interesting too, especially in my case because I was allowed to use extremely pricy equipment to take 3D scans of random materials. My supervisors gave me a deadline but allowed me to work at my own

pace within that time.

In the middle of the summer the other cities in Poland started organising their IAESTE weekends. One of them was the Kraków weekend. Everyone was excited for this one since you had the option to go to Auschwitz. People said it leaves an impression and it really did. There were rooms filled with belongings of real people that had been misled in going there. Maps which portrayed the influx of people from all over the world to the deathcamp. Vast landscapes with train tracks, the kind you see in movies. For an accurate description you have to go yourself, the buildings and the feeling of the place are something you have to experience yourself.

What really stuck to me while staying in Łódź was the fact that almost every day there was something to do in the city. And with so many people around you from so many different countries and cultures every trip was worth it. I could ask in the chat if people would want to go out and within a couple of minutes you had a small group of people who were ready to go. No two days went by without a party or seeing friends.

I can only encourage people to go on an internship with IAESTE, it's an easy way towards real experience and you obtain memories and friends you'll keep for the rest of your life.

As they say in Poland: Łódź you go (back) to Łódź? I certainly would.

## POLAND



# ECUADOR

TOMAS DE BACKER

Going to exotic places far away is always a thrill you can hardly describe in a few words. You are most likely getting stuck with the phrase: “You had to be there”. My experience these last two months is not different than that one sentence. I went through highs and lows, but in general you had to be there to really understand the full expense of my trip.

Before, I didn't really go anywhere outside of Europe, let alone more than a couple of weeks. This made the trip to the other side of the world a very scary adventure. I was about to go to a country I didn't know at all for more or less two and a half months. The thrill and fear of the unknown had me sitting on the edge of my seat for a long time until it was finally time to start and leave everything behind. As expected, the first few weeks of my internship were rough. Ecuador could be compared to Europe 100 years back in time in my field of work, so there was not much to work with. Not only was there a language barrier from both sides, they also didn't really get my specialty in environmental engineering. This made the job kind of hard in the beginning, since I had nothing to start from and they couldn't grasp the techniques I had studied in the past.

After a few weeks, I found ways to go back to the basic and figured out where to go from there to turn the company I was assigned to into the right environmental



direction. In the meantime, I started to explore the foreign country I found myself in. The beauty is rather indescribable and for a Western soul like me, it was hard to grasp. The nature was so versatile and beautiful I had no words most of the time. I tried to use my camera every time I saw something beautiful, but after a while I realized that technology is not nearly advanced enough to really capture the whole thing as I could with my eyes.

Every weekend the other interns from the hostel and myself went out on trips with busses for hours to little parts of the country. We tried to see as much as possible, but there was just not enough time. The country is in South-American terms a rather small one, but in our eyes, it was huge.

It is a combination of beautiful coastal areas, massive mountains, mesmerizing jungle and everything in between. This made every trip not only completely different in scenery and wildlife, but also in climate. We traveled in busses and when we got out it was possible the temperature had risen or plummeted 10 degrees and you went from dry mountain air to wet jungle air in only a couple of hours.

This went on for weeks on end and after a while, I really got used to the Ecuadorian way of life. I went from being a student in the center of Ghent to a hard-working gringo in the heart of rather poor Ecuador. Even the culture differences, which were a lot to take in at the beginning, I got used to in time. The way of living in

Quito namely is nothing like here. People are either disgustingly rich or very poor. There is almost no middle class. This makes the city a buzzing place of poor sellers trying to convince you to buy their products, honking cabs who try to make a living and people talking loudly without caring too much. In Belgium, the entire city would be overflow with people complaining of nuisance, but their nobody cared. It is the Latino way of life someone told me dancing like his life depended on it to the tunes of reggaeton that blasted through his speaker.

The internship was a life changing experience and I'm so glad I was fortunated enough to be able to do it, but I think the thing that made it worth every dollar where the

people I met. The group of interns I started with in June became sort of family. That happens when you are with them for about two months in the week every day and of course every weekend as well. I was blessed with an amazing group of people and a great vision on what life should be. They gave me different perspective on things and made it one of the best two months of my life. I am sure that in the future I will be seeing them again in person or even in magazines with their own inventions or brilliant ideas. Therefore I recommend this journey to everyone who can do it. It opens your eyes, gives you a perspective on life and just makes you a person who knows the world we live in.

## ECUADOR



# VIETNAM

VINCENT POLFLIET

During the summer holiday of 2017 I was able to go and partake in and internship in Vietnam. The internship for which I applied was to teach English on a university in a small city in the north of Vietnam. The teaching job was quite different from what I originally expected. I didn't receive any guidelines for my lectures nor did the class have any end goals that the students needed to achieve. The assignment was just make sure they're talking English and correct their pronunciation when needed. This gave me the freedom to plan more interactive and fun activities for my students, instead of worrying a lot about grammar and vocabulary exercises. But the classes could get quite repetitive when I didn't have that much inspiration. Another disadvantage of the internship itself was that the Vietnamese people are quite bad when it comes to organization and planning and keeping their promises. Which could be quite frustrating when you're in your class room at 8 o'clock in the morning but none of your students showed up because the class was postponed last minute without the university notifying me. The teaching itself was quite fun. I taught between the ages of 6 and 45. This meant that I taught children as well as students and some teachers or professors of local high schools and universities. It could be quite



Thai,  
Nguyen,  
Vietnam

annoying sometimes when you have to spent half an hour each classes making sure they say 'swim' instead of 'shwim' or 'beach' instead of 'bich'. I have no regrets of doing the teacher internship, it gave me an experience that I won't forget and one that I will value for quite some time.

The most interesting part of my two months in Vietnam was the travelling in my opinion. I tried to visit some places each weekend. My boss gave me quite flexible working hours so I could plan some longer trips from time to time. She also arranged and paid for a trip to the famous Ha Long Bay for me and some of my colleagues. The two most memorable trips for me were the

trips to Sa Pa and Hoi An. The first one is was quite unique for me since it was my first solo travel ever. Which was a bit frightening, but as soon as I arrived in my destination my fear quickly made way for excitement. Sa Pa itself is a must do when you go to Vietnam. The region has amazing rice field terraces with the rice plants themselves being the greenest green I've ever seen. During my time there I also visited some poor local villages to get a feel for how Vietnamese people really live in smaller villages. Going on my first solo trip meant that I was also able to meet a lot of other people doing a similar holiday as me. This resulted in us exchanging experiences and recommending each other things we should



absolutely see during the rest of our stay. One of these things that I got recommended was my second highlight of my Vietnamese internship and that was the trip to Hue and Hoi An. I took an 18 hours bus drive to Hue first. I arrived there in the morning the next day and this gave me the opportunity to explore this ancient city a bit. It also gave me enough time to make arrangements to rent a motorbike for the next day. The next day I went on a 150 km motorbike trip to Hoi An. The hostel where I stayed in Hue was kind enough to provide me a map with the route to Hoi An and some landmarks I could visit along the way. One of the landmarks I could visit is the Hai Van pas. Which was made famous by the TV-show

Top Gear describing it as one of the most beautiful route to do on your motor bike. I was also able to meet some people during this motorbike trip and form a little biker gang with them to make the experience even more amazing. When I arrived in Hoi An I also stayed in one of the best hostels I've ever stayed in. Everyone there was very social, which made it very easy to make new friends and which also in turn gave me always some friends to do the activities with that I wanted to do.

All in all I really enjoyed my internship in Vietnam and would highly recommend it to everyone.

# VIETNAM



# JORDAN

VINCENT CARDOEN

Riding on camels like Lawrence of Arabia, stargazing in the middle of the desert and floating on the Dead Sea. Who doesn't have these items on their bucket list? Thanks to IAESTE, I was able to see these dreams come true. I did my internship in Jordan, a beautiful country with the most friendly people I have ever met. An oasis of peace in an otherwise turbulent region. Everywhere we went, we were greeted very warmly and sometimes even invited for tea and dinner. At my internship company, we had also a teaboy, who was in charge of making delicious tea and also took the lead in the prayers, which were held twice a day in the office.

At the first day of my internship, I was asked whether I preferred to work in the office or do fieldwork. As temperatures can go up to 40°C in the desert, the decision was rapidly made. My first task was to program the communication devices to control and monitor the equipment of a water purification installation in the Azraq refugee camp. I got a good training on the company's equipment and software tools. Eventually plans changed and I got to work on a solar plant together with Anas, a super friendly colleague with whom I commuted to work.

As an electrical power engineer it was very interesting to learn more about the solar project and we even did a site visit to see how the



Amman,  
Jordan

project evolved. As the deserts of the Middle East are full of sunlight, the region provides a huge opportunity for sustainable solar energy.

Of course, an IAESTE internship isn't all about the work itself. There were a lot of activities planned during weekends and at nights. As I did only share pictures of these leisure activities with my Facebook friends, they actually thought I was on holiday for six weeks instead of doing an internship. Honestly, it really felt like being on holiday as we were travelling around the country. The first weekend we went for a walk in the rivers and waterfalls of Wadi Mujib, the ideal place to cool down from the heat and have a good shower. After that, we went for a swim in the Dead

Sea. Although, in reality, it was impossible to really swim in the Dead Sea, because my feet were popping out of the water all the time.

A few weeks later, we had our Golden Trip, which included a visit to one of the Seven UNESCO World Wonders: Petra. It was amazing to walk among these huge temples, sculpted in rocks, where camels are greeting you at every corner. Later that day, we went for a ride in the desert of Wadi Rum, where we not only admired an enchanting sunset, but also spent the night looking at the stars above. Some of us even stayed up all night to see the sun come up again. The last two days of the trip we went to Aqaba, a city where it is so hot that you cannot avoid getting sweaty. There we

stayed in the Radisson Blu hotel at the Red Sea. In contrary to the Dead Sea, the Red Sea does contain living animals. The first day there, one guy got stung by a jellyfish and it really looked painful. Bad luck or not, the second day, another guy also got stung by a jellyfish. Fortunately there were also large swimming pools to relax in a safe environment. In the beautiful surroundings of the resort I got my first yoga session, by an even more beautiful young lady. At night there was a spectacular fire show and some sexy belly dancing. We absolutely had the time of our life!

Besides the trips organized by the IAESTE volunteers, we also did a lot of exploration on our own: walking through Roman ruins in Jerash, watching mosaics in Madaba, hanging out at the boulevard in Amman and much more.

As I did book my flight before I knew the precise dates of my internship, I had some days left in Amman before I came back to Belgium. Together with some other trainees, I went

downtown to another hotel to explore the rest of the city and eat my last falafels and shawarma's. These days, there was also an outdoor film festival going on at nights, in which the spectators sat outside and had an amazing view over the city. When the green illuminated towers of the mosques also started to broadcast their prayers over the city, it was a very enchanting moment.

In order to please my family and friends, I did also buy some souvenirs during my last days. I really got in love with the Jordanian sweets, so I decided to buy 7 kilos of them. It was an organizational challenge to get them all in my luggage and still not exceed the weight limits, but I was able to manage it.

For me, this summer internship was a once in a lifetime experience and I really recommend everybody to also participate in an IAESTE internship.

## JORDAN



# SPAIN

WOUT DEBAENST

Immediately after my last exam at my university I went to Barcelona, Spain with the single goal of enjoying my trip to the fullest and meeting a lot of people and learn about their culture. At my departure I was prepared for working from 8-18h with two hours and half a day on public transport to get at work. I thought learning Spanish would take me a huge effort. I expected that it would take me a lot of time to meet people and make friends.

Well, everything turned out way better than I expected! During the summer my company shortens their working hours from 8-18h to 8-15h and a colleague proposed to pick me up at the train station which shortened my daily commuting time drastically. This way I was home at 4 o'clock and had the whole evening to go enjoy the amazing city life in Barcelona.

Because I first followed beginner classes Spanish and later obligated myself speaking Spanish at work, I could express myself pretty fast in their language. During my stay, I started speaking it more fluently, with more vocabulary, making jokes,...

But the thing that turned out the best way possible, was the IAESTE community in Barcelona. On my second day I was added to a Whatsapp group where I introduced myself to end up two hours later eating a delicious meal together with people from China, Bolivia,



Barcelona,  
Spain

Austria, Mexico, Spain ... The amount of people I got to know during my IAESTE adventure was tremendous (for some reason half of them were from German speaking countries). All of them had such an interesting stories about their country, their culture and their personality.

For example I learned that 'oida' is a word that's usable in every thinkable situation in Austria. Bolivian people feel uncomfortable if they go to a bbq and everyone has to take his own food. In their culture one family usually prepares a meal and organise everything for their guests. Austrians also really feel like they lost something in the second world war, even the new generations talk about it with a lot of emotions. Fun fact: If people in

Barcelona stop for a red light when there are no cars coming, they are tourists!

Dating a Chinese girl taught me a lot about the Asian continent and more specific about China: Asian people take everything literal and don't understand sarcasm which can turn out in very funny situations. It's just not in their culture to use sarcasm as a way of conversation. In Mandarin there doesn't exist a difference between calling someone 'He or she', so don't get offended if a Chinese boy/girl mixes it up to you. Being white in China makes you look attractive and many will strive for that ideal image by using creams and evading the sun. Whiter people look wealthier because they don't have to work as a farmer in the sun. Also glasses can make

young people more attractive because they look like a better student.

I learned a lot about other cultures and certainly Catalan people and culture too. I could form a nice image of Catalans by working with them all day and living together with a Catalan middle aged man. They are very closed towards non-Catalan people and hard to make friends with. The two guys I had a lot of fun with at my company, were both not originally Catalan while the rest was. But saying they are closed doesn't impose they aren't nice to have around. They are really kind, caring and have great cooking skills. Their patriotism is

immense, they don't feel Spanish but Catalan. This sentiment is also the base for the long strived Catalan independency. In September 2017 the independency was a big deal for all the Catalans, especially with the referendum planned on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. There wasn't a day at work that independency is not a hot topic. This way I could profoundly create an in depth image of this problem.

I had the time of my life in Barcelona and achieved my goals in a way I never thought possible!

# SPAIN



# UNITED KINGDOM

YARNE HERMANN

Hi there, pal/lass. One year ago, I was considering going on an IAESTE internship just like you might be right now. Maybe just like I was, you're also not sure whether you want to do an exchange semester or an internship. If that's the case, I have only one advice for you: just do both! I've always wanted to go abroad as much as possible and being a musician and a computer science engineering student, IAESTE provided me with the most perfect internship.

I went to Glasgow Caledonian University, where I worked together with a PhD student to make a hearing loss simulator. For me, having just finished my bachelor's degree this was a very educative experience. Prior to this internship, I felt that my knowledge about signal processing was too basic and mainly theoretical. Working on the hearing loss simulator finally had me apply theory in practice and also introduced me to some concepts that were new to me and that will definitely prove useful in the future.

When I arrived in Glasgow, I only had a very small amount of time to get used to my home for the following two months, seeing as the next day the IAESTE Glasgow LC had arranged a weekend trip to the Isle of Arran. Looking at the itinerary for this trip, I saw: "Visit of the Arran whiskey distillery, whiskey master class and whiskey festival", so I



Glasgow,  
Scotland, UK

knew this wasn't something I could miss. Plenty of time to get used to Glasgow afterwards.

This was already an amazing experience. Aside from the distillery, we took some walks through the beautiful nature of the island, visited an old castle ruin and spent a cold evening next to a campfire. This was also an amazing opportunity to meet other interns from countries such as Norway, Poland, Kazakhstan, India, China, Tajikistan, Lebanon, Jordan, Algeria, ... . On Saturday evening I also had my first experience with haggis, and I have to admit that it's not my cup of tea. But that shouldn't stop you from trying it though, seeing as most of the other interns actually really enjoyed it. I preferred filling my stomach with fish 'n chips however.

After this weekend, I had my first day of work. At the university I was received by my supervising professor and PhD student. They showed me around the beautiful campus and were always very friendly and helpful. This is something I noticed about Scots in general, they're always so kind and helpful, which makes you immediately feel at home. My supervisors were also very flexible on working hours, which allowed me to work from home sometimes and take days off when there happened to be a trip during the week.

The trips were definitely one of the best parts of my time in Scotland. It's such a nice country with very beautiful nature and cities and a lot of history.

The one I enjoyed the most, was the one to the Isle of Skye. During this four-day trip we saw the Hogwarts Express riding, saw Loch Ness, hiked to the top of a mountain, were able to swim in the Fairy Pools, a series of pools connected by small waterfalls, and did so much more. Scottish weather is known to be quite rough, but during this trip we couldn't have hoped for better weather, the sun was always shining, and with temperatures around 20°C we actually felt warm.

One of the evenings we also had the "International Night", where everyone made a main dish, a drink or a desert from his or her home country. This was a very tasty diner I can tell you. Every night we would also spend our time together with everyone in the very nice living

room of the hostel where we stayed. These were absolutely the best nights of my whole stay in Scotland.

I'm writing this after I've been back for almost a month and I'm telling you, this was one of the best experiences of my life. This country that is so close, was able to offer and amaze so much. I learned a lot, both within my internship and outside of the internship. I visited so many beautiful places and most important of all, I met some wonderful people and made friends for life.

And no matter which country you go to, I'm sure your IAESTE internship will be something you'll also look back on for the rest of your life, with nothing but the greatest of memories.

# UNITED KINGDOM





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