



IAESTE

BELGIUM

Internship booklet – edition 2018



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 cooperating 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 apply for an IAESTE internship.

Enjoy reading and we hope to see you on the next IAESTE activity: some time, some place, somewhere in the world.

Ellen Bond,
Yann Simoens,
Ewout Vereecke

LC Presidents 2018-2019



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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, University of Zagreb

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KAZAKHSTAN



At one point during the Easter break of 2018, I was a bit bored and somehow I ended up scrolling through all available IAESTE internships of the oncoming summer. After some initial doubt, I decided to just be bold and apply for one of them, and about three months later I was sitting on a plane to Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan.

The first thing I noticed upon my arrival was the huge amount of space! Every big street had at least four lanes, trees on both sides and then a sidewalk about double the size we have in Belgium. The city is also filled with parks, flowers and spectacular fountains. And on top of that, whenever you look south you can see the amazing Tien Shan mountain range towering above everything else.

Unfortunately I didn't have a lot of work to do because most of the university research was on hold for summer, but this gave me the opportunity to explore the vast unknown city anytime I wanted. I spent a lot of time just wandering through some random streets, because on almost all of those

trips I came across some interesting building or park that I hadn't seen before. It's also very easy to find your way in the grid-like street pattern, and public transport or private taxis are extremely cheap in case you're too tired to walk all the way back.

It didn't take me long to meet all other international trainees, and also a lot of local people liked to hang out with this diverse multicultural group. I was quickly added to their WhatsApp group: Kumis for Life (Kumis is a typically Kazakh drink based on fermented horse milk). Because the restaurants over there are so cheap, we went out for dinner almost every night, usually followed by a visit to our favourite bar, a nice and quiet place called "Stalker". Mr. Aidarov, the owner of that place, was a typical example of a Kazakh person: he only spoke basic English, but he tried his best and was really friendly and open hearted.

On the weekends IAESTE Kazakhstan organized trips for us to some of the beautiful displays of nature that surround the city. Even though



the bus rides tended to be long and uncomfortable, the destination always turned out to be worth it. Once one of our local friends organized a camping trip for us, near lake Kaindy, and despite the rain (and non-waterproof tents) it was the best weekend of them all.

Because I was using a 30-day visa for about 70 days, I also had to cross the border into Kyrgyzstan twice to reset it. Those little trips were also very interesting, because Almaty is a pretty western city, but in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz capital, you can really see you're in ex-soviet central Asia. Once I also went all the way to the Issyk-Kul lake,

where you can see a big contrast between the crowded touristic beaches and the old abandoned skeletons of soviet factories. The group was also really dynamic, as new people came in and others went back home. We had at least one farewell party almost every week, accompanied by some shots of "Aidarovka" (Stalker's homemade vodka) and a big hug from Mr. Aidarov himself. When I arrived in the dormitory I had a room for myself, but about three weeks later a guy from Hong Kong moved in with me. This was a really interesting experience for both of us, as we spent many evenings talking about the cultural differences between two countries on almost opposite sides of the world. He only stayed for a month though, but after he left I got another roommate from Serbia. At this point I had changed from being the new trainee to being the one who had to show the others around, like the people I met on my first day had done to me. This was a really strange feeling, because it also meant that I would have to go home pretty soon. During this period the academic year had started again, and at once the campus was full of young students. Also a whole new bunch of exchange students from all over the world were flowing in. Especially my last weekend was great, because one of my local friends had hired a

house in the mountains to celebrate her birthday, and she had invited almost all of the international people in Almaty, plus all of her local friends. The location was amazing, with a spectacular view over the city at night, and I met so many interesting people there from too many different cultures to count (especially after some beers).

I was really sad to leave my home away from home, and saying goodbye to all those amazing people wasn't fun at all. But I'm sure we will meet each other again at some point in the future, like one of my friends already pointed out: it's called Kumis for LIFE, not just a few weeks.



MACEDONIA

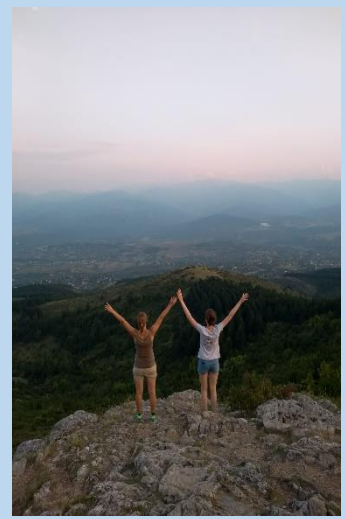


Homegrown alligator, see you later . Gotta hit the road, gotta hit the road. The sun it changed in the atmosphere. Architecture unfamiliar. I can get used to this

Time flies by in the yellow and green. Stick around and you'll see what I mean.

Although this recent song of George Ezra is probably about his time in Brazil, this summer, for me, it became a song for Macedonia as well. Time really flew by, but what a wonderful time. With more than 100% of desire, I took off to Skopje on the 21st of July for an internship in the architecture office of CUBUS. The architecture here is maybe somewhat unfamiliar but the I can get used to the life I lived here for 6 weeks. For me, Macedonia equals having a fancy dinner and go for a drink for no money, meeting friendly people all over the place, not understanding and not being understood by most of the people (except from the IAESTE ones and the younger generation), but living the good life and get along in a nice climate and wonderful nature. Most of the days, we

had around 30°C but some raining made it comfortable. The mostly brutalist architecture of Skopje, almost completely rebuild after the earthquake in 1963 is a special and intriguing one more like the communist Sovjet one, but a lot of new buildings and monuments, trying to make the city monumental and giving the city an international image, are maybe not so unfamiliar. Visiting the city is also like travelling around the world: from Flatiron in New York, to the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin to the Arc de Triomphe from Paris, to the Grand Bazaar in Turkey. Even the Pentagon and Japanese architecture can be found. Even more international was the group of interns that all became friends: Norway, Turkey, Brazil, Hong Kong, Australia, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Japan, Oman... 'The basement', the place where I lived together with 6 other interns was the lower level of a normal house. What first seemed to be an uncousy and empty cave became unforgettable with the attendance of those international interns who



made every day in the basement a special one.

To start from the very beginning, I arrived on the international evening. You could call it a blessing, because I had the opportunity to meet every intern immediately. A Belgian waffle from two Belgian interns made me feel home from the first second. Since most of the interns arrive in the beginning of July, I could meet everyone, but also had to say goodbye to everyone 3 weeks later so I can recommend to go from the beginning of July. Though, we had a wonderful time. With a group of around 20 interns, we visited Matka to go kayaking, we climbed

Mount Vodno near the city to enjoy the sunset, we had a 4 day trip to Ohrid where we could find the most beautiful lake of the Balkan, some went camping in the national park and enjoyed the traditional event of Galichnik wedding and we went Bitola. We even enjoyed Kotor in Montenegro and Thessaloniki in Greece in some extended weekends.

To speak about work, it became clear quickly that working hard and Macodonia is not a really good match. Some interns had an interesting job, but some others didn't even had to go to work. I was kind of lucky. In my company, I could work every day, I got my own project to design an

apartment building in the city centre completely from scratch and I was free to do whatever I wanted with it. It became clear that Macedonian taste and money is different from the Belgian one and that I wouldn't get a lot of guidance, but besides from that, it was an honour to be so independent during my first internship and to see how the real working life maybe could be. I trained my cad and 3d-modelling skills and my colleagues were amazingly friendly. One of them took me out for lunch for most of the days and I think I tried all possible 'Macedonian' dishes with him. No day passed without getting something from my colleagues: from chocolate to tomatoes to

cucumbers to special bread to jam to Burek to Burek in bread etc. One thing is sure: the more bread, the better. People not eating bread will have to search a bit longer for food.

I had a great time, made many new friends and learned about the Macedonian/Balkan countries and traditions. I should say, to experience the life here, just stick around and you'll see what I mean...



PORTUGAL



Exciting, educational and unforgettable, that is how I would describe my internship with IAESTE in Lisbon.

Arriving in Lisbon, driving away from the airport (which was much to my surprise situated in the middle of the city) I could immediately notice a huge difference with cities in Belgium. Apart from the crazier drivers and pedestrians just crossing the streets whatever color the traffic lights might be, I was especially surprised by all the green in the streets. Being in such a busy city with lots of traffic, hotels and high buildings everywhere, an effort was made to have trees providing shadow during the warmest hours of the day and wherever I was, a park was never too far away to find.

Living in Lisbon is not cheap, almost all the young people share apartments. During my time there I lived together with 10 other young people, Portuguese students originating from Portugal's Islands or small villages in the middle of Portugal, exchange students from Brazil, Spain... and recently graduated people refusing to leave

because of the ambiance and comradery. Everybody was very keen on telling me about their culture, helping me adjust, pointing out all the different beautiful places and monuments to visit and inviting me along for a taste of Lisbon's busy nightlife.

I did my internship at EDP Distribuição, a part of the large EDP group with activities in energy generation, distribution and marketing. My task was to find a solution for the outdated electricity network in Portugal's idyllic fisher's village Nazaré. I had to study the existing electricity distribution network, come up with different solutions and by performing a technical and economic analysis of the options, present the most promising solution. My supervisor at EDP enthusiastically educated my fellow Portuguese trainee and me about the history of the company that was interwoven with the arise of the electricity net in Portugal. Every noon we had a lengthy lunchbreak to go out for a coffee or just to take a walk through the sunny and green surroundings.



As you can tell by the long lunchbreaks, the Portuguese people love their food. Almost every other day someone at work brought some special treats, Pasteis de Nata, self-backed cake or we went to buy a melon or other fruits to eat together as an afternoon snack. During my stay the whole department also went out for a typical Madeiran lunch together. At all these activities it was easy and fun to get to know the nice, humorous and easygoing people I was working with.

Every time driving outside of Lisbon, for fieldtrips, visits to Sintra or Cabo da Roca (the most western point of Europe), I was impressed by

the variety of mesmerizing landscapes Portugal has to offer, large fields with cork trees, large vineyards, small old villages with colorful churches, but also remains of huge forests gone due to the forest fires... I luckily did not see any fire myself, but seeing these landscapes really gets you thinking about their impact on nature and the different species living in those forests.

During my internship did I not only learn a lot about the Portuguese culture, meeting other IAESTE trainees also lead to very interesting discussions about their different cultures, their viewpoints on nature preservation,

education ... and the reasoning behind them.

An internship abroad offers so much more than one would ever be able to experience from a culture by just vacationing in a country. Portugal and especially Lisbon is a very touristic place so being able to discover its everyday laid-back culture living there together with locals was a unique and unforgettable experience.

This internship was a step out of my comfort zone, but it was absolutely worth it. I would recommend everyone to go study or work abroad if you ever have the chance. This experience encourages me to keep on discovering different cultures all around the world

and I will definitely go back to Portugal visiting all the very kind and wonderful friends I made!



GERMANY



“Amazing, an unforgettable experience!”

That’s what I tell people when they ask about my internship. It was already my second internship with IAESTE. My first stay in Poland was a life-changing experience, so I decided to apply a second time and I got the internship in Germany.

I lived for 8 weeks in Detmold, a small city in the northern-east of the country. I had my own flat, but I didn’t spend much time alone. Almost every evening I hung out with the other interns. I met amazing people from all over the world: Ghana, Palestine, Nepal, Israel, ... Without them, my summer wouldn’t have been as much fun as it has been now. We spent a lot of time together: talking, playing games, eating dinner, discovering cities, going for night walks in Detmold, etc. It was great to learn about each other’s cultures and ways of living.

All the interns in Detmold were working for the same university. My internship was at the energy department, where I worked as a research assistant. Together with two

other interns, one from Palestine and one from Nepal, we were working on a project about optimizing the energetic performance of a renovated school building. My task was to perform a daylight study, which included doing research, setting up a measurement strategy, taking light measurements and analysing them. Daylight was a topic I didn’t know much about, so it was a great way to gain knowledge about it.

Of course, IAESTE is not only about the internship itself. Another big part is getting to know people and having fun. Each weekend, an IAESTE event was organized in a different city in Germany. Attending these events gave me the chance to travel a lot, get to know new places and meet people from all over the world.

My first weekend was in Aachen. The weekend was themed “Superheroes and Villains”. The city is close to the three-country-point (Germany – the Netherlands – Belgium), so I had the chance to make a quick stop in my home country. Next



was the weekend in Halle and Leipzig, where we visited the Völkerschlachtdenkmal, an impressive war monument. Then I went to Munich, where the biggest IAESTE event in Germany takes place. More than 120 interns from all over Germany and neighbouring countries gather together for a weekend full of fun. Sleeping in tents, a city game, an unforgettable party, it had it all. After that I spent a weekend in Hamburg – a vibrant city with a new concert building, the Elbphilharmonie – and Lübeck – the most beautiful city I’ve seen in Germany – where we went on a boat trip to the sea in Travemünde.

When my internship at the university was already over, I had one weekend left before I would go back to Belgium. I decided to attend the IAESTE weekend in the Thüringia region. This was the best weekend of all. We were only about 10 people from different cultures, but everyone was very nice and friendly so we got to know each other very well and enjoyed our weekend to the fullest.

I also spent a weekend in Detmold, where the so called Sommerbühne took place. This is a series of concerts that take place in the center of the city and are organized for free. We danced on Belgian

and Argentine music and had a lot of fun.

The people I met on the IAESTE weekends made me realize how much I like to be abroad and to meet new people. At the end of August, almost all of the interns in Detmold were leaving at the same day. As we all realized that it would be over soon, we spent as much time as we could together. It is unbelievable how close you can become to people you've only known for a short period of time. It was hard to say goodbye, but we are all convinced that we will meet again sometime. Somewhere in the world.

For me, IAESTE is not just an organization. It is a way to meet people from all corners of the world and have the best time of your life. If I got another chance, I wouldn't doubt a second to go on an internship with IAESTE again!





Last summer, I spent six weeks in Tunisia. However, it felt more like a couple of days. This exchange abroad has been an amazing experience and it went by in a jiffy: from work to hanging out with a bunch of new friends to exploring this very diverse country.

First things first: I am a bioengineering student specialising in environmental technology and IAESTE Ghent offered an internship in the country's capital Tunis with the company EAM (Environmental Assessment & Management).

This company's core business is performing environmental impact studies for its clients which are mainly situated in the Tunisian and foreign petrol industry. As an intern, I mainly focussed on specific calculations such as soil pollution or underwater noise pollution.

IAESTE Tunisia organised the housing of incoming trainees by providing apartments that are located in one building outside of the capital, in La Goulette. This means that all incoming summer trainees and some of the IAESTE

Tunisia members were living all together. The atmosphere in La Goulette is indescribable and unmistakably an important part of my entire summer experience. The local members were very accessible and very devoted to accommodate all trainees in the best way possible. Also, with everyone living together, the morning commute to the capital was always enjoyable and every day, after work, there were plans to go to either the capital, the beautiful towns outside the city, or the beach.

Having all these new curious people living together definitely gave rise to some very beautiful friendships and the open atmosphere throughout the entire building connected all of us very strongly, going out together, randomly cooking for more than 20 people, making music, dancing,... In short, literally enjoying every single minute in wonderful company.

Another shout out to IAESTE Tunisia: as accepting local committee, they do an amazing job. They are around every day in case



something is wrong in the apartment, driving us around, advising where to go, joining us, and of course organising many trips for us during the summer. They were very open to us and this accounts for the entire country: foreigners in Tunisia are very welcome and the people are very happy to help you out and to help you discover their country. My employer (and this holds for many of the internships in Tunis) was glad to give me days off when I asked for it to go out and discover every part of Tunisia.

Which is what we did. The local IAESTE members took us to places in the north and also to the south, this during an

incredible week trip. Apart from all these trips, usually on weekends, there was also room to go out on your own and explore the country, chances I took to the fullest to discover the more mountainous parts of Tunisia in the centre and the west. I learned the enormous diversity Tunisia has to offer, from exotic beaches along the desert area to the mountain areas, all interlaced with history going back for thousands of years with a multitude of people and cultures having settled in the "epicentre of the Mediterranean". The opportunity to celebrate the Festival of Sacrifice, one of the big Muslim holidays, with a local friend's family was a

particularly beautiful finish to this Tunisian summer.

A couple of downsides that should be mentioned are the saddening presence of trash all over the country, which definitely is a blame on the country's image. Also, in the capital the atmosphere in certain public places, such as crowded markets or public transport during commute, was not as welcoming and enjoyable, and most of the times just rude and pushy.

Wrapping up, I am very grateful for this opportunity to discover a new country and culture from the inside and for all the friends contributing to it, with a special thanks to the wonderful IAESTE Tunisia

members making this stay abroad as it is, I wouldn't advise any change and I invite you to go there for yourselves. I am sure they are ready to welcome you in Tunisia as warm as they always do.





'Taarof', the Persian word for which there exist no English equivalent. No wonder, because nowhere else I met the kind of people that can be called 'Taarof'. And by using this word, I am talking about people who are kind, generous, hospitable, always willing to help, and all this with the greatest smile. I didn't even leave the airport yet before it came clear to me that I would never have trouble to find my way in this country. I did my internship in the capital city of Iran: Teheran. Probably you will wonder 'Is it safe to go there, alone, as a girl?'. This is the question that I often got before I went there. Well, I can tell you this, I never ever felt unsafe during my stay in Iran.

Tehran, with its 8.3 million inhabitants, it's a kind of overwhelming city. You are never alone on the streets, not during day nor during night. Getting to know the whole city would take more than one internship alone. Every single day during the almost 7 weeks that I was there, I discovered a new part of the city. And still, I haven't even seen a quarter of it. At first sight, it just looks like any

other big city. But you have to know the special places to get really the feeling of it. One of my favourite things to do there, was just going a park at night (namely Laleh park) and see how people come to live and feel free at night. They gather around, making some kebab on the BBQ and play some badminton or other sports. At those moments, the people there don't feel like they are suppressed or have any problems, which is wonderful to see.

For 6 weeks I worked at the Advanced Phase Transformation Lab at the University of Tehran. I was welcomed there like no place else and I could integrate in the group immediately. They all put in a lot of effort to speak English to make me feel at home. At the lab, there worked PhD students, as well as master students and bachelor students, so I could learn something of everyone. I had a separate project on which I worked, but everyone was prepared to help when necessary. The work pressure there is much lower than in our Western world, which makes the working environment very pleasant.



There is a lot of academic interaction between the different students, which improves the progress of the projects. There is also enough space for social interaction. Every day at noon food was ordered (mostly kebab) and was consumed all together. Time for tea breaks with Iranian sweets was also not hard to find.

One of the best things about the internship for me, was meeting a lot of people from all over the world. From Poles, the Swiss, Germans and Swedes, to Indians, Nepali and of course Iranians. All of them with different personalities and different habits. But no matter where

people are from, you can always find similarities with people of the same age. In Tehran, all the girls slept in the same university dorm. This gave us the possibility to get to know each other well. You never had to look far to find someone to hang out at night or to visit some places in the city. The boys slept one street further, so meeting them was also not a big challenge. However, the dorms were guarded by a security guard and with the curfew at 11 pm, it was not possible to hang out at the dorm of the opposite sex, but the city had enough to offer to do at night or on days off.

Tehran is not the only major city to visit in Iran. And

because of its magnitude, Iran has a lot of different climates to offer. In the north of the country, north of the Alborz mountains which split Tehran from the northern part of Iran, there you can find a mild climate with a lot of green. In the centre of the country, you can find the widespread deserts with, amongst others, its camels and scorpions. The beautiful cities Isfahan and Yazd, and more south Shiraz are worth to be mentioned. In the south, there you can find the warm and humid weather, but also the breath-taking Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf.

I have been so lucky to be able to visit a lot of these places in Iran, but I still

haven't seen everything yet. If I have the opportunity to go back later, I will definitely take it with both hands. Not only to see the rest of the country, but also to see the amazing people again that I met there. Because during an experience like this, friends for life are made. I am so grateful to IAESTE for giving me this unforgettable experience and letting me see this part of the world that is so unknown to our Western world; and especially to IAESTE Iran who took care of us so well.





My name is Bjorn and I study Civil engineering at the university of Brussels. Doing an internship abroad was one of my first aims since my first year of university. Finally, I arrived in my final bachelor and it was time to make reality of my dream. Through IAESTE Brussels I got the opportunity to do an internship at Hering in Mostar. Mostar is one of the biggest cities in Bosnia Herzegovina next to Sarajevo. Hering is a construction company specialized in building bridges and is known as one of the best building companies of the Balkan with construction sites in Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia... In addition to building new bridges, they are also known for renovating old bridges and road engineering. As you can imagine, the construction of bridges is a big business in Bosnia Herzegovina because of the landscape and therefore very interesting for me to take part in. My adventure started from the moment I stepped on the plane from Düsseldorf to Mostar. The airport in Mostar was extremely small but I was already fallen in love with the

landscape. The same day I met the other trainees that were hosted in the same dorm as me. In the middle of July 5 trainees were living together in the same dorm.

The day after I arrived, I went to work for the first time and met my mentor and some colleges. Anton and Zvonimir were the guys of IAESTE who brought me with their own car to the company. The company was in fact 15 km from the place where we slept and public transport was extremely limited. The only quick option was to take a taxi but this would be too expensive after 4 weeks. Because of this reason, Anton and Zvonimir had contacted in advance the company to arrange transport. A college of work that also lived in Mostar would pick me up every morning at my sleeping place and would drop me off at the evening.

This IAESTE internship was an astonishing and unforgettable experience! During this internship I gained a lot of knowledge on educational level, but that is not the only thing. I also lived abroad for such a long time alone for the

first time. I have to look critically to the word 'alone'. It was my first time without my parents but in Mostar I never felt alone. The new people from LC Mostar, the other trainees but also colleagues from the company were responsible for the fact that I felt never alone. This people gave me the chance to discover the Herzegovinian culture, to make new friends and to develop myself as a person.

I was involved in different topics and projects at the company. This gave me an overview and idea of the subjects a building company here in Bosnia Herzegovina 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 specialization. I also learned that working isn't only about scientific knowledge and analysis. It is a lot about people and communication. My mentor 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. It was also very interesting to

integrate and work with other codes, namely the Bosnian building codes instead of the Eurocodes.

During the weekends, the members of LC Mostar usually planned a trip out of the city with the other trainees. We went to the coast in Croatia (Makarska), we did a zipline of 200 m with a view over the city, we went to a qualification match of Champions League of the local team HŠK Zrinjski Mostar, we visited Sarajevo ... In addition, I went to a weekend with the other trainees to Banja Luka organized by the IAESTE of Banja Luka. The president of the IAESTE of Mostar itself arranged the transport

because it was a trip of almost 300 km. During the trip to Banja Luka we saw a lot of the country, such a beautiful undiscovered nature. During this two days-trip we did a city raily and a rafting on the World Championship race route in 2009. Mostar is also known for the Stari Most, the famous old bridge that was a symbol of connection between the two parts of the city. This bridge was destroyed during the war of Yugoslavia. You can still feel the tensions between the different entities and the two parts of the city. It was shocking me that there are still so many buildings destroyed and the progression after the war in the country isn't such advanced as expected. They

like to call themselves the second Switzerland but there is still a huge gap between both countries.

After 4 weeks of internship, I'm happy and proud to look back on this extraordinary experience. I experienced some very funny, joyful moments. To conclude, I would like to highlight to all interested students the importance and impact of an internship abroad. You cannot develop more skills on technical and social level.



ECUADOR



Hello, my name is Bram Vandekerckhove and for the last year I've been a member of IAESTE Belgium. I became a member shortly after my first application for an IAESTE internship was rejected. There weren't any hard feeling. I knew there were only a limited amount of internships for a large group of interested students. So, the next month, when I heard that they were searching for new members (and were offering free pizza), I joined their forces. Over the next year, under the strong and righteous rule of the internship coordinator, we obtained a lot more internships than the year before.

So I tried my luck again and as a manner of speech, the gods were in my favour. I was selected for an internship at the university of Ecuador, better known as USFQ. It was kind of stressful because I had never been out of Europe at that time in my life. So after a lot of paper work, when the day was finally there to leave, I was more than a little bit nervous. A totally new environment, a random internship and at a university that I've merely read about...

It was more than frightening to be honest. So during last summer, the 5th of July, I left for this incredible adventure. It was more than I had ever hoped for. Of course, it's true that you arrive in a strange country, at the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, where they speak a language that you hardly manage (or at least, I didn't). It's important to remember that you're not alone over there! You enter in a group of incredible people that are experiencing exactly the same journey. They came from all over the world (most of them from all over Europe but still...) to have a similar journey. I've lived with a lot of them in the same house (which was a little bit to small) for most of my internship and they became really close friends during my stay there and even after.

During the week, we almost never stayed at home. We did all sorts of stuff. We participated in salsa and Spanish classes, we went to the hot springs, we organised parties in our home or we went partying in the other hostel where the rest of the trainees were staying.... and the weekends were even more

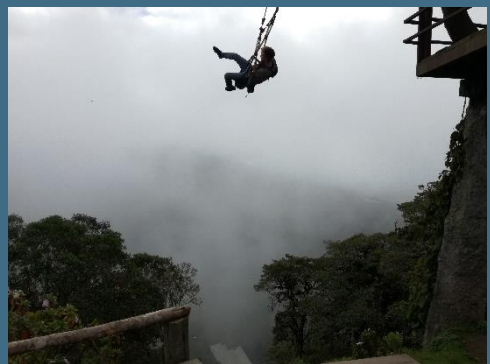
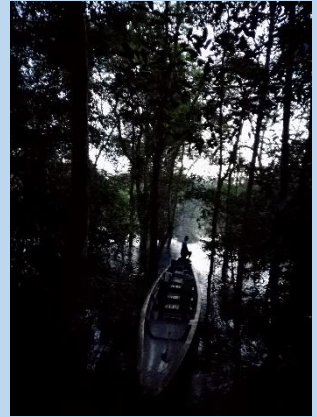


crazy. We did everything we could possibly do during our limited amount of time there. We went on little trips to all sides of Ecuador. We saw the beaches in Montañita, the mountains in Chimborazzo and Quilotoa, the rainforest in Cuyabeno... We saw the historical part of Quito, the Inca ruins close to Quenca but also the wales and the sea turtles at Isla de la Plata. We did some rafting in Baños, some canyoning in Mindo and even saw the equator.

There were so many nice experiences, just to many to count... One of my favourites was the time when we were laying in the hammocks in the common area of our lodge in

the jungle of Cuyabeno. We just came back from a trip in our motorised canoe where we looked for some wild animals. We saw some monkeys, anacondas, parrots, sloths, more monkeys... and even some toucans. It was really nice and all of us were still quite exhausted from our 18 hour trip to arrive there, the day before, so we decided to rest for a bit. We were just laying down for a while in the hammocks and enjoying the nature. The entire place was just so peaceful. There was (almost) no electricity, no internet, no running water, no background noise... just some frogs croaking in the distance, us talking and that one tarantula that would stay there for the next 2 days. It was amazing.

Ecuador is an unbelievable country and an amazing place to do an internship. I would not hesitate for a second to do it all over again and I would recommend it to everyone who has a chance to go there. You won't regret it.



GERMANY



Having the possibility for doing an international internship was really a unique experience and I would like to share the things I did during this 2-month period in Freiberg, Germany. I can imagine that most people think that it is a bit boring to go to a country next to ours but I can really prove you wrong. I visited three other countries and 8 beautiful cities both in and out Germany. But before I start talking about all the things I did in my free time (which was actually quite a lot), I should maybe tell you shortly the more technical side of my internship.

I applied for this internship because the description on the IAESTE website said that it had something to do with the examination of raw materials which I am really interested in. My workplace, which was the *TU Bergakademie Freiberg*, was situated really close to my apartment. My first day I was guided around through the university and the different research groups, then they told me that I will be working for the glass and ceramic research department of the university. This was pretty cool for me because of

the fact that on school I didn't have a lot of courses about this subject. The colleagues were all really friendly and helpful, it was a really nice atmosphere to work in. Each morning they have breakfast together with some tea or coffee and in the afternoon they all go for lunch together and I was welcome to join them. My daily jobs strongly differs from day to day, some days I had to do microscopic research on some glass foam samples from which my colleagues wanted to know the pore size distribution for example. Other days I had to cut small planes out of a big glass plane with a diamond cutter, after a lot of practice and broken pieces of glass I was able to cut glass pieces properly! My colleagues also gave me the chance to help them in their own projects which was really interesting for me because this gave me the opportunity to really see and experience what kind of research they were doing. The second month I also got my own little project which was going about the chemical resistance of enamel materials.

But I think that's enough about work, since IAESTE internships are actually way more than just working. IAESTE Germany is actually one of the best IAESTE committees to do weekends with. What do you need to know about those weekends. Well, first they are extremely cheap to attend! The fact is that IAESTE Germany refunds 50% of the weekends you attend and reimburses 50 to 75% of your transportation costs to the weekends. In total I did five IAESTE weekends, three of them were in Germany itself (Kiel, Konstanz and Munich) and two of them were abroad (Prague and High Tatras – Slovakia). I think that I paid something like 350 euros for everything, including food, drinks, accommodation and transport. So this is really not a lot of money knowing that I got 750 euros each month from the internship itself. Next to the IAESTE weekends I also planned some trips on my own to cities where no weekends were organised. Because I did so many weekends I will try to summarize one: The Prague weekend, also called the PRAGUE CHALLENGE!

Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic and is really a beautiful city really worth visiting. Since Freiberg is close to the boundary with Czech Republic the bus ride only took me two hours. The local committee of Prague hosted this weekend and they were expecting 120 trainees. Mostly the weekends start at Friday afternoon so I took a day off at work, which was by the way no problem. Arriving in Prague somewhat around 2 PM the weekend started with some beers and music and in the evening they planned a big BBQ and a little warm-up party to kick off the amazing weekend. The next day the committee planned a big city challenge to really see and explore the city in a funny way. It took most of the afternoon but I have to say that it was one of the most beautiful cities that I had ever seen, we saw most of the famous historical buildings and monuments and did some funny city games in between! In the late afternoon we went back to the hostel to take a quick shower. Dinner was up to us after showering. Dinner on Saturday was something special, they took us to a boat on the Moldau where we had a big buffet. It was amazing to have your dinner while sailing on the Moldau with view on the Charles Bridge. After dinner there was a boat party on the ship's deck! You could see it as a predrink because after the boat party we dove into the night life in Prague, which is amazing! The next day we had to leave at 11 AM, on the bus I slept for the two hours and when I arrived in Freiberg I was pretty tired but it was all worth it. It was really the best weekend of my internship. After reflecting on the entire internship, I have to say that it was one of the most unique experiences that I've had. You get to meet so many new and interesting people and do a lot of nice activities. On top of that you might also get lucky and have a nice working environment which makes the internship only better. So, to all people still doubting whether to do an internship or not I can only say **DON'T THINK AND JUST DO IT!**





I joined this program because I thought it could be a rich experience and a good way to spend my vacation. As a student I have the privilege to have every year a big summer holiday (3 months). And I always like to use this time for activities which combine fun with passive learning, like being a leader for children where you can go on camps. That is why I wanted to do an internship this summer and IAESTE looked like a good opportunity since it combined both traveling and professional experience. The internship at Changzhou Xingyu Automotive Lighting Systems Co. LTD – later referred as Xingyu - interested me the most, because I am fascinated in photonics (the science of photons).

Three months ago, I arrived for the second time in China. I had already visited Beijing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong with the program Huawei Seeds of the Future. At my arrival, I thought I knew a lot about the Chinese culture, but right now it feels like I know just a little of this big country. China offers a lot of different kinds of food; its history cannot be compared with

Europe; and the people think I visit a country, I want to learn the culture and in China are a lot of opportunities to do this. Talking, visiting and joining. I talked to many locals about their life and about their thoughts. I visited many different places even in the city where I was staying. And I joined their habits when possible, like a dance at the square or Tai Chi after work.

When I arrived in the company, I knew I could finally do something as an engineer. But I was concerned what I could do for them, because as a student I am still learning so much. This was my biggest concern during my application for this internship. Before I went to the internship of this lighting company, I watched some movies to get a deeper understanding of the current innovations. One movie was about the intelligent lamps (ADB technology to be specific), where lights could do more than shining. The lights could adapt their light pattern depending on the situation. I asked my mentor if I could choose this topic for my project. She told me that a



big part of the electronic department was focused on intelligent lamps including herself.

Intelligent lamps are both innovative and challenging. Innovative, because everything is different compared to the standard headlamps. Challenging, because the future is moving faster to reach the goals. That's the reason why I chose this technology as my research topic. For the first step in this process, I did some separate talks with the engineers involved in this project. In this project were many different engineers involved, since every step of designing a lamp should be

adapted. Therefore, I talked to the thermal, the structure, the optical, the software and the hardware engineer. These separate talks gave me a good overview and helped me to understand why it is a new lamp and not a new version. The second step, I did a brainstorm with them to tackle their challenges and to think how we could innovate this technology. The third step, I worked further on the conclusions of the problems and the new ideas they gave me.

One of the most amazing experience was my last travel towards Xian. This time, I did it on my own, since my friends of Changzhou went to Beijing, which I had seen last

year. I first wanted to visit Xian for the Terra Cotta army – Bingmayong is the Chinese name – but the excitement of other travelers about Huashan convinced me to visit also this other landmark. Huashan is one of those mountains, it is one of the five best Mountains in China. So, it was an amazing experience to climb this one. On the bus, I met my travel mate, he grew up in the mountains and together we countered this climb. He could only speak Chinese, but we figured out a way to express ourselves during this trip. Climbing this mountain was a huge challenge for my motivation and strength, especially because we did not take the cable car to reach the top. But

I was rewarded with a wonderful view of the blue sky, the sunset and the night.

After all, I learned a lot from this experience. I learned how to live in Changzhou, a city of 3.5 million people; I saw how a big company works, and adapted myself to work in an open office with 50 colleagues; I met people from all over the world: Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Australia, India, Brazil, etc. (other IAESTE interns or travel companions).





Last summer I got the opportunity to do an internship in the city of Araraquara, in Brazil. I must admit that I didn't know much about Brazil before I arrived. I think the thing that struck me most was that most people don't speak English there. Even in my lab, not everybody could speak the language. This made the communication sometimes hard, but I was lucky enough that to have Portuguese classes there. Therefore I can now safely say, I speak some Brazilian Portuguese 😊.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves... My journey started on July 17th. I took the direct flight from Amsterdam to São Paulo which took me 11 hours. When I arrived at the airport, an IAESTE volunteer awaited me and put me on the bus to Araraquara. I only arrived there around 2 a.m. but that didn't stop my flatmates to pick me up at the bus station. I was hosted by Giulioano Mello, a Brazilian student, who lived together with 8 other students in a república called República Dominicana. A república is essentially a frat house but with the difference they have

their own name, flag, parties, etc. You could say it's the equivalent of the fraternities we have in Belgium but with the difference that the members live together. I think it's a really cool concept and I enjoyed every day I spent there. I can say that after 2 months, they became friends for life and I'm sure I will see some of them once again; in Belgium or in Brazil 😊.

In the first weeks, my flatmates let me experience the real Brazilian life. They took me to eat coxinha's, pastel, açaí icecream, etc. The last day of my internship, they even cooked me feijoada, a traditional Brazilian dish, which consists of rice, black beans, calabresa and other types of meat, accompanied by couve, a type of cabbage. Next to the food, they also introduced me to cachaça, a Brazilian strong-drink, and guaraná soda. However, it didn't stop with food and drinks, they also took me to some waterfalls, play soccer (and I must say Brazilians indeed really love soccer) and a lot of parties. If you like parties, then you should definitely come to Araraquara. It's really crazy

and the music is completely different. Most of the time you will hear Brazilian funk, a music style I never heard before in my life but now I actually like it.

During my stay there I also visited some major cities, including São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Vitória. I think São Paulo is the biggest city I ever visited, 22 million people (!). It's a very nice city and if you visit Brazil you should definitely go have a look, especially Avenida Paulista. It's a big avenue in the middle of the city which is turned into a street full of concerts, street artists, food stands, etc. on every Sunday. In striking contrast, you have Rio de Janeiro, which is actually a really dangerous city. Even my Brazilian friends warned me for that. But if you don't go alone, you should be fine. The famous monuments are amazing, like Christ the Saviour, but everything in between the monuments is less appealing, at least in my opinion. The best trip was to Vitória, for the Vitória challenge, organized by IAESTE volunteers. We were there for one weekend, together with 30 other interns.

I met a lot of people from around the world (Germany, Poland, Spain but also India, Jordan ...) and the city itself is near the beach so we had the chance to go sunbath/swim.

Of course, next to all the trips and parties, I also had to do some work since I was doing an internship... In my first week at the lab - I study Biochemistry & Biotechnology - I was introduced to my colleagues and how things worked around there. There wasn't really a project for me there but after discussing this problem with some of my co-workers, I finally got one. I studied 2 strains of the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*. I made growth curves, studied their morphology using a

microscope and genotyped them. However I must say that the university labs in Brazil are experiencing rough times because of low funds. That's why I was never able to do the complete genotyping because we didn't have all the materials. Also the morphology study was really difficult since one lens of the microscope was broken and they couldn't fix it in time. So in general, I didn't learn much during my internship but my life outside of the lab really made up for that.

Together it's needless to say that Brazil is an amazing country with amazing people but if you want to learn a lot during your internship, then maybe think twice on coming

to Brazil. However, despite the low quality of work, I would still recommend people to do an internship in Brazil. The things I experienced there really changed my life and I hope everybody who decides to go Brazil will have the same unforgettable Brazilian experience as me. Tchou!





In the first year of my education, I heard about IAESTE for the first time and I immediately knew I wanted such an international experience. When the time was finally there to apply for an internship, there weren't a lot of options for my study area, but I took a risk and applied for an agricultural internship. I got accepted for this internship for a period of six weeks in Kumasi, Ghana in the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research-Crops Research Institute and it was an unforgettable experience. Before this experience I had never done something as adventures as this, but I am very glad that I took the opportunity.

After trying to prepare myself as good as possible, I finally left for Ghana with a big backpack and a lot of nerves. When I arrived, I was already off at a good start. Someone from IAESTE Ghana was supposed to pick me up at the airport, but I couldn't find anyone. After twenty minutes of panicking and calling every phone number I had, finally an IAESTE t-shirt appeared. Apparently, they were expecting a guy,

considering my name, and that was why they didn't come up to me. Fortunately, it all ended well. The first two nights I spent in Accra at mama B's house and the second day someone from IAESTE already took us to the beach. The day after, we took a bus to Kumasi and we arrived at our hostel, where I would stay for the next six weeks. Around five Ghanaian students, IAESTE members and ten other interns were staying in the hostel.

At my first day going to work, I experienced the real Ghanaian way of transport. The traffic is as you can imagine a big chaos and the preferred vehicle is called a Rotor. These little vans are everywhere on the streets and go to different locations. You just have to shout which way you want to go. On the streets, you see people selling everything you can imagine. The women are carrying big buckets on their head filled with plantain chips, drinks, spring rolls, etc. and the men sell everything going from toilet paper to washing powder. At my first day a lot of waiting was involved and a little bit of showing around.



The internship itself wasn't very challenging. I worked at the Post Harvest Unit and since it was planting season and not harvesting season, there wasn't much to do. However, I met a lot of nice people and here and there I learned some food quality related material. They taught me a lot about their habits and religion and I am really happy that I got to know a lot more about their culture. Everyone in the institute was very kind and welcoming, they even threw me a little birthday party with cake and a lot of chocolate.

Our evenings in the hostel we mostly spent getting food or having a get together. Our

favourite food stand was at Beyoncé's, who made the best bread and egg in town. Ghanaian food is very spicy, but very good. Their favourite products are cassava, yam and plantain and their most famous dishes are fufu, kenkey, redred and banku. My workplace had a nice canteen where I could try all these local dishes.

Almost every weekend there was a trip planned for us by the Ghanaian IAESTE members and if there wasn't we would organise something ourselves. The longest and most memorable trip was the Northern trip. We saw monkeys, crocodiles, an elephant and so much more. All these trips were together

with the interns living in Accra and because we spent a lot of time with each other in a tiny bus, we became very close. We organised a lot of parties and there was never a dull moment on the trips.

These six weeks were one of the best experiences of my life. I made a lot of new friends, who I am definitely going to see again, and I learned a lot about a country I didn't know anything about before I left. I can recommend everybody to visit Ghana and discover this beautiful country. This IAESTE internship really had a great impact on me and I strongly believe everybody should have an experience like this. I like to conclude with the

Ghanaians favourite sentence:

'This is Ghana for you'



MACEDONIA



Zdravo! Jas se vikam Dieter, became my friends. I lived and I am a computer science with them, went eating or engineering student at Ghent drinking with them almost University. My story with every day, we went out IAESTE started in September partying together and 2017, when I joined the local travelled around together. committee in Ghent to help. Hopefully, I will have the work on a new IT project. At chance to meet them again that time I knew nothing about someday.

IAESTE and I was suddenly going on a teambuilding weekend, meeting new people and learning about the whole organisation and what it stands for. It has been an amazing experience so far, but the frosting on the cake was definitely my first internship, I did this summer, in Skopje Macedonia.

The summer reception was very well organised in Macedonia. When I arrived at the airport, someone was there to pick me up by car and bring me to the accommodation. This accommodation was a nice flat I shared with 2 lovely Polish girls for three weeks. After that I had to move to another place which was less comfortable, but we shared it with 7 people which was nice, because I would see my friends every day and do stuff with them. And yes, the people I met there really

The company I worked in was Endava, an international software development company with an office right in the city centre of Skopje. There I received some training in software development and had to work on an internal project. The nice thing about this project was that I was also included in client meetings, client demos, sprint planning and daily stand-up meetings. It was interesting to see how this is all works in a company, because you learn stuff you are not always taught at university. The project was actually part of an internship program for Macedonian students, which meant that I was working together with 10 other interns from Macedonia. I had a great time with them, going out for lunch, playing ping-pong together or going for a drink after work.



Besides work, the IAESTE Skopje members organised a lot of weekends for us to go on. This gave us the chance to explore the country, taste the local cuisine and try some Rakija which is a strong, typical drink from the Balkan. Just don't drink too much of it though ;).

First weekend I went to Galičnik, a lovely mountain village where they organise a traditional wedding every year. The festivities lasted for 2 days so we camped there for one night. We hiked in the mountains, had a cozy time around a campfire and late at night we went to a so called 'kafearna'. This is a typical local bistro and there

everyone, including the bride and groom, was celebrating the wedding. And I can testify, that the Macedonians really know how the party. It was a crazy night!

The second weekend was in Ohrid which is arguably the prettiest city in Macedonia situated right next to a lake. We sunbathed a lot there and had a welcomed cooling swim in the lake. At night I went to a local festival which hosted some pretty famous DJs such as Armin van Buuren and Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike.

Last organised weekend, that I could join, was in Bitola. It is a beautiful little town which also had some ancient ruins that we visited. At night, we

went to an amazing open air night club where we partied until the early hours.

Unfortunately, I had to say goodbye to everyone right after this weekend and go back to Belgium. It was hard to leave and I needed some time to adjust to the everyday life here, but this internship is something I will look back to a lot in life and every time I do, all the memories about this amazing experience will flood back to me.

This was my story about my IAESTE internship. As our tagline "Work. Experience. Discover." says, it is about gaining work experience, but maybe more importantly it is about discovering the world

and meeting new people abroad. It is a large step to do such an internship, but I can assure you that it was worth it and I hope that you can have the chance to experience an internship abroad as well!





Dzien Dobry fellow student, **jak się masz?** (*Hello fellow student, how are you doing?*)

I am Domien Van Steendam, 21 years old. I am a master student in Computer Science Engineering. Last year, I was lucky to become selected for an internship spot for six weeks in Krakow, Poland. It may be cliché, but this internship turned out to be far more than I expected. I met so many different people. I honestly didn't know I could have that much fun with new people in such a short time. I made friends for life. I actually learned a lot for six weeks, not only in technical way but I also improved my communication skills in groups.

Two o'clock in the morning, the streets were empty and all the neighbors were still sleeping. I took my luggage, got on the bus to Charleroi Airport. About 7 hours later I landed in Krakow, ready to start my IAESTE adventure. The first problem I encountered was getting to my dorm to reach my dormitory.

So I went to the ticket machine, but the first problem

arised already because everything was polish (laughs). With the help of polish citizens nearby, I managed to buy my ticket and get to the dormitory. There was Maria, an IAESTE member of Krakow, waiting for me at the bus stop. She gave me a quick tour in the old town of Krakow and helped me in getting the keys for my room and buying my bus subscription card. This was really handy because these people barely understand English. The dormitory had everything a student needs: laundry and drying machines, kitchens, nice bathrooms, 24/7 reception and fellow students who are always in for fun. Luckily, my roommate was one I hoped for: very wise and social.

To be honest, the first week I was very homesick. I saw my family and friends' activities on social media and there was me, all alone in Poland. But this homesickness was quickly cured as soon as I met my fellow IAESTE trainees where I had a really great time with. They really are interesting people from all over the world: Afghanistan,

Brazil, Jordan, Lebanon, Armenia, Norway, India, Austria, and so on. Therefore, for future IAESTE trainees, I really advise you to hang out and make friends with your fellow trainees. In fact, every trainee arrived alone. Our group was always in for fun, literally every minute was planned (laughs). We swam in the lakes, solved riddles in the escapes room, almost had a heart-attack in the panic rooms and of course we partied regularly. By no surprise, I stood no chance in dancing compared the Latino's in our groups who learned me quite a bit of dancing. I learned a lot, I am telling you.

Four days of exploring the city, it was Monday, my first work day. Very excited to finally meet my mentor, Kycia Radoslaw, for the very first time in real life; I headed to the University of Science and Technology in Krakow. I was very lucky with the location of my work because it was only 2 blocks away from my dormitory. Kycia showed me around the building and told me that the university was in fact a vacation castle for a former king.

The subject of my internship were microcontroller/chips. To be more specific, my main task was to write a manual for different types of sensors e.g. humidity, light, UV, Hall, temperature sensors. I had to find out how to connect and control/program these sensors in order to read their measurements.

Poland has much to offer and best of all is: Kraków is in the middle of all these activities. In the south, you can go for a hike in the Tatra mountains of Zakopane and enjoy the amazing view. The most popular winter destination of Poland. I've never heard that Poland has mountains that you can ski on. There is even a song written about it -which

I really like actually- named "Love in Zakopane". In the north, one could visit Gdansk and Warschau. And in the west, we went to Auschwitz (this place was on my bucket list and Krakow is so close by). In addition, Sebastian organized a trip with our whole group to Energylandia, the largest rollercoaster park of Poland.

I really recommend you to take the Walkative free tours around the old town since this will give you an overview of the city's structure along with some interesting historical acts and stories. This will set you off to explain this amazing city on your own in detail.

Like I mentioned before, not all polish people speak very good English, but they become very excited when you talk a little bit Polish, I enjoyed that. I can conclude that it is true what people say: Polish women are incredibly beautiful. To give you a hint: Don't look into their eyes or you will fall in love.

Do Widzenia!





My decision to go on an internship in Ghana was quite impulsive. Before the decision to apply for this internship, I never thought about going this far abroad, both in distance and in culture. So when I got nominated, the excitement was real, but the closer the departure, the more I thought 'why did I choose this?'

Well, in the first place, I wanted to do an internship during my studies to expand my practical experience and get to know the situation in the work field. In that aspect, you might think that Ghana is not the right place. It depends on which company you arrive though, but I had the chance of working in a company that sets its priorities on safety and quality and tried to work according to European standards. Furthermore, my company builds gas filling stations for Total most of the time. So as the economy of Ghana is growing, which is predominantly based on oil, the company had a lot of assigned construction contracts. During my stay of 6,5 weeks, I got to work at several worksites and got to know all types of work that

needed to be done. They learned me to make plaster and concrete, how a gas filling station works behind the scenes, how to get projects by filling in tenders, how to work safely and so much more.

The city where the main construction site was located and so where I spend the most time, is called Kumasi, and with 2,1 million inhabitants it is the 2nd biggest city of Ghana. With its central location it is the connecting trading place of the country. This results in a vibrant atmosphere, where the people are doing business everywhere, for example selling 'sachet water' which they carry in big piles on their head. All these people on the street, together with loads of cars honning all the time, make living in the city quite chaotic. Nevertheless, the peacefulness and friendliness of the people help you getting comfortable with all this. The first day of my stay in Ghana for example, I took the bus to Takoradi alone, but I actually had to take the one to Kumasi. The people sitting next to me helped to take the right one then. Another thing that I



I noticed, was that Ghanaian people seldom get angry, or maybe it's just because the oppressive weather doesn't allow it...

Talking about oppressive weather, working in shorts was not allowed, so I sweated more in those six weeks than I had in the rest of my life due to the high humidity. This humidity, together with the high rate of pollution, made breathing less easy sometimes, especially when there was no wind. Another local element that you better get used to when going to Ghana, is waiting, for food for example. When you're at a restaurant, it can take an hour at least, but the portion

that you get then is big. So if you get food, eat the whole portion, because you never know when the next time will be.

At the beginning, I was quite sceptical about the local food, like when my co-workers took me to an eatery next to the abattoir across the street of the construction site to eat fufu. Eating with your right hand is mandatory, but it was especially the texture of the food and the fact that you're not allowed to chew on it that was not working for me. After trying other local food like banku, waakye, jollof rice, palmnut soup and many other things, I can say that I actually love the Ghanaian food.

At my company, they worked 7 days on 7, but fortunately I was free to escape the working environment and explore Ghana during the weekends. There stayed about 12 IAESTE students from all around the world in Kumasi and another 12 in the capital city Accra. With them, I had unforgettable times, for example when we were lifting a crocodiles tail at the border with Burkina Faso, watching the sunset at the tropical beach in Ada Foah where the Volta river meets the ocean, taking selfies with monkeys on our shoulders, having parties with live African music around a bonfire on the beach or swimming through breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls. The way to get to

these places was also legendary, as we were packed close together in a tro-tro - about 25 people in an old van in which in Europe we would only allow 15 people - and hurtling through the endless landscape of coconut trees and plantain trees. Good atmosphere guaranteed!

So looking back on it now, I know why I choose to do this internship. One advise for you, future IAESTE trainee, if you would still be hesitating: just go for it!





Going on an IAESTE internship, outside of my comfort zone, alone for the first time, for more than ten weeks, was the most insane and impulsive decision of my life (this far).

To be honest, I had doubts. Leaving Belgium while not knowing where you will end up, and whether you'll like it, is terrifying. But from the moment when I entered the arrival hall of Tunis Carthage Airport, and when I saw IAESTE Tunisia members waiting for me to bring me to my new home, I felt the sensation of the adventure that I would experience for the next months.

Those IAESTE Tunisia members brought me to La Goulette, where all the trainees were lodged together in a building that would become my second home very soon. The mixture of nationalities and the fact that we were all lost in a strange country, created an amazing atmosphere and strong friendships. While sharing my flat with girls from India, Poland, Thailand and Jordan, I got to know the differences in our cultures and I was

struck by the similarities. During my whole stay, I never felt alone and I realized that in such a small time, those strangers became my second family.

IAESTE guided us around Tunisia and they made us experience the country and culture in a way that would never be possible as a tourist. Every weekend we were invited to trips in order to discover the best beaches, taste the amazing couscous, get lost in the old streets of Tunis, ... The ultimate highlight of the summer was the legendary 'South trip'. IAESTE Tunisia took us to the south for five days, where we discovered the desert and the beautiful island of Djerba. It was an overwhelming once-in-a-lifetime experience, which I will never forget.

Of course, I didn't go to Tunisia on holiday. I chose this country because the internship description was exactly what I was looking for: challenging and fitting my specialization. I worked in the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). It is an international organization which supports its African



member countries in the sustainable management of their natural resources. I was assigned to my own project about the mapping and inventory of protected areas. I created maps of the different IUCN categories of protected areas in 28 African countries and I started to set up a database which can be linked to those maps. In the end, I wrote a small report with some ideas and recommendations to further develop the database.

During my internship, I was surrounded by a team of experts from Europe and Africa. They were very welcoming and extremely friendly. I got an inside view

in the sector where I might work after I graduate. Working at the OSS made me realize that there are many differences in approach for land and water management, depending on the climate and the culture. This is something that I couldn't learn at a Belgian university. It was an unpriced opportunity for me to learn more about my field of study in a different perspective. In addition, I took the challenge and tried to refresh my sparse knowledge of French since this was the main language at the workplace.

Eventually, it was impossible not to fall in love with Tunisia. A country about which I didn't know anything a year ago.

The motto of IAESTE 'Work. Experience. Discover' describes this journey the best. I had an eye-opening work experience, I got to know a different culture, I discovered Tunisia from the beach to the desert and I lived in an international family of students.

Going on an IAESTE internship, outside my comfort zone, alone for the first time, for more than ten weeks, was not only the most insane and impulsive decision of my life, but most of all, the BEST decision of my life!





When I got the news in February 2018, that I was nominated, I was so happy. Even though that I already went abroad to Oman for an internship before through IAESTE, it still felt so adventurous to explore a country and I was excited. For me it wasn't my first time in India, since I have been two times before to visit my boyfriend, so I knew which cultural differences I could expect and how amazing India is. After I finally bought the tickets and got my visa, I was ready to go. I was counting the days so badly to my departure day to India on 5th of August.

The 5th of August I said goodbye to my family. After the 28h long travel, I finally arrived in Manipal, which would be my home for the next two months. I was welcomed by my buddy Yash of LC Manipal, he made sure I could ask him everything about Manipal. The next day I met my supervisor, Deepika Shetty, the head of department of the faculty of architecture of Manipal Institute of Technology.

My internship was a research about the comfort in public places. This was mostly about how good or bad the comfort level is in a public space. I had to compare the results in an urban and rural setting. It also discussed the impact of materials, vegetation and humane activities on the urban heat Island effect. To investigate this, I did a fieldtrip to measure the humidity and temperatures during the day in different parts of the studied village, Barkur, with a humidity sensor and heatcamera. I also learned how the traditional residences used to cope with the hot and humid weather, without using the technologies of today and how they make an indoor comfort using some specific plans in their architecture.

Enough said about my internship, let's talk about my adventures in Manipal. My first weeks in Manipal were an absolute bliss! The local committee had planned a week full of activities for us, which is known as Namaste week. In this week there is each day an activity to let the interns meet with Indian culture and tradition. There



was for example an international day, where some of the interns performed in a fashion show showing the traditional clothing in India. Others learned dancemoves to dance on a bollywoodsong. Then there was also citygame through Manipal, to explore the different parts of the city. On top of this there was a bollywoodnight, but also an international cooking event, where every intern cooked something from his or her country.

The LC organized different trips, but since I already visited Manipal before, I didn't attend them because I already saw most of the places in that area. Instead of that, I travelled to West – Bengal and Sikkim, which are northwest states, at the beginning of the Himalaya. Those places are so much different in every aspect than in south. It really proved me how big and how different India can be.

I am really thankful to IAESTE, that I was able to travel and work abroad. I recommend everybody to apply for an IAESTE-internship, since this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It is amazing how much you learn about

yourself, your life, your goals, another culture and country, ... through the IAESTE-program. So for those who are still not convinced, just pack your bags and go!



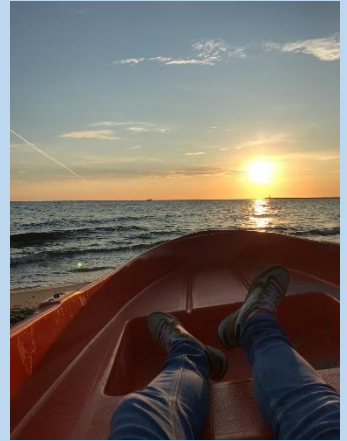


Arriving in Poland happened as smooth as I could possibly imagine, thanks to the summer reception responsible who was guiding me through every step of getting to Gliwice where I'd stay for the next six weeks. Everything started promising and I don't want to spoil anything, but the entire Polish internship experience was totally amazing!

Upon arrival in Solaris, a gigantic student dorm in Gliwice, I met my Austrian roommate (also an IAESTE intern) with whom I'd share a bunk bed for six weeks. Funny detail: the ladder of the bunkbed was obstructed by a closet. After deciding I'd sleep up top, I had to invent creative and acrobatic ways of getting into the bed, resulting in waking my roomie up quite often upon entering or exiting my bed. Later that day I got to meet the other lovely interns in Gliwice from all over the world: Japan, Brazil, Hong Kong, Macedonia, USA and India. We were all set for going on the numerous adventures the next six weeks would bring. The internship life consisted mainly out of the following two parts: working

at the research center during the week and going to organized IAESTE events in the surroundings of where we were having our internships during the weekend.

Working at the research center wasn't what I expected from it at all. Since my supervisor was an extremely kind PhD student who spoke almost flawless English and was in the final stage of his PhD, he didn't really have a lot of time to give me work. He was very busy finishing his paper and I really didn't want to distract him too much. This had two main consequences: during a regular day of work I had a few tasks to complete, but after doing that I was able to prepare and plan trips for the weekends on my laptop and do some other IAESTE work for the local committee back in Ghent of which I'm an active member. The second consequence was that a regular day of work never lasted for more than six hours, so I had loads of spare time to spend with the other interns which resulted in a lot of cooking sessions, watching world cup games or eating ice cream outside in the sun.



But to be honest, the thing that made my internship experience really unforgettable was the organized IAESTE weekends. In six weeks I attended four IAESTE events: Gdansk Baywatch weekend, Prague Challenge, ICEM Krakow weekend and the Legendary Warsaw weekend. These weekends had a typical pattern: arriving and barbecue on Friday, city game and party on Saturday and getting back home on Sunday. On top of that we had the tradition of catching the sunrise on Sunday, which resulted in a lot of sleeping in public transport on the way back to Gliwice. I met so many amazing and extremely

kind people during these weekend, people I hope to see again at some point in my life. It's really incredible to see how big the IAESTE social network is, but condensed at the same time: the new people you meet definitely know people you have met in the past. Experiencing this really made me realize how small the world actually is, a world filled with IAESTE friends waiting for you to pop up in their home country at some point to bring them a visit.

This internship had a big impact on the way I see the world and more importantly the people that live in it. IAESTE connects people that have the same open minded

way of thinking, trusting and building friendships. I met people that I will never forget, every moment was intense and I experienced a unique combination of freedom and happiness that won't be equaled any time soon. The memories of these six weeks will be cherished for the rest of my life and it may sound cliché, but this internship really changed me in a profound way. Upon my return in Belgium, it felt like nothing in my daily habitat changed, except for me, looking at my surroundings in a new and fresh way.



ROMANIA



To finish my master degree I wanted one last international experience, using the advantage of being a student (read 'not too expensive'). The IAESTE formula was perfect to make this happen. So this summer I went to the capital of Romania: Bucharest. In a seed enhancement company Pioneer (Corteva) I assisted in fieldwork and office work. They were specialized in corn and sunflower breeding. My job was to help collect the data from the corn field experiments. In this way I learned about the corn breeding sector, the company, the research methods and other practical things I didn't learn during my education. Getting involved in a company is an interesting way to get to know the culture. It took some time for my Romanian colleges to get used to "the intern" but after a while they loved joking with me and telling me about their country and their culture. Seriously, an IAESTE internship is a great way to explore a country, get international working experience and build friendships with people all over the world. You go to

work during the week, where you're colleges tell you what you should visit in Bucharest or what should be your next weekend trip. Counting down till Friday and then you go partying in the old city centre or prepare for a two day trip you planned with people from at least four different countries around the world.

I have to admit that the international friendships were the best part of my IAESTE internship. I lived in a dormitory together with all international IAESTE interns. I shared a room with Turkish girls, a Polish girl and a Jordan girl. It took me some time to get used to living together with four girls, but the fun part is, there is always someone to talk to or to go out with. It's also very interesting to see how this mix of very different cultures live together. One of the most enjoyable nights was the 'international dinner' night. Everybody had to make a typical dish from their own country, and I can assure you, there were heaps of delicious food and Sangria (since we had 2 Spanish girls in the dormitory). Bucharest is not the most beautiful city I've been, but it's a very



interesting city with 'scars' from various historical times with a big impact on the city. The most recent one being the Ceausescu regime. But also the time the city was called 'little Paris' and the influences from the Ottoman Empire. Although Bucharest is a very lively city, with tons of activities, Romania has a lot more to offer. That's why most weekends I left the city and went on a trip by train or by renting a car. One of the most beautiful trips was when we drove through the Transylvanian mountains on the Transfagarasan road. We were a little bit worried beforehand weather or not the old Dacia car we rented would get use to the other side

of the mountain along the curvy mountain road. But the Dacia succeeded and the views where amazing.

Romania is too big to visit everything in a weekend, so we had to choose. That's how I ended up in the most touristic castle of Transilvania: The Dracula Castle. A nice castle, but it was mostly about selling the Dracula story. For example the Peles castle I visited, also the first castle in Europe with electric lighting, was more beautiful in my opinion. That's one more thing actually: since almost all interns I met in Bucharest where architects, they taught me to look at these ancient and beautiful buildings in a different way. Maybe I

appreciate them even more now. The things an IAESTE internship can lead to... A summer I will never forget!





Today, I got back home from the most amazing summer. I spent two months at the Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology in South Korea, where I did a research internship. During this time, I got to discover Korean culture, visit a lot of beautiful places and meet wonderful people from all over the world. While I am sad for this summer to be over already, I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

My internship was in the department of urban and environmental engineering at UNIST. I specifically chose this internship because I wanted to broaden my knowledge in a field related to civil engineering. I had two projects: first an introductory literature study and next an ABM model of migration patterns in Seoul. Although I didn't expect to do a literature study, it taught me a lot about how future cities will look like thanks to the professor's input. My second project was more practical and I absolutely loved it. My lab mates had developed a model of migration patterns in NetLogo, where I got to

implement the housing development because of gentrification. I was able to finish this implementation and was really happy to contribute something to the lab's research.

More than only the technical experiences, the social experiences of working in another continent were what taught me the most. For the ABM model and the weekly lab meetings, I had to cooperate with my Korean lab mates. Not only the language barrier, but also cultural differences made this a challenge. Thankfully, I had really nice lab mates and with some patience, we were able to figure everything out. The skills I acquired by adapting to this different social interaction, will for sure be useful in a future job. Another part of the Korean work culture that surprised me, was the emphasises on personal connections. The university would pay for the whole lab to go out for dinner or drinks together. It was really interesting to get to know my lab mates and professor in this setting.



Of course the work was only part of the experience. Doing an internship abroad means travelling around, meeting other interns from all over the world and learning to survive in a country where a different language is spoken. At UNIST, there were about 50 international interns. We were all in the same dorm and there was a Korean student staying in each room. The Korean students showed us around and often took us out to the city for dinner. As outside of the urban areas, everything is in Korean, it was helpful to have Korean friends. I discovered food is a big part of Korean culture as well. A funny anecdote about this is asking Korean people

for travel tips. Every time we would ask 'How is city X? Is it worth visiting?', they would respond by naming the food and drinks that city is known for. Talking to the other interns, it was especially interesting to hear that despite all the cultural differences, we had so much in common.

During weekends, the university would organise some field trips for us or we would organize something ourselves with all the interns. As such, we got to discover some traditional Korean cities like Gyeonggijeon and Andong, had a drum class, made a traditional fan, stayed in a hanok house and in a Buddhist temple. In a lot of places, the sleeping

arrangements were very traditional: we slept on the floor. As weird as it may sound, it wasn't that uncomfortable at all. We even got to visit the inside of the Hyundai Motor Company factory and the Mud Festival. Of course we also visited Seoul and Busan and saw a bamboo forest. Next to that, Korean nature is gorgeous. Jeju Island, Juwangsan National Park, Sinbulsan mountain: there was no end to it. And don't even get me started on how many different types of food and drinks we tried!

Although this summer has come to an end way too soon, the memories and friends I made will forever have a

place in my heart. I would recommend everyone to do an internship abroad. Not only will you acquire so many new skills, encounter so many new situations and see so many new places, it will also be so much fun!



JORDAN



Well here I am, back in Belgium, writing a report about my internship in Jordan with a big smile on my face, thinking about all the great memories I made in the last two months.

First sentence appearing in my mind? What an amazing adventure! Time went very fast, I can still remember the day I left in Brussels, on my way to Amman, the capital of Jordan. A bit insecure of leaving alone but totally filled of pure excitement.

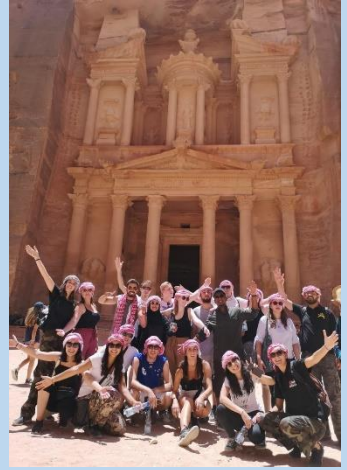
At the airport, I was glad to be picked up by a very friendly IAESTE member of the Amman LC. He immediately took me out for my first of many shawarma's as a welcoming gesture. First fact about Jordanians was already proven, they are endlessly friendly and generous.

Amman is a huge city, traffic is a hell and of course the Arab culture is totally different than ours. It took me a few days to get used to the life over there. After a couple of days, I knew the other trainees better, found a strategy to cross the street ('don't think, just go for it')

and installed the 'unofficial bus map of Amman' on my smartphone. My Jordanian adventure could start for real.

First day at the office was exciting as well. I had a job as a junior architect in a modern architecture studio, Asali Architects. An IAESTE volunteer brought me there and introduced me to the company director. They immediately gave me a design task to test my abilities in order to invent challenging tasks for me, so I could do useful work in the office and learn a lot in the meanwhile. My job was a really enriching experience, I enhanced my design skills thanks to the good guidance of my mentor and even learnt new software.

Although, the major time of the internship is dedicated to working it felt like holiday. I've been on amazing trips with friends I made there. I will never forget the water-hiking in Wadi Mujib, the last-minute dinners when someone posted in our Whatsapp group 'who's in for something this evening, guys?' or just the one hour bus trips back from the office. Always better to be stuck in a



traffic jam surrounded by friends than alone.

Moreover the IAESTE organisation in Jordan is very active. We went for three wonderful trips, all arranged by the IAESTE volunteers. First trip was to the Dead sea, covering our bodies with mud and relaxing in the salty water. On another trip, we went to the ruins of Jerash and Ajloun. But the most stunning trip was the one to Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba. Petra is of course widely known for its UNESCO world heritage ruins and I must admit that it is stirring to suddenly see these iconic monuments appearing between the rocks after a

walk in the burning sun. After Petra, we went to Wadi Rum to stay the night in the middle of the desert in a traditional Bedouin camp. Laying in the warm sand and watching the sky full of stars for hours is just pure magic. Waking up at 5 am to see the sunrise without morning moodiness is only possible in Wadi Rum. We finished the trip with a stay of two days in Aqaba, the city where you can melt in shadow. Luckily IAESTE arranged a boat to go snorkeling in the Red sea, great way to cool down a bit.

Unfortunately, every story has an end. After spending two month together, our student group was a bit like one big family, making fun, drinking

tea, taking care of each other, discovering Jordan together. It was hard to say goodbye to everyone but I am sure I will see some of my new international friends again. Although the adventure is over now, the happiness of sharing great memories with amazing friends is still there.

If you still hesitate after my story whether or not going on an international internship, I would say have the guts and just do it. It is really a once in a lifetime experience and an exceptional opportunity to discover a new culture, open your mind and release the adventurer inside of you. So to end up this story, my final advice: Don't think, just go for it!





I know it very well. Everytime I told somebody i was going to do my internship abroad, in Serbia, people looked at me like "I should know where that is, but actually I don't really know". This look was mostly followed by the question: "Why would you go there?" To be honest, I didn't have any solid argument for it. It doesn't have a sea, it is not known for the history or as a party place, in fact I barely knew anything about the country either before I came there. But that is what made it such a great experience.

On 23d of July, I got on the plane and left for 7 weeks to go explore Eastern Europe. On my first day I was already introduced to about 50 other IAESTE students from all around, since everybody was staying at the same dormitories. Outside of these dorms, there was always somebody, just hanging out or escaping from the heat inside the non-airconditioned rooms. This first day my roommate from Romania also arrived, and from the start I knew we would be partners in crime to discover the city. In the weekend we went to Ada lake, one of the coolest places

to have barbecues or parties next to the river and a nice place to cool down in the hot temperatures of summer. That weekend we also went to Republic Square in the city center, the shopping streets and Kalemegdan, the old city fortress from where you can witness amazing sunsets every night.

The next days we discovered why everybody kept using quotation marks when they were talking about "work". Two other students, from Germany and from Lebanon, took me to the Highway Institute, or Institut za puteve, where we would be spending the next 6 weeks. After a half an hour bus ride on a (non-air-conditioned, of course) bus with a crazy driver we arrived to our workplace. We spent our time in different departments, learning about everything they do in the Institute, but also learning about the people and their working spirit. On regular days we would arrive pretty late, say around 9:30. By then the regular workers were already almost ready for their breakfast break, to have some typical 'burek and yoghurt'. This is some typical Serbian



breakfast, consisting of layers of dough with inside cheese, minced meat (a lot of meat mostly) and greens. I must say that this was an impossible breakfast for me: too much meat, too much cheese, and just too much of it in general. Breakfast was followed by some working, followed by coffee breaks and talks with the people about where they grew up, about places we have to go see, about cultural differences between all our countries,.. I even learned how to spell my name in both Cyrillic, Russian and Arabic alphabet!

Because I love seeing and wandering around, almost every weekend was a weekend-trip. We went to Nis and Novi Sad, the two biggest cities in Serbia next to Belgrade, where I noticed that in every city apparently 'the fortress' is the most important thing to see. The local IAESTE

committee also organised a trip Along the Danube, which took us to Viminacium City and Military camp (an old Roman city), the hydroelectric plant Djerdap and the dam, Lepenski Vir (the first city in Europe), some boat trip on the Danube and of course a visit to.. another fortress! Because of its central location, it was also possible to do trips from Belgrade to other capitals around, so I went to Sofia. This was the first time I realized what a luxury we have living in countries without borders, believe me, the border controls were almost longer than the bus ride.

The most important thing which makes the internship a

great experience is not the work or the activities though, it is the people you meet along the way. It doesn't matter if it is by losing your way in the city or by losing time in front of the dorms, a lot of friends are remaining with me. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to do this, thank you IAESTE!





After not being selected in the first round, of course I was a bit disappointed but I accepted that it would just be a quiet summer in Belgium. It was only in May after seeing a facebook post that I decided to take a look again at the exchange platform. Luckily I did. After looking at the different applications, I applied the day of the deadline itself for an internship in Łódź, a city I had never heard of. From then on, everything went quite fast and one and a half months later I arrived in a city I will remember for the rest of my life.

Of course I was very nervous. I am not very used to being on my own and I had never travelled all by myself, let alone travelling for six weeks to a country where most of the people don't even speak English. But the moment I arrived, someone from IAESTE was already waiting for me and accompanied me to the dormitory. She assured me that I wouldn't be lonely, and she was right. The first day we went to the bank with the other trainees, the next day we went eating at Da grasso, the day after we had

a beer together, the day after that we went to Manufaktura and it was all like that. Almost everyday we did something together in Łódź, and in the weekends, we went visiting other big cities in Poland. Łódź (which is actually pronounced something like "Woodsh") is the third biggest city in Poland, even though it only started to grow in the 19th century as a result of the growing textile industry. The typical buildings you see are old factories made from the typical red bricks. Most of them (like Manufaktura) are beautifully renovated and the people from Łódź are very proud of them. But what I liked more, was all the streetart. You could literally see something from everywhere. There wasn't a corridor where you couldn't see a statue or a wall covered in graffiti. I even saw one being made next to my dorm on a 15-floor high building. It really made the city more pleasant and colourful.

I did my internship at the Department of Applied Computer Science at Uniwersytet Łódzki, one of the three universities in Łódź. I



worked around an impartial game that I got to choose myself (I chose Sprouts). I not only had to implement the game, but also decide a winning strategy (based on mex-trees). It was a very specific topic that wasn't really covered in my courses, so I was very glad that I got the chance to learn more about it on this internship. The professor I worked for, was very friendly and let me choose a few days off, so I could do more than just work and I could take my time to visit other places.

One of the best things of an internship in Poland is that there are so many trainees doing an internship and a lot

of LCs. When I was in Łódź, there were around 40 other trainees doing an internship in the same city. A lot of us went together on the first organized weekend, the Gdańsk baywatch weekend. It was one of the amazing weekends organized by other LCs in Poland for other trainees to come visit their city. We were with over 100 trainees in Gdańsk. There, I didn't only meet people from all over Poland, but from all over the world. There were parties and a big city challenge, but there was also time to chill at the beach, to discover the old town at your own pace, or in my case to watch the third place final of the World Championship football together with some

other supporters of the Red Devils.

Another weekend we participated in, was the ICEM Cracow weekend. In my opinion, Cracow is the most beautiful city in Poland. In Cracow I saw a lot of my newly made friends from Gdańsk back.

After six weeks it still felt like I had only just arrived, but I already had to go home. It was a hard goodbye. I made some very good friends and even though we don't live in the same country, I really believe that I will see some of them again in the future. If you're still hesitating if you should go on an internship, just go! Everything will be

fine. The only thing I regret is not staying there for longer than six weeks.





I will always remember the quote that is pinned on a wall in my secondary school: "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies, the man who never reads lives only once.". Being not on the same page with this quote, since travelling is also a way to hear, learn and experience new stories that enrich your life, I was extremely happy and grateful to find out during my exam period that my application for a two-month-long internship in India was accepted.

With exam time being over and only a few days left before taking off to India, I made sure I was not forced to wait, long and stress for my departure to India by having a post-exam party, picking up my visa, getting some more vaccinations and enjoying a music festival. In the end I only had one day left to pack everything so that my travels towards an experience abroad started abruptly.

Arriving suddenly in India on the 4th of July, whilst my head was still in Belgium, the first day started with tiring administrative formalities at JECRC University, meeting

over 20 other interns, remembering all their names (which is a problem if you have a memory the size of a mosquito) and paying a visit to the Big Bazaar to buy a pillow for the first night. While I was still adapting to India and started with the internship project, some interns already had to leave. To complete their time as an intern, all of them had to give a presentation about their project and experiences. In the end my head was filled with several testimonials that all boiled down to 'this was one of the most intense moments of my life', something I was not able to understand. In the meantime the hearing, learning and experiencing continued.

Being surrounded by people from Europe, Asia and Africa, you gather an immense number of stories. I heard that cannibalism still exists in Indonesia, that women are treated as in-house diamonds in Oman, that Vietnam has a magnificent natural beauty, that Ireland is a highly tolerant and save country, that homosexual people are put in jail in Nigeria etc.

If you want to survive in India for two months, your mind and body should learn how to sleep under a ventilator (wind is the best way to avoid mosquito bites as fragile mosquitos can't land on your body in windy conditions), how to digest spicy food (apparently the state in which I stayed, serves the most spicy food in India), how to bargain for a 50 % discount (good cop, bad cop is a frequently used and effective technique), how to make clear to Indians that they can't take selfies with you to upgrade their status (in the end we told them to give us bananas if they wanted to treat us as monkeys), how to nod in an Indian way whilst having a conversation, how to depart in a tuk-tuk 'Chale Chalo'... During the week I was mostly occupied with learning about my research topic. In the beginning my supervisor was quite surprised that I was performing a master in Engineering Physics, whilst having applied for an internship about Big Data, computer sciences. We decided to perform an internship on the edge of both scientific fields: a blend of Big Data, machine learning and

nuclear fusion to define a threshold for disruption prediction in JET.

During the weekends we mostly did trips to the most famous cities in Rajasthan, a state that is 11.2 times as big as Belgium. I experienced my first world wonder, saw poor naked children dancing and running in the rain, had a crazy exhausting petal-party in a temple, drove a scooter 80 km/h for the first time, celebrated life in a Krishna-temple by singing repetitive songs etc.

Being back in Belgium, sitting behind my computer in my well-known house and selecting 3 lovely pictures for my testimonial, many stories come up in my head whilst

browsing through my pics. Georges R.R. Martin definitely was wrong. In India I did live another life, a life that started with my arrival and ended with my departure, a life that could handle the non-familiarity of India. Although having difficulties remembering how my other life felt in India, I remember the lessons about life. Being snatched away from my usual environment and being put in India, formed a huge source of reflection. I can only conclude that I tremendously value my stay in India as it helped me with developing a greater emotionally comprehension, a bigger global insight and a deeper understanding of the value of things in life. Now, I

finally do understand why the other trainees described their experience as one of the most intense periods in their lives.





Salam,

I am Gaëtan Vervaele and I am a master student chemical engineering. This summer, I went to Teheran, Iran and it was really an unforgettable experience. But before I tell you about all the cool stuff I did in Iran, I have to take you back to the beginning. The first thing you have to do as soon as possible is to apply for the visa. Since I had no experience with visa, I expected it to be arranged in maximum one month and I already booked my flight tickets. This was however not the best way and as a consequence I had to postpone my flight. For all other matters such as your employee or dorm, the people of IAESTE Iran take care about that.

So I left on the 18th of August, four weeks later than planned, to Tehran. At the airport Pedram, one of the mentors, was so kind to pick me up at 2 am and drove me together with a German girl to the boys dorm (boys and girls live in different dorms). After a short night of sleep, I first met the Iranian guys who are not part of IAESTE but with

whom I had a lot of fun during my stay. When all the trainees (in total there were like 35 trainees) got back from work, we went to a cafe where I got to know already a lot of people. From that day, every day of the week was filled with activities for the next five weeks (visiting Tehran, good-bye parties, pool party, concert, football, hairdresser, ...). It was by the way very cheap to live in Iran due to the decreasing value of the Iranian Rial so we went every day to restaurants and hang out at cafes (of course without alcohol but with delicious tea and juices).

On my second day, my mentor Zahra who helped me a lot during my stay, took me to work. I worked at the green technology lab, which was 5 minutes walking from the dorm, and got my own project about CO₂ capture by algae. The subject did not really suit to my courses but it was interesting to learn something new. For my work, I got helped by an Iranian intern Nima and he taught me a lot about Iran going from the best food places to the very interesting but horrible political situation. They gave



me a lot of freedom during my project so that I could start whenever I wanted and take days off to travel.

Every weekend, every holiday we had, we used it to travel through Iran. We went to the Caspian Sea, to the mountains, to the desert, to the Persian Gulf,... IAESTE Iran also planned a five days trip through Iran where we visited Isfahan and Yazd (personally my favorite city). Since it was no so difficult to get days off at work, we made of the five days trip an eight days trip where we visited Shiraz, the city of poets and wine.

Iran is really a special country in so many ways. You have the life risking traffic, the beautiful landscapes, the long history, the Farsi language and the absurd rules of the government. But what makes it really special are the people. As a foreigner walking through the streets can evoke many greetings, questions for pictures and offers to drink tea or fruit. Iranians show that the stereotypes about their country are completely wrong. They show their courage by breaking the rules because being Iranian is not only determined by the last forty years but by their long history. They show their intellectuality by singing traditional songs and reciting

constantly poems of their greatest poets. But they show also their despair when the value of the Rial goes down. Many young Iranian people are now doubting between leaving the country to build up a secure life or to stay in Iran with no guarantee on a future but with the purpose to help to change their country. Not an easy choice in my opinion.

I really had a wonderful time during these 5 weeks. I had a lot of laughs, a lot of discussions about who had the best beer and the best chocolate, which religion a child would have if the mother is Jewish and the father is Muslim and many other things. I would like to thank the people of IAESTE Iran and

the trainees to make my stay really awesome!

Khodahafez





After almost three years of studying, I felt the urge to put the theory I learned into practice. And since I had to choose a specialization for my master's degree, I wanted to have a clear image of the various disciplines within my field of study. Combined with the contagious enthusiasm of my friends who were a member of the local IAESTE committee in Ghent, the decision to go for an IAESTE internship was easily made. Deciding which internship I would like to do however, was a more difficult one – IAESTE Belgium definitely did a good job when exchanging the internships, since they could offer a variety of destinations and topics to the Belgian students. Once I had made my final selection and had written my motivation letters, the waiting could begin. After a suspenseful week, I got the exciting news that I was selected for the internship in Łódź at the Medical University (UMed)!

With the assistance of the IAESTE members, who were always very eager to help, the paperwork was a piece of cake, so I could fully focus on the more practical side of this

adventure. And then the day of my departure had arrived! After a long journey by train and bus, I finally arrived in Łódź. My buddy Justyna was waiting for me at the bus station, and together we went to the dormitory of the UMed where I would stay during my internship. In there, I shared a room with a girl from Czech Republic, who was doing an IAESTE internship as well. Our IAESTE 'family' in Łódź consisted of a bunch of international students, coming from all over the Europe (Sweden, Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Italy, ...) and even further away (Ecuador, Tunisia, ...). On the other hand, there were our IAESTE buddies, who helped us settling down and finding our way in Łódź. It was a very dynamic group: for every goodbye to a friend ('strangers' become friends so quickly!), there was a 'welcome' to a new student. But we really had a great time together, which is the most important thing after all.

Although Łódź is nicknamed 'the ugliest city of Poland', my stay in Łódź was one of the most beautiful times of my life so far. Together, we watched



some games of the FIFA World Cup (which is really one of the best ways to get to know each other), visited some musea (big tip in Łódź: every day of the week, there's another museum you can visit for free), went to a jazz concert and a small festival, watched a movie in an outdoor-cinema, organised our own graffiti hunt or just chilled in the common room of the dormitory. And that are just the things we did in Łódź! The IAESTE weekends, that were organised by the LC's of some of Poland's major cities, gave us the opportunity to discover Poland in a very fun way: a Baywatch-party at the beach in Gdansk, cruising on

the river in Krakau, partying in Warschau, ... Whoever said they had a boring weekend, just should have joined an IAESTE weekend!

Of course my stay in Łódź wasn't filled only with social activities. I did my internship at the department of Molecular Carcinogenesis of the Medical University. During the first days, it was a little bit difficult to find some concrete tasks I could do. I had expected to be involved in a lot of practical lab work, but since the department was transitioning towards bioinformatics, there was not that much of lab work for me to do. So I got a small crash course in bioinformatics and most of the time, I was

assisting a PhD-student with preparing and analysing her datasets. After all, this was even better for me than the lab work I expected, because bioinformatics is really a big thing in my study field, but we never had a decent introduction into it.

The only disadvantage of doing an IAESTE internship? The huge IAESTE 'hangover' you have afterwards, a heavy craving you can feel as if every vessel of your body is screaming to go back. Luckily, this turns into a warm and nostalgic sentiment that makes your body glow from the inside every time you think back about those tremendous weeks. Summarized, it was a very instructive and enriching

experience – I would definitely do it again! It is a unique opportunity to learn how to be independent and to work and communicate in an international context, which are very important soft skills that you don't get taught at school! And above all, you are well-supported by the IAESTE members: what are you still waiting for?



TAJIKISTAN



'Tajikistan, where is that!?' is a question I frequently hear after I explained where I went on my internship. When I saw the offer on the IAESTE page, I also totally didn't have a clue about this. I was immediately interested in the country and found out that it actually borders with China, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. I had read that it's very mountainous with more than fifty percent of the surface area over 3000 meters above sea level. The fact that this country seemed to have really beautiful nature, and a really cool job offer, persuaded me to apply for this internship.

When I arrived in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, I immediately saw that the internet didn't lie. I got out of the plane and was surrounded by mountains everywhere. The country has a lot of natural water resources, so even in the very hot summer without any rain, it was a green landscape with many flowers. For some reason, planes in Tajikistan always arrive/depart in the night, so I arrived at 3 am. Lucky for me, the IAESTE volunteers didn't care about

and somebody was waiting for me at the airport. When we went to the place that would be my new home for six weeks, I was very surprised about the capital. I had read online that the country is one of the poorest countries in the world (about 45% of the population lives below the poverty line). But seeing the capital, you wouldn't think this at all. It's one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. The buildings all look like palaces and there are flowers planted everywhere. When we drove further, the surroundings changed and there were mostly old apartments build in the Soviet Union. I stayed in a two-room apartment with my host family: a mother and her four children. I shared a room with the daughter; she was about my age and an IAESTE volunteer. I was so happy to have a Tajik sister, because it was kind of a big culture shock and she was always there for me.

My internship was at the University for botany, plant physiology and genetics. I worked together with people who could only speak Russian and Tajik; they only knew a



few words in English. It took some time to really get to work along these researchers, but with the help of google translate and our common interest for plants, I learned a lot of them and it truly was a really great job. It was also very satisfying as I helped doing research to find a good variety of sweet potato to be grown by poor farmers. Sweet potato is more nutritious than the crops that they're cultivating at the moment, so it would help to prevent malnutrition. The work life is very different compared to Belgium. We almost never worked longer than 2 or 3 pm and there were a lot of tea breaks.

Because of my very short work days, I had plenty of time to visit Dushanbe and some other parts of the country. Every weekend, IAESTE organized a trip to somewhere. These trips were truly amazing. We went hiking in the beautiful mountains, swimming in ice cold lakes, camping in the middle of nowhere and so on. Next to me, there were only 3 other trainees. The IAESTE of Dushanbe also didn't have many volunteers, so we soon became a very close group of friends.

What I liked most about my adventure in this crazy, beautiful country were the people and their culture. The Tajik people value their

traditions so much. That's why it was so great to live in a host family. One of their culture aspects is that they sleep on the floor on a very thin mattress, called a 'korpucha'. Luckily for me, they had one bed where I could sleep on. Another cultural aspect is the fact that almost all the women in Tajikistan wear traditional clothes, these are dresses in very colorful patterns with a pair of trousers underneath. I only saw women with more modern clothes in the center of the capital. The Tajik people also love their traditional food, and I spent six weeks eating almost only 'khurutob', 'osh' and other traditional meals. The Tajik food is actually really good, so I was very happy that the

mother of my host family taught me how to make these dishes.

There is so much more I could tell about this amazing experience. I already miss the hospitality of the Tajik people and my truly wonderful host family. So if you have the opportunity to do an internship in Tajikistan, don't hesitate and just do it! You won't regret it at all!





After doing both my first and second master year abroad (respectively in South Africa and Bolivia), you can say the “study-abroad-bug” definitely bit me, which was also the reason why I applied for doing an IAESTE internship and gaining pre-work experience as a completion of my study career. When I heard the redeeming news that IAESTE Oman accepted me to work at the Sultan Qaboos university in Masqat, I was ravished.

Hardly two months later, I took a plane from Brussels to Dubai and survived a subsequent nine-and-a-half-hour bus drive via Emirati and Omani borderlands to reach the capital of Masqat. I arrived at the end of July which is quite late compared to other international students, as soon after my arrival, the first people already started to go back home. This was hard at times, as my newly-made friends had already come to the end of their adventure, whereas mine had only just started...

Furthermore, I only realized when arriving on Thursday that weekend days are Friday

and Saturday, which meant that my first three days were already free and filled with exploring more of Masqat and getting used to the extreme heat (46 °C!), hooray!

After the weekend, I started working at the University, where I got the very interesting topic of shadowing nurses in order to optimize their time management by using Lean Six Sigma tools and Time And Motion Studies. However, the beginning started off a bit chaotically as the head nurse who was supposed to guide me through my shadowing tasks had to take leave unexpectedly, which resulted in the fact that I had to wait until she came back (five weeks later) to finally be able to start the practical part of my internship. Anyway, after her return, things went smoothly and I could even assist in the hospital's operating theater one day in order to get a very accurate image of nurses' work there too! Being an engineer, it was quite an adaptation to work in this setting, but at the same time very enriching to see that engineering tools can be



multifunctionally applied in no matter which sector. From the start, it was nice to realize that all hospital staff took me seriously, although I did not really work in a normal engineering ‘habitat’. Moreover in the end, I was proud to see that my eventual suggestions to reduce nurses' workload got applied in the hospital and that also the biggest hospital of Masqat showed interest in my research!

Now a bit more concerning housing and spare time activities! We lived together with 50 international students in one huge accommodation and shared rooms per 3 people. As our house was

located quite in the middle-of-nowhere, not really ideal for exploring the surroundings, plus you basically always need a car to get anywhere around or in the capital, we often got driven around by some Omani students who called themselves the "Omani IAESTE Friends". With these students, who apparently got elected every year by the international coordinator, mister Moadh Al-Zadjali a.k.a. our favorite "surrogate uncle", we often went on adventurous trips during weekends to taste more of the Omani culture.

Moreover, because of unreliable public transport and dodgy taxi drivers, the IAESTE students and mister

Moadh were also the main organizers of some memorable weekend trips which made us able to explore other places in Oman, outside of the capital city. That is how we ended up in the old town of Nizwa, green Salalah (bordering Yemen), the Nakhal fortress, Turtle Beach, Wadi Shab, Wadi Tiwi, Jebel Akhdar and Jebel Shams. Apart from that, we also planned trips on our own and hitchhiking became our new favorite time expenditure during weekends, leading to memorable drives and conversations. We soon realized that Omani people are not really used to this concept but, nevertheless, are so nice and open-minded that

we mostly not stood any longer than 5 minutes waiting along the road before someone stopped to pick us up.

To conclude, this experience and the up-until-now-lasting friendships with some of my colleague-students, were one of the best things that ever happened to me! What I can only advise you, if you want to gain work experience abroad, is doing an IAESTE internship. Then, I might see you next year as that study-abroad-bug makes me dream of going on another, new internship...



NORWAY



During the summer holidays, I got the opportunity to do an internship in Bergen, a city located in the southwest of Norway. With 280 000 inhabitants, the city doesn't seem that big, but Bergen is after Oslo the biggest city of Norway! Besides, Wikipedia warned me that Bergen is the European city where it rains a lot. So when I left, I was prepared for 6 weeks of rain.

My internship adventure started at July 8th. Karen, a member of IAESTE Bergen, picked me up at the airport and showed me the apartment where I would live for the coming six weeks. I had my own room and I shared the kitchen, bathroom and living room with two Norwegian girls. The view through the window of my room was amazing! It was a combination of the city centre and the mountains in the background.

The second day, I didn't have to go to work yet, but I had to go to the tax office and afterwards, Mari from IAESTE Bergen, showed me and Kengo, another internship student, the city. The city was small and cosy, I immediately

liked it! The next day, when I started working, I was a little bit stressed. I was afraid that they would expect me to work very hard. But when I met professor Bodil, she took my worries away: I didn't have to work in the afternoon because of the good weather and I could further discover the city. My task at the university was to make a model of the microstructure of a surface in order to make it more hydrophilic. Naureen, my daily supervisor, steered me in the right direction.

During the first weeks, the members of IAESTE Bergen organized many activities like barbecue, tacos on Friday, a party, hiking in Aurlandsdalen, making pancakes, ... We were only a small group of interns, so we knew each other quiet well after a few activities. Surprisingly, the weather was very nice and there was almost no rain. Although, the Norwegian people warned me that this good weather wouldn't last for long.

After three weeks, a weekend was organized by IAESTE Norway in Stavanger. I took, together with Kengo, the boat



to Stavanger. This trip took 6 hours! Luckily, we met some nice guys on the boat so the time went quiet fast. When we finally arrived in Stavanger, it was already late in the evening. The next day, we went hiking to Prekistolen, a famous hiking spot in Stavanger. On Sunday, we took the bus back to Bergen.

In the following weeks, more interns arrived to Bergen and all my evenings were full of activities. A picnic, a hike, swimming and so on. I had no free time anymore. I enjoyed every moment in and around the beautiful city of Bergen. I also became acquainted with the typical weather in Bergen:

unpredictable very strong
rain showers.

Before I knew it, the end of my internship came. At the last day of my internship, I had to give a presentation. Some professors, PhD students and all the new master students of nanophysics attended my presentation. Luckily they were very friendly and it was not very formal. One student made a cheese cake for after my presentation.

When finishing the presentation, my internship officially ended. Before going back to Belgium, my boyfriend came to visit me and I had some more days left to show him the nicest places of the city. At my last evening, I organized a farewell party

at my apartment for the other interns and IAESTE members.

The next morning, I flied back to Belgium. When coming back to Belgium, I really missed the other interns and IAESTE members and all the beautiful places of Bergen. The only think I didn't miss were the unpredictable rain showers.



BELARUS



Last year I have done a BEST course in Poland and I had the time of my life, so this year I wanted to go somewhere again, but this time I wanted it to last a bit longer and be somewhat more professional. So an IAESTE internship seemed ideal. I wrote motivation letters for India, Israel and Belarus. The first two internships were in really cool countries and the topics seemed very interesting (to me, an electronics engineer). The last one was more of a YOLO choice, as Belarus is one of those countries that you know exist, but that's all. Also the topic was very vague: "modeling of magnetic fields". But hey it was only for 4 weeks so if it's boring, I still have two more months of holiday to compensate.

As you might have guessed I got the internship to Belarus. I booked my flight to Minsk without knowing where I would live or what I would do. Even when I got on my plane at the start of September, I had no clue. At the airport I was greeted by the whole local IAESTE committee, which consisted of one person. She took me to the

dorm I would live in, which is simply one of the many concrete Soviet apartment buildings. There I met four other interns, from Germany, Poland, Turkey and India. The Polish guy with whom I shared my room friendly introduced me to everyone and arranged some things in Polish, which has at least some common words with Russian.

The following day we were introduced to our supervisors. My job was to use some software packet to do a simulation of magnetically induced currents in the human brain. Sounds very interesting, but all I had to do was click the 'simulate' button and let it calculate. As I am not a neurologist, the results I got were just cool plots. Also I was not expected to work more than 3 hours per day and they didn't even have a proper place for me where I could sit. Luckily 2 other interns had a very enthusiastic supervisor, who was glad to adopt me. Together we did some 3D modeling and embedded programming and I liked it a lot.

The thing is that they really didn't want us to work a lot



here. For them it was cool that there were some international students, but they didn't really expect us to do some meaningful work. For me it was quite a relief actually. Life in Belarus is way calmer than what we are used to. People take time for everything they do, and at first it made me somewhat nervous. But I soon learned to appreciate it. Why would you spend your whole life running if walking is way more enjoyable? Take your time to read a book in one of the many beautiful parks, sit with your friends next to the water or listen to the many street-musicians playing in the pedestrian tunnels.

And actually, I wasn't bored a single time. Although there was not really a committee that organized activities for us, the local students took it as their duty to show us around and they made us experience this country in a way that would be nearly impossible for tourists. Actually tourism is almost nonexistent in this country. There are no huge attractions, but the beauty can be found in the small things, in its everyday life. Belarusians tend to be very kind and sincere people and although only a fraction of them speak English, they are very hospitable. Sometimes they didn't seem to understand that I know no Russian at all and kept on talking and talking.

In contrast to what I expected, Minsk is quite a modern city. For no money at all you get unlimited mobile internet, the public transport system works almost flawlessly and there is some kind of Russian google maps on which you can find all the information you need (even including real time position of busses). So with a smartphone in the hand, I could cope on my own. Even though they might look grim, the streets are very safe, even at night. Contrary to common belief, I haven't met anyone slaving and haven't heard any hardbass. Maybe that's also a bit of a disappointment.

So to sum up, I can recommend anyone to take

an IAESTE internship. Don't worry too much about where you're going to end up, cause I think the whole point is to get in touch with the unfamiliar. And even though a culture might be so completely different to ours, it's the similarities that leave the biggest impressions.





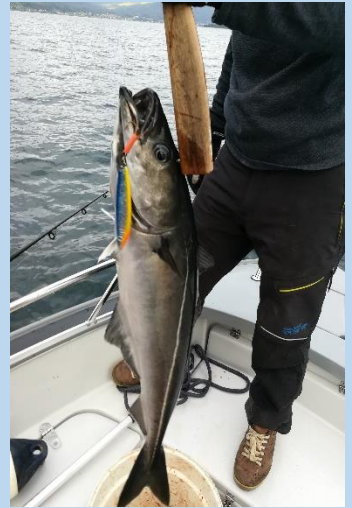
If I would describe my experience of my internship in Tromsø, Northern Norway in three words I would say mind-blowing, eyes-opening and surprising. One of the main reasons I applied for this internship is the astonishing nature Norway has to offer. I came back more than satisfied after hiking mountains and visiting places which were even more beautiful than shown on post cards. I have to admit that I was really excited when I received an invitation from IAESTE Norway to join the Lofoten weekend. I didn't hesitate any second and travelled on my second weekend in Norway from Tromsø to Bodø where the meeting point was. Once arrived, I've met some really nice people from different countries. Most of them were trainees in Norway and Sweden. I've even encountered some guys I met earlier this year at a twinning with IAESTE Göteborg. The weekend was really nice and well organized. I could even watch the world cup game Belgium vs. Brazil in the middle of nowhere. I almost felt at home, except for the beer prices which were four

times more expensive than I am used to in Belgium.

One of the biggest advantages of doing an internship with IAESTE is meeting people from all over the world and establishing new crazy friendships. My coworker Vanja, and I had some absurd evenings going out in Tromsø.

One weekend we were invited by Helle from LC Tromsø to visit her cabin. We had a very nice time there playing games. The second day we went fishing in the fjord where we caught about 25 kilograms of fish. Once back at the cabin Helle tried to teach us how to skin a fish. As expected we succeeded to totally destroy our fish so we left the skinning for her. Finally, at 1 AM we ate our fish with an amazing sight on the fjord.

When Vanja finished his internship, I started organizing my own trips. The first weekend alone I suddenly decided to climb a mountain on my own. After some hours walking in 26 degrees Celsius, and this above the arctic circle, I arrived at the foot of the mountain and



installed my tent there. After a short night I started to climb. Distracted by the breathtaking view I lost track of the trail I had to follow. In a moment of enormous stupidity, I chose to climb the mountain sideways, which was a very steep and rocky surface. As a person who is afraid of heights this was one of the most foolish ideas I ever had. Eventually, after a lot of swearing and dying, I arrived at the top where I ran in to a surrealistic moon landscape. After searching a while, I found the hiking trail and went back.

The next weekend I was up for something bigger. I found this relatively cheap tickets to Longyearbyen in Spitsbergen. I thought this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I was totally right. To reduce my costs, I slept at the Longyearbyen camping place next to a nice lagoon where thousands of birds were laying their nests. In advance I reserved a speed boat tour to Pyramiden, an abandoned Soviet Union town in the middle of nowhere. There was one Russian hotel with a bar where they served traditional wodka at Russian prices. Evidently, I bought a lot of it. After our visit to Pyramiden we went to a glacier nearby and had our lunch among the seals swimming next to us.

Luckily AND unfortunately we didn't run in to a polar bear...

My last weekend I went hiking with Marcus from IAESTE Tromsø in Kvaløya, a.k.a. whale island. I don't know why it is called like this because I didn't see any whales, but the nature was something else. While eating self-made hot dogs on a big rock, reindeers were just walking by like they don't care. We even had a really close encounter with one of them. I will never forget the moment I was looking the reindeer in its eyes and it farted shamelessly.

In general, I enjoyed my internship with IAESTE really a lot and cherish those

memories until the end of my life. I invite everyone to do the same. Don't hesitate and just go for it!





"Serbia? Why are you going to Serbia?", it was always the first thing someone said when I told them I was going there for an internship. To be honest, I didn't know myself but afterwards, I did not regret it once.

I arrived at the Nikola Tesla airport on the first of July where I took the bus towards the city centre of Belgrade where someone would pick me up. When I got of the bus there was another girl from Germany waiting as well and after 10 minutes the girl who came to pick us up arrived and took us to the dorm where all IAESTE students were staying. There, I met my Omani roommate. One of the first things we were discussing was off course the World Cup going on at that moment and I found out that he was a huge fan of Brazil, at that point our future opponent in the quarter finals.

The next day, we went to the IAESTE office with all the people that arrived during that weekend (about 15). At the office I met my Iranian colleague that would do an internship in the same company called Elektromreža

Srbije or EMS. The rest of the day was filled with meeting even more students. In the end, I have met a lot of very nice people from the following countries: Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Dubai, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Macau, Macedonia, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam.

Tuesday, it was time to go to work where I met even more people. The first week, it was really difficult to remember all the names and faces. The first day at work, they gave us some intro about the company and we had to finish some paperwork. The rest of that week, they did not prepare that much for us to do at work: we only got some presentations about the company. So, I used the rest of my time to study the Cyrillic alphabet (they use both Cyrillic and Latin alphabet in Serbia) and I tried to learn some Serbian as well. As the Serbians say: "Speak Serbian



so the whole world understands you!". Luckily, most of them still know some words in English. At work, they mostly tried to teach me some things and show me as much as possible about what they are doing in the company. My mentor and his colleagues tried all their best to arrange all these things for us and therefore I am very grateful to them: Hvala!

The first week was immediately followed by the international evening in which I could proudly represent Belgium after we just beat Brazil in the World cup. This

was (for me) the first of many great activities organised by IAESTE. Other activities included a three-day trip to the Southwestern part of Serbia where we had some magnificent views on top of Tara mountain and in the Uvac natural park, home to the endangered griffon vultures. We went to do a trip along the Danube in the eastern part of Serbia introducing us to a lot of historical places. We even saw a one-million-year-old mammoth skeleton and the remainders of the first city in Europe!

But not all activities were organised by IAESTE. IAESTE made a WhatsApp group in which all students were

added. This group was used a lot to make plans for going to have a drink, going out to eat or going to a party. Together with other students and the IAESTE volunteers, we spent lots of time sitting in front of the dorm having a drink or going to Kalemegdan in the evening (the old fortress at the place where the Sava and Danube river come together). Furthermore, I visited Novi Sad and Niš, the second and third biggest city in Serbia. Life in those cities is totally different from the life in Belgrade: everything is much more relaxed and at ease. While in Belgrade the traffic is always busy and very noisy with all people using their horn a lot, it is very calm in other parts of Serbia where

you can regularly see people using horse and carriage!

After two months, it was time for me to go home taking with me a lot of good memories and off course a bottle of Rakija, the local liquor which Serbians are very proud off.





Hi, I'm Jef, a biochemistry and biotechnology student at Ghent University in Belgium. This summer I did an IAESTE-internship in Israel for seven weeks. I stayed in an Airbnb in Tel-Aviv and worked in the analytical laboratory of Tnuva Dairy in Rehovot. During the weekends we went on trips to explore Israel. It was an amazing experience and I would recommend it to anyone.

I stayed in an airbnb in Tel-Aviv during my internship. (There were five other IAESTE-students in Tel-Aviv. About 20 other students stayed in the dormitories of the Technion University in Haifa.) In the evenings we visited the Shuk Hacarmel market or the beach. At the market they sold pita with falafel for only 7 Shekels (1,70 euro). I also like going to Yarkon park which has a climbing wall and an outdoors fitness park. Tel Aviv also has various shopping centres, nightclubs and an art museum. I thought the art museum was pretty boring, but some students enjoyed it a lot. So give it a try if you are into art. Another recommendation is Jaffa, the old port city of Tel-Aviv. The

city is not that big and it's easy to get around with public transport. But be aware, from sunset on Friday till sundown on Saturday there is Sabbath. This day is holy for the Jews, meaning that they don't work which means there is no public transport and most stores are closed.

Israel is a beautiful country with a lot of history and exploring this with the other students during the weekends was the best part of my time there. My favourite trip was to Jerusalem where we stayed for two nights. Every day we could go on free tours with the guide from the Postal Hostel (shoutout!). He took us to the markets, nightclubs and restaurants and showed us lots of the historical sites in Jerusalem. We visited the wailing wall, the olive mountain, the Church of Mary Magdalene, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (which contains the sites where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected). We also walked de Via Dolorosa which is the path Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion. Unfortunately, we couldn't visit temple mount because there was a Muslim holiday.



Another trip that comes to mind is the trip to Masada and the Dead Sea. We rented a car and drove to Kfar Hanokdim, a little desert village in Masada where we could spend the night in a Bedouin tent. During the day we rode camels and during the night we watched the stars. The lack of light in the desert makes it possible to see the milky way and various planets very clearly. We also saw some scorpions at night!

Even though Israel is very beautiful and has a rich history, what really made it fun is getting to know the other students from all over the world. We quickly

became good friends and they are what I miss the most.

I worked in the analytical laboratory of Tnuva Dairy where I did quality control of raw milk and finished milk products. The people at the company were very kind and welcoming (as was everyone in Israel). I learned some new techniques and gained more insight in the food industry but overall most of the things I had to do were fairly basic and I feel like I really didn't need seven weeks to learn the things I learned. The internship was not as challenging as I had hoped but it was still a very valuable experience and I would do it again in a heartbeat. And I feel this experience will really

help me to make better decisions about my future education. I also learned a lot just by talking to the other analysts in the laboratory.

Last of all I want to thank IAESTE. Every time I had a problem they helped me immediately, they were very supportive and welcoming and really helped making this an amazing experience.

I would recommend everyone to do an internship abroad with IAESTE. You'll experience another part of the world, meet lots of interesting people, get some work experience and probably you'll learn a thing or two about yourself as well.





I was on a plane to Istanbul, a little nervous, but excited. Next to me sat a mother and her teenage daughter. "So where are you going?", she asked. "Iran", I replied. The mother looked at me with a combination of compassion and fear and said: "Isn't that dangerous?". While her daughter rolled her eyes, I reassured her that everything was going to be fine, although I did not know what to expect of the weeks to come.

About 5 hours later I was picked up by a very friendly Iranian IAESTE-member, who was going to take me to my new home in Tehran. Although it was only 5 in the morning, the heat was already on the verge of unbearable and the sun was trying its best to burn as much of my skin as possible. After a 1 hour rollercoaster ride through Iranian traffic I arrived at the dorm. There I met my fellow trainees for the first time. There were people from all over the world: Omani, Pakistani, Indians, Germans, ... After the initial small talk, I knew I was in for quite an experience.

The following day, I already had to start to work. I worked for a private company in Tehran as a software engineer. The company made a nurse alarm/call system and my job was to help build the application that was responsible for managing all different hardware that was used to build the alarm/call system. Although I managed to learn quite some technical things, it was especially interesting to see how Iranians organized the workplace: lunch was eaten all together on a carpet on the floor (without shoes, this is important!), tea was much more popular than coffee and rice is consumed in large amounts.

When I returned at the dorm after work, most nights were spent together in someone's room or in a local tea house, talking about the most different topics with the other (male) trainees. During these times I made some really good friends and learned a lot about different cultures. If you want to gain insight in how people from all over the world think about marriage, religion, science,... an



IAESTE-internship is the best way to do it.

Apart from the job, I also really wanted to experience Iran firsthand and see the country with my own eyes. Maybe the lady on the plane was right, maybe it was dangerous. After a couple of days living amongst Iranians I really started to feel the differences. On the one hand nothing seemed to be allowed. You could not take pictures everywhere, men and women were very separated, clothing was a lot less liberal and you feel a constant presence of police and military. On the other hand

people were very open, hospitable and family-oriented. Walking the streets as a European, you really stand out, but everyone seemed to be genuinely interested in foreigners and willing to help (and sometimes even invite you to all sorts of cool activities).

Next to the weekly routine, there were also the weekends. During the weekend all the trainees went on some excursions. This was really amazing. Iran is a beautiful country with lots of rough nature and a very rich history. We spent a night in the desert, watched the stars and woke up very early to see the sun set over an dehydrated salt lake. We climbed Tochal

mountain to have a view over Tehran and some of us visited Persepolis, the city that Alexandre the Great once decided to burn down. Doing these things with a group of people really lead to memories of a lifetime. I am not sure the lady on the plane was wrong, but if you want to do an internship that you will never forget, pick Iran. It is definitely worth the risk!





When I was thinking about going on an IAESTE internship I wanted to go somewhere unexpected. I mostly wanted to go somewhere where I thought the internship itself would be interesting and fun. That's how I found the internship in Bratislava, Slovakia.

I feel I wasn't prepared, two days before I was leaving, I had barely thought about what to pack. I didn't have many expectations, didn't know what to expect. 'How many other interns are going to be there? What are we going to do? What am I exactly going to do in my internship?' So many questions.

When I arrived three lovely people from the local IAESTE committee were waiting for me, the weather was nice, I got a free bus ticket from a random stranger and then they took me for free burgers. A good start and a token for the rest of my stay.

My internship itself took place at the Institute of Physics at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. I enjoyed this experience a

lot! For six weeks I was part of a group that did research in nuclear physics. My task was to first calibrate the detectors and then analyse the background radiation measured at the laboratory. The people at the institute were really nice and I had the opportunity to learn many new things from them. For my own education in physics it was an added value to experience what a research environment is like because most of what we learn during classes is theory. In addition it also helped me decide what I wanted to do after finishing university.

All the interns in Bratislava were staying in dorms, which were located in this huge space with tall buildings, small supermarkets and places to get food and where also in the summer there are a lot of people around. It was also very close to my workplace and a 10 minute bus ride away from the city centre. Bratislava is quiet a small city for a capital, because of this I quickly felt like I knew my way around pretty well. It was easy to go



around by bus and by foot and explore the city. There is not a huge amount of tourism in Bratislava, which I found very nice.

Next to exploring my home for the summer on weekends, I also did some other things. I visited Vienna for a weekend as it is very close to Bratislava, only an hour by bus away. Vienna is absolutely beautiful and I did so many things in one weekend (thanks to the subway!) but there in the centre it was crawling with people.

My last weekend we went hiking in the High Tatras, the pride and joy of all Slovaks (really, everything in that

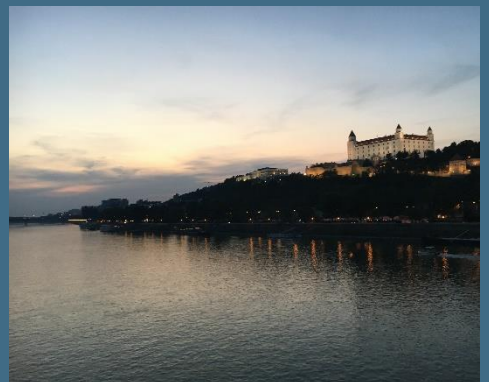
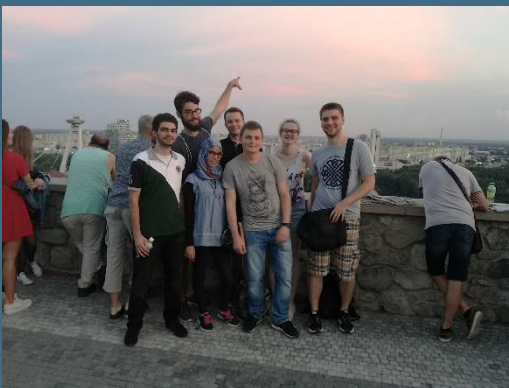
country is named after the mountain range). The first day the weather was horrible and because hiking would be too dangerous we visited a cave.

The second day the weather was much nicer and I finally got to see what people had been raving about for weeks (they were right).

One of the things I like the most about IAESTE that on your internship you don't only get to know the country where you're staying but also all the others countries of the other trainees. You get to know all these people, make new friends from different cultures which gives you a whole new perception on life. I can also honestly say that some of the

people I met are friends for life that I'll be visiting in the future.

I did a lot of things in my six weeks in Slovakia. I went to visit really every tourist attraction in Bratislava, I went to Vienna, I went hiking in the High Tatras, got to know the Slovak cuisine, learned many things... It was an amazing experience and I can only recommend everyone to go on an IAESTE internship as well.





Excitement and doubt. These were my two feelings when leaving for a 3 month internship in China. Two years ago I went to this country as a tourist and it enchanted me so much that an internship seemed the perfect opportunity to discover more about the unique culture they have. But three months is a long time and I was worried to leave my family and friends.

Luckily my worries went away upon my arrival in Shanghai. I was picked up by a Chinese IAESTE volunteer at the airport. She guided me to a hotel where I stayed for one night before going to the city of my internship, Yantai. I never heard about it and according to Chinese standards it is quite small, although it has 7 million inhabitants. After I arrived in Yantai, I was welcomed by my internship mentor. He is an employee of the company and will guide me at work. Together with his wife and son, he lives in Yantai. I arrived in my room and during unpacking, I heard some noise out of the other rooms. I saw an open door and went inside out of

curiosity. Other interns were sitting together and having fun. They invited me to join so I got to know them. They came from all over the world: Ireland, Hungary, Brazil, Mexico, Poland, UK,... I immediately felt home in this international atmosphere!

From Monday to Friday I worked at Wanhua, a big chemical company. I was part of the Analysis and Characterization Department and got to know different instruments to analyze the samples from the factory or from the research and development team. Every two weeks I changed lab so I could join every group for a short time and learn more about every instrument. I made standard curves for the gas chromatography (GC) instrument, learned about the maintenance of the liquid chromatography (LC) instrument, did a moisture test to determine the amount of water, processed nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) data,... It is so different to see all these instruments in real life instead of in a textbook.

During the weekends, I had time to explore the country.



One of the most memorable ones was the trip to Qingdao. It is a famous seaside town for Chinese tourists. It was very easy to reach and it took only two hours by high speed train (300 km/h!). As the city was a German colony there is a mix of Chinese-German culture and architecture. Back in time, the homesick Germans founded a brewery and since then the most famous beer of the country, Tsingtao, is made over there. Every year they organize their own Oktoberfest, but during summer. These are finished before midnight since the Chinese can't stand alcohol well. As a bunch of Western people, we were welcomed like celebrities and everyone offered us free beer and food.

I am absolutely astonished by the hospitality and kindness of the Chinese people. They let me discover their habits and traditions. Chinese people prefer drinking hot water over cold water, the ground floor is the groom's family. I had the number 1, not finishing all of you food shows you ate enough and they loooove spicy food like Sichuan hotpot! Talking about the Chinese food: it is sooo delicious (or hàochī)! One of my colleagues invited me twice at her home to cook and I learned to make Chinese dumplings. I also got to know a lot of the Chinese traditions by attending the wedding of a colleague. After a relationship of 7 years, she married her boyfriend. Not as in Belgium, the Chinese

wedding takes about one week! First the couple goes to the city of the bride to say goodbye to her family, then there is a big celebration and at the end they go to the groom's family. I had the chance to attend the big ceremony where the groom has to ask the hand of the bride to her father. It was a day full of fun, traditions and joy!

I can keep on writing but I think you get the point. This internship was an amazing experience and I am really thankful I had this opportunity. Don't wait, just apply to start your own international adventure!





Hey, Mzungu! Let me tell you about my crazy experience in Juja, a village just outside of Nairobi in Kenya. Honestly, I don't know where to start as this internship turned out to be such a crazy experience. But let me try:

On the 29th of July 2018, my African adventure began. D-day! I took a plane to Nairobi and 16 hours later I arrived at the Jomo Kenyatta Airport. At first, I was a little bit scared as I was not sure someone was going to pick me up and I had no idea where I would spend the night. I was really relieved when I figured that a guy was waiting for me. The driver explained me that I was going to do an internship at a university just outside of Nairobi in a city called: Juja. I would share a little house with other interns.

The following four days I tried to contact my supervisor. As I finally met him, he told me that I would be involved in a fish-farming project and a project to build a toilet for a primary school. As a Civil engineer, this was quite an experience as I didn't know anything about agriculture nor building toilets.

Nevertheless, it was a great challenge to assist a PhD. Student with his final project on RAS, which stands for Recirculated Aquaculture System. We collected data out of samples of the fish farm to analyse several parameters. This, to optimize the environment of the fish. Water that is gathered out of the fish tanks go through a biofilter which main purpose is to reduce the ammonia concentration as this is quite toxic for the fish. The second project was a construction of a toilet facility in a primary school. This mainly concluded supervising the works. It was a real challenge because the building method (and laziness) in Kenya, is way different than in Belgium.

During the weekends, I would organize trips together with my fellow intern-colleagues to explore Kenya. As my internship was from August to September, I was lucky because in this period a very big phenomenon takes place. It is called the Wildebeest Migration. Big groups of animals travel from the Serengeti in Tanzania to the Masai Mara in Kenya which is spectacular to see. In the



Masai Mara region, I also visited a Masai village. A very nice opportunity to learn more about their culture and behaviours. I have also been to the Amboseli National Park which is amazing as you experience a safari with the majestic Kilimanjaro in the background. Further, I have done a lot of hikes in the several National Parks that Kenya has to offer. A trip to the impressive city, Mombasa, and the beautiful coast of Diani Beach was a nice ending for my stay here. Kenya is by far one of the most beautiful places I have ever been to.

The people are so friendly. Often, I got invited to have

dinner at some of the local's houses. As a foreigner though, you get a lot of attention. I spent a lot of time at the primary school and every time I came, around 50 little kids would gather around me and touch my skin or hair or just stare at me! African people tend to image white people or Mzungus (which is Swahili for 'wanderer') as someone who has a lot of money. Nairobi is also known as 'Nai-robbery', which shows a bit the sadness of the poverty. Also going outside when it is dark, is not advisable. This was a big struggle, as the sun already sets at 6 pm! Luckily, we could always rely on our fellow interns to play cards or chit-chat.

As an intern, you basically try to live as a local. This means eating local food! In the beginning it is a task to figure out what your stomach can handle. Almost all the interns I met, had troubles with their stomachs at some point during their internship. But after a few toilet visits, you know what is good or not. 'Ughali' is a very famous African dish. It is kind of tasteless and it is just a big pile of wheat that you eat with something else such as beef, beans or whatever. My breakfast each morning were Mandazis. These are oily bread thingies. These are usually eaten with tea. There is such a big variety in food. And a lot of Kenyans will

invite you at their own places to show it!

My internship in Kenya was a very life-changing experience. I was scared in the beginning to go to the unknown, but it was the best decision I made so far in my little engineering career.





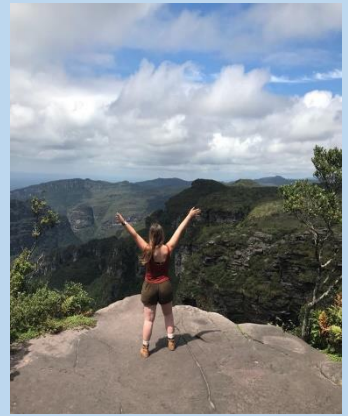
My experience in Brazil was like a roller coaster, to say the least.

Since I had already been on holiday in Brazil with my family, and already participated in an Erasmus exchange once before, I considered myself prepared to go to Brazil for two months. However, it turned out I was as unprepared as I could be. I have learned that going to Brazil as a tourist or actually living there for two months are two entirely different things!

The biggest difference was that the people living in Botucatu, a small town of about four hours away from the metropole Sao Paulo, do not speak any other language than Portuguese -except for some young people-, in contrast to major cities such as Rio de Janeiro where people are sort of more "prepared" for tourists, not realizing that the difference could be so big. Not knowing a single word of Portuguese, it was hard for me to not being able to communicate with everyone around me, since I like being sociable. Luckily, you meet other

internationals quite easily, or you even live with one or more. Plus if you try your best, the learning becomes more and more easy. After my two months, I can say for myself that I do speak some very basic Portuguese. So, the language barrier was my personal biggest shock. Living in modern times where almost anyone speaks basic English or a second language, makes it easy to forget that that is not standard for the whole world.

Workwise, let's say it did not meet our Belgian standards of working 9 to 5 or even longer. A usual day in the lab for me involved around three hours of very easy-going work, but I have to add that this was very variable between different people. I did know people that had to work (much) more than me, but overall I would say the work rate is a lot lower in Brazil. The people in my lab were typical Brazilian: very eager to talk to you, very interested about your life, super friendly even if you don't speak the same language (thank god for Google Translate!). In general, their kindness is unlimited; they can treat you



like family from the very first moment you meet. I have had help with all financial stuff and any other problems I had encountered during my internship. Asking a day off for travelling was never a problem, they urge you to go out and see the beautiful country that is theirs!

So let's end of with the best part of it all: the travelling. I've been to Brazil before, but this was nothing like it. Actually having time to think about where you could travel and, more importantly, being able to ask locals what the good places are to discover, makes that much of a difference. I have been to places where I had never

heard of before, sometimes far from the modernized cities. Anyone considering which I never knew existed friends/locals, which makes choosing Brazil for an (ever heard of guarana, acai the experience so much more unique. Plus a special shout-out to all the Brazilian IAESTE staff and volunteers, who have organized many trips, who hosted many volunteers needing a place to sleep in any city in Brazil, and who have been incredibly inviting and kind to all us gringos (Brazilian term for foreigners).

Since Botucatu was quite in the middle of nowhere, we were also surrounded by such beautiful nature. There was a giant waterfall lurking around every corner, or a forest to hike in. Easy, one day trips which made it worth being so

the tons of delicious foods which I never knew existed or pacoca?), but I believe you should go out and explore yourself!
From all the cities in the Sao Paulo district (Botucatu, Araraquara, Sorocaba, Campinas etc.), it was common to take an overnight bus to your destination so you would arrive in the morning on your destination. These buses are very modern though, with comfortable seats which could be turned into beds sometimes, with WIFI, etc. Flying was the more expensive alternative, with trains simply not existing.

I could go on and on about the amazingly different culture in Brazil, their habits,





Hello, my name is Laura Then...

Landuyt and I'm a Master student from Ghent University. I study 'Master of Science in Engineering: Architecture' with as main subject: 'Architectural Design and Construction Techniques'. I've done an IAESTE internship at Queen's University Belfast where I joined a research group called 're-wind' and I want to walk you through my experiences, especially that very first frightening day!

The meeting in front of the gate of the Lanyon Building. I had absolutely no clue whatsoever of who I was going to meet! Was Matthew a PhD Student? An older assistant? Who was I going to meet? I stand there, looking around. It was really crowded because it was graduation day, so hundreds of students in graduation capes and heads and their families. And then I got a text from Matthew



My first day on the job: I'm excited, frightened and exhausted. My boyfriend and I went on an exploring weekend in Belfast to get me settled for the coming 6 weeks, but this story was coming to an end. We got up, ate breakfast at the hotel, went to the busstop where I said my goodbyes to him. That moment it started to realize what I had done. I regretted the decision I made to go on an internship abroad. This wasn't the greatest start of my independent adventure here. No worries, after a phone call from my uncle I could hold it together.

"Hi Laura, it's Matthew. I'm just at the front gate of the queens. Where are you?"

"To the left of the gate inside the campus when you face the street left"

"Near the statue? Loads of people about here today. I'm wearing a black and yellow check shirt"

"White t-shirt me"

And then he found me and we went for a coffee to chat about the project and to get to know each other. Weird and nice at the same time. The English isn't going that fluent.

After the first chat, the big tour around campus. The main

building, the library, the botanic garden, the studio's for undergraduates, the concrete lab, the strength test labs, the offices, the exhibition of the master students...

In the afternoon we got to meet the professor Ruth Morrow. She explained the RE-wind project in more detail and assigned me to specific tasks: what are composites in general? What is the whole range of composites? Is it used in architecture nowadays? What properties to look at for specific applications? And so on and so on.

This was the beginning of the most amazing period of friendship, independence and self-learning. It has been a great adventure full of amazing people, crazy evenings and awesome IAESTE weekends! I joined three IAESTE weekends during my 6 weeks of internship: Belfast Castle/ Cave hill, Mourne Mountains and Belfast Weekend. My absolute favourite would be the first weekend, Belfast Castle/ Cave Hill, I was so enchanted by the mountainous landscape and the group was so easy to be in. But my absolute favourite IAESTE evening would be my goodbye evening, we went for dinner in a famous place there Maggie Mays and just

chatted for hours and hours, it made me even regret leaving and the circle was round: when you are in the bus to the airport and look outside and know you're going to miss this place, the time abroad has succeeded.

I think most of the students that go abroad for a certain amount of time will face a similar experience like mine, one full of doubt and anxiety at first and then the most amazing time abroad. The LC determines off course a lot how the experience will be, and there for I want to give a thought to the president of NI, Orlaith, she attended every event and really make us feel part of a little family. We called her our mother duck

and we were her ducklings. I hope that sharing this experience helps some doubters to stop the worrying and just GO FOR IT!





I always wanted to go to Japan for a study-related experience, and because my university didn't have that option for me I am so glad that I had this opportunity. I went to Japan for an amazing 9 weeks and had the most amazing summer of my life working at Sanyo Chemical Industries Ltd. in Kyoto.

I arrived in the 38°C sweltering hot and humid Kyoto – I just happened to arrive in a period of an unusual heatwave. There were no members of IAESTE waiting for me at my arrival because most members are in Tokyo, but that was not a problem because Kyoto has many overseas tourists and it was easy for me to find my way (except for the fact that one of my wheels of my luggage kept breaking off every 5 minutes). I am lucky that I had a decent self-taught knowledge of the language because many Japanese (especially elderly) are not good at English. Whenever you ask a Japanese stranger they immediately notice that you're a foreigner and they say "I don't know sorry" even before you asked your question. But when you speak

Japanese to them they are very happy to help.

There was a minor earthquake (which I unfortunately did not feel because I was playing in the company sport club) and some unusually strong typhoons which always enjoyed passing over Kyoto and allowed me to leave work a bit earlier but damaged the airport severely. But nothing to worry about – most modern buildings in Japan are built to withstand this and I experienced no problems.

Together with the employees I visited many places in Kyoto and beyond, and discovered that Japan has such a large variety of different foods with only a limited amount of ingredients. I will definitely cook more Japanese when I am back in Belgium. Even though it's a basic dish, miso soup with seaweed is definitely my favourite. My weekends were full of those trips, during the week after work I usually had a few hours of company club activities such as the tennis and football clubs (how many times was I asked "how come Belgium is such a small

country and why the football players are so good?", and how many times I got into the conversation that Japan lost in the world cup – I really chose the perfect time to come to Japan, right?).

Japanese have a habit of drinking a lot of alcohol because they are always consumed with their work so to release the stress they like to drink a lot of beer and sake. Especially beer – they already knew very well that Belgium has many different beers whereas Japan only has a few kinds of beer: Asahi, Kirin, Sapporo and Suntory. Don't worry if you don't like to drink a lot of alcohol, you should ask for "Karupisu", a sweet soft drink made with lactic acid bacteria (a little bit like yoghurt). Another way for them to relax is to go to hot springs (Ofuro) or public baths (Sentou) – you are only allowed to take a towel with you but you don't wrap it around your waist so at first it is embarrassing but afterwards you don't care about it anymore and relax.

I learned a lot about the Japanese way of life; very hardworking and disciplinary. I got to know

more about the wide range of products that the company produces and how staff is moved around to different departments every so many years to encourage innovation and to give the staff the chance to experience different research.

At the company every day after lunch I would teach my colleagues English pronunciation which proved to be a very funny experience. We also learned to sing some songs together such as Frozen's "Let it go" and "Do you want to build a snowman?" – They all knew the melodies, and their English accent and fluency really improved! Other colleagues who walked past

the meeting room must have been wondering what we were doing, I don't think you see this every day in a chemical company.

I am very glad with this experience and I hope you can also experience the same as I did and I would like to thank IAESTE and Sanyo Chemical Industries for making this amazing opportunity possible. I will definitely try to do another exchange program in Japan, either via IAESTE or through an Erasmus or PhD programme.





After a lot of waiting on the official acceptance documents (I got my acceptance papers one week before leaving), I hopped with shaky legs and a bag full of motivation on the airplane to Brazil. When I arrived there, I understood why it took so long. Brazilians are very relaxed and don't mind to be a little too late ;) So don't worry, if you're reading this and waiting on your documents. I feel you. But I promise you, the waiting is definitely rewarded. Brazil is such a warm, colorful and exciting country.

I slept with two Brazilian girls who made my experience just that little more extraordinary. They gave insight in the Brazilian way of living and cared for me like I was their best friend since ages (<3!). One of my two roommates picked me up from the airport with a major sign to welcome me. She was like a Brazilian version of me and we freaked out about how much of a resemblance we had. The first weekend I stayed with her family in São Paulo and they treated me for the rest of the two months as if I was family of their own. The arriving day I already got an invitation to

a wedding who took place in the beautiful setting of the waterfalls of Iguacu. Beside the love, I got also a looot of food. The Brazilian food is amazing like avocado's the size of your head, brigadeiro <3, coxinha, the best meat ever, pão de queijo, queijo, mango, papaya, goyaba Brazilian BBQ... (I can literally fill this whole report with tasteful food). Shout-out to my roommate's mom who stiffed me full with every possible Brazilian dish when I visited her.

My internship took place in UNESP Sorocaba, a campus that exist out only one building that was one street away from my condomínio. A condomínio is a place with houses or apartments that share a garden, fences, guards and in my case even a swimming pool and gym. My professor invited me several times to eat dinner and offered help in any way. Brazil is not known to be the safest place on earth, but if you take precautions (especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) and listen to locals nothing bad can really happen.



They were 400 students in the campus among which three gringos (a Brazilian word for foreigners). The other two gringos were a funny Belgian guy and a Polish wacko, they were few of the amazing travel buddies I met during my stay. Every weekend I made trips to several places like Rio de Janeiro, Ilhabela, Florianópolis, São Paulo, Ilha do Cardoso, Foz de Iguacu,... I saw the powerful ocean, the marvelous jungle, the mysterious rainforest and the nostalgic beaches and their beauty surprised me every time. During those trips I met a lot of interesting people from everywhere around the world. I've had many conversations about

cultural differences, discussing all sorts of habits with American, Polish, German, Austrian,... people and I hope one day I will reconnect with them. The people from IAESTE Brazil itself showed my around in Rio and were great hosts when I needed a place to stay for one day in São Paulo before getting my plane in the morning. There was no one from IAESTE in my own city but if you think about it, that's very logical because Brazil is huge (the 5th largest country in the world!).

When I wasn't travelling, I worked with plasma in the lab and in my free time I hung around with the other interns or with my Brazilian friends in

Sorocaba. I went to several republica –a place where students live together in a big house- parties where everyone wants to meet you and tries to talk English with you. I say trying because a lot of Brazilian people struggle with English but they all make you feel very welcome. Even after the world cup ;) Another benefit is that at the end of my stay I could express myself a little bit in Portuguese without having any classes in advance.

I'm so grateful for this experience and if I had the opportunity I would do it all again. I will definitely go back to Brazil to visit my friends and to explore more of its vibrant culture. I never

thought I would have such a joyful experience and meanwhile meet people who really touched my heart. You maybe have to overcome some challenges but it's all worth it at the end.





Kalimera/Kalispera (Good morning/good evening)

Full of excitement, and at the same time a little bit frightened, I boarded the plane towards Greece. This was my first experience travelling alone to a country with an unknown language for me. (and is still unknown for me... Greek is so difficult!)

My first days in Athens, I was really shocked because streets are very dirty, you see homeless people on every corner, there is graffiti everywhere... But I figured out this was because of the economic crisis. Later I discovered the touristic parts, which are very beautiful, cosy, clean and very nice to hang around.

I shared an apartment with young people, most of them were already working or were volunteering. There was also one Indian girl, Beulla, who also did an internship at the agricultural university. She was my guide during the first week.

The first lesson I learned about Greece was: "Relax!". The Greek people are never in a hurry. So, it took a lot of time

before all the paperwork at the university was done: people were not at the office, papers were not made already and so on... Also in the microbiological lab, where I did my internship, everything was relaxed, it doesn't matter if you arrive an hour later, when we were waiting for the sterilisation, we just could grab a coffee. We never had to hurry. In the lab, I had to assist a thesis student who was working on probiotics. The topic was very interesting, but sometimes there was not so many work to do so I get bored. The people in the lab were very friendly and social and it was nice to get to know the Greek culture in this way.

My working days at the university were quite short, so I had time to explore Athens. The beautiful old Greek buildings with the typical columns and marble statues, the ruins, the little orthodox churches on almost every corner, the local markets with herbs, fish, meet, souvenirs, the cosy terraces in the streets... Athens has so much to offer. Except maybe the food. The Greek kitchen hasn't convinced me really.



They eat a lot of grilled meat, but actually it floats in oil and fat, the fries are not crispy (they definitely can learn something more about the Belgian fries!), the vegetables are not very various... But the seafood was delicious!

It was a little bit a pity that there was only one responsible person of IAESTE Athens, Donald. He was amazing and very funny, but never arranged an activity for the trainees. Also, there were only five trainees. It would be nicer if there were more people to hang around with, to learn more different cultures... But with the trainees we did a lot of trips during the week and of course

in the weekends. We visited of course the beaches, some islands, cities, went to a fun park... And I also went to Meteora in the middle of Greece. I saw amazing things during the six weeks and I realised how boring Belgium is; no mountains, no nice beaches, no blue water, no amazing old culture.

But of course, Belgium is also charming and it's obvious that I missed home: my friends, family, boyfriend, my mother's dishes... I was also glad when I was home again. You can't underestimate that it's also hard to be alone for six weeks. But it was good for me to go out of my comfort zone, to be responsible, to

improve my English, to learn new cultures...

This was without a doubt the greatest experience in my life! I have some amazing friends from countries around the world, I have some new scientific experience, I discovered amazing places in Greece, I learned more about the Greek culture and history...

If someone asks me if I would do it again, I definitely say "YES"!



MACEDONIA



Last summer I did an internship in Skopje, Macedonia. Everyone was asking why I chose Macedonia and if there was even something to do or see. During my internship, I discovered one of the most underrated countries in the world!

My adventure started with a three hour flight and a short bus trip. At the bus stop, one of the local summer receptionists was waiting for me. He accompanied me to my apartment which I shared with three other interns and a Macedonian guy. I shared my room with two Spanish girls. We all arrived during the same weekend, so we could discover everything together. We had to obtain a Macedonian phone number, a bank account and some more stuff. We immediately felt like locals. The first evening, the people from IAESTE Skopje took us to a bar to have a few drinks with the other interns. At that moment, there were around 15 interns in Skopje. During my stay, more interns arrived until we were a group of more than 20 interns. We were from all over the world;

Spain, Poland, Dubai, Switzerland, Honk Kong, Japan, Germany, Czech Republic, Brazil, Thailand and many more. This made the international evening really interesting. We ate some food and tried some drinks from all over the world. Team Belgium, as the other two Belgian interns and I called ourselves, baked some waffles.

There were a lot of activities during the weekends and even during the week. My first weekend, we visited Matka. It's a beautiful lake with a cave. A lot of Macedonian people go there when the city gets too hot. You can kayak to the cave or go there with a small tourist boat. Around the lake, you can go for a hike in the beautiful nature. On Monday, it was time to start working. I worked at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The first day, they introduced me to everybody. I could talk with a lot of professors and students who worked on different projects. Finally, I chose to work on a project about a drone. Together with another

student, I developed a parachute recovery system to protect the drone in case of a failure. I was sitting in a room together with other students who worked on other projects. It was really interesting to get to know them and talk about all the differences between our countries.

When you think about an internship abroad, you think about travelling. So did my flatmates and I, so we went to Sofia for a weekend. Macedonia and Bulgaria are quite affordable countries compared to Belgium, so going there wasn't an expensive thing to do. We visited the Rila Monastery and took a free city walking tour through the city. The weekend was the perfect occasion to get to know each other even better. I was really lucky to live with such funny and nice girls. We laughed and shared a lot! During the other weekends, IAESTE organised a lot of different activities. We went camping in Mavrovo National Park. During our stay, Galichnik Wedding Weekend was taking place. This event shows a traditional Macedonian wedding from

that region. The groom or bride (or both) needs to have his/her roots in Galichnik. Every year, a lot of couples want to get married during the event, but only one is selected. During my last weekend in Macedonia, we went to Ohrid. Actually, we stayed there for 4 days. This was possible because of the national holiday on Thursday, the 2nd of August. The old city of Ohrid is cosy and beautiful. Because of the national holiday, there were a lot of activities, for example a small festival. We went there so we saw another aspect of the Macedonian culture. At the university, they gave me the chance to see as much as possible of the country. They gave me some days off, for example for the Ohrid weekend and to visit the country with some small Smolare Waterfalls and the Swan Lake. To get there, we had to take the bus for 4 hours and afterwards we had a taxi ride of 30 minutes. It's a long trip for one day, but the nature and villages we were driving through were so beautiful that time flew by. While driving by the villages, we could see the big differences between Macedonia and our home countries. Macedonia is making a lot of progress, but it still has some 'lag' on Europe. We saw a lot of farmers with old tractors or even with horses. The villages had only one main road out of asphalt and some gravel roads.

Macedonia is a really nice country with some small cultural differences if you compare it to Belgium. Still, I found it a perfect location for my internship and I will definitely go back there to visit my friends. We already arranged a reunion which will take place in 5 years. I'm looking forward to it, but I'm sure it won't last that long to see some people again. Since the end of my internship, I already met the Belgian interns again and a Polish girl during my holiday in Krakow. I definitely made friends for the rest of my life during my internship.



GERMANY



I have done an 8-week internship in Bonn, Germany. Bonn is a relatively small city neighboring Cologne and is located by the Rhein river. Bonn used to be the capital of the BRD and was the birthplace of Ludwig Van Beethoven.

I interned at a research institute called the "Fraunhofer Institute for High Frequency Physics and Radar Techniques". There I got to experiment with a small and relatively cheap radar with the task of figuring out what its pros and cons are. In the end I programmed a GUI that interacts with the radar and I wrote a few reports about the usefulness of the radar. The local committee of Bonn did their best to make my stay in Bonn as comfortable and as convenient as possible. Almost everything was arranged by them: a place to stay, public transport and even insurance!

I also participated in 2 IAESTE weekends. One in Hamburg and the other one in Bonn. It is very easy to get around Germany with the Deutsche Bahn railway, although it can be quite expensive. However,

if you are under 26 years old, you can get an extremely convenient summer ticket (Sommer-Ticket) that can cut the costs of travelling by more than half.

I was greeted by the IAESTE committee of Hamburg when arriving at Hamburg with my summer ticket. We were 30 interns in total and I got to meet people from all over the world: Poland, Egypt, Russia, UAE, Palestine, Turkey and Belgium just to name a few. We went around the city during the day and at night we walked in the famous Reeperbahn of Hamburg before going to a club where we partied until 5 in the morning. As per Hamburg tradition, we didn't go to sleep immediately. Instead we went to the fish market to get the best fish burger I ate in my life. After sleeping for less than 3 hours we checked out of the hostel and made our way to "Miniatur Wunderland", the largest model railway attraction in the world. Afterwards we ate pizza before saying our goodbyes.

Although the Bonn weekend was less intensive, it was



equally fun. We stayed at an indoor camping for 1 night. There we played camping games, had a barbeque and some drinks. After the barbeque we hiked up the Drachenfels mountain located on the other side of the Rhein. There we watched the sun set before heading back to the camp. Late at night we went to the park to observe the shooting stars. That was the first time in my life I was a shooting star. The next day we visited the city center while stopping here and there to participate in embarrassing challenges, like eating a bagel with 3 other people without the use of our hands.

My IAESTE internship was an unforgettable experience. I learnt how to work systematically and how to design experiments based on which information you want to analyze. The most important thing that I learned in the internship is that if you

are doing an experiment, you must try to get as much data as possible and when you are analyzing that data, you must focus on 1 aspect of the thing you are experimenting on. Another important thing is that you should sometimes stop your work and write a report on the progress you have made. This is a good way to get everything sorted out, and to see what you might have missed.

The full-time workers at the Fraunhofer institute where very interesting and pleasant. The other interns where also very fun to hang around with. The relationship with other people at the research institute was mostly informal. I even joined some employees

and interns at the Bierbörse of Bonn (beer fair).

The IAESTE committee of Bonn was very helpful during my stay in Bonn. They give their time to IAESTE voluntarily and this internship wouldn't have been possible without them. It is because of the help I have gotten from IAESTE that I am considering joining IAESTE to help provide interesting and fulfilling internships to students coming to Belgium.





"Are you sure you want to go to Israel?" A question I heard so many times. But I'm glad no one talked me out of doing this internship, because Israel is breathtakingly beautiful, and this is still an understatement. I left Belgium with no expectations and it turned out so much better than I could ever hope for.

My internship about Deep Learning in the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology (in Haifa) - was starting on the first of August and I arrived a few days earlier so I could already explore the area. After my arrival, I started meeting some other trainees, and we went to the beach right away. At that moment, I didn't know how many memories I would make there. It was the start of a new adventure.

The geography of Israel is very diverse. There are many beautiful beaches, mountains, a spectacular desert scenery and of course historical and religious places like Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem. On every weekend trip, we visited a different place in Israel, which

made visiting this country incredibly interesting.

We did many extraordinary things, that I probably wouldn't be able to do in many other places, being my favourite sleeping in the desert while stargazing and watching a meteor shower. Another one was an incredible view in Eilat's bay. We stood on Israel solid land and right in front of us, we saw from left to right Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It was a special view and of course we floated in the dead sea, visited Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, slept on the beach,...

The trips were not organized, IAESTE's local committee proposed the trips and we had to arrange transportation (which involved taking buses or trains or rent a car) and book our accommodation. This gave us a lot of freedom regarding what we wanted to visit and where to go there. Sometimes we had troubles while traveling since everything was written in Hebrew or Arabic, so it was hard sometimes navigating ourselves. Luckily, everyone is very helpful and their English language mastery is very good. If you needed help,



they immediately stop what they were doing just to help you.

There was no moment where I felt bored or alone. After work, we gathered together to go to the beach, the gym, the swimming pool,... . We ate together (mostly falafel or hummus of course) and after that, we grabbed a beer in downtown Haifa, or just at home. We learned so much about each other's cultures. We were like a big happy family.

I, and two of my intern co-workers, worked in the SIPL lab(Signal and Image Processing Lab). I learned a lot about Deep Learning

thanks to my supervisor, who was always there when we needed help or had questions about our project, the campus or about Israel. They wanted us to have a good time and that we learned a lot. The first day they even showed us around the university. We did a beginning and final presentation so we got to know the professors and other trainees and at the end to show our work and results. It was very interesting to see what the others were doing and what their results were. In the beginning I didn't know a lot about my research subject but my supervisors were always prepared to give explanations and to help. So I started with a lot of tutorials on deep learning and after a

while I started experimenting with an EDSR architecture.

And suddenly it was already my last evening in Israel. Time flew so fast. We ate Shakshuka and hummus all together for one last time. Saying goodbye to my friends, the beautiful weather, the sea, the landscapes, and so many other things, was the worst thing of the internship. At that moment I regretted why I booked my flight so early. I could easily stay there for a few more weeks. It was way too short, however I feel so lucky that I could experience this.

Those 7 weeks in Israel were extraordinary. It was such an exclusive experience. I did so

many "once in a lifetime" experiences, it was truly amazing! I would recommend going on an internship abroad to everyone. It's so much more than only the internship, It's about the experience. I will remember this for my whole life. You're still doubting? Just do it!



NIGERIA



"White people get kidnapped", "Boko Haram is offering you to sit down and there", "It's a dangerous place", ... These were the reactions of people close to me before my departure to Nigeria. Every time I told them they would not change my mind, I would be going anyway. Turns out it was one of the best decisions I made in my life.

When I arrived in Benin City, Otabor and Richard were there to pick me up and take me to the guest house on the campus of Uniben, the university of Benin City. I was first of all shocked by the way Nigerians drive, there are no rules whatsoever. People don't pay attention to traffic lights, overtake other cars on the right, everyone is honking and some cars will even just start driving in the wrong direction. This was the first culture shock for me and many were to follow.

The people in Nigeria are very friendly, everywhere you walk they start shouting 'oyibo' which means 'white person' and they are very enthusiastic to talk to you. Some people even treated us as celebrities, asking for

selfies. People are always go out of their way to make you feel comfortable. The moment you speak a sentence in Pidgin English (an English dialect), they are really surprised and are pleased you want to experience Nigerian culture.

I did my internship in the mushroom and plant pathology department under supervision of dr. Akpaja. I helped a bachelor student with her thesis and together we did experiments on insects pests on mushrooms and how to prevent them. I also wrote my own research proposal on using certain plant extracts as insect repellents. I was lucky my assignments didn't require electricity as most of the time there was no power in the lab. My fellow IAESTE-colleagues in Uniben often had nothing to do because of this so together we decided to let the others know when there was work so everyone could join in on the fun.

I had my own desk in Akpaja's office and random people would come in and start talking to me. I had a lot of discussions with them



about religion, politics, the history of Nigeria, biggest threats they face now, corruption, education, waste management, evolution, social security, gun control,... just about anything really. What struck me most is how all these people, even though they know a lot is not going well in their country, are still positive about the future and have a certain drive in them to keep going forward.

In the weekends, Otabor brought all the IAESTE-students together to experience the culture and nature of Nigeria. We went to a real Nigerian wedding, we went to bars and clubs, we tasted a lot of different (spicy!)

foods, we wore traditional how to speak Pidgin, danced clothing and we did a lot of shaku-shaku, climbed in a trips to other states. As a really high tree hut, had no biologist, the trips were my wahalas, went to church, favourite moments in Nigeria. drove on a motorbike, swam Even when it took us 10 hours in a river, pounded yam, slept to get somewhere, the in the airport, got scammed, overwhelming beauty of went to the market, carried a Nigerian nature made it all baby on my back, had the worth it. The river in Abraka, time of my life....

the tropical forest in Osogbo and Okomu national park, the mountains and hills in Akure, Obudu and Abuja, the ocean and mangroves in Lagos, I enjoyed every moment of it!

I like Nigeria in particula !

Spending 2 months in Nigeria has been an interesting, eye-opening, wonderful experience. I met a lot of fantastic people from a lot of different countries, learned



ROMANIA



'Dad I am going to Romania!' I said.

'WHAT??' My father yelled.

My dad wasn't pleased. He thought I didn't get my first choice and got the last internship that was left. Unfortunately for him that wasn't true. Romania was my first choice. But why Romania? Who would go to Romania voluntarily? How crazy can you be? Well, to tell you the truth, very crazy. A normal (boring) person would have cancelled this internship before they could even book their flight, but I didn't. And you bet your ass I don't regret going. This was the most amazing summer I ever had.

As you can already guess, my internship didn't start without any incidents. I'll spare you the details cause it's a very long story that went on for 2 but long story short: I had a lot of trouble contacting both my employer and IAESTE Romania. If it wasn't for the help of IAESTE Ghent I would've cancelled my internship 2 weeks before my arrival in Bucharest. Afterwards I heard from several Romanian students and a co-worker that IAESTE

Romania is kind of a mess in organising the internships and me not being able to contact IAESTE Romania was 'quite normal'.

When I arrived in Bucharest there was another small incident with my IAESTE buddy. He wasn't able to pick me up from the airport, so he sent his friend who partied all night and had a huge hangover. From the very beginning I got submerged in the real Romanian experience, I guess. When I arrived in the IAESTE dorm I regretted not cancelling my internship. **HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LIVE IN SUCH A SMALL PLACE?** The rooms were tiny, we had to share 2 tiny bedrooms and a tiny bathroom with 4 girls, while the boys' apartment was twice the size. One good thing: we didn't have cockroaches as a pet and we had a working kitchen and washing machine. Apparently this was a miracle for a university dorm.

But as much as I hated the dorm in the beginning, I was so sad when I had to leave after 2 months. This report is not long enough to tell you the



countless stories, but believe me, when you live with so many people in such a small place, you get to know each other very well ;)

Romania is everything you didn't expect it to be, with amazing people who are willing to help you 24/7. **EVERYONE** speaks English. Even the ones who tell you they don't. Summers are hot (*/- 40°C) even though this summer was exceptionally cold and wet (+/- 30°C and rainy. Fainting because of the heat is possible. Always stay hydrated and use sunscreen and don't forget about your feet or you'll have to walk barefoot in the office the whole week. Your co-workers

will make fun of you 'till the end of your internship.

The capital is good for partying and getting drunk on cheap booze but it's actually the least exciting place to visit. Don't stay in Bucharest, you can get wasted in Vama Veche too, a bottle of wine is 11lei. Go to Transylvania, the seaside, the north, ... go everywhere you can. You can take the bus or the train or you can rent a car and go wherever you want, whenever you want. If you have a good boss he can even give you some days off so you can discover the country.

Compared to Belgium, living expenses are cheap, yet you shouldn't underestimate traveling costs. For bus, metro

and train you have to pay the full bill, no student discounts. So even though it's worth traveling around Romania, it could become quite expensive to travel every weekend. Small detail: you have to organise trips yourself, but don't hesitate asking your co-workers or buddy for help.

If IAESTE Romania didn't pay you in time and you're on the verge of bankruptcy, don't worry. On every corner of every city you can buy covrigi (pretzels). Quick math: 1 covrig = 1leu (€0.22) = 1 meal. For just 3lei a day you can have breakfast, lunch and dinner. Covrigi save lives. Believe me.

I met a lot of amazing people and made a lot of great friends. I fell in love with Romania, it's a great country and I will definitely go back. I also promised my boss we'll grab some drinks in Vama Veche when I'll be back.

So if you're in for an adventure and a lot of fun but you're not sure whether it's worth going to Romania, stop thinking and just go.

Romania is amazing.





Hello! My name is Miguel. I realized that it was not that am originally from Zaragoza, Spain but I moved to Leuven that everybody welcomed me for my master's degree. Just very warmly. After some formalities with the administration department, I met my supervisor. She gave me total freedom on the topic for my report, which let me chose something that closely fitted my interests. Apart from this task, I also had to participate at the English Club: some students gather three times per week to practice English, led by a couple of fellow students. My job consisted on correcting pronunciation mistakes, since most of the students were beginners.

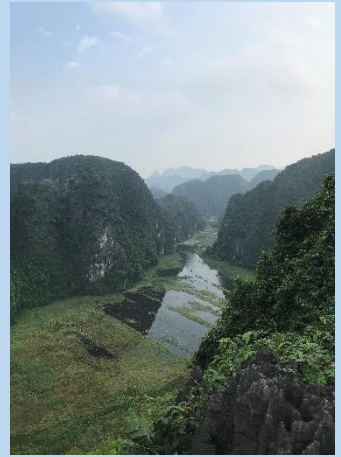
The description of my internship was a bit vague and I did not really know what to expect. I tried to gather some information through my contact at the Vietnamese University but I did not receive much more. Anyway, I made sure I sorted out all the necessary paperwork (visa, insurance, etc.), I got some vaccines and I was all set to go.

Once I arrived at the airport, everything went incredibly smoothly. One volunteer from the local committee of IAESTE was waiting for me there and took me to the university. We went directly to the dorm to leave my stuff there and I met my roommates, who had arrived some weeks before. When I entered the room, I was honestly shocked. The room was quite small and there were already four interns. It was definitely not the type of accommodation we are used to in Europe, but after the first impression I

realized that it was not that bad. It was specially helpful that everybody welcomed me very warmly.

After some formalities with the administration department, I met my supervisor. She gave me total freedom on the topic for my report, which let me chose something that closely fitted my interests. Apart from this task, I also had to participate at the English Club: some students gather three times per week to practice English, led by a couple of fellow students. My job consisted on correcting pronunciation mistakes, since most of the students were beginners.

From the personal point of view, the internship was incredibly enriching. Vietnamese people are truly kind and hospitable, especially in non-touristic areas such as Thai Nguyen. They try their best to make you feel home, which is crucial when you see yourself inside such a different culture. It is obvious that they have very little money in European standards, but they do not usually hesitate to offer you



whatever you need without asking for anything in return.

There is very little immigration or tourism in this area. Therefore, they are fascinated when they see different looking people, especially Westerners. From the moment you leave your room, there are constantly people looking at you, smiling at you, asking to start a small chat or to take a picture together. It feels like being a football star.

Another culture shock comes when you want to go somewhere outside the university: traffic. I had seen some scenes in movies and documentaries about Vietnamese traffic, but they

were nowhere close to actually living it. There is an insane amount of vehicles, especially motorbikes, flowing on the road with no apparent logic. Traffic lights, lanes or forbidden directions seem to be invisible.

For short or medium distances (up to 150 or 200 km), it is very convenient and cheap to rent a motorbike. The first time I took it I was quite scared: I had never ridden one and the chaotic traffic was not going to help. However, with a little practice I realised that I just needed to slow down, follow common sense more than signals and pay extra attention.

After spending two months there, I strongly recommend

choosing Vietnam as a destination for your internship. There are tons of things to still say about this country, but it is difficult to express them with words. Just some final advice: beware of mosquitoes and sunburns! All the rest is very worth experiencing, especially being friends with local people, eating their tasty food and discovering its wonderful landscapes.





My name is Niels. I went on an 8 week internship to Brazil between the 2 years of my master studies. I was very excited when I got accepted, as it would be a new adventure. I didn't really know what to expect, only that I would travel far away on my own. Something I really was looking forward to...

The journey of getting to Viçosa didn't start smoothly. I was ready to go to the airport, when I got a call from the airliner saying that my flight was cancelled. No problem of course, I flew the next day to Belo Horizonte. When I got there, a guy called Mateus was there to pick me up. He was very friendly and made me feel welcome in Brazil. He took me to the bus station, but because I had some delays in the airport, we missed the bus. Again, no problem of course. I stayed the night at his parents place, where I had a very warm welcome. We stayed up late, talking about our countries, showing pictures and just enjoying the time. The next morning, after a typical breakfast from Minas Gerais (cheese, cheese and cheese

with some extra cheese), I took the bus. 5 hours of driving to Viçosa in the countryside of Minas Gerais. It was stunning and before I knew it, the bus driver shouted Viçosa and it was time for me to get off.

In the bus station, Homerito picked me up and took me to our house. I stayed in a República, which is a house where students live very closely together. I lived there with 10 other guys. 10 Brazilian guys who were all happy to share their house with 'a gringo'. This being Brazil, some of them spoke only Portuguese and the ones that could speak English, were hesitant in the beginning to do so. They never had a lot of practice, so they were a bit insecure. After a while however, when we got to know each other and once they realised making mistakes in a foreign language isn't bad, they got the hang of it and from then on, we had a really good time. They were friendly, interested and immediately accepted me as one of them.

Then came the FIFA world cup. In a short period of time



before the game, the República was filled with people to watch. They were all curious about me so my friends introduced me to everyone. 90 minutes later, when we were quiet drunk, the game was over. Brazil won. Immediately, everyone started shouting and taking their trumpets, vuvuzela's and drums to the city centre, where a crowd had gathered to have a big, very Brazilian party. Imagine scarcely clothed girls dancing around pick-up trucks with subwoofers in the back, large groups of friends singing and making music while everyone is dancing and drinking. Of course, this being the city center, also imagine busses,

trucks, cars and bikes trying to pass through the crowd and its chaos. Even when Belgium kicked Brazil out of the world cup, the party was as lit as the ones before.

The internship I did was at the local federal university. I worked with Nathália, a PhD student who became one of my best friends during these 2 months. In the lab, we synthesized fungicides while at the same time, we were growing fungi in the phytopathology lab and cucumbers and coffee in the greenhouse. When our fungicides were ready, we tested their activity on Petri dishes and on real plants, which gave me a lot of variation. Nathália and I

didn't only work together, we also went to bars and restaurants and made trips in the forest. She really cared about me and wanted me to make the most out of my stay, as she was proud to show me the beauty of Brazil.

There were also about 5 other international students in Viçosa, with whom I became good friends. We came together to organise a weekend trip and then, armed with Google Maps and Google Translate, we went to see other places and had a really good time together.

I can only recommend going on an internship to Viçosa. There are no people from IAESTE and you're not

dropped off in a house to live together. You are really living with Brazilian people, so prepare yourself to experience some struggles sometimes, especially due to the language barrier. But when you get to know the country and its people and your Portuguese starts to improve, you can really enjoy your time and feel proud to have done it on your own. It is the best way to get to know a country and I wouldn't want to have done it in another way.





After hearing stories from friends about the IAESTE internships I was excited to try to apply for an internship as well. When I saw that Brazil was an available option, I was convinced at once.

Travelling to Brazil is really easy now, unlike a few years ago. You can stay for 90 days without a visa. So even if the Brazilian administration is really slow, in the end everything works out great. When I arrived in São Paulo I was immediately welcomed like I was part of the family. This warmth and acceptance is typical for South American countries and Brazil is no exception. The next morning I took a 1.5 hour bus to Sorocaba, a city with a population of about 650.000. The city itself was not really impressive but the people I met there were amazing.

As most local students in Brazil, I lived in a 'republica', a shared house for about 5 to 12 students. The very first day they taught me to make Caipirinhas, Brazil's national cocktail made with cachaça, sugar and lime, which I can really recommend! There are many republicas organizing

parties every week where you pay maybe 5 euro entrance and get free drinks all night. We were with three interns in Sorocaba: Marcin from Poland and Lise and I from Belgium. We were soon known as the 'gringos' (foreigners) at the parties. We attracted a lot of people who wanted to practice their English – which got better after a few beers – or who just wanted to meet new people.

The work itself was at UNESP, the São Paulo State University. Here I created a smartphone app in Unity to help blind people navigate places they haven't been before. A big part of my work was with Arduino and sending data from various sensors to the Unity app over a Bluetooth Low Energy connection. I arrived the day Brazil played Mexico in the World Cup, so it was an unofficial national holiday. My professor invited me to watch the match together with his family and get lunch after. I watched Belgium Brazil together the following Friday with about 20 Brazilians and I'm still alive, that must mean something!



It's really easy to get a Friday or Monday off for a long weekend to travel. In this way I visited Rio de Janeiro, went hiking in Ilhabela, sandboarding in Florianópolis and sightseeing in São Paulo. It's easy to find interns to join you on your trips. After my internship I also travelled four more weeks to see more of Brazil. I hiked in the Pantanal and through the Amazon rainforest, which I can strongly recommend if you have a week of free time after your internship. There was also an IAESTE organized event called 'Vitória Challenge' where 48 interns from all over Brazil met up for

an awesome weekend in Vitória.

Eight weeks of internship might seem long to you, but I can assure you that the time just flies and you will wish you could stay longer. Brazil is an amazing country, with incredibly warm people, vast nature and really good food (try out Coxinha, Pastel, Açaí and Feijoada when you're there!) and if you have time, try to stay a little longer after your work period ends! You'll make amazing friends from all over the world, and have a whole new list of countries to visit. Good luck on your trip!



AUSTRIA



I know everyone prefers to read testimonials about exotic destinations, but hang on to this one, as Austria isn't as boring as you think. Writing this report, I look back at two beautiful months spent in a country which shouldn't only be famous for skiing and Heidi from Tyrol.

After a 16 hour train ride, I arrived in Leoben, a small town in the middle of Austria. An IAESTE member took me to my flat, which was only 2 min walking from the train station, where I was greeted by my awesome flatmate. As it was already late in the evening, we just had a beer (which would turn out to be the essence of this internship) and he promised me to have a walk around the city the next day.

What I thought to be an all-day activity, turned out to be just 1 hour. Leoben is situated in the mountains, has only 20 000 inhabitants and the two main things here are the prestigious mining and materials science university and the brewery of the best beer in Austria. Thank god! You can walk from one side of the city to the other in only 10

minutes. Being disappointed about the size of the 'city', my flatmate assured me that after some time I would understand the fun about Leoben. He was right. Everything turned out to be in a 5 min walking distance. My workplace was luckily just 1 min away, which made me able to sleep until 7:59. As a materials engineer, I worked, surprisingly, at the materials science department of the university. They got a new testing machine and my internship involved finding out how it worked and setting up reliable test set-ups. I spent a lot of days just in the basement with no sunlight, but it was interesting and for an internship, very well paid!

As there was not much to do after work on weekdays, I soon found out the Austrian way of life. Hiking, running, climbing up the mountains, drink a beer up there and then come back before dark to go for diner afterwards which would probably turn out the schnitzels. It became a habit of my fellow trainees and me, which I absolutely loved. You could call live here boring, but work done at the university was very productive



and you can live a 0-stress level life over here. After dark, several cooking events were organized and as most of us lived in the same flat, we just rang each other's doorbells and spent the evening together. But one thing was sure, we always ended up in the one bar of the city, Pub O Cino, which revenues were probably tripled once we arrived in Leoben. It was a great benefit to sleep until 7:59.

Having an unlimited summer train ticket, weekends were spent in all parts of Austria, its mountains, its thermal baths, Slovakia, Slovenia, Italy and Hungary. After one night partying in Vienna's

underground clubs, we were standing on the queue for the train back home, but then decided on the spot to go to the border with Swiss to see the first snow. It was just a 6 hour train ride away, enough time to catch up some sleep. If you ever think you will be bored on an internship, you're definitely wrong!



Reflecting on these 2 months, I can absolutely say it was great. My fellow trainees were awesome people and we found out that Austria is a great place to live. As this was already my second IAESTE internship, I can definitely recommend you to also participate in one and I hope this wasn't my last internship!
Tschussss





Nuclear power and radiation are what interests me. You can imagine that not many internships are offered on these topics. I mean, who would let an intern stroll around their nuclear reactor? Luckily for me, an internship on radiation protection was offered in Banja Luka, the second largest city of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I thought, Bosnia, why not? Because, I don't know if it's the same for you, but I actually knew very little about Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding countries. Well, of course I knew it's cheap and the weather is good from previous travels, but of the culture and history I had no clue. So right after the exams, early June, after a day of travelling, I arrived slightly late at the bus station (the bus was held up at the Croatian-Bosnian border due to border control), where I was awaited by a member of the local committee. Turns out we had to walk half an hour towards the dorm where I was to stay the next two months of my internship. For me, this was a long distance to walk as for any distance longer than a 7-minute walk I will use my bicycle. However in Bosnia,

bicycles are a rare sight (so are good bicycle paths), which I blame mostly on the local driving style and attitude, so they usually walk these distances (and longer). That first night I was quickly dropping off my luggage at the dorm warmly welcomed and escorted to a nice bar in the city center (again half an hour walk) to meet the rest of the committee. I met so many people that night (and the following nights) of which many would become close friends over the next weeks. I found out that in Bosnia it is really easy to meet new people and make friends, as Bosnians are very open and approachable. They are also very hospitable, helping me out with any problem I encountered during my stay. I think these are the things that stick most in my memory, due to the contrast with us Belgians, who make new friends more difficultly as we are comparatively less open people. Now working in Bosnia has a different meaning than working here in Belgium. The working culture is very relaxed and for me as an intern, this was only reinforced. A usual working



day looked like this: I came into work between 8 and 9. We had a collective breakfast break starting at 10 which consists of taking the car to a local bar to have coffee and buy breakfast in the adjacent supermarket. By the time we got back to the office it was around 11. Then have breakfast of course and work until 14:30 which was the end of the day at the Public Health Institute, which was where I interned. My colleagues and boss were more concerned with me discovering their country and culture than working. They practically forced me to take days off to travel and enjoy my time. Apart from the fact that I already had half of every day

free to do what I wanted. I was never bored, though, as there is always someone to hang out with, or something to do. I took up a lot of new activities, like dancing tango or playing american football or playing chess on the large chess field in the park. Then of course there is the weekends. Every weekend, a trip or activity was organised to keep us, the interns, entertained. Examples include visiting the cities in Bosnia (Mostar, Sarajevo, Jajce) and neighboring countries (Zagreb in Croatia, Belgrade in Serbia), hikes in the vast forests (70% of Bosnia is forest) and barbecuing (almost every weekend). The trips were perfect to learn the history, culture and gastronomy. For example on the road, you could pass next to a not-yet-cleared mine field and in Mostar you could see bullet holes in certain old buildings, a remainder of the Yugoslav wars which split up former Yugoslavia into the countries we now know. This history is still somewhat sensitive to older generations, but the younger people don't mind. There are nicer sides to the culture, too, such as the food (cheese- and meat-based mostly), the dances (kolo) and the architecture. Then again, these are strongly influenced by the somewhat 500 years of Ottoman occupation. To conclude, I already miss my time in Bosnia. I miss the people, their history, culture and attitude, the weather, the rivers, the green, the food, the drinks (home-made rakija), ...



NIGERIA



Arriving in an African country can often be overwhelming or intimidating. You are tired of a long flight and arrive in a country filled with shouting people and people looking for a tip. This will not be the case when you arrive because of Otabor, who will organize your stay in Nigeria for IAESTE. He will come to pick you up at the airport. Or if you have to transfer to the domestic airport, like me, he will make sure Frank, an employee at the airport, will help you with this. As taking a local flight in Nigeria is not that easy if you are not used to the chaotic way the country works.

You will notice that Nigerians are a very friendly people and that most people really want your stay to be as pleasant as possible. In contrast to Belgium, the people here are very sociable and it is normal that you sometimes talk for 15 minutes with people you don't know in shops or make friends on the street. Also, my colleagues at my internship and my landlady often went out of their way to make me feel

comfortable. If you will stay in the same apartment as I did, you can expect her to invite you into her home or give you food at least once a week.

The mindset of Nigerians is very different from the European way of thinking. One needs to accept that in Nigeria appointments are not fixed. Sometimes the person you are meeting arrives one hour to early or three hours too late. This forces you to let go of your expectations for the day and makes you just go with the flow. This is due to the fact that planning is often simply impossible because of electricity problems, checkpoints on the road or bad roads due to the weather. Your internship also has this element of ambiguity. Often you will not be able to work, due to electricity problems, uncertainty about your assignment or organizational problems. However, I never felt bored. There is so much to see in Benin City and the culture is so different that you can easily fill the slow days with walking down the street and meeting (Nigerian) friends.



Most food that you will eat, you have to buy on the street and often bargain for. Bargaining is an essential part of Nigerian culture and once you get the hang of it quite fun. Sometimes, bargaining can be especially difficult because most Nigerians assume you are very rich simply because of the fact that you are white. Nevertheless, going for food on the streets is always amazing. The Nigerian kitchen is completely different than the European one. They have a lot of amazing dishes and snacks. Even fruit that we have at home tastes out of this world in Nigeria. You will

never eat a banana, coconut, avocado or mango as tasty as the ones over here.

Before going to Nigeria my family and friends expressed their concern about my security. When the country is in the news at home this is seldom in a positive way. While it is true that there are some security concerns, this is mostly in the northern part of the country. If you look at the safety maps provided by the ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, you can clearly see that the southern part of the country, where the internships are, are perfectly safe if you use common sense. Otabor

will also help you and guide you in the first few days. He will learn you where you can go and what you should or should not do. He also arranges safe and secure accommodation for all interns.

When going abroad it's always nice to visit different parts of the country. With Otabor, you will go to nature reserves, mountainous areas, Abuja the capital, and Lagos, the economic heart of Nigeria. He makes everything run smoothly and always makes sure you pass checkpoints as swiftly as possible. During the weekend, the IAESTE interns

also often meet in Benin city to go to bars, clubs or restaurants. If you stay in Benin City you will also often do things with Otabor in the evening, he is a really fun guy to go to bars or restaurants with.

All these aspects will definitely make your internship in Nigeria a once in a lifetime experience. Should you have any more questions about the country or the IAESTE program. You can always get my contact details from IAESTE and mail or call me.



COLOMBIA



I always wanted to try and get an international internship in my master, but I never imagined I would be able to get one. I wanted to give it a shot, because you never know right? So I applied for three IAESTE internships. I wanted to go to Colombia very much, because it would be something completely different to Europe, but I put it on the second place because I didn't think I would be able to get it. My first and my third choice were countries in Europe, because those I might actually get.

To my big surprise, I got selected for the internship in Colombia. I couldn't believe it at first, but I was going to Colombia. It always seemed so unrealistic and so far away, but all of a sudden comes the day that changes everything. The day that you're on your way to a far away country, to do an internship on the other side of the world. The day that was the start of this amazing adventure.

It was a very long way to get there, but every single second of the road was worth it. Carlos from IAESTE Colombia

came to pick me up from the airport and brought me to my apartment. He then introduced me to Ana Joaquina, the girl I would be living with for the upcoming three months in Colombia. I was only an hour in Colombia and I was already in love with this country, thanks to those completely amazing people. I was already in love with Colombia and I didn't even know how amazing the next two months would be.

The next day, I went to Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana Seccional Montería for the first time. There, things just kept going great. All the people were so welcoming, so warm, so amazing. I got introduced to everyone and everyone was so nice to me, and that wasn't going to change during the upcoming months. The only problem was that I barely spoke Spanish and well, in Latin America people don't speak too much English, but everyone wanted to try and speak to me in English and I did the same thing in Spanish. After the introduction I got the full tour of the campus and my job assignments. I was going to be supporting the students,



the classes and the research for the upcoming 2 months.

The upcoming days/weeks/months kept on being amazing. I met so many international friends, amazing people I would have never met otherwise. Mexican, Colombian, Argentinian, Brazilian, French, Canadian,... Students, teachers and people from all over the world. Everyone amazing in their own way, everyone with their own experiences, with a hunger to get to know more people and to discover more of the world. We became a very close group of friends and we spend most of the days together, doing small

little things and discovering people they had ever met. keep it close, because I will how the others do the same And thus, my activities were never forget the amazing thing on the other side of the more differentiated than I had memories I made in world. While in the suspected before the Colombia. meantime, discovering as internship. much of Colombia as we could.

Although we had so much fun, there was still a lot of work that needed to be done. I had such a busy schedule, because they wanted to make as much use as possible of a European student while he was in Colombia. Very busy, supporting all the activities in the laboratory, supporting the classes, giving presentations and doing my own research. Next to my regular activities, everyone also wanted to practice English with me, as I was one of the most fluent

Every day was an amazing adventure. I had the chance to experience things I'm never going to forget, to meet people who will always stay with me and gain life experience that's going to change me forever. I'd like to tell everyone what a great experience it was and that Colombia will always be in my heart, but I can't do that. I can't do that, because I lost my heart. I lost my heart in Colombia. Those amazing people, those wonderful experiences, they all stole my heart and I hope they will



GERMANY



This summer I went on an internship of two months in Zittau, Germany. Studying in Ghent for five years already I wanted to change up my environment. An internship abroad seemed a great way to get some international experience without having to fit an Erasmus program into my regular curriculum.

I was selected for an internship in the University of Applied Sciences in Zittau. Upon arrival I got picked up by someone from the university which dropped me off at the dormitory and arranged many other things, including getting me a rental bike to use for the duration of the stay. My room was basic but very comfortable with a separate kitchen and bathroom.

At the university I performed research into novel machine learning solutions for the monitoring of nuclear waste containers. This research is important as these radioactive substances will be around for a long time, so improvements in monitoring will have the effect that the physical contact of humans with these radioactive substances that is

needed will be at a minimum. As an internship student I got a lot of independence when it came to my work and the topics I got to focus on. In some instances I was even the person teaching the staff more about various machine learning subjects as most of them had a more practical engineering background.

Zittau is a charming little town, located right at the three country point between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. It has known a very rich past, but got into a bit of decay after the reunification of Germany. In recent years this development has reversed due to the popularity of the university and outside investments. An added advantage of the closeness of the Czech border was that cheap and good beer was always easy to get.

During my stay in Zittau another student was also doing his internship at the university. His name was Omar, a mechanical engineering student from Jordan. We quickly became friends and travelled together to cities all over Germany. We had some great fun



discussing various topics on which we sometimes had different views.

We obviously did not spend all of our time working, and being in Germany, the most popular destination for IAESTE students, meant that there were local committees all over Germany. These committees organized weekends throughout the summer for their respective regions. Using the cheap summer train ticket we could participate in two of them, one in München and the other in Hamburg. Both of these weekends were unforgettable and attracted internship students from all over Germany and thus also all

over the world. Through activities we got to know each of these cities and the parties at night socialize with all the participants. The enthusiasm of the organizers topped it and transformed both of these weekends in tiring but amazing experiences.

because of some rain clouds. We all got back safely and in the evening the wind died down so we got some more sailing initiations from the owner of the boat. He didn't let his broken English stand in the way of explaining with full enthusiasm the different sailing techniques.

means a lot more activities and trips, so you can explore more of the country you are visiting.

The region around Zittau has been and is still being quarried for coal. Discontinued mines were flooded and provide the area with some new artificial lakes. On one of these lakes a colleague of the university had a boat. One day after work we went sailing. This was a very cool experience as the vessel was built for speed and the wind was picking up

I can wholeheartedly recommend going on an IAESTE internship. The experiences, new connections and memories you return with really have a profound impact on your life. Also, don't be afraid of the longer internships, time flies when you are having fun and having extra time means you get to work on bigger projects. More time also





After going to Brussels to the Indian embassy for four times and stressing out during the exams, my visa finally arrived two days before departure. At that moment I was finally able to start an amazing adventure of nine weeks to India. My internship took place at the JECRC University in Jaipur. This is a huge city in the northern part of India in the state Rajasthan, it has approximately one third of the population of Belgium in one city (wow).

Everything was very well arranged from the moment I arrived until the day of my departure. The laeste comity of the JECRC University consists out of many enthusiastic and fun people who helped us out during our stay and guided us through the craziness of India. We slept in the dormitories of the university, these are shared apartments with three separate rooms for every student or intern and you can already guess that boys are not allowed in the girls dormitory and vice versa. Of course it was not luxury at all, for me, as I am 193cm tall, sleeping in a bed of 180 cm was not that comfortable and

you really don't want to put your matrass on the ground. However this was all part of the experience and sleeping in this shared apartment was a good way to make friends and I was lucky I shared an apartment with an Indian IAESTE member who became a great friend after a high amount of very late night discussion about the Indian culture and trying to understand and not understand the Indian way.

During the week all the interns had to work of course on their project. This happened together in the so called "laeste office". It was a very fun environment to work in as all your friends are normally in the office too. We had to work approximately 6 hours a day for five days in a week but eventually you just had to do what your supervisor told you and the atmosphere was really chill and relax. I was never alone in India the maximum number of interns was around 25 people coming from all over the world. This is a great way to learn about other countries and to make some friends who you can visit in the future. During the week it was



possible to go and visit Jaipur because the university was not that far from the city centre or otherwise I also often played soccer with the University soccer team or we went out for a drink with the interns.

In the weekends there is lots of time to travel. Mostly we left on Friday right after lunch and came back late night on Sunday. Sometimes we even took some days off of work for some longer trips. Every weekend we went out to go and discover India. Traveling around with your friends really was fantastic. The most famous places we visited are of course the Taj Mahal and the ganges ghats in

Varanasi. We also did some camel riding in the dessert, visited lots of forts and temples and I can go on and on. We even rent some scooties for a couple of days a drove in the crazy traffic to swim in a waterfall and also a lot of tuk tuk driving for sure! There is a famous saying in India which says "Guest is god" so all the people are very nice and friendly. We were hitchhiking from the sea and a very hospital man picked us up and invited us for dinner the same evening. Yes the food in India is very spicy, especially in the state Rajasthan, and yes the first weeks I spend some time on the toilet, but don't worry I got

used to it and in the end I very much enjoyed the spicy food.

The whole journey was so much greater than expected. I was able to explore a completely different culture, make great friends and learn not only due to my internship but more because of crossing so many different people from all over the world and trying to grasp their mindset. This experience really opened my eyes on so many different levels. I can truly recommend this to all the open minded, motivated and exploring students and I am very grateful for this opportunity. Thank you laeste for this life changing adventure.



MEXICO



I finished my last year of industrial engineering in chemistry and before starting my studies as a civil engineer, I wanted to apply my knowledge in an internship. I have been wanting to visit a Latin American country since a long time now. Looking for an international experience, I saw that IASTE could help me make this dream come true. Without hesitation I started scanning through the various options and my eye fell upon an internship in Mexico. At first it was in a 'little' town called Poza Rica, but six days before I left, the location changed to Mexico-City. My adventure had just turned a lot bigger, bigger than I could ever dream, and what an experience it was.

People warned me to be careful in such a major city and with healthy curious precaution I arrived at the airport of this enormous metropolis. I would work for two months at Rotoplas, a company devoted to provide clean water to the people of Mexico. I worked at the sanitation department of the innovation team, where new methods for cleaning and disinfecting wastewater were

developed. I learned a lot about wastewater treatment, product development and teamwork. Not only could I apply my knowledge as an engineer, but I also learned a lot about benchmarking and seizing opportunities in growing markets. The team I worked with was relatively young and very ambitious. I could not speak a word in Spanish when I arrived, but after two months of practice I was cracking jokes in fluent Spanish during the lunch hours. Yes, I learned all the swear words in the book and there are a lot of them in Mexico.

Aside from the internship, Mexico is an amazing country. The culture is so diverse and beautiful that it is hard to encapsulate the Mexican vibe in one short article... First of all, the food is amazing: tacos, tortas, flautas, enchiladas, chile enojada, churros... Truth be told, I spent a decent number of hours on the bathroom but that was well worth the rich taste of these platters. Second, the culture is beautiful. Mexico-city, one of the largest cities in North America is divided in more than fifteen



districts each with their own unique vibe. At Lucha Libre (the Mexican wrestling), you throw with popcorn to the fighters and the fighters throw other fighters right back at you, all while shouting your worst curse words, absolutely amazing... I also thoroughly enjoyed the mariachis, their wonderful howls and of course toques toques (a weird party custom where you sit in a circle with friends and get electrocuted). I also had the privilege to experience the national proudness of Mexico during the independence weekend. Armed with my Mexican flag, painted in the Mexican tricolore, I went partying in the streets with all the proud inhabitants of this

astonishing country. But the best part of Mexico will still be the people.

At the start of my internship I was the only intern at my company, but I started making so much 'amigos' in no time. I started my own friend group of interns so, when others arrived, they were already in the middle of a group always ready for a fiesta. A bit of tequila or mezcal are the perfect start for beautiful friendships, I can guarantee you that. I traveled and explored a lot of places in Mexico in the weekends. In the surrounding areas are a lot of colonial, authentic towns called 'Pueblos Magicos'. I visited Tepoztlan, Puebla and Cholula. I also

visited beautiful archeological sites with Aztec and Mayan temples like Theotihuacan and Chichen-Itza. There was also a company trip to Veracruz where we went rafting in Xalapa. I could get a couple of days of to visit Yucatan, former home of the Mayans, and there I visited Mérida, Izamal and Valladolid. On my last days I visited, Iztaccihuatl, a sleeping volcano of 5,200 meters height, and we climbed it all the way to the top. For my farewell party we visited Xochimilco, the venice of Mexico. All in all, you can say I did my fare share of visiting central and southern Mexico, but there is still so much more to explore.

I lost my heart in Mexico. This internship was an amazing experience and if someone offers you an internship in Mexico, it would be an offer you Mexican't refuse.





After already doing an unforgettable IAESTE internship in Cyprus last year, I felt I wanted to do a second internship, but this time in a completely different setting and culture. I chose to go to incredible India and after landing in the giant metropole that is Mumbai and being ripped off by Riksjä drivers, I immediately knew this internship and trip was going to be the most crazy trip I have ever taken.

From Mumbai, I set off to Coimbatore, a small Indian city of only one million people where I would do my internship in the picturesque village of Karunya Nagar. The location of this university is breathtaking. Surrounded by green hills and lush mountains, its position guaranteed relatively cool and dry weather. Whilst everybody in Belgium was suffering from the intense heatwave that struck our region, I was chilling in comfortable temperatures of 28°C and I advised everybody I knew in Belgium to come to South-India, to escape the heat. Luckily there was the spicy food all around me that could keep me warm.

Non-spicy food in India means that they will only put one chili pepper in your food and eating truly spicy food is equivalent to drinking 10 liters of pure burning gasoline. A thing I would definitely advise you to do, when in India.

An IAESTE internship wouldn't be the same however without the many students you will meet from all over the globe. I have met some crazy Polish drunks, sensual Brazilian dancers and gifted Iranian artists. And don't forget the Germans of course, who you will find literally everywhere in India and who will enlighten/bore you with their talks about *Gründlichkeit* and *Pünktlichkeit*. With these amazing people I took many weekend trips and visited a lot of the hidden gems that can be found in Southern India.

If you want to do an internship and travel a bit in a region where virtually no tourists come, southern India is your place to be. It is a truly magnificent region, with dense jungles and mystic Tamil and Hindu temples. There are pristine sand



beaches, surrounded by palm trees and when I was drinking my coconut juice straight from the coconut, I was wondering why I didn't come earlier to this paradise. As a foreigner (with a white skin), you will attract some attention however and some people will stare at you and will want to take a picture with you. My pretty face can now be found in numerous pictures all across the country. India is a country in full development also however, so a lot of trash can be found near virtually every road you come by. This will give you some perspective however when people back home complain about their garbage bags not being collected. People in India also

simply burn their garbage, shortened my internship with bigger than the E40 and the watch and learn, mr. two weeks to go and travel the E42 combined in Bangalore. Termont! north.

After all this talking about travelling in India, I would almost forget I also did an internship there. I worked at the local university and my project was about aluminium hybrid composites and how to use them in gears. I had a super friendly supervisor, who tried to help me whenever he could and when he asked me to write a 60 page report in one and a half day, I was more than happy to fill up some pages with things I've found from Wikipedia. But, after seeing all of the beauties of Southern India, I knew I wanted to go and visit Northern India as well and I

Some interns and me embarked afterwards on what would be the most crazy trip of my life. We travelled more than 3000km in just 2 weeks. I have seen it all; from Indians vomiting on my sandals, in a night/sleeperbus to losing my looking glasses in the ocean at a beach party in Goa. From buying cheap lenses the next day in Goa, and letting my spare pair of glasses fly over from Brussels to Mumbai by a friendly Indian guy, named Shaji. From hugging elephants by their trunk and feeding them in Jaipur to simply crossing a highway,

This internship and trip was a crazy, awe-inspiring experience and I would advise everybody who doesn't mind wiping their ass with their left hand to do an IAESTE internship in Incredible India.



CROATIA



A lot of people asked me: why Croatia? Well, because I really wanted to go on an internship abroad and Ghent University cancelled my internship in Pakistan. At first, I had no clue what Osijek would be like or how I would get there, and the first two nights I didn't even know where I was going to sleep. Intrigued? Let me tell you a bit more about of the best experiences I've had in my life.

I booked my flight as close to my exams as possible to be able to stay there 6 weeks and still be able to study for my exams in August. As I had almost no time between exams and my departure I figured I'd just land in Zagreb and see where I would end up. Thanks to BEST (Board of European Students of Technology), I already made a friend that lived there and went couch surfing there. The next day my plan was to leave for my internship after the game of Belgium on the world cup. I arrived in the middle of the night, but even then, someone from IAESTE Osijek came to pick me up and show me to my dorm. The dorm had other trainees from all

nationalities, which meant that we could meet every night very easily.

On my first day of work I got to meet my colleagues at IDT Engineering and everyone was very excited to have another intern there. The fact that they had several interns before assured me that I was in a decent company and it really was. They constantly gave me tips for events, trips, and were very open about their culture and politics. It also helped that one coworker was a huge football fan who also studied abroad.

Croatians are crazy about their sports... Every half an hour you could hear a patriotic football song and they were driving me insane, but after learning some verses with the other trainees it changed from being annoying to a bonding moment. With everyone rooting for Croatia and Belgium I experienced some of the most insane celebrations ever. The match against England, we were passing through Slunj, a town with about 2000 inhabitants. Winning resulted in hour long parties in the street where



even the fire department got their truck with sirens involved.

Around halfway through my internship I went on a trip to the beautiful Croatian coast. We rented a small van with 6 people, all different nationalities, and stopped along Krka National Park where you can see the waterfalls and swim next to them. Following the park was Split and Zadar. Zadar is famous for 'the most beautiful sunset' in Europe. Although I'm not sure of that, I think they're not so far off. The combination of the Sea Organ, water, and Islands sprinkled just outside the coastline just makes it the

perfect place for some deep conversations at 2 am.

At the end of my wonderful internship, I had one week left where nothing was planned before I left so I decided to go on an adventure. I started with 13 hours of traveling to Bovec for the Slovenian Weekend organized by the LC's of Slovenia. Between swimming in ice cold glacial waterfalls, kayaking where Narnia was filmed, watching the lunar eclipse, mars and milky way, zorbing, saving a butterfly and watching the sunrise over the valley, I got to meet even more amazing people. One of them even joined me on my trip to Ljubljana after that. To end my trip, I went to visit

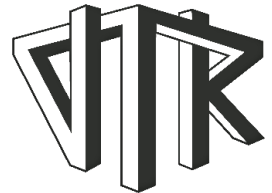
Sarajevo and Belgrade where I got to see some of my friends that I made during my internship.

Going back home after this made me realize that although I worked in a different country, I felt at home because of the friends I've made. Not one moment did I get the feeling that I made the wrong decision by coming here. I truly miss them and our cult meetings (don't ask it was really weird sometimes) so much even though we only saw each other for 4 weeks sometimes. I'm certain that I'll see some of them again throughout the following years. I could rattle

on for ages about this experience but in conclusion, if I have to describe my internship in one word: neopisivo!



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