

Edition 2015

# IAESTE

Internship Booklet



Are you ready  
for the  
international  
experience?

## IAESTE IS ALL ABOUT INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS.

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

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

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

**Sam Van Essche,**

LC Ghent President 2015-2016



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# MALTA

LIESELOT GELDOLF

It was now or never. My last summer holiday was coming up, so it was up to me to make the most of it! When I saw the list of possible countries, one immediately caught my eye: Malta. After going through the results of 'Malta' on Google Images and checking the website of the company, I was convinced! I was going to do it and Malta was going to be my first choice. After some exciting weeks, I received the message that I could do my internship on this little island! Eeny-meeny-Malta, only two times the size of Ghent!

Bouncing heart, waving family, just me and my luggage... Off we go! After a good flight, a small, tanned guy on slippers was waving to me with a big smile. This had to be the IAESTE-Malta guy! 'Open your window, otherwise you're going to die!'. After wanting to enter on the wrong side of the car, he drove me to my apartment in the Maltese way. There is a saying that goes: Maltese people don't drive on the left, neither on the right, but where the shadow is. He seemed to be the stereotype of the Maltese, not to be confused with Maltesers! I lived with two other IAESTE-students and two Maltese. The perfect combination of having afternoon tea with my English roommate as well as trying the self-



prepared tuna from my Maltese flatmate's mother.

Thanks to the chaotic Maltese transport, my Spanish IAESTE-colleague and I had to walk for half an hour in 30°C to go to work. Our path consisted of going down a hill covered with stones grown over by weeds, followed by climbing up a lot of stairs during which I learned some Spanish swearwords. Luckily, the air-conditioning and the amazing atmosphere at work made us forget about our walk quite quickly.

As an architecture student, I was lucky to work with DeMicoli & Associates. This is one of the most famous architectural offices

of Malta with projects going from a resort with palm trees inside to the renovation of the only tower of Malta. I worked together with architects and technicians, as well as with the people who made the models. The architectural design, the construction details, the interior design, the models, all of these things were done by the forty people working there. As a lot of my colleagues were young foreigners, lunch breaks consisted of preparing and enjoying Sicilian, Italian, Spanish, and of course Belgian food during which we discussed all the differences between our countries. These moments were extended with drinks after work

and even a barbecue on the beach at sunset.

I didn't only learn things at work, but also from the other IAESTE-students. From the Spanish, I learned how to make sangría and of course the lyrics of the Macarena. The Czech guy proved that they are not that resistant to beer as they say they are and from my lovely British roommate I got a kind of British accent. My Scottish flatmate was very nice, but I didn't learn a lot from him because almost no one was able to understand his accent. A Polish friend proved that the partying stereotype is completely right and she was the only one, besides the Croatians themselves, who liked the Croatian drink Rakia. One evening, I refreshed my French with a guy from France, a Romanian girl, and one of the Spanish people. From the Slovakian girl, I learned that the world is really small as her boyfriend lives in the same city as my grandmother.

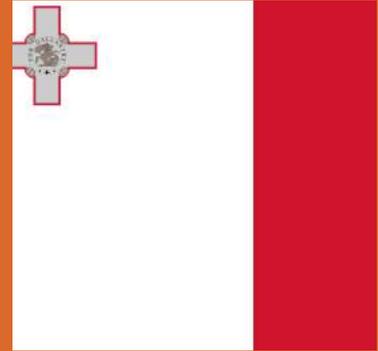
Last but not least: the Maltese themselves. Even though Malta is small, the hospitality of the Maltese is great. With a lot of enthusiasm,

they introduced us to the rich history of Malta by visiting different historical cities, taking us to beaches all over the island, organizing a barbecue on the cliffs, joining us for a night on the beach during our weekend in Gozo, a smaller island of Malta, and immersing us in the rich Maltese culture. A part of this culture is that every town organizes a feast during which they honor the saints and launch tons of firework, even during the day. We went to the craziest one of these feasts where everyone, including us, was painted either red or blue. Afterwards everyone was waving with flags in the same color they were painted, pouring beer and singing songs which were not even about the saints, but actually just swearing towards those painted in the other color.

The highlight of these feasts, the one of Santa Maria, was also my last day in Malta. A perfect day spent with great friends on my favorite beach, followed by some drinks with a view of Valetta by night!

Malta, see you again!

# MALTA



# AUSTRIA

MATTHIAS HERTHOGE

Hello reader! Glad to have you reading my short report of one of my best summers to date. You might have absolutely no idea what IAESTE is, or you think that an internship abroad is nothing for you and that it is too much hassle to deal with. You might feel afraid to go abroad alone. Or you already know that you want to have a great internship in a different country. In the following paragraphs I will try to convince you to apply this year to go on one of the greatest journeys of your life!

During my internship I worked with Atom Probe Tomography (APT). This is a wonderful material characterization technique that we don't have at Ghent University. I got to learn the ropes and tricks on how to prepare samples, interpret data and grasp the concepts of how this technique works. The main idea behind APT is that you ionize atoms from metal needles and let the ions hit a detector. This allows you to know the chemical composition for the sample and which element sits where. It also allows you to brag to your friends that you spend your summer vaporizing metal.

The technical side of the internship, i.e. your "work", is what brings you abroad. The main experience of an IAESTE internship consists of the people you will meet. Not only did I work together with wonderful PhD's

whom I count to my friends after two months of warm welcoming. I also gained some great international friends and got different looks on their cultures and mine. IAESTE not only helps you with paperwork and getting there, it also provides you with a group of people to hang around with. The organizers, the students from IAESTE who welcome you, also plan some great events. You will never be bored and never will feel lonely!

My internship was in a small town in Austria called Leoben. How small is Leoben you might ask? We had the saying at the Montan University that Leoben is so small, you can't get lost because everything is within a

five minute walk. This adds to the charm of the town!

The welcoming at Leoben was great. The first evening I spend on one of the organizers apartment balcony, drinking some fine Austrian Gösser. We discussed the differences between our countries, engineering and had some good laughs. It is great how fast you make friends with other engineering students. You have so many interests and views in common that it seems like you are all longtime buddies.

In the course of the next few weeks, more and more trainees arrived at Leoben. It was nice to see not only European trainees, but also some great people from Arabic countries! I had some of



Austria,  
Leoben

a bicycle. In her country, bicycles were seen as toys for children and not a modus of transportation. As a student from Ghent, this was a very weird concept.

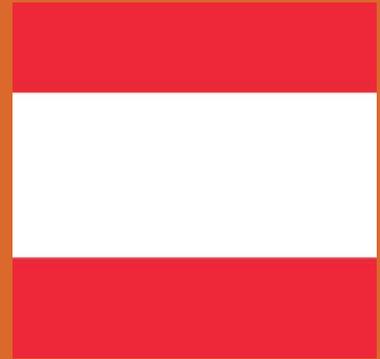
My workdays started with waking up at 6 AM (the horror). After taking the bus from the dorm to university I started work at 8 AM. Half an hour later, we drank some coffee. At 11 AM it was time for lunch. This seems very early, but you get used to it very quick. In the afternoon, we had some more coffee and did some science. After work we always had an activity planned by IAESTE. We had movie nights on Monday, playing board games at the dorm, international cooking nights ... And of course every activity was accompanied by beer,

yay! You will never feel bored on your internship.

When it was time to go back home, we had a farewell party for every trainee. This shows how fast you connect with other people during your internship. The Whatsapp group we made is even now still active. In September, some trainees visited Belgium. I showed them Ghent and when I visit their country they will show me theirs. IAESTE is not just about technical training, it is about building bridges between nations.

Do I regret anything after doing my internship? Yes, I regret only doing it after my first year of master. Had I known how much I could learn and grow as a person by doing this internship, I would have applied sooner!

# AUSTRIA



# BRAZIL.

BRAM TEETAERT

When I stepped out of the airport in São Paulo I was quite nervous, even though I had clear instructions where to take the bus and where I would be picked up. After some trouble with finding a bus, it was clear that the language barrier was very real. I met a professor working at the same university I was going to and she guided me all the way till we found my contact person. This person was really kind and in the car she taught me some tips and tricks to survive my first days after which she dropped me off in front the house where I would live for the next 2 months. In this house I would soon find my future friends with whom I would spend two of the most exciting months of my life.

Few days later I went to university to meet the professor who would guide me through the internship. It was a very nice meeting and afterwards he gave me a ride to my house (because everything is so far apart in Brazil). The next day, after the professor offered me a bike and an invitation for dinner at his house, I started working in my office in the department of cosmic rays of the university of Campinas, UNICAMP. The work had everything to do with muons (elementary particles similar to electrons) and I worked with MatLab and C++ and some hardware and sensors, to calculate some properties. The



Campinas,  
Brazil

professor used my work and data immediately in his lessons and in this way I really felt like contributing something. A nice thing about the professor was that he was very flexible, I could arrive at work at 8 am, 9 am, 10 am, or even later and I could leave whenever I wanted. Sometimes I asked for some days off, to visit more distant places, and he even encouraged me to do this!

You see that my professor was a really nice guy and this is true for almost every person I met in Brazil. I easily met people from all over the world and became friends with a lot of foreigners and Brazilians! With these people I travelled every single weekend. With a Spanish and

German delegation I visited the beach, a Brazilian colleague of mine took me and some friends to Petar, where we walked and swam into caves. Together with a lot of other destinations also Rio de Janeiro was on the list. Here we were guided and hosted by people from IAESTE living in Rio de Janeiro. We visited of course all famous places and went to a football game in Maracanã. We also went through a favela with a motorcycle taxi after which we walked to the top of one of the hills surrounding Rio and watched the sunset which was amazing.

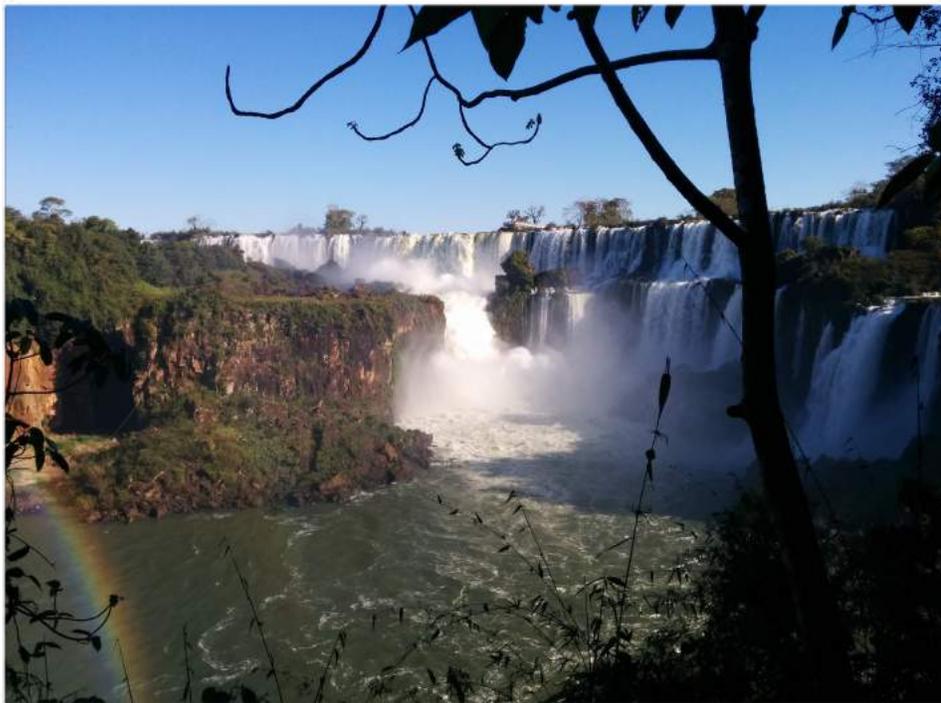
In the end every weekend has a great and unique experience and I see no other way to do these things without the IAESTE

In the end every weekend has a great and unique experience and I see no other way to do these things without the IAESTE context. IAESTE opens a lot more doors than the average tourist would be able to open. The contacts we made while working led us to places of extraordinary beauty and amazing stories.

The thing I will remember the most of my travel is how nice people in Brazil are in general. On the street they guide you to any place you want to go. People even spontaneously offer to help you out

if they recognize you are a foreigner (they recognize this very fast ;)). Also the atmosphere in small villages is quite amazing, everyone knows each other and life is way more relaxed than in Belgium.

I would like to conclude by advising anyone reading this to go abroad, with or without IAESTE. I learned a lot more than I would have ever expected and I made some friends with whom I'm sure I will keep in touch. The small effort of applying is certainly worth it! Don't be shy, just apply!



## BRAZIL.



# HUNGARY

GAËTAN POELMAN

On my way to the airport to leave for Budapest I was both very excited and anxious: spending two months away from family and friends, whilst making many new ones.

Upon my arrival, the local IAESTE group had organized for me to be picked up from the airport and guide me to my hostel, where I immediately met a few new faces. No time to unpack, we went straight on a small excursion. This was perfect, since it gave us time to meet everyone while doing something.

The first day of work (at Fomterv Civil Engineering Designer Ltd.) was a bit weird because I am working with people I just met and we don't know each other. The engineer I was assigned to work with and I started talking and he asked me which programs I was acquainted with. Turns out that none of the programs I had been using previously were used there; first task: try to understand new programs. Luckily the first program was similar to one at my university, so learning this one did not take much time. After a few hours I could start making calculations for a bridge my supervisor had been working on for months. Though it was only a light post, it was exciting because this project was very



tangible: a few days later I got to see that it was built, which gave a satisfying feeling.

Every evening there was something that the group organized to do, this was a great way to get to know everyone very quickly, and create an amazing atmosphere.

The first weekend I met some new incoming trainees and we went discovering the city. No real idea which direction we need to go or what there is to be seen, but we just kept going and saw some of the many beautiful sites Budapest has to offer. A small but important detail: the weather in Budapest was fantastic!

Progressing in the internship more trainees started to arrive. When the group was at its maximum, we were about 16: a small but close group that lived together in one hostel. After a few weeks the local IAESTE LC started International Evenings: with groups of two or three we make a short presentation about our countries and cook some traditional food for everyone to try. Also, the Summer Reception Coordinator occasionally organized an activity. We went for Escape Games, Aquarena, ...

During my internship I went on some site visits, made calculations and learned two new calculation programs: Axis VM and SOFiSTiK. I had a great supervisor who wanted me to

comfortable in the working environment, and then I started looking forward going to work in the morning. Especially in the period where I was assigned to model an entire bridge model (one of 301,95 m in total with 9 spans), which was a challenging project.

An amazing extra when doing this internship was that LC's from all over Europe organized International schedule for the weekend. On such an International Weekend (I went to Prague) I had the opportunity to meet many new people from all over the world, and in the parties at night are amazing!

To summarize I can only say that I had the best time of my life on this internship! I had the opportunity to

combine learning in a real working environment with so much fun.

Making so many amazing friends (some are most definitely for life) and spending two months together was the highlight of my summer. I can't describe in how many ways this experience has influenced and even changed me, both educationally and personally. The only hard part is leaving the people behind, for me this really got to me. The first few days back home are a bit of a downer, falling back into reality. Though, this does not outweigh the amazing experience by far!

For this I would like to sincerely thank IAESTE for providing me this life-changing experience!



# HUNGARY



# BRAZIL

ANH CHI NGUYEN

When I first read about Ilha Solteira, I was thinking "Oh my God, where on earth am I actually going". In fact, this student city is part of the state of São Paulo but is actually located... more than 600 km away from São Paulo, near the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. No major Brazilian cities are reachable in less than 6 hours of bus... at least! And although it is not actually an island, this isolated city is a bit in the middle of nowhere. Moreover, you cannot find much information about Ilha Solteira when you Google it; you can only find a few pictures of a water tower and a roundabout: not what people are usually expecting of Brazil. However, this internship was one of the best experiences of my life and this place and the people I met there would definitely stay in my heart forever. If you were reluctant because of the reasons mentioned before, I would say "Don't hesitate! Go for it!".

Let's start from the beginning! My internship acceptance was confirmed only a few weeks before I left Belgium so when I arrived to Guarulhos International Airport in São Paulo, my airport pickup had not been arranged yet because of administration issues. Fortunately, I had friends in São Paulo so I stayed in their



Ilha Solteira,  
Brazil

apartment for a couple of days before taking the bus to Ilha Solteira when my accommodation had been arranged. It was a 10 hours long ride but the buses in Brazil are surprisingly comfortable, much more than planes, trains and buses in Europe. I arrived in the early morning and took the cab to the address that was given to me. In fact, the street was not even shown on Google Maps because, as I said, this city is in the middle of nowhere.

Ilha Solteira is a student city where they have student housing called "republicas" with 5 to 12 students. I stayed in a republica together with seven Brazilian

girls and another IAESTE student from Canada. The day I arrived, we went to see a football game to support a team of the campus. I could not expect less for my first night there as Brazilian people absolutely love football. As we won, the game was obviously followed by a little party at my republica. There were also two big parties on the weekend I arrived. And this happened pretty much every weekend of my internship. In fact, as Ilha is a student city, there are many student parties organized by these republicas. Another good thing was that Ilha Solteira is probably the safest city I have ever been to. I remember my parents and my friends because a bit scared

city I have ever been to. I remember my parents and my friends because a bit scared about me going to Brazil from this point of view but actually, we were not even locking the door of our republica!

I already tried to learn a bit of Portuguese before I arrived, which made it easier to improve it. I was thus trying to speak Portuguese with my roommates as many people do not actually speak English there (or are too shy to speak it). But at the same time, I met many international students, the “gringos” as they called us there, with whom I started hanging out a lot and who became really good friends.

I worked at the university UNESP in the faculty of civil engineering. I was working on a project together with two Brazilian students. To be honest, I did not have much work

during these two months of internship. My teacher was really nice and, as most of the people there, really relaxed. However, I learned a lot during my internship about the Brazilian culture and the people but I also met people from all over the world. As I said, I also learned I bit of Portuguese, enough to make myself understood while traveling.

In fact, apart from Ilha, I also had the opportunity to travel during my internship. I did some 3-4 days trips with IAESTE students to Foz do Iguaçu, Campo Grande and Bonito but I also visited São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro after my internship. In Rio, a girl from IAESTE Brazil who I did not know before showed me the city and helped me when needed. Brazilian people are indeed very nice and helpful, even when they do not speak English and do not understand you!

I feel nostalgic writing this text and

## BRAZIL.



# WALES

MAX BEAUCHEZ

My name is Max Beauchez, and I am a master student of bio-engineering sciences at Ghent University. This past summer I did a traineeship at the Cardiff University School of Biosciences through IAESTE. Cardiff, for those who do not know, is the capital of Wales, one of the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom.

As the capital of Wales, Cardiff is the seat of the Welsh Assembly and government, which is responsible for a number of devolved policy areas. Wales is a Celtic nation and thus has a unique culture which is quite distinct from that of neighboring England. To give some examples: rugby is by far the most popular sport in Wales (as opposed to football in England). In addition to English the Welsh language is still spoken by many people and is an official language in Wales. As an official language, all public signage is in Welsh. Wales also has its own cuisine (with a lot of lamb-based dishes), handicrafts, folklore and traditional industries (coal mining and slate quarrying were major Welsh industries).

Cardiff University is the foremost university in Wales, so I was quite happy to be able to do my traineeship there. I worked in the laboratory of professor Julian Marchesi. The main focus of this lab was on the microbial ecology of the human intestine. My task,



however, was of a different nature – it involved using a new DNA sequencing device to sequence long 16S rRNA gene reads from mixed microbial communities. The device I used was the Oxford Nanopore MinION, a nanopore sequencing based device smaller than a mobile phone. This device is currently being distributed by Oxford Nanopore as a public beta to interested parties under the MinION Access Programme (MAP).

The work thus consisted of doing the burn-in of this device (a standard procedure to assess the performance of the sequencing device), creating genetic material for sequencing (through PCR of bacterial

genomic DNA), sequencing runs of this DNA, and bio-informatic analysis of the obtained sequence data. I was let very free in my work, and only conferred with professor Marchesi intermittently to discuss my progress. The work itself was also very challenging, as nanopore sequencing is a very novel technology, meaning there was little published literature to fall back on.

My accommodation was in university housing, roughly 20 minutes on foot from the university. Though a bit pricey, it was nice, clean and comfortable. The remuneration was £1000 per month. After rent, this left enough money to explore the UK. So, in the weekends I went

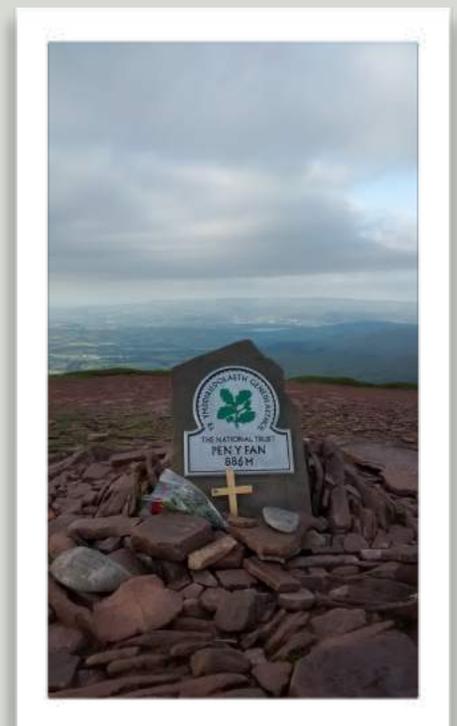
IAESTE England), and various other places in Wales and England. There were relatively few other trainees in Cardiff, but because of my packed weekends I was never left wanting for social contact.

To summarize, my traineeship in Cardiff let me work with cutting-edge technology at a world-class

university and let me see a lot of the UK and make many new friends! Not for a moment did I resent giving up my summer holiday in order to have this experience, and I would recommend any student of bio-engineering sciences to jump at the chance to do an internship like I did. I promise you will not regret it.



## WALES



# SPAIN

FRÉDÉRIQUE DE BAERDEMAEKER

June 21st 2015, exam  
Information Theory. June 22nd,  
flight to Madrid.

There wasn't much time to say my goodbyes and pack my bags. I felt glad to leave Belgium behind for some time, a new adventure was waiting. The months before that I had been restless. I was getting quite tired of studying and felt that I wanted to experience the working life. Additionally I felt that I wanted to go abroad, meet new people, see new things. IAESTE seemed perfect for this. Browsing through the list of traineeships, most of them seemed pretty normal. Programming in Java, work on a website, manage a database, etc. But then one stood out, Electronic Arts Software. I've been a big fan of games so this name directly stood out to me. The job description was a bit vague and there was no prior knowledge/skills necessary other than speaking your native language. But hey, the pay seemed good and it was located in Spain! After some language skill tests and a phone interview I received a mail stating I had been hired, and several weeks later there I was, on a plane to Madrid.

After a short 2 hour flight, I landed and was received by 2 local Madrileños with a big smile, Felix and Guillermo. The



moment I stepped out of the airport I nearly melted, it was 40° and that's not something you're used too as a Belgian. We got into Guillermo's car, put on Rock FM (loudly) and headed into the city. We were going to meet with Pablo, my landlord. We find a parking spot outside of a pub and as we start unpacking, an older man walks up and very happily starts talking very unintelligible Spanish. This was Pablo and even though I didn't understand a word he said, he kept talking as I nodded and repeated 'si'. Luckily the IAESTE guys helped by translating the important stuff. I was going to be staying at a 10 man shared flat for the first week until a nicer room became free. After the short tour I was left on my own to

unpack and explore a bit. I socialized a bit with my flatmates and discovered that there's also a Swede and a Norwegian who both work at EA staying here! I was chilling on the couch when they came home from work, soaking wet. The same day where it was 40° ended with big rain showers and a hailstorm (which fortunately is quite unusual in Madrid). These 2 guys, Tord and Ole would be the people I'd spend most of this awesome summer with. They immediately invited me to have dinner with them where Tord cooked up some of his 'specialty pasta con chorizo', it was a great start.

Next morning was my first day of work, or rather training. I arrived

a tour of the office building, got explanation on the basic workings and got a presentation on what our job would entail. I was going to be a localization tester for FIFA 16. Essentially this means I had to play the unreleased game in Dutch and check if all the translations were showing up correctly and made sense. Because the work involves a big team, the entire office space is open with everyone sitting at big 'island' desks. I was the only Belgian on the Dutch team, but we ended up getting along just fine, I also got to know people from all other language teams, we went out together and had a lot of fun, both during and after work.

A few days after I settled into my new Spanish lifestyle, we decided to throw a party for both IAESTE folks (which I hadn't met yet) and our colleagues from work. We ended up crowding our already

overcrowded 10 man flat but luckily there were enough drinks to keep everyone happy. The party got a bit too loud so we decided to move it into the city where the local IAESTE committee showed us around local pubs, clubs and other attractions. Meeting up every couple of days with IAESTE and heading into the city became a tradition. There were also of course the IAESTE city trip weekends, unfortunately I could only attend one trip to Valencia, but it was still an awesome experience. Slowly but surely I learned some Spanish, and enjoyed the city of Madrid's beautiful parks and buildings. I can ramble on and on about the countless things I did and saw, but really it's something you have to experience yourself. Time flew by and after 7 weeks I already was on my way home. With a lot of new friends and amazing experiences, I would recommend a traineeship to everyone.

## SPAIN



# THAILAND

KRISTOFFEL BAUWERAERTS

Thursday morning, June 4th, Brussels Airport. Destination: Bangkok, Thailand. I was not quite sure on what to expect. It was my first trip to Asia and I was all by myself. After missing the connecting flight in Abu Dhabi, due to a delay of the first flight, I arrived at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok at 6 p.m. on Friday. Waiting for me at the airport were the international officer of the university I was going to perform my internship at, and an international student of Cambodia he brought along. When we arrived in the airport parking lot, it struck me, it was so incredibly hot. The officer told me: "In Thailand we have two types of weather: hot and very hot." A phrase that got repeated several times by a lot of people during my stay. They said I was lucky because during April and May it's even hotter. They also told me I would get used to it, but eventually I realized I wouldn't, even not after 2 months. The first weekend I stayed at the room of the Cambodian student before getting my own room the next Monday.

We went out for dinner after my arrival and this was my first experience with the Thai food. And damn, it was so good. Everything I ate during my stay was just so amazing. I know how they say Thai cuisine is one of the bests in the world and I totally agree on that, it's just the



Bangkok,  
Thailand

best! Ever since I've been back home I've been thinking about how I miss it. The first weekend of my stay I got introduced to many new people and the thing I noticed most was the kindness of Thai people and how they always smile and are ready to help. A wonderful thing I admired in them. Walking around just made me happy, seeing all those smiling people.

My internship was at the Petroleum and Petrochemical College (PPC), a part of the eldest university of Thailand; Chulalongkorn University, or in short "Chula". I'm not going to write too many technicalities about the research itself. Just that it was very interesting and

relevant for my field. I could pick a topic myself and then work on it together with the corresponding PhD. Student. I attended a class as well. I received excellent guidance at every moment and the workload was not too high!

The free time during the weekends was always well spent. We went on a trip every weekend. I went to the original floating market and a royal palace (Thai people love their royals) with the international officer during the first weekend. With friends we went to Pattaya and Ko Lan. With my girlfriend that came to Thailand to visit me with some of her friends, I went to Ko Chang. With some Belgian

that came to Thailand to visit me with some of her friends, I went to Ko Chang. With some Belgian friends that also came to Thailand I met up at Krabi. And finally with my family that also came to Thailand I went to Ko Samui and Ko Tao. Every single one of these trips, also the smaller ones I didn't mention, were just great. Thailand has both a very rich culture you can discover as well as wonderful islands with paradise-like beaches.

My overall experience was fantastic. In the beginning I was, probably like a lot of people, not fully convinced that this was something for me. But now, looking back at my time in Thailand, I am so glad I did take my chances and had this adventure of a lifetime. I met great new people and I think it

changed me and the way I look at life. It helped me putting things in a better perspective.

Now what is it that makes an internship with IAESTE great? The fact you get to discover a different culture. But you don't do this in your 'regular summer holiday way', no, you do this from the inside with the local people. Your friends will be the locals and who else is there to better show you the real culture. I can recommend going on an internship with IAESTE to everyone. Even though right now it may seem a little frightening to some, I can assure you will look back on it with great satisfaction, only wishing it had lasted longer.

Kristoffel Bauweraerts

# THAILAND



# GERMANY

## WARD QUAGHEBEUR

I arrived on the 1st of August in Emden. For me, it was a short trip, a 5-hour drive from Ghent, Belgium. I arrived by car and was directly greeted by a friendly Professor Engemann, the coordinator of all international programs at the University of Applied Sciences Emden. He gave me a ride to my new home, and we made an appointment for next Monday.

This is how everything started. What followed was a wild rollercoaster ride of scientific research, international meetings and live-changing experiences.

At the Hochschule, I met my friendly supervisor Professor Uhlenhuth and Doctor Biernacki. They gave me a long thorough walk around the university and all its labs, and warmed me up for some interesting research. I first worked on a project simulating waste water treatment plants, and later changed to another project about flexibilisation of biogas plants. Both were very interesting and broadened my knowledge of the general processes and modeling of these plants. I gained some valuable experience I'll most probably use in my further career, both academic and professional.

Soon after I was introduced to the Hochschule, I met the other IAESTE interns. Since we didn't have a local committee in



Emden,  
Germany

Emden, it simply doesn't exist, we had to organize most things by ourselves. However, this wasn't a big problem. All the interns, we were four in total, were great people who love to make tons of fun. Every lunch, we came together in Backer Bochulz, the local bakery, where we spent our lunch breaks together. In the evenings, we often went for a drink together, or went to a restaurant to share a meal. The atmosphere was always great, we shared stories about our home countries, about our travel experiences and our daily lives back home. We compared cultures, discovered small and large differences and had a lovely time together.

During the weekends, we often went to a German IAESTE event. We went together to the Burg Party organized in Aachen by the Local Committee over there. On another weekend, we transversed whole Germany to go to a weekend organized by the Local Committee of Dresden. On these IAESTE weekends, we met tons of people from all over the world. Here, we were able to chat with students from literally everywhere. I talked with Iranians and Tunisians, with Ecuadorians and Chinese, with Angolians and Czechs. It was great. I discovered so much about all these different interesting people and cultures. The LCs had also great activities planned. We did a city rally

about all these different interesting people and cultures. The LC's had also great activities planned. We did a city rally through Aachen, which my team unfortunately didn't win. We held a great party in an old medieval castle in Aachen. We dined on a rooftop in Dresden and ate a glorious BBQ in a city park. It was amazing. New experiences kept coming in, and while the last one wasn't fully processed in my brain, a new experience was already knocking to come in. Sunday evening was the worst. Since intercity trains are quite expensive in Germany, we took the cheaper options of long-haul busses and series of slow regional trains. Most of the time, it took us more than seven hours before we arrived home, exhausted but fulfilled with wonderful experiences.

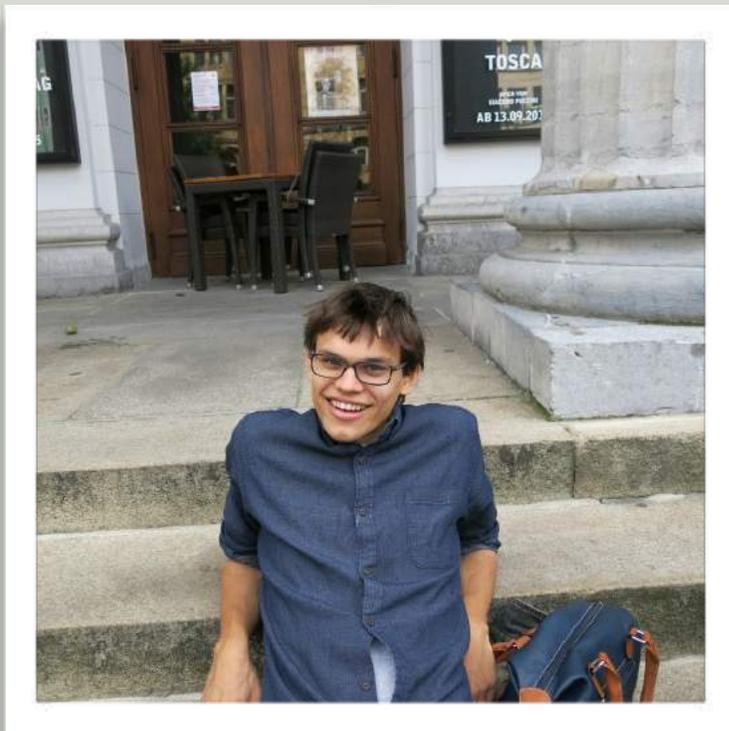
During my stay I learned more about the German culture. It's quite

similar to the Belgian culture, but there are some big, meaningful differences. The German folks were a little bit of a mystery for me before, but now, I have the feeling a know our neighbours better. I didn't simply met them as a tourist, but as an equal. I got to know the culture from within. And my spoken German improved a lot!

It was a great time in Emden. I gained valuable working skills, I met tons of people from all over the world and made some international lifelong friends. But most of all, it was tons of fun, and I came out a richer person.

Ward Quaghebeur

Student Bioscience Engineering:  
Environmental Technology & Intern  
in Emden 2015



## GERMANY



# GERMANY

CHEN YANG

I worked as a trainee at the Department of Crop Sciences, Section Quality of Plant Products, Georg-August-University of Göttingen from 01st August until 18th September 2015.

Once I recognized that I was accepted by the IAESTE internship in Göttingen, Germany, I felt really happy since it was the first international internship that I got. Everything there would be unfamiliar for me, but this was also the most attractive point of this journey. Meanwhile, this internship took place in one of the best university of Germany, Göttingen University, I felt happy to join such a fantastic research group and enjoy the amazing research atmosphere there. Meanwhile, I also recognized the difficulties during the internship. Though the content of the internship was related to my current study, there were still a few differences. I was also a little bit worried about the new environment. Are people easygoing there?

However, once I arrived in Göttingen, Germany. Everything seemed not as difficult as what I imagined. Sarah, a volunteer of IAESTE Göttingen picked me up in the bus station. I felt very guilty because it was already 10 p.m. She was very friendly. As an IAESTE volunteer, she did not only pick me up in the bus



Göttingen,  
Germany

station, but brought me to my dormitory, though it was really far from her own home. Once she knew that I did not bring my quilt with me, she came to my flat again and gave me her quilt. Additionally, she also gave me her bicycle for free because she thought my working place was far from my flat.

My flat mate was also very friendly. Before coming to Göttingen, I was a little bit worried about cooking, since I did not have enough space to bring enough cooking machines with me. Meanwhile, I did not want to buy new things since they are always very expensive and I had to through them away after the 2 months internship, which will waste a lot. However,

this problem was solved when I arrived in my flat because my flat mate said I could always use her dish, bowl, etc. that I want to use. IAESTE workers and German people really gave me a very good first impression. They are very easygoing, helpful and friendly!

My internship itself was also very fantastic! Everyone in the Department of Crop Sciences was highly motivated and very interested in their research. My supervisor Dr. Inga Smit and my tutor Frederike Wenig helped me to learn readily the methods and performed measurements of high quality. Every worker there (i.e. PhD students, Master students, Scientific assistants, etc.) were very friendly, which

performed measurements of high quality. Every worker there (i.e. PhD students, Master students, Scientific assistants, etc.) were very friendly, which gave me a very good motivation to work with them every day. Sometimes, when I made mistakes, none of them blamed me, they always worked with me to find the best solution and because of this, I always could learn extra knowledge. I really thought that it was also very important for my study and research in the future since no one can guarantee that they will not make any mistake during a long term research and because of this, the experience to find the best solution is really important, which is even more important than the main content of internship itself!

During my research staying, I actively participated on investigations about quality parameters of tomatoes. Specially, I developed competences in

analysis with different methods such as SPAD-measurements, chlorophyll extractions, colour and texture analysis, physical methods (refraction for sugar analysis) and titration (titratable acids). Additionally I learned techniques for quality estimation of wheat flour (dough properties with the Farinograph, baking test). I was involved in cultivating tomatoes in an outdoor pot experiment related to the Potassium nutrition of the plants.

Apart from that, the local IAESTE organization also organized very fantastic travels and parties every week. We visited many beautiful cities in Germany, which included Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, Hannover, Rhine river, etc. And there was an regular BBQ in Gottingen every Wednesday. I enjoyed every day in Germany!

IAESTE, thank you so much for giving me such amazing internship in Germany!

## GERMANY



# COLOMBIA

RIK HENDERICKX

Friday, the 28th of August, 08:00 AM, Brussels Airport

I'm boarding my first plane that will take me to Madrid. In Madrid, I have to catch another flight to Bogotá. After 14 hours of traveling, I finally arrive at El Dorado airport in the capital of Colombia, completely exhausted. While waiting at the baggage reclaim and slowly falling asleep, I suddenly notice 2 people waving at me hysterically, holding a piece of paper that shows my name and the name university where I'm supposed to be working during the next 2 months. One of them will later appear to be the owner of the student home where I'll be staying, The other one, a student living in the same apartment, will become a great friend.

4 days later...

I already feel like home here. The students that live at the apartment are too kind. They helped me to get settled, providing me with a Colombian SIM card and joining me in doing groceries etc. Most of them barely speak English though, but that's okay. It forces me to improve my Spanish level, which is terrible at the moment.

Meanwhile, I've met my supervisor at the Universidad de San Buenaventura. Se llama Marcelo. He's really chill. He told me that I will be working on two

projects in the audio engineering department over here. One of them involves research in software-defined radio using GNU Radio and USRP modules. The other one allows me to design an audio equalizer that one can control using a smartphone application.

Marcelo also gave me a quick tour through the university. It's beautiful, so much nicer than any campus back in Belgium, and not even comparable to our dear Plateau building. You may be thinking something like "hey, anything would beat Jozef Plateau's campus", but just take a look at the first picture. There's a soccer field, basketball field, volleyball field, an area with grass where you can just chill, there's an amazing coffee bar, a sports hall, gym, and so on. These are just recreational facilities. The academic facilities they own are probably even crazier: two floors with electronic labs, fully equipped with everything you could think of and free for use for all electrical engineering students, multiple professional music production studios (they told me that Shakira had been recording here several times) for audio engineering students, a hangar with aircraft components available for avionics engineering students etc. I never expected anything like this in a city like Bogotá, which is certainly not the most beautiful and safe place on earth, as it appears.

I'm living up in the north of the city, far away from downtown. It takes at least an hour and a half by Transmilenio, the public bus transportation network, to get to the city centre, so you get an idea of how big this city really is. Estimations suggest that at least 10 million people live here. That's the whole population of Belgium in one city. It isn't the safest place either. 90% of my friends from back at the apartment have been robbed at least once in Bogotá, so they're all telling me that I should be really careful, and I should never go outside alone at night. Indeed, at night, poor people from the comunas (districts with primitive houses build in the hills, comparable to the favelas in Brazil) descend from their homes and 'hunt' for value downtown. But that doesn't make the city less interesting. On the contrary, it makes life over here a unique experience.

One evening, some friends invited me for a game of football on a 'cancha' (a soccer playground in the streets) nearby. Five minutes into the game, something really sad happened: I broke my foot.

1.5 months later

After walking around on crutches for three weeks and wearing a special walking cast for several weeks more, my foot is finally fully healed. My time on crutches has been really frustrating. It was hard, often too hard to get anywhere. Even going to the university was kind of

impossible. I had to rely on someone willing to take me by car. I spent a lot of time in my student room, which isn't the largest, and didn't get to see a lot of the city.

However, after losing my crutches, my adventures started. Not only did I start to explore the city of Bogotá, I also went across its borders. At the IAESTE National Meeting, I met the people from the Colombian IAESTE community and other international students that are currently doing an internship in Colombia. It was exciting: we started off with a bike tour in Ibagué (where IAESTE Colombia is settled). Next, we travelled to Armenia and surroundings, visiting a beautiful small town (Salento), doing a canopy tour, being guided through a coffee farm and so on. Three weeks later, we reunited in Medellín, which is probably the most beautiful city I've ever seen. It goes without saying that we had a lot of fun and very little sleep...

By this time, I have decided to extend my stay here in Colombia. Now that I have experienced some of the wonderful things the country has to offer, I realize that I have lost too much precious time being stuck

in my room, time that I could have spent exploring and having wonderful experiences. That's why I'm staying for 3 months instead of 2 months, yay!

Today

As I'm writing this report, I'm preparing for a trip to the Caribbean coast of Colombia (Santa Marta, Tayrona Park, Cartagena) and to San Andrés, an island in the Caribbean sea that is part of Colombia's territory. I can't wait to go there!

Applying for this internship has shown to be the best decision of my life. At first, I had doubts, a lot of them. The idea of going to Latin America on my own was kind of scary to be honest, certainly because it would be the first time that I'm traveling abroad alone. But here I am now, having a fantastic time, gaining work experience in a foreign country while visiting unique places, meeting interesting people and fully living the Colombian life. Hasta luego!

Rik Henderickx

Universidad de San Buenaventura,  
Bogotá, Colombia



# COLOMBIA



# POLAND

LEN VANDE VEIRE

It's 2 a.m., Friday the 3rd of July 2015. My alarm clock wakes me from a very short power nap. An hour earlier, I was still cramming the last and maybe not-so-necessary things in my already overfull traveling bag. A cup of coffee and a final luggage check later, we leave for the airport of Charleroi. There I say the final goodbyes to my family, and I'm good to go! When I step through the gate, I realize that this is my first flight ever, the first time abroad for that long and the first time living on my own, in a country where I don't know anyone and don't speak the local language. But I'm way too excited to care about that, and before I know it, I'm on the plane. Destination: Krakow! An adventure has begun.

Merely two hours later, I arrive at the Krakow-Balice airport. I'm welcomed by a local IAESTE member, who takes me to the dorm I'll be staying in for the coming weeks. We drop off my luggage and immediately after we go for a morning walk through the Cracovian city centre. I already start to notice how beautiful the city is and how nice the people are.

It doesn't take long to get to know the other trainees. On the evening of my arrival day, I join them to climb the Kościuszko



mound, which gives a great view over the city. Afterwards, we go for a drink on the 'students square', a place where students gather to drink and throw a barbecue, because drinking in public is prohibited elsewhere. The day after we go swimming in a lake near the dorms, and on Sunday I visit the Wieliczka salt mines with two other trainees. And that's only the first weekend! If you go on a traineeship yourself, don't be shy and just join the other people. You'll be greeted with smiles and hugs, because the other trainees are as excited to meet you as you are to meet them. A very warm welcome indeed.

And warm it was in Poland! A common misconception about that country is that it is cold out there. In winter, yeah, but in summer? Oh no, not at all. My stay in Poland was blessed with sunshine and a blue sky, and temperatures above thirty degrees all the time.

Another misunderstanding about Poland that I have to set right, is that it is a somewhat poor and underdeveloped place, where the quality of living is much lower than in Belgium. In fact, I never experienced anything like that. The dorms were clean, buildings were quite modern and the tap water was drinkable. Also, public transport in Krakow was excellently organized.

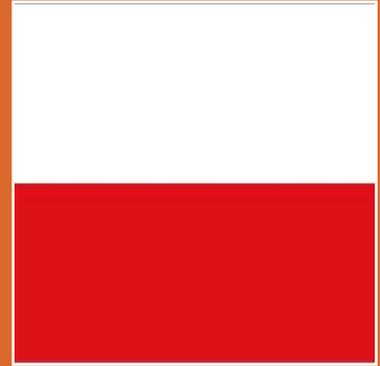
Of course, doing an internship means that you have to work. I had an assignment in the AGH university of Krakow, where I programmed a communication module for a medical robot and a software tool that eased the programming of a dedicated processor. The working pace was quite low, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but I had hoped to get an assignment that was a bit more challenging. If you are planning to go on an internship, and I definitely recommend you to do so, then a hint for you: if you want a more serious working experience, work in a company. If you want to take it easy, apply for an internship at a university ;).

So I had quite some free time, but I haven't been bored one single moment. Krakow truly is a beautiful city, with a lot of parks and green space. I could walk through the magnificent medieval city centre all day! During the week I'd visit a museum somewhere or try a

typical polish dish in a restaurant. In the evening, I'd grab a drink with the other interns near our dorms or in the city centre. The weekends were also packed with activities. For example, there were IAESTE weekends organized in different cities in or near Poland. This is a fun and cheap way to explore a city and get to know even more crazy people, so if you have the chance to participate in such a weekend, go for it! This is how I visited Poznan and Warsaw. If you'd rather go for a hike somewhere instead of doing a city trip, then no worries, because nature in Poland also is really beautiful! We went to Zakopane in the Tatra mountains for a day. Magnificent views and a good leg workout guaranteed.

When there's so many things to do and to see, time really flies. Six weeks came and went in a flash. This internship truly was an amazing experience, and I'll never forget the friends I made and the things I did.

## POLAND



# INDIA

TOM DE MALSCHE

Hey y'all! I did a ten week internship in the biotech lab in Manipal university, India. As a bioscience engineer I felt lucky that I got my first choice, since most of the topics were not really in my field. Of course I was very excited about this journey. An internship in a foreign country is an unforgettable experience and it is a big plus when searching for a job. I think way more students should take this opportunity, even if they wouldn't get credits for it (like me).

The arrival in India was actually not that good. It took a long time to get there in Manipal. Not only did I have to take three separate flights (Brussels->Bangalore->Mangalore), I had to pay a €40 additional fee in Bangalore for my luggage being too heavy. When I finally arrived in Mangalore no one was waiting for me there. I had to make some phone calls and two hours later finally someone would show up to drive us to college (1,5 hour drive). Luckily there was another intern waiting at the airport too. It appeared that he studies in the same university (University of Ghent) and arrived with the same flight as I did. What a coincidence!! We would become friends and flatmates.

Speaking of which, the flat was not really what I expected. It was crazy hot and humid, in the rooms as well as outside, and



Manipal,  
India

we were not allowed to use the air conditioning (but we had a fan) nor the kitchen (locked). Also we had to share a room with another intern. I guess I just had to adjust a little to the Indian way of life.

Not a good start, but I knew things could only get better. And they did. My other flatmates all were cool guys and from that moment I knew I was going to have a great time the coming ten weeks. Seven people lived in our flat; besides me and the other Belgian guy there were two Germans, two fellows from Tunisia and a guy from Kazakhstan (who barely could speak English). Later the IAESTE people showed us around and took us out for

dinner, which was helpful because I never would have figured out how to order food. They also invited us for a trip the next day early in the morning so I got to meet the other interns. I immediately felt comfortable with this heterogeneous group of youngsters. People from all over the world, different skin colors, different religions, yet they all were part of a coherent group. During this first trip, which was epic by the way, I also discovered why the IAESTE people advised me to buy flip flops and an umbrella as soon as possible. I had not and of course it started raining cats and dogs. Monsoon rains are different from our rainfalls. They are very unpredictable and just take a couple of minutes. But it rains

it started raining cats and dogs. Monsoon rains are different from our rainfalls. They are very unpredictable and just take a couple of minutes. But it rains extremely hard, sometimes even an umbrella doesn't help to keep you from getting wet.

After this weekend it was time for my first day in the lab. I met my professor (with mustache of course, like all indian men) in the morning. He was very nice and caring. He showed me around in the lab and introduced me to the other people (lab technicians, PhD students,...). The lab was neat and the equipment state of the art, but I immediately noticed people there have different habits. They would walk around on bare feet, there was no policy on waste (everything just in the sink) and they are generally more relaxed, also when it comes to working hours. Quite nice.

During this ten weeks in the lab I surely learned a lot. I gained experience and it was fun at the same time. But the most fun was the weekends. Almost every weekend we would do a trip, sometimes just one day but most of the times two or three days. Some of the trips were organized by IAESTE, some by a couple of interns themselves. I've been to wonderful places like Hampi, Mysore, Dandeli, Kerala backwaters, ... (no, not taj mahal. That was way too far). IAESTE India really took care of us. Besides the trips they also organized events like cooking classes, international days, sport activities and other stuff. They always were ready to give some advice or help.

To summarize, I had a fantastic time over there. The people. The food. The beautiful places. The peace of mind. I can recommend (an internship in) India to everybody. If I could do it all over

## INDIA



# WEST BANK

SIMON BOES

“Where are you going in Israel”, asked the lady sitting next to me on the airplane heading to Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion airport. I told her about my internship in Nablus. Being an Israeli, she had never heard of Nablus, of which the Hebrew name Shechem was unknown to me at that point. “It’s in the West Bank”, I added, carefully avoiding the word ‘Palestine’ for obvious reasons. She raised her eyebrows, hesitated for a moment, and then said with an astonishingly serious voice “don’t you know... the Palestinians will kill you if you cross the border”.

Of course this wasn’t true, and although her words – and the 15 minutes interrogation at the passport control in Ben Gurion for that matter – didn’t really help me to forget the doubts still remaining in my head, they are testimony of the unusual and difficult situation in Israel/Palestine. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a topic that would inevitably come up when having a long enough conversation with any Palestinian I would meet in the following six weeks of my internship. Luckily the journey from Tel Aviv to Nablus went smoothly and was carefully arranged by the local IAESTE committee. In Nablus I met my fellow IAESTE trainees with whom I would share the boy’s apartment provided by the An-Najah University and



Nablus,  
West Bank

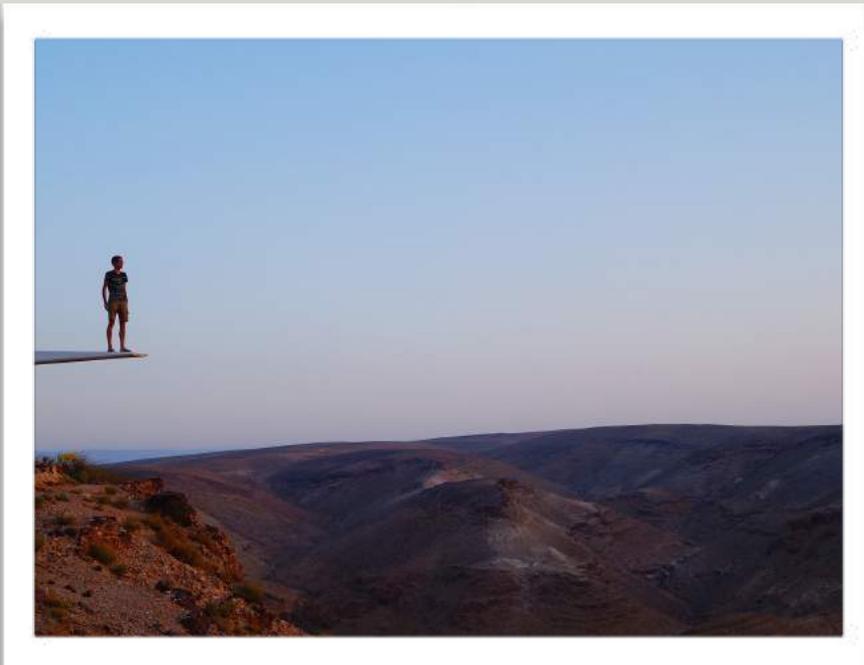
conveniently situated close to the old campus. The girls’ apartment – a mixed apartment would obviously be unthinkable in a Muslim culture – was closer to the city centre and a 2.5 shekel (~ 0.60 euro) taxi drive from our place. Besides walking, taxis are the dominant way of getting around in the city since there is no other public transport. Luckily, prices are really cheap – as you can tell – especially if you opt for a shared taxi or ‘service’ (commonly pronounced as the Dutch ‘servies’). I did my internship at a small architecture/engineering company which maintains close ties to the An-Najah University and concentrates its activities in Nablus and its vicinity. I had to

make designs and rendered 3D images of both residential and commercial projects, based on rough floor plans provided by my colleagues. Work only lasted from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (and only to 2 p.m. during Ramadan), so the workload wasn’t all that high, which I think is suitable for an IAESTE internship. (Obviously this depends on the kind of work you do; one of the girls only finished work at 6 p.m. each day.) Even though I sometimes had the impression that the work I did wasn’t really significant – in the end most of the design alternatives I made were completely overhauled anyway – I learned a lot of new software tools and design tricks and

I learned a lot of new software tools and design tricks and my colleagues showed great interest in my 'foreign' way of designing. I would also never have thought that I would ever design a building in eastern traditional style with semi-arches, and decorative columns and cornices. But enough about work! Despite the quite difficult political situation in Palestine, it is a beautiful country with a rich culture and plenty of things to see and do. The food is good and sometimes extremely cheap – yes falafel sandwich, I'm looking at you – and Palestinian hospitality has proved to be as legendary as people told me it would be. If you have never been to an Arabic or Muslim country you are in for a culture shock though. For example, it is absolutely not done for a man to shake hands with women, or for a woman to sit between two men in a taxi. And of course, the inevitable 'Insha'Allah' (≈ 'God willing') after

every expression of hope or intention also seems peculiar at first, but you get used to it quickly. Traveling can be challenging in Palestine/Israel because of the Israeli checkpoints – the ubiquitous, heavily armed soldiers never fail to remind you Palestine is still an occupied country – but is absolutely worth the trouble. The magnificent holy places in Jerusalem, beautifully situated monasteries near Jericho, and Masada's breathtaking fortifications towering above the Jordan Valley are only a few of the unforgettable sights to behold.

And ultimately, if you still have doubts about going abroad with IAESTE, the cliché proved to be true. Just do it! Take the plunge! It will be one of the greatest experience in your life, and the only thing you might regret is not having opted for the maximum amount of weeks for your internship.



## WEST BANK



# POLAND

GILLES DECAN

The day I was leaving for Krakow, I have to admit, I was a bit scared. I was about to leave my family and friends and was going to Krakow, where I didn't know anybody, to live and work there for 6 weeks. Barely did I knew what a great adventure was waiting for me in Krakow.

When I arrived at Krakow Airport, my worries were almost immediately wiped away. I got picked up by an IAESTE-member from Poland, who brought me to the dormitory where I would live for the next 6 weeks. She showed me around the dorm and told me about the things that were happening in the next few days. Since I arrived in the weekend, I got some time to settle, to walk around and learn the new environment. Then on Monday, someone would pick me up and walk with me to my work at the AGH University. So everything was well prepared, which caused my worrying to stop and started me to get ready to have a great working and of course social experience.

My work at the geo-engineering department of the AGH University consisted for the first and small part of assisting the PhD-students in the geothermal laboratory. This wasn't a very challenging job but it was still nice to do some experiments in the lab. The most part of my



work consisted of doing my own research. Research about heating and cooling loads, cost of heating and cooling, borehole heat exchangers and heat pumps with as end result an article in which I compare all these things between Belgium and Poland.

But enough about work, the real experience was the social experience, the great time I had here and all the new friends I made. It already started the day I had arrived. The other interns and some of the Polish IAESTE-people were having some beers. The perfect chance for me to join and to get to know the others. A lot of other nights like this followed and step by step we became closer friends. During

the weeks, we got together for some drinks and to talk and make fun. It wasn't only about the drinks though, we had barbecues together as well. Of course some alcohol like the cheap Polish beer or the traditional Polish vodka was always accompanying us. In the weekends we went out partying together, having a blast until 5 or 6 a.m. During the daytime in the weekends, we could hang out, recover from the previous night or visit some things in the old historical center. The last weekend of my stay - it was more than 30 degrees outside - we decided to take a bus to a lake close by. We hung out there all afternoon, taking a dive in the lake when we felt too hot.

second Monday. This way we could learn a lot about other cultures and other cuisines. We started with a Polish evening where we could taste traditional Polish food and where we played some drinking games with traditional Polish vodka. Two weeks later, we had an Iranian/Kazakh evening and right before I left, there was a Belgian/Czech evening.

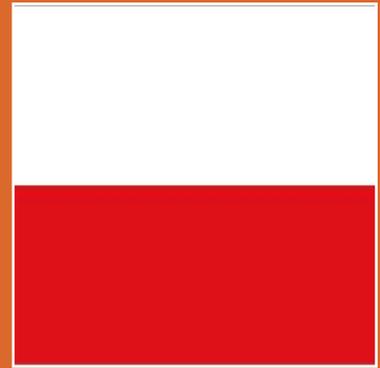
As scared as I was when I got on my plane from Zaventem to Krakow, as sad as I was at the end of my internship when I had to go back home. I've had a great time

over here and as thrilled as I was to see my friends and girlfriend back, I was also sad to leave this beautiful city and these awesome people. I really had a great time over here and made friends all over the world, from Brazil to Iran, from Denmark to Cyprus and I know that wherever I am, I have someone to contact.

Gilles Decan

Mechanical Energy Engineering,  
UGent, Belgium

# POLAND



# CROATIA

JOREN BUYTAERT

On the 10th of July I left my home for an 8-week internship in Split, Croatia. After a whole day of traveling I arrived at the bus station where somebody from IAESTE was waiting to pick me up to take me to my room. When I arrived there late in the evening, I was a little disappointed about the place: it was small, dirty and it smelled like smoke inside the whole apartment. Also, I was there alone without any other trainees around me, so I was a little bit lonely in the beginning.

The next day I went out to look for a supermarket and other shops and I went to the old town of Split to get to know the city a little bit. That evening the feeling about being lonely changed because I met the other trainees while going around town. The group was just amazing, a lot of nice and fun people.

The next Monday, my first workday, someone from IAESTE took me to the company where I was supposed to work, but apparently something went wrong in the communication because they weren't expecting me until September. Because of this my first week was a bit boring since they hadn't prepared any work for me. To be honest, the rest of my internship wasn't much more interesting. I was working in a company that sells electric equipment, so the



Split, Croatia

only thing I had to do was search on the internet for some cheap stuff. Not really what I expected.

Luckily I met the other trainees a few times during the week so it wasn't that boring. The 2nd weekend we didn't really do anything special, we went to the beach and had a lazy day. The weekend after that on the other hand, we went to Krka, a national park in Croatia. We rented a car and made a road trip out of it.

During the next week, I went every evening to the apartment where the other trainees were housed. Because it was already the last week for a lot of them,

we visited the islands around Split where at one point, we missed the last ferry. Because we were stuck on the island, we went to the beach to go for a night swim and watch the stars while waiting for the first ferry back to Split at 5 in the morning. The next two days (we still had to go to work) were exhausting, but it was totally worth it.

As I said, 4 trainees left during this week, so the next weekend we went to another island with just the 3 of us. Here we rented some bikes and cycled to the other side of the island to visit an old and beautiful city where we slept on the beach for the night (yes, again a night under the night sky ☾ ). The next day we

slept on the beach for the night (yes, again a night under the night sky ☼ ). The next day we went back to the other city to take the ferry back to Split after we went for another swim. We arrived back at the apartment without any energy left, so once again, an amazing weekend.

The weekend after this, it was the last weekend for one of the 2 other trainees, so we decided to make it a party weekend as a goodbye. Because of this, we didn't do much for the rest of the days except sleeping and lying on the beach.

During the guy's last week, we took a day off and went hiking on one of the mountains close to Split. After a hard climb we reached the summit of the mountain (Mosor, about 1325m high if I remember is), we had an amazing view on Split and on the other side of the mountains. My legs were hurting for 2 days after this, but again, worth it.

The next day, a friend of the girl that was still staying came to our apartment, so after Friday, we were still with 3 people. The day after, we went rafting on a river nearby, and another friend of the girl came with us, so we were with 4 people.

The next week it was the girl's and my birthday, so we went partying

during the week. Again a hard week to stay awake at work, but I didn't have much to do, so I managed to do it. Thursday that fried left again, so me and the girl were the only ones left. We didn't do much on Saturday, we just took a long sleep and went to the beach again. On Saturday night, another guy from Tunisia arrived and on Sunday, me and the girl went diving. The view in the Mediterranean sea is just amazing (compared to Belgium of course).

The weekend afterwards (my last weekend), we visited Zagreb. My company has an apartment there that we could use, so we could stay there for free. It's not a big city, but beautiful to walk around. One weekend is a bit short to see the whole city, but I loved it.

My last few days were calm, and I was just enjoying the time with the 2 remaining trainees. After a last goodbye on Friday morning, I left to the airport to come back home after an amazing 2 months. This experience is definitely something I will never forget in my life.

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Master student in industrial engineering electrotechnics, University of Ghent, Belgium

# CROATIA



# HONG KONG

BERT DE KONICK

For my internship, I went 9 weeks to Hong Kong, a SAR of China. It was definitely a great period, with the combination of working and discovering one of the nicest cities in the world. An IAESTE internship stands always for: not one minute of boredom and a lot of nice trips and this is why this internship was so wonderful.

After going to the center of Hong Kong on my own, my buddy Ted was waiting for me at the bus station. Together we discovered the campus of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, my exchange company, and the useful shops around the city. There were already 8 people arrived in the dorm and as it affirms good students, the first parties arrived fast. Every evening there was a trip planned through the city or some activity in the dorm. There were about 30 trainees in our dormitory and after the internship it was like one big family.

Of course there was also work that had to be done. My project was about acoustic metamaterials, a new kind of materials made in the laboratory by manipulating and building of microstructures, to obtain new properties. Together with the help of my supervisor and my accompanying PhD-student, I



Hong Kong,  
China

did first some research about it on the internet, followed by some practical simulations in COMSOL, a computer program for the finite element method. Because I had no desk to work on, I worked in the library of the university together with some other exchange students and at noon, we gathered with the whole group for lunch in the staff canteen where the served food was excellent.

Hong Kong has a really western culture and so the food is also like in Belgium. The only difference is that they eat always rice instead of potatoes and of course there are not as much fries and chocolate, but I got really fast used to it. It is a very crowded city with only flats, but after every high building, a

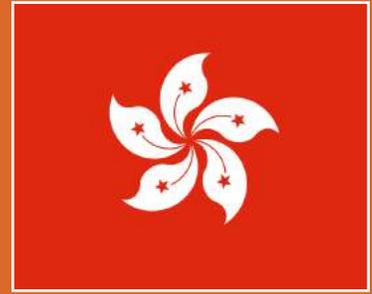
mountain arises, which makes it one of the most beautiful cities I ever saw. Even after the famous skyline, beautiful lighted by night, are mountains and this is why you never get the thought to be locked up in a crowded city.

Everybody of the IAESTE students could choose which activity they wanted to join or not, but I can recommend to try to join as much as possible. You learn to know new cultures, not only the one from Hong Kong, but also I learned to know a lot of European visions. The students in my group came from around Europe, two from Oman and one from Thailand. Together we got a lot of discussions about cultural differences, sports but also about politics or the contemporary problems in the world.

We also planned a trip to mainland China, with Shanghai ,Beijing and Shenzhen as stops. This 5 day trip were the best days of the internship. Together with 10 other trainees and one Hong Kong girl, we discovered the must-sees in these cities with a walk of more than 10 kilometers on the great wall as headliner. We discovered the biggest cities of the biggest country in the world and even the train trip from Shanghai to

Beijing from 15 hours and the one from Beijing to Shenzhen from 21 hours were nice with this great company.

To conclude, I can say that it's definitely worth it to join an IAESTE internship. The company, the work and the discovering of a new culture together made it for everyone a huge and wonderful experience. I had a great time and I shouldn't doubt any second to do it again.



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