

INTERNSHIP BOOKLET 2019

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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.

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ECUADOR



Since January my mind was set on doing an internship abroad. It didn't even matter where, as my wish list proved: Latvia, Panama or Uzbekistan. When all possible internships were finally released, there was only one that really interested me: an insurance firm in Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

I didn't apply for any other internship, not because I was so sure that I would have the one in Ecuador, but because I really only wanted this one. In the end the fact that it was all or nothing made sure I put everything I had in my application. It worked out really well, because at the end of February I got the nomination and I was one step closer to Ecuador.



It took me a lot of paperwork, some trips to Brussels, and more than 24 hours of travelling on the 8th of July to finally get to Quito. At around 2AM I arrived in the hostel that would be my home for half of my stay. The next morning I was greeted by an amazing view of Quito. That evening, I finally got to meet the other IAESTE students with whom I would share my

experience for the next months. There were so many Polish people that I was afraid I'd learn Polish faster than Spanish, but all of them were very open and didn't mind speaking English to each other when someone else was around.

After three days of exploring Quito and its surroundings, I had my first working day. The engineer with whom I worked introduced me to the other employees and the insurance company itself. The next weeks I was part of the project to visualize the processes of the firm and try to improve them. Apart from this, I also had the opportunity to create an inventory management system and a methodology to rate and evaluate suppliers (which is way cooler than it looks here).

“I'll never get accustomed to saying goodbye to international friends without knowing when or even if you'll ever see each other again.”

Every weekend something else was planned by IAESTE Ecuador. In no particular order and with the high possibility of forgetting way too many experiences, here they are: spotting whales in Puerto Lopez and blue-footed boobies (these are birds, really, look it up) on Isla de la Plata, waving at monkeys and swimming in a lagoon in Cuyabeno, taking buses between Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil, buying a new wallet in Otavalo, flying over the cloud forest of Mindo on a zip line, walking the loop around Quilotoa, reaching 4864m on Cotopaxi, biking next to (and under) waterfalls in Baños and enjoying the view of Quito from the top of the

During my eighty days I got used to a lot: the days that are always 12 hours long and change so quickly to nighttime at 6:30PM (literally don't look for 5 minutes and it is as dark as it is going to be), the Ecuadorian-Spanish, actually working for 8 hours a day, the importance of coins in Ecuador, the bus system of Quito and the altitude of the city.

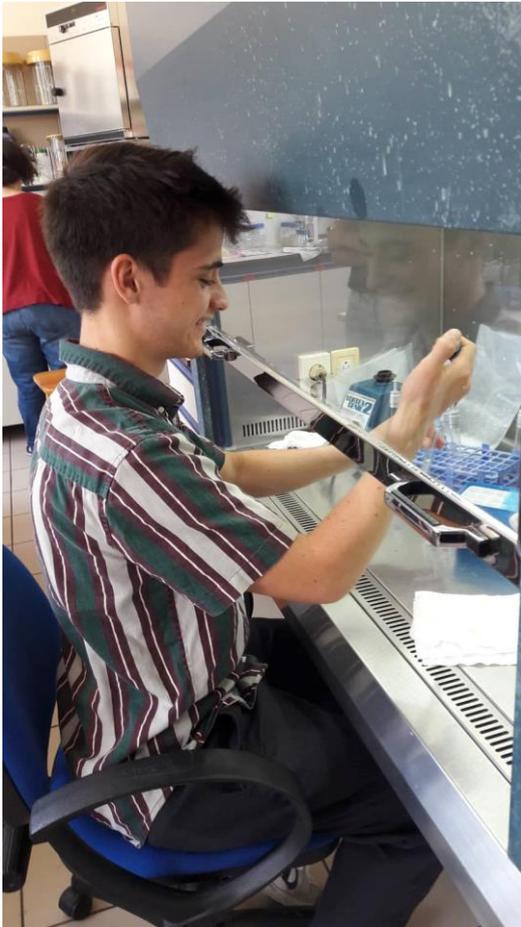


But there is one thing that I will never get accustomed to, and not for a lack of trying after being part of two different international organizations already: saying goodbye to international friends without knowing when or even if you'll see each other again. It has and will always break me a little to see someone go or leave myself. Then again, we will surely meet again somewhere, and now there's always something to look forward to.





An IAESTE internship begins like everybody in Belgium with applying for it. I wasn't really sure about doing an internship abroad completely alone without my Belgian friends but I just thought I should go for it. So I did, I applied for internships with Athens as the first choice. My odds were very low I guess because more than five people applied for it but in February I noticed I was the lucky who got the internship.



My internship was a short one, six weeks in total. The weeks before my internship I hadn't the time to feel the excitement of my internship because I was fully occupied with my exams. The day after ending my exams I arrived in the beautiful Athens. IAESTE took care of the housing and so I met Eifel. Eifel was the owner of the apartment. She was really awesome and kind and she answered all my questions within minutes. Once arrived in the flat I met my other four other flatmates who were so kind and really spontaneous. I learned to know them better and I immediately joined them on trips in the weekend to different Greek cities and islands. The most difficult decisions of my internship were the ones where I needed to decide to which destination I would go the next weekend. I was really surprised by the beautiful nature in Greece.

I thought it was just a country with only beaches and temples but it is the opposite, Greece has also mountains to hike, waterfalls, beautiful rocks in Meteora and really cosy cities as well. Greece is also well known from its rich cultural heritage. When you know a bit about Greek mythology and history it is really cool to see all the temples and mythical places. And last but not least the food in Greece is the best, I tried as many as foods as I could and they all did not disappoint. The ouzo is worth a try as well but take care when drinking this ;)

“The ouzo is worth a try but take care when drinking this.”

Of course I was not on holidays in Athens. I started working for the lab of dairy research the Monday after my arrival. When I arrived at the agricultural university I was a bit surprised. All the buildings of the uni were full of graffiti. It looked a bit abandoned from the outside, there were also not many students because they just finished their exams when I arrived. Luckily the outside of the building wasn't representative for the inside. I worked in a microbiological lab with around seven other people. I was working on different projects so every day was different, this was quite nice because I get bored very easily. I worked for example in purification of bacteriocins, analysis of the microbial composition of dairy products, probiotics...

We also went on an excursion one day with two girls from the lab to sample some grapes for DNA-analysis. But the best part of the internship was the working routine. I began working at 9:30 am and most of the time I finished before 2 am. After work I thus had plenty of time to visit Athens or to do other stuff. In August most of the people from the lab were on vacation so I thought: "Maybe I want to take a few days off at work as well!". I asked for it and I think they were glad I asked it because they didn't need to provide me any work for these days. This illustrates a bit the Greek lifestyle, they are not really strict which is quite nice in my opinion except when you have to take care of the documents for payment etc. With the help of an IAESTE representative it was a lot easier but you still have to wait quite a long time in the tax office to get the papers.

Everything together it was an amazing experience and I would recommend everybody to do the effort and apply for an internship!





Norway, what can I say, it's magical. This summer, I spend 6 weeks at the university of Oslo building an educational platform. While the internship was a fun and worthwhile experience, it is only a part of the experiences I want to be sharing with you. Oslo is a vibrant and culturally engaged city, full of new experiences. While I would not recommend tourists to visit it, it would definitely be one of my top choices of cities to live in. It is the largest capital of Europe by area, but smaller than Brussels by population. This is because it is full of parks and trails to hike and lakes to dive in. All these places are easily accessible by a fast and efficient public transport, which was probably the biggest culture shock I experienced.

When I arrived in Norway, I got an extended explanation on how to get to the main station, where Emil, an IAESTE-receptionist was waiting on me. He helped me to get to the place I would be staying at for the next 6 weeks. This was an apartment just outside of the city center, which I would be sharing with two Norse people and their kittens. Yes, kittens. Jack. Pot.

My very first weekend in Norway, I spend going on one of the IAESTE Norway weekends to Grimstad. As mentioned, Norse people live a lot closer to nature than we do, so this weekend we rented a boat and some kayaks and camped on a small island, only inhabited by sheep. The city itself was small and picturesque, but it housed a University and had some fun bars.



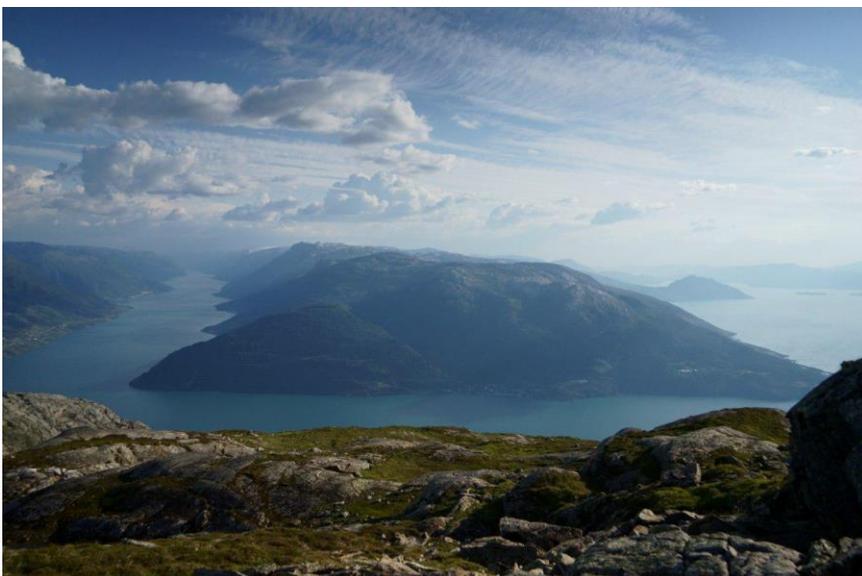
“A fast and efficient public transport, which was probably the biggest culture shock I experienced.”

During my internship, I worked together with 5 other students: someone from Edinburgh, Shanghai, Austria, Cyprus and some guy from Kortrijk. Here worked as a team and learned different techniques and technologies, combined with a few words of Chinese.



I tried to see as much of Norway as I could. I went on two roadtrips, the second one being with the other Belgian student and the girl from Austria. This trip went from the Oslo, all the way to the West in Bergen and back, during which we camped every night near another Fjord, and tried to explore as much as we could.

The IAESTE organization of Norway was very active. They organised a number of weekends around Norway for all IAESTE interns to join, we had some barbecues or barnights in Oslo every other weekend and so on. I could only join 2 weekends: The Grimstad weekend and the Oslo one. The last one was super fun, as it took place during the start of the academic year in Norway so we could join some freshmen parties.



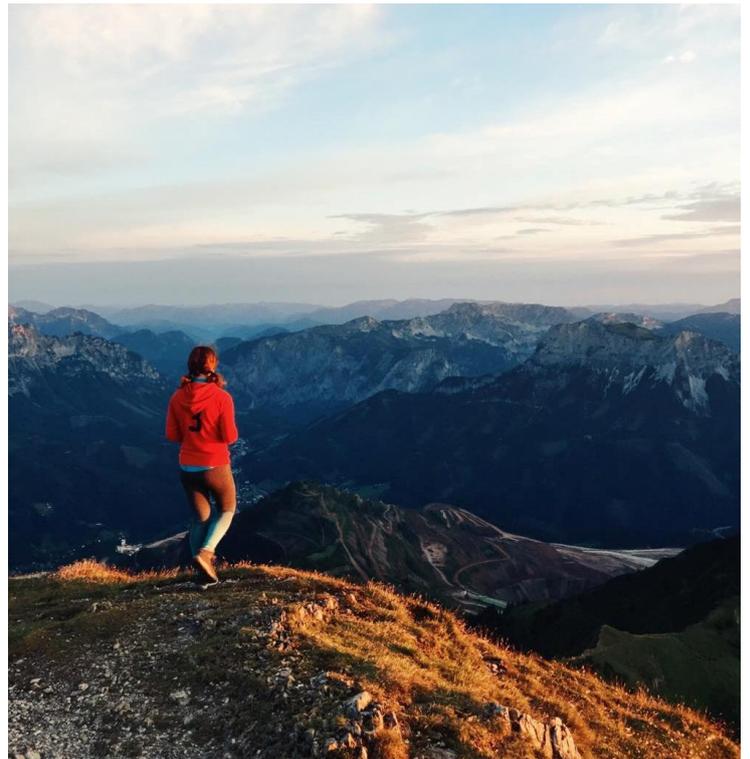
Overall, I would like to encourage everyone to participate in this unique and wonderful adventure.



This summer I did an amazing IAESTE internship in Leoben, Austria. I love travelling, meeting new people, seeing beautiful landscapes, experiencing new cultures, ... so doing a cultural exchange like this is exactly what I wanted! After a clear and compact application procedure (oh boy, if you've ever done an Erasmus exchange, you know what I mean!), booking train tickets and packing my suitcase, I was totally good to go!

I arrived late on a Saturday evening in the main train station of Leoben and was already mentally prepared to walk half an hour to my dorm...but here's where the awesomeness of IAESTE comes in: they picked me up by car from the station! You can't imagine how thankful I was, not having to walk all the way in the dark. And that was the start of an amazing six-weeks-adventure. Of course, there was the internship part. Five days a week I worked at Materials Center Leoben. I had the luck to end up in an enjoyable group of people and be given a task I totally enjoyed. And let me tell you, the pay was not bad either ;) . But besides those forty hours per week, I had oceans of time to do whatever I wanted.

The local IAESTE group of Leoben organized some events for us, which was wonderful. There were the international evenings, where some of us had the opportunity to prepare a dinner from our home country for the rest to try out, and the guided tour in the Gösser brewery. My favourite event, however, was the hike on the Eisenerzer Reichenstein that they organised. After an hour bus ride in the direction of Eisenerz, we set up the mountain. It was for sure one of the hardest hikes I've ever done (no, in Belgium we don't have 2000-meter-high mountains with 25% slopes...), but the views on top made it totally worth the effort! After a nice dinner and a short night in the Reichenstein hut, we did a short hike to the top at 5 am to view the sunrise. Never seen such an amazing sunrise before!



“Here's where the awesomeness of IAESTE comes in...”



Of course I also did some travelling while I was there. I went to Graz and Salzburg, but my favourite city trip was definitely Vienna! For three days I walked the boulevard on Ringstrasse, explored the old town, enjoyed the gardens of Schönbrunn and visited the Natural History Museum. I even had the opportunity to watch a modern ballet on the big screen in front of the Vienna City Hall!

And the rest of my free time, I spent doing what I love the most: hiking! Leoben is located in the valley of the river the Mur, and there were some pretty mountains around. Of course there were the thunderstorms that appear every few days out of nothing in Leoben, but hiking in them wasn't less fun than in the bright sun. And after a hard hike up the mountain hill, there was always a beautiful view waiting for me!



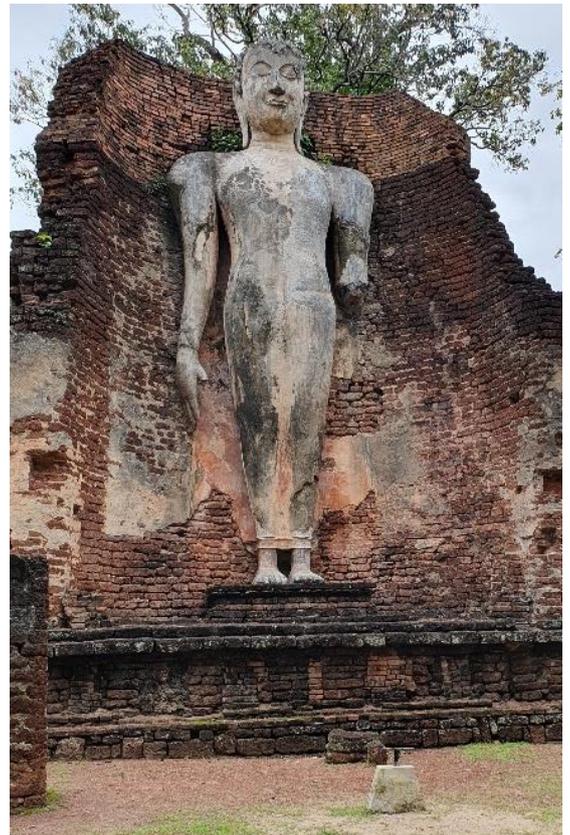


I arrived in Bangkok's international airport looking for the nameplate with "IAESTE, Tycho de Bakker". I was told someone would come to pick me up. Sadly, I couldn't find my name. A bad start to a three-month-stay. After getting in contact with the people from IAESTE Thailand I got picked up and was brought to the dorm. A room where eight people slept, separated by curtains. Safe to say, this is not what I expected. Luckily this did not set the tone for the rest of the stay, Bangkok and Thailand in general is amazing. From the friendly people to Buddhist temples to the most beautiful natural scenes.



The first day I got greeted by professor Vilai, who I was going to work for at King Mongkut's University for Technology North Bangkok. She is the nicest person and took the lab and me out for lunch to get to know me. There she told me the details for the project I was going to be working on. I got complete freedom, I could come and go as I pleased and had set tasks each day that I could complete at any time I wanted to. If I needed help my supervisor was always available to help and answer questions.

The first weekend some other IAESTE exchange students and I went to see Bangkok. Which, let me tell you, is THE BEST. The markets, the temples, the people,... it's all amazing. The first temple we went to was Wat Arun (Picture 1) an amazing and unique temple by the river which is one of the most beautiful temples I've seen on my stay in Thailand. A couple weeks later IAESTE Thailand organised a trip to the north of Thailand where we experienced rural life and some ancient temples (Picture 2).



We stayed with local people who prepared food for us. Finally, there were some holidays and some of the people at the dorm planned a trip. First, we went to Khao Sok which is a natural park in the south of Thailand. The special part of this national park is Cheow Lan Lake, an artificial lake created by a dam.

The lake now submerged a big forest that covers the surrounding mountains. Some of the trees under the water still peak through the surface of the water, reminding us of the forest that once stood where the water now flows. Next stop was Koh Samui, an Island of the coast not far from Khao Sok. The islands are beautiful, Koh Samui was full of people having a good time, eating Thai food and relaxing on the beach. Afterwards, we went to another Island, Koh Tao (Picture 3). A small island to the north of Koh Samui where there a way less people and way more nature. We went snorkelling and enjoyed the extensive corals and the fish living there.



In review. Thailand was amazing, the experience was amazing and taught me a lot on both an academic and personal level. I would recommend anyone to go and take the chance on an IAESTE internship.

JORDAN



I shall never be the same. And my stay in the Middle East is to blame. Be it in the good sense. If you wish to experience life first hand, to be in the world and not just a spectator of it, go to the Middle East. Life proceeds in a higher gear there. And Jordanian people are generous and hospitable to the degree that it almost evokes suspicion in a cautious Belgian bloke like me.



Four-hour flight. At first the rigid everyday consciousness. But as the daunting contours of a red, wavelike desert appears through your window your mind flows and realization hits. An IAESTE member welcomes you at the airport and takes you to Irbid, the second city of Jordan, in the North, peculiarly close to Syria. First stop: the best shoarma place in town. Most of the interns stayed in the capital Amman, only a small group of interns in Irbid. As there wasn't much to do or see in Irbid I always looked forward to the weekends.

Every weekend IAESTE organized a trip together with the Amman group. How about Mount Nebo, from which Moses saw the Promised Land. Or Jerash, one of the largest and best-preserved Roman cities in the world. Or the ever-merciless Dead Sea. And of course, there was the Golden trip, which included the world wonder Petra and its smelly camels, gazing the Milky Way in a Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum and eventually diving in the Red Sea. I cannot tell you, nor can I truly grasp the things I've seen. I made friends from all around the world. When I go to Brazil, Lebanon, Tunisia, Thailand, ... I will always have a friendly place to stay and so will they when they come to Belgium.



Almost every week I went hiking in the mountains and fertile valleys of the countless nature reserves nearby. I remember walking in a dried-out river bed between huge oleanders in full blossom before being forced to a sudden halt by a crossing herd of sheep and their toothlessly smiling sheppard, and I thought: this is it, the Promised Land. Although I would recommend, if possible, to visit Jordan in Spring or Autumn. The dry summer heat was a deal breaker at times.



Despite being an engineering physics student, I had an internship in biomedical engineering. It was the first year for IAESTE Jordan to also organize internships in Irbid at the Jordan University of Science and Technology, allegedly one of the best technical universities of the Middle East. My supervisor clearly still had to get used to the idea of having an intern to guide. My work was solo, a bit vague and I had very little guidance, but that also meant the workload was not very high. I recommend paying close attention to the internship description to make sure that the work is 100% what you want to do.

After about a month I got a week off from my internship and decided to go to Jerusalem. Only 2 hours from Amman if you forget about the lengthy controls at the border. From the holy city I travelled on to ever lively Tel Aviv and Haifa. What struck me most in Israel/Palestine was Bethlehem, a city under Palestinian government. The stories of some Palestinians were eye-opening. After the internship my sister and a friend flew in and we travelled Jordan for another two weeks. Jordan never ceased to surprise me. To conclude I'd like to say it's easy to stay in your head boasting about how you are right. That's who I was. Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage. Do it, take the plunge.

“I shall never be the same.”



Akwaaba (welcome)!

I impulsively applied for the internship in Ghana thinking I wouldn't get nominated. That being said, actually being nominated came as a big surprise but I was really looking forward to this adventure. The closer I got to leaving the more excited I became but also the more I began to realize that I had no idea what I had gotten myself into. When I arrived in Accra someone from the local IAESTE staff kindly picked me up and brought me to Mama B's (the host mom in Accra) house where I met the interns in Accra and spent the night. The next morning we immediately left for a trip to Busua, at the beach. That's where I met all the other interns and IAESTE guys who stayed in Kumasi and Cape Coast. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming, and I immediately felt at ease in the group.



After this trip I went home with the Kumasi interns and the real working life began. I did my internship at a pharmaceutical company. I was expecting to do mostly laboratory work, but it turned out that only in my first 2 weeks I was in the physicochemical and microbial quality control labs. The next 4 weeks I spent in the production and quality assurance departments. The work itself wasn't very challenging and not really related to my field of study but it was interesting to see which compounds are used in which drugs, how medication is produced and how it is tested and I learned a lot.

We also went on a trip to the Northern region of the country where we spent most of our time in a bus together, which was a great way to get to know people. Every bus journey was a party with the upbeat Ghanaian music blasting through the speakers. Apart from the bus rides the trip consisted of rock climbing, feeding (and being jumped by) monkeys, giving crocodiles a back rub and worrying everyone at home when you send them the pictures of it, drinking, dancing and doing crazy stuff on our rooftop in Tamale. The hours and hours on the bus were totally worth it!



The last trip I went on was the one to Ada Foah. It was a weekend full of chilling, swimming, drinking, eating local food, playing beach volleyball and dancing around the bonfire at night. That was my last weekend in Ghana and I don't think there could have been a better way to end my stay.

“I had no idea what I had gotten myself into.”

Over all, my time in Ghana has been a great experience where I met some of the kindest, realest and most inspiring people. I learnt a lot about myself and others and if I could I would 100% do it all over again.

So medaase (thank you) Ghana, medaase!



Hi there!

I am Helena and went on an internship to Bucharest this summer. I had a wonderful 8 weeks, but I have to admit that it was also a big adventure. 😊 It already started before I arrived. I didn't have any address of my stay, but luckily I knew that someone would pick me up from the airport. I arrived in a totally empty dorm, because everyone was at work. So, I decided to explore the city centre a bit on my own. In the evening I met all the other interns and we went for a drink in the famous 'Cismigiu parc'. I really like the atmosphere. Everyone was so friendly and we were always laughing and making jokes. I knew that this was the start of a great summer.



The next day was already my first day of work, a quiet day. I got to know my architecture team and the other departments of the office. The second day they gave me a project. I had to do a reconversion from a house into apartments. I could start from the beginning with the concept and end with construction and material details. It was really nice because I had a lot of freedom and I learned to work with ArchiCad too.

In the beginning of my stay we were only with 2 interns, Theresa, a girl from Austria, and me. After 4 weeks Ivana, a girl from Macedonia, joined us. I am grateful that I met these amazing people. Without them lunchtime and the breaks would not be that fun!

The first two weeks were really amazing. We went out almost every evening and I got to know the people really well. In Bucharest there are a lot of nice places. Some weeks before there were a lot of Erasmus students and so we knew where to find the really good spots.



“I had a wonderful 8 weeks, but I have to admit that it was also a big adventure.”

We planned some weekend trips, a hiking trip, a beach trip, city trip. Only sometimes there were some problems with the transport... Because we planned a lot of trips only some days before, sometimes it was hard to find train tickets. The seats are reserved and they were all sold out. Sometimes it was possible to find some alternative like the bus or we changed our plans for that weekend and went the next weekend.

A lot of things happened there. I lost my phone... (again) We had to learn some Romanian words to show the taxi driver the way to the dorms. We missed our train and almost had to sleep at the station. Stânga – dreapta – totu drept (left-right- go straight) were enough words to get us home safely haha. We went to visit Sighisoara, Sibiu, Vama Vecche, Busteni, Brasov,... In Sibiu there was a handmade market when we arrived, some classical concert at night on the main square. It was a really amazing summer and I won't forget all the amazing people I met there!!





Norway, what can I say, it's amazing. For a long time, I've been wanting to visit Norway for its unique culture and nature, through IAESTE I've been able to do this. I went to do an internship at the university of Oslo for 6 weeks in July and August. As my partner was free for the entire period of the internship we decided to have this experience together. After some online searching, we found a host family in Oslo who could give us room and boarding. Yara, my girlfriend, would help in the house and be with the children while I was working at the university. We stayed with a single mom with three children and the grandparents. Because we lived in with an actual Norwegian family, we got to know the culture quite quickly and were able to ask about anything we might wonder about.



We arrived a week and half before the start of the internship in Oslo to explore the city. Although Oslo isn't a very typical tourist city, it is very alive with a lot of cultural activities and it kept surprising us throughout our stay. The first few days we mainly strolled around the city, and since at that time there was a heatwave, it was the ideal moment to chill in the many parks.

On our third day we already went to a barbecue at lake Strømsdammen hosted by some IAESTE alumni living in the city. One of the main perks of Oslo is the public transportation. It is really well organized and since Oslo is just surrounded by nature, you can easily take the metro or bus straight into a forest.

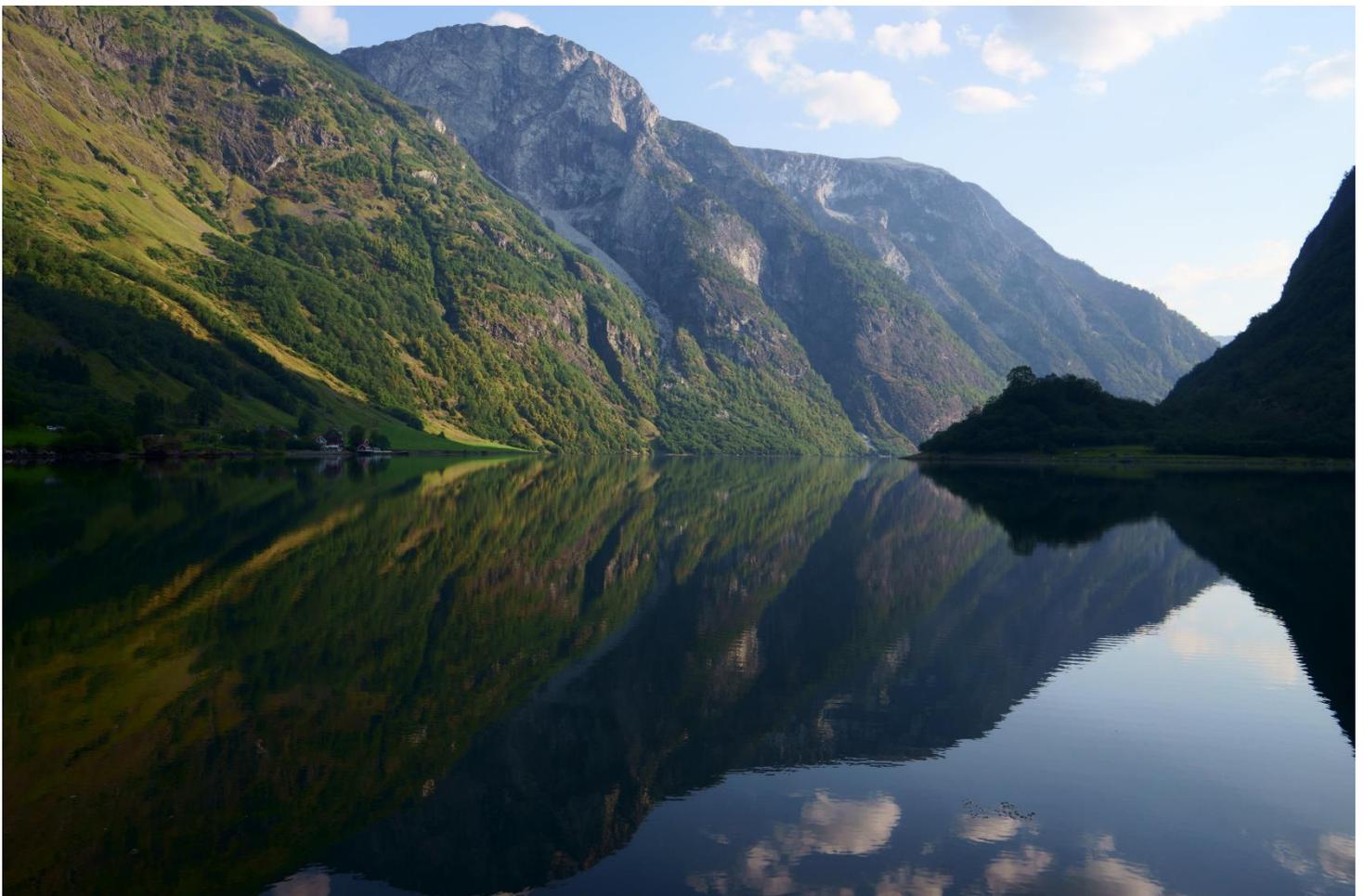
At the internship we worked with six people on an educational platform for the university. These were all IAESTE interns from all over the world, including Scotland, Austria, Shanghai and Cyprus. Much of the cultural exchange thus happened during work. We kept talking about all the small things in live that makes our cultures so different and I even learned some useful Chinese. We were free to choose most of the hours we work because Omid (our supervisor) was mostly result oriented. We were allowed to take time to learn new technologies and learn from each other's expertise.

Most weekends we went on trips to different cities in Norway, but the most memorable was probably the road trip to and from Bergen. We picked an extended weekend (Friday to Monday) with the best possible weather (by Norway standards): 30 degrees and blue sky. Four of us drove through the beautiful mountains and forests and eventually across the famous fjords. We visited



Bergen, a nice, but very small, city at the west coast of Norway. After staying there for a night we drove back to Oslo stopping along the way to make probably the most exhausting but also beautiful hike in my life.

I would definitely recommend an internship abroad with IAESTE to everybody I know (and those I do not know).





'Mind-blowing' and 'life-changing' is written in my IAESTE application letter but at the time of writing I had no idea about the real meaning of these words nor about the impact the whole IAESTE adventure would have on me. You have to experience it yourself to really understand what it is like living and working three months abroad, especially in a rapidly evolving country like China. Nevertheless, I will try to show you a glimpse of the life of A-lóng – my Chinese alter ego.



Let's start with the company. I worked for Xingyu, a firm that produces automotive lighting systems for cars like Toyota, Audi and Volkswagen, sold in China. As a design engineer my main tasks were designing 3D models for assembly tools used in the production line of the head- and rear lamps as well as doing research about the automation of one of the factory processes. Definitely worth mentioning is that we practiced Tai ji, a Chinese martial art, twice a day in the office to ease our mind and to get off our chair for a couple of minutes. Oh, and after lunch we had a break where everyone took a nap. Lights out, curtains closed and heads on the desk.

After work I met with the other interns from Europe to arrange an activity in our apartment or to explore Changzhou, the small city of 4 million people that was my home for three months. 'Small' is not even sarcastic, people living there really think it is small and as a matter of fact, it's just a village compared to a metropolis like Shanghai (26 million people and a one-hour train trip away from Changzhou). I also organized some activities with my Chinese colleagues from the company. We had a tea party, an international dinner, played football and badminton together, I sang in a KTV karaoke bar and I went to a typical Chinese restaurant with them. I can assure you, spicy has a different meaning in the east.



During the weekends I had the opportunity to travel around and visit a few of the many treasures that China has to offer. I went to Shanghai to enjoy the astonishing view on the second tallest tower in the world and to party in a club on the roof of a skyscraper with sharks. Yes, there was an aquarium in this party temple! Besides Shanghai, I also went to visit the great wall and the forbidden city in Beijing, tried boiled duck blood in Nanjing and went to see the tea- and rice plantations in Hangzhou. I can also scratch a visit to Yellow Mountain, an immense canyon-like landscape formed by the clash of an erupting volcano and a glacier on top of it, off my bucket list. The most impressive of them all, however is the 'Mountain Forest' in Zhangjiajie. You can see these unreal 300-meter-high mountain pillars in the movie Avatar and it's hard to believe that a landscape like this exists on our planet. Trust me, it's real and to describe it in one word: it's breath-taking.

“... Spicy has a different meaning in the east.”

I had the time of my life during my IAESTE-internship in China and I already miss my Chinese and new European friends, that fact that you can use your smart-phone for everything and maybe I even miss the times that Chinese people asked me to take a picture with them.

Tzai Tsian China, see you soon!



Privyet!

This summer, I spent six weeks in Moscow. A place where people hardly speak English and where Google Translate is a real savior at the internship, the supermarket, the office of a tourist attraction, ... It may seem hard to you to handle this communication issue, but it is one of the many charms of going to Russia.

Of course, there is the famous Red Square which will surprise you by its size and the imposing buildings which surround it. But this beautiful square is not all Moscow has to offer. For example, you can have a strange experience at the mausoleum where you can decide for yourself if the embalmed body of Lenin is real or just a wax statue. If you want to escape the bustle of the city, you can chill out in one of the many parks (there are really a lot of parks) if the weather is nice or take an elevator at the Ostankino tower, the highest tower of Europe, to have a 360°-view over Moscow. You can also try to spot a muse at the big nature reserve Losiny Ostrov next to the state university of Civil Engineering. Apparently, the legend says that if you don't see a muse before you graduate, you will not graduate. As this year will be my last year, I went to look for a muse, but unfortunately, I only came across some irritating mosquitoes... Right now, I hope that their legend doesn't apply for non-Russian students and that these mosquitoes are not a bad omen!



Speaking of the university, during the weeks I went to the laboratory. There I was able to observe some tests of structural elements: concrete blocks, steel rebars, ... For me, it was interesting to see how materials behave in reality and to compare it with the theory. One day I was also allowed to solder some wires and to watch someone else while he was welding. For some people, it may not be spectacular, but because I have only seen the theory about it, it was quite cool to see the procedure from up close.



Going to Moscow gives you also the opportunity to visit Saint-Petersburg. I took a night train and I tried to squeeze myself in one of the top beds. I should admit that I slept surprisingly well to the rhythm of the train. One of the main touristic attractions there is the Hermitage, really the most impressive museum I have ever visited. Walking around with a map of the museum, I was still continuously lost. But in the end, I managed to find the exit and be on time for a boat trip on the many waterways which flow through Saint-Petersburg to watch the beautiful sunset.

Lastly, the public transport is very well organized in Moscow, but be prepared if you want to go somewhere or if you want to meet some of your new friends, literally everything is more than 50 minutes away. You really get a different opinion on something being far away. I think Moscow is great, and then I don't only mean its size. It was an amazing experience and if it would be possible, I would go back immediately to see all my new friends again!

“It may seem hard to you to handle this communication issue, but it is one of the many charms of going to Russia”



During the final semester at university, I wasn't really sure if I already wanted to start working or keep on studying. However, I was certain about one thing. I wanted to go on an IAESTE internship. I have been a member of the local IAESTE committee in Ghent for more than 2 years and this has changed my life. I made friends, I improved my soft skills and I experienced the open, positive and international community of IAESTE. But an essential part of IAESTE, actually going on an internship myself, was still missing.

A search on the Exchange Platform, resulted in a COBE offer in China. After sending my documents and doing a Skype-interview, I got accepted for the internship at a company called Celestica, located in Dongguan. The trip there was easy as the company had arranged a taxi to pick me up at the airport in Shenzhen. This was a good thing, as I felt kind of helpless when Google Maps, WhatsApp, Messenger and all the other apps I usually rely on, refused to work.



During the first days in China, I got to know my colleagues and I learned about working in Celestica. Besides me, there was only one other IAESTE trainee, named David, in this office of Celestica. We were the only trainees in Dongguan and therefore the only IAESTE trainees in a 1000 km radius. This scared me at first. Most Chinese colleagues could not speak English well, but everyone was very friendly, welcoming and eager to help me whenever I ran into a problem. Celestica is a Canadian company and therefore, my work environment was probably not typical for China. The atmosphere was casual, and it was easy to talk with everyone, even if their position is a lot higher than yours. This was a positive surprise for me. As my office was quite new, most colleagues were about my age and were staying in the same dormitory located on the factory premises.

Because we all lived in the same building, it was easy to hang out with my colleagues. After work there were always some people who went swimming, playing badminton, play football, etc., who we could join. So even though David and I were the only foreigners, we were not lonely, or bored. The first weekend, we did a trip with a colleague to Shenzhen. The next weekend, we went to visit Guangzhou with a group of 7 people. The weekend afterwards, IAESTE China had organised a trip to Changsha where we finally met some of the other international trainees. Through these and following trips, we got to experience a small part of the very big country that China is.



“I made friends, I improved my soft skills and I experienced the open, positive and international community of IAESTE.”

In hindsight, this was not the typical IAESTE experience that most people expect when they apply because of our isolated location. However, this internship has given me valuable friends both in and outside of China and it has given me a unique opportunity to learn about living in China and the differences with Belgium.





'Kosice International Airport', the airport of the second biggest city of Slovakia, was to say the least quite underwhelming. The building, which I discovered later is smaller than the train station, consisted of two rooms: The first room I got in when getting of the train was directly the luggage room, which had only one automated luggage carousel. After getting my bag from here, I proceeded to the next room which served as both departure and arrival hall. Here I met our summer coordinator Filip. After we met briefly, he told me that we had to take a taxi, as the next bus would only arrive in about 1h30. I couldn't help but thinking 'Where did I arrive?'. We arrived on a parking which looked like it was recently bombed, surrounded by old communist blocks. Apparently one of these was the dormitory... To have a view, look for the video 'Partying in Europe's biggest slum | Lunik IX', that was the gypsy neighbourhood next door.



But enough negativity. To be fair the next two months were two of the best months of my young life. Arriving in my room I was greeted by my housemates: Gullsher from Pakistan, Khan for the friends, Jorge from Spain, with who I worked for my internship and my Bosnian roommate Janko. Later this summer, we would also be accompanied by Cesar, another guy from Spain, Damian and Kamila from Poland and Derya from Turkey. The next hours, I immediately got a tour in the small but very nice city center of Kosice.

The nice thing was, we were (literally) all in this together. The accommodation was very basic, but you get used to it. And complaining about it, it creates a bond ;) Our small group really became very close in the next few months. And the gypsies in the neighborhood next door, apart maybe from their strong smell, I didn't have any trouble with them.

The internship was also a big plus. Together with my fellow IAESTE trainee Jorge, I had the opportunity to work on interesting projects. There was also the freedom and flexibility to take weekends when we wanted. We didn't have a lunchspace, but our colleagues were more than happy to guide us through all of the culinary places Kosice had to offer. After the (almost) daily midday shot of course... I think I tasted almost every spirit in Eastern Europe, from Prague to Athens. Also very nice were the beers after work with the boss and some colleagues and the lunch with Dusan and his wife. Special thanks also to Matus for the expert guidance on hiking and Jana and Zoran for the insider tips for Krakow, Budapest and Vienna.

But work is only a part of the experience. The many drinks after work, sometimes till the early hours, cooking together in the dorm, barbecues at lake Bukovec, planning the weekends... These weekends are for sure the best thing about the IAESTE internship. Every weekend we had some trips planned: we went to a folk festival, hiking in Slovak Paradise and the High Tatras. We visited all the big cities around Kosice such as Krakow, Budapest and Vienna. At first, I thought that 8 weeks would be too long, but eventually they passed so fast. I really wouldn't have minded couple of weeks more.



If you still hesitate whether to go or not. Don't, just go! You arrive in a fantastic group of people from all over the world. It's an experience you really wouldn't want to miss!



It's difficult to describe in words how much I enjoyed my stay in Bergen. Let me start with my day of arrival. I arrived in Bergen on a Friday. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived, but I got a very warm welcome from Lise and Anneli, two members of IAESTE Bergen. Lise showed me my apartment (a very lovely one), my kitchen (which I had to share with 4 Norwegian students) and the closest supermarket. She invited me on a hike and a pre-party the next day. I did it both and this was actually the start of a very busy but so enjoyable stay.

When more days passed, I met more other IAESTE students from all over the world (mostly Europe). I did some trips on my own (a boat trip through the Fjords, a trip to the most beautiful train ride of Europe in Flam,...) and did other things with IAESTE members (eating some pizza in town, joining a game night, hiking the 7 mountains of Bergen,...). Probably the most beautiful trip was the one to Trolltunga, a famous hike a few hours by car from Bergen. Three other interns (one from Germany, Spain and Portugal) and I decided to go there by car (it's very difficult to reach with public transportation). We slept some hours in the car and started the hike at 6 a.m. The way to Trolltunga took more or less 4 hours through beautiful and unspoiled nature. When we arrived there, there was a lot of fog and the view was completely hidden. Because we started so early, we had some time to wait for the clouds to disappear. When this was the case, the view was incredible. After taking some really nice pictures we decided to go back to the car and drive back through the fjords to Bergen.



The next weekend Miguel (the Portuguese intern) and I got the opportunity to start in a very famous obstacle race on top of Fløyen, one of the 7 mountains around Bergen. It was an unbelievable experience with a lot of mud and even some obstacles where we had to dive in the ice-cold dirty water.



Beside the many hikes, I also took the time sometimes to enjoy a beer in one of the many beautiful parks in Bergen when the sun was shining or in a student pub when the weather was less good. Because yes, the weather in Bergen is sometimes terrible, but after 6 weeks of pure happiness I don't have to complain about anything.

The last evening, we organized a goodbye party where every intern brought something from his own country. Everyone loved the Belgian beers (what did you expect). After this party, the 6 weeks were over, and I flew back to Belgium. I will always remember these 6 weeks and I will give the advice to everyone I speak with in the future: don't hesitate, go on an IAESTE internship!





My IAESTE experience was about to be my first journey outside Europe. People warned me that South-America could be dangerous and English speakers are rare. So I admit my gut was absolutely filled with some nervousness when I hopped on the big plane. Luckily, all stress for nothing in the end...

Since my internship was about assisting a PhD student in the university of Campana, I expected to arrive in an entertaining city full of young people like Ghent. However, as the taxi was cruising through the city I didn't believe my eyes. Campana was nothing like an excited city I hoped for. Just blocks of small houses where suddenly a faculty of a university appears (non-streetview user writing). What the hell was I going to do here for 8 weeks...First stop was the house which I had to call home for the upcoming six weeks. It was a small pink apartment that I had to share with an Argentinean (Nicolas) who works as a truck driver for a company close by. The place was clean and had all the necessary facilities. Nicolas was a nice guy, so nothing wrong with lodging.



Then I headed to the faculty where two gentle lads were waiting for me to show me around in the university. Franco and Pocho, which soon became my best buddies, gave me extensive tour at the faculty which offers only engineering careers. The faculty is very small (approx. 400 students), so the atmosphere is very family-like and they introduced me to almost every one of the personnel and teachers. Everyone gave me warm welcome and was happy to see a foreign student at the faculty.

They didn't always speak English very well, but did everything they could to help me. Their friends were very sociable and made me feel comfortable right away. The nervous feeling was ebbing away, and I was changing my opinion of the place. Final stop was the office where Marcos (PhD student) was waiting for me to introduce me to the project. Marcos is a mechanical engineer and his study focusses on the vibratory behaviour of Euler Bernoulli beams. He wants to investigate if cracks and geometrical differences (like tolerances) in the beams influence natural frequencies. So examining the beams on damage and dimensions by modal analysis. My job would be to perform a small literature study, think about manufacturing methods, draw the technical drawings and perform tests. Everyone in the office was again very kind and helpful.

For the upcoming six weeks, I learned everything about the Argentinean culture! First of all, the way of living. This is more relaxed than I was used to in Belgium. Working hours were not strict at all. Everyone comes and goes to work as they please. And if one wants to take a day-off, this is not a problem at all. Also regular students went on holiday during the academic year of their preference. I can't imagine this in Belgium. Next is the food, I am going to miss this one a lot... Argentina is all about *Asado* (BBQ). They lit up the coal all year-around and you can find a public BBQ at every corner of the street. The quality of the meat is not always the best but they serve a lot, so you'll never be hungry. Other specialties are *Empanadas*, a typical dish from Latin-America which are a kind of puff pastry cookie filled with meat and other stuff, very good. Or *Maté*, a kind of hot tea which requires some skill to serve properly. Some addicts drink litres a day.

Like said before, the Argentinean people are a very warm and open folk. I was soon introduced to the group and they took me everywhere right from the start. During the week, most of the students do sports or combine their studies with work. I like sports too, so I felt perfect by playing some football or basketball, going to the gym or swim a little bit with Franco and the 'boys'. During weekends, it was time for the *cervezas*. Since Campana was not the party town like I hoped for (only one or two nice pubs), it was mostly the case to just drink in someone's house all night long. Argentineans are sometimes quite macho, so a drinking competition is not rare. Other weekends, we went to a city close by which has more clubs. Nightlife is very entertaining! *Reggaeton* beats blast through the speakers all night long. *Perriar* (twerking) is the most common dancing move, so the atmosphere was often quite hot...

Short, my six weeks in Campana were fantastic I met many lovely people, enjoyed the Argentinean vibes and gained a lot of experience. My first impression was clearly not justified, the IAESTE internship was nothing boring! So a great recommendation to all readers to have no doubt and sign up for an experience you'll never forget! After my six weeks in Campana, I had the chance to visit the country. Argentina is a very big country, I've been spoiled with a huge variety of amazing landscapes. In the north you find rainforests, but also Grand Canyon style rock formations. The south hosts the beautiful region of Patagonia which is a paradise for every hiking fan. A big thanks to the IAESTE team providing this unique opportunity.

GERMANY



Last summer, I got the opportunity to do an internship in the beautiful city of Potsdam in Germany. To be honest, this was not my first internship abroad, so I knew what to expect. However, this didn't stop me from loving my internship!

I first arrived in Germany on August the first, at the Berlin Tegel Airport. There, an IAESTE volunteer awaited me and took me to my home in Potsdam using public transportation. During our trip, since the airport is on the outskirts of Berlin, I got to know her a bit and she explained me a lot of stuff I needed to know about Germany. Especially, things like how to use the public transport, which tickets to buy and where to go for administration affairs. She was very nice as she also travelled with me to my workplace and took care of any practical affairs that needed to be dealt with. IAESTE Germany really has her things sorted out!

Once arrived in my lab at DIfE – The German Institute of Health - I met my supervisor Thomas Laeger, one of the nicest persons I have ever met. We immediately got off to a good start and on the first day he introduced me to all his lab members. This made my first day a lot easier as well as the rest of my internship.

I got to work with one of his PhD students, Teresa, who was also Spanish! She was a very good supervisor that gave me a lot of room to be independent in the lab, which I much appreciated. In my opinion, this is how you learn the most. The entire internship was of very high quality since I practiced a lot of techniques in the lab and if I had any question (even a very technical one) I could always ask help from one of the many technicians in the lab, each specialized in a certain molecular biology technique (Western Blot, qPCR, genotyping ...). This was quite new for me since most labs in Belgium don't have that many technicians. In any case, I can now say I mastered most of the basic molecular biology techniques.



The good thing about this internship was that the people in the lab also became my friends. Especially my boss Thomas whom I now consider as a good friend. For example, we went to see a movie in a German movie theatre or on the last evening of my internship I was invited to his house for dinner and a sleep-over. But of course, I also made friends outside the lab. In Potsdam, there were 2 other interns, one from Brazil and one from Peru. I mostly hung out with Vinicius, a cool guy from Brazil. Because I already went to Brazil last year and spoke a bit of Portuguese, we immediately got along well.

Together, we went to the IAESTE event in Dresden where we met 7 more Brazilians. Needless to say, we all got along very well and after the weekend we made a WhatsApp group so that we could travel together in Germany. Almost every weekend we went to a big city in Germany or abroad. From Nurnberg to Berlin, from Krakau to the Oktoberfest in Munich (which is funny enough held in September). Every trip was a trip never to forget (Brazilian people are crazy). The one that stood out for me the most was the Oktoberfest in Munich of course. Two days of drinking, chanting and partying with random people from all over the world. Litres of beers everywhere and thousands of Germans in their traditional Lederhosen or Dirndls, what else could you ask for?

Of course, all good things come to an end. After every weekend, I returned to my home in Potsdam. I had a shared apartment with a big room for myself and a shared kitchen/bathroom. My roommate, Hubert, was a Polish guy that did not speak so much. I guess maybe it's a cultural thing because the people in Krakau were quite closed as well. After a while I got used to it, but this was really the only negative thing about my internship.

Indeed, apart from that, it's needless to say that Germany is a great country with great opportunities. The labs here are of high quality and if you decide to do an internship here, I am sure you will learn a lot. However, keep in mind, it's quite demanding since you work around 40h a week but during the weekends you're completely free to do what you want and sometimes you can even get a day off. So, for me, my IAESTE experience could be summarized as work hard, play hard: an interesting, challenging internship during the week and hanging out the tourist during the weekend.



I remember checking my school email and seeing the advert about summer internship offered by IAESTE. Without any hesitation I went to the website and started my application. Doing a summer internship in a company is what I longed for, and this was reflected in all my choices. I got my first-choice destination, Canada, but due to some regulations with the IAESTE in Canada, my nomination was cancelled. I had to make another application and after several attempts, I was accepted by IAESTE in the UK, for an internship at Cardiff University (Wales).

Just like most students, I would say the exam period is very stressful and I think most will agree with me that when you are looking forward to something new and exciting, you get overwhelmed that you almost don't feel the exam stress. Well, this was true for me :). After my exams, I had a week to prepare for the long-anticipated IEASTE experience. Being a none EU national meant I had to apply for a visa to go to the UK. Unfortunately, this took longer than expected so I went two weeks late for my internship. Nonetheless, I was very much in contact with my supervisor-to-be and another IAESTE intern. I travelled the next day after receiving my visa and arrived Cardiff on a Thursday and luckily for me, the IAESTE intern I was in contact with, lived in the same accommodation I booked. The lab was a 15-minutes' walk from where we lived so we walked to the lab every day. The next day, I met the team, CRIPES (Cardiff Research in Infection and Parasites in Ecological Systems) and was briefed about the project(s) and what I would be doing.



We engaged in several projects, basically helping the PhD students with their experiments. The two projects I was involved in were: 1) Investigating the effects of microplastic exposure on fish welfare and 2) Schistosome and gastropod diversity in national parks in Southern Africa. It was my first time to do research on fish and snails; it was an amazing and intellectually enriching experience. The PhD students and the head of the lab were so accommodating, making the working environment conducive.

After working hours, there was always something new we looked forward to. We had a local student doing his co-op on the same project, he was very receptive and friendly, he showed us around and introduced us to other local students and summer interns not under IAESTE. Together, we went clubbing every weekend and toured the city: we went to the glee club which is very famous in Cardiff, to watch a live stand-up comedy, went to the Queens Arcade for shopping, travelled to Bristol city for an out-door party, played football every Thursday (myself and the other guys interested), went to the gym on Sundays (detox :)), visited the Castle to attend a historical event, went for indoor climbing, to Porthcawl beach and got to the top of the tallest mountain (Pen y fan) in South Wales. It is worth mentioning that my birthday was within this period, and for the first time, I had to celebrate my birthday away from close friends or family. Many thanks to these amazing friends I met in Cardiff for making it special. I received a card from the CRIPES team and in the evening, my friends brought me a (surprise) birthday cake. I was wowed and I should say, without any fear of sounding too cliché that, this IEASTE experience is by far one of the (if not the) best highlights in my academic journey.

Closing remarks? Yes! Firstly, I didn't get the Company internship nor travelled to the destination I wanted. However, I now realise that sometimes, not having what you want is an opportunity for you to, perhaps, have and experience something greater than what you originally wished for. Secondly, I have been able to experience and appreciate different cultures through this experience and most importantly, we created beautiful memories and promised to keep in touch. By the way, I recently travelled to Barcelona and I met some of my IAESTE friends there. I think every student should at some stage in their academic journey, try to have this international experience. To any student reading and considering this, I encourage you to, you can thank me later:). I am open to any questions to assist you if need be, I wish you the very best. Cheers!



I'll end by saying THANK YOU, to the CRIPES team, IAESTE Belgium and UK, and the Home Office, UK, for the international exposure and for making summer 2019, my best summer in Europe.



Ola, tudo bem ?!

I think this is the sentence I heard the most this summer. This is how the Brazilians greet you, as they are always so kind and interested. This summer I spent 10 weeks in Brazil and I can truly say, I had the time of my life. I know this sounds cliché, but with this report I'll try to convince you it's true!

First of all, why Brazil? I was searching for an internship in the field of biotechnology. To be honest, I didn't have so many options. But luckily IAESTE offered some internships in Brazil. As I really like traveling, I was immediately enthusiastic to visit this country. I was already dreaming of the white beaches, tropical weather, exotic animals, party's in Rio de Janeiro, ... But I was a little concerned about the internship itself, will the company be on the same level as biotechnology companies in Belgium, wouldn't I learn more from an internship in Belgium, what about the language barrier, ... But ok, I chose the adventure, I applied and got accepted and before I knew I was on the airplane on my way to Brazil!



When I arrived there, I was so lucky being welcomed by a very friendly and loving Brazilian family. The house was very basic and didn't have a lot of luxury, nevertheless I felt at home immediately. In the beginning it was difficult to find my way in such a big city as Campinas, especially because few Brazilians speak English.

Also, my host only spoke Portuguese to me. But I can assure you, this is the most efficient way to learn a language! During my first week other students doing an internship with IAESTE arrived at the same house. They came from Poland, Hungary, Germany, Canada, the UK and Austria. In the first weekend we immediately visited Rio de Janeiro and this was the beginning of the most wonderful friendship. In the two months we spend in Brazil, our friendship became stronger every day. Almost every Friday night we left for another two days adventure. We visited Rio de Janeiro, Ilha Bella, Rio Claro, Capitolio, Foz do Iguacu and Sao Paulo. We saw and did amazing things. Brazil is an amazing country to travel as the people are so friendly and there is so much beautiful nature all around you.

During my internship I worked in a research lab in the university of Campinas, UNICAMP. I had a very interesting and challenging project to work on and I enjoyed my days in the lab a lot. I acquired a broader view on how a lab works and to think out of the box. This is something that's not always possible in Europe where there's not much space for creativity.



“I had the time of my life.”

“The world belongs to the daredevils!”



I could recommend an international internship with IAESTE to everyone who loves traveling, meeting new people, getting in touch with other cultures and languages. The world belongs to the daredevils!



Needless to say that making the decision of going on an internship in India for ten weeks requires some courage, but spoiler alert: I got greatly rewarded for diving head first into this adventure. I couldn't have picked a more enriching destination to spend my entire summer.



As expected, the nights prior to departure were associated with insomnia, due to a combination of worries and pure adrenaline for what lay ahead. After taking a short flight from Brussels to Frankfurt, home of the biggest collection of Lufthansa logos printed on literally everything, the Air India plane took off, destination Mumbai and Mangalore after a short transfer. Once landed in Mangalore, a taxi driver with a sign that had my name on it, magically spelled correctly for once, was waiting for me. One hour later I arrived in Manipal, a small city on the west of India, entirely dedicated to universities and students. Manipal was a great place to explore

Indian culture at an early stage, without being thrown over by a massive culture shock. It has the beauty and culture of India, accompanied by at least some western comfort.

Everyday life in Manipal was very enjoyable, working on the internship during the day, going for lunch, dinner and other activities with other interns whenever we had some spare time. At the time I was in Manipal, about 60 other interns from all over the world were performing an IAESTE internship in Manipal, which led to multiple international and lasting friendships and a whole lot of unforgettable moments of fun and laughter. Also, the role of the local committee in Manipal shouldn't be underestimated, they made sure that whenever we encountered some problem, it got solved in the blink of an eye.

Of course, staying in Manipal for ten weeks would have been a shame knowing India is one of the most diverse and culturally rich countries on our entire planet. So whenever the internship schedule allowed it, I was travelling together with newly made friends, fellow interns, all over the Indian continent. During the ten weeks my internship lasted, I have travelled over 5000 kms in distance, mostly by night bus, a wonderful means of transportation where a bus is equipped with beds instead of seats. The sheer size and diversity of India is something you can only understand by travelling around in it. During my travels I have hiked in the Himalayas, ridden a camel in the desert followed by a night under the stars,

visited cities that accommodate more people than the entire country of Belgium, been showered by monsoon rains, visited dozens of stunning temples and other massive monuments, met hundreds of remarkably helpful and hospitable Indian local people, eaten some of the tastiest food I ever tried or will ever try, witnessed some of the most fascinating rituals and festivals and the list can keep going on. It is surprising how much I read about India and still had no clue what things were like until I actually experienced them in real life.

I have seen wonders that I can't imagine occurring anywhere else, India is truly an exceptional place. This summer is probably



the summer I will nostalgically talk about to my children and grandchildren, since I have never experienced things as intense as I experienced my ten weeks in India.

To everyone who is currently doubting whether or not to go on an internship abroad and miss out on the fun Belgian summer filled with friends, family and festivals, I can only give you one advice: just go for it, you will most definitely not regret making this decision. I have never experienced a more enriching and satisfying summer ever before, all thanks to IAESTE.

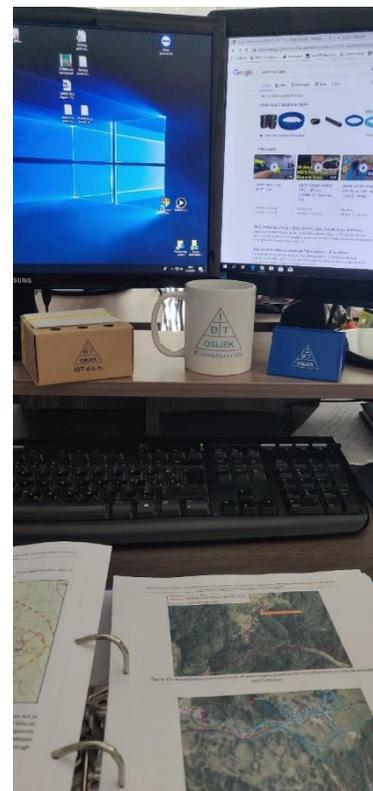


“This summer is probably the summer I will nostalgically talk about to my grandchildren.”

CROATIA



The idea for an internship abroad all started one day in classes with the professor telling about our obligated civil engineering internship in the summer. There was only one slide about the possibilities to do this in another country. After this slide there was no way back. I HAD to do my internship abroad. Eventually I chose for a hydro technical engineering company called IDT in Osijek, Croatia! After my last exam, I took the plane and went to Osijek without knowing where I would stay, if there were other interns there and when I had to go to work. But from the moment I arrived at the bus station, 2 guys from the local IAESTE committee were waiting for me to bring me to the dorm. At this moment, the adventure officially started, and it was more fun than I could ever have predicted! I wasn't alone in the next 6 weeks. I met my roommate, a girl from Poland with whom I've done a lot of fun stuff. Already after some days we had a diverse group of people with whom we did every evening something else. It's interesting to hang out with people of the same age, but from different countries (the nationalities of our group: Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Bosnia, The Netherlands and of course Belgium). I discovered that we have so much things in common, but the fun part is the different habits and sometimes way of thinking about different stuff that lead to some interesting and fun discussions.



Now a bit about the work I did there! The company is a small but very professional engineering firm at only 700m from my dorm. There I had a promotor who gave me some tasks in AutoCAD and sometimes explained me the projects they were working on. I think they told me 20 times that I didn't have to work this fast, no stress: That's the Balkan way of doing things. This is something a boss in a Belgian company would never say. They gave me a lot of free time to do trips and fun stuff by day. And that exactly what I did! With our group of international people we went to the outside pool next to the river, visited the zoo, drank gin in a café full of cats, played beach volleyball (sometimes joined local people who were already playing), went bowling, watched a movie in the cinema, carting, joining local Zumba classes, going for an ice cream (it was almost always 30°C so this is more than welcome),...



One weekend we rented 2 cars and when to a GETT together weekend in Rijeka at the seaside. We all had such a great time, so we decided in the week after this on an evening with beers to go to the beautiful Plitvice national park. So only 2 days later we were again on the road on our way there! It's so nice to be surrounded with people who are also full of energy and excited to discover new places! In my last weekend, my roommate and I decided to leave for a weekend in Banja Luka, Bosnia, for another GETT Together weekend with +/-20 interns from there. This was the perfect end of an amazing and divers 6 weeks of internship where I had the opportunity to meet so many different and interesting people from all over the world!!



Six weeks abroad, only three days where I didn't go out with friends. That's my answer when someone asks "Hey, how was your internship in Macedonia!?". So yeah, pretty damn awesome.



I went in about as blind as possible. I had no idea what I'd be doing at work, only that it would have something to do with "software development". No clue who I'd be hanging out with, only that there would be other international interns. Not the faintest idea where I'd stay, only that it "had been arranged". Anyway, I arrived at the airport at around 16:00 and was brought to my apartment by a member of IAESTE Macedonia (MK). There I met my two roommates for the following weeks: an Irishman and an Egyptian living in Dubai. I was at the apartment for about 20 minutes, when the Irishman told me "We're going hiking, want to come?". Only just having sent a message to my mom saying I arrived and being not even close to settled in, I was of course hesitant, but I went along anyway. Doing so I met most of the other interns and a couple IAESTE MK members. Immediately, I felt welcomed by this amazing group of people. This was the first in a long list of great nights.

Other activities included bowling, indoor rock climbing, escape rooms, playing football, museums,... Often these were preceded by a dinner recommendation from one of the Macedonians. Of course, we also got very well acquainted with Macedonian nightlife. We went to a slew of different bars, saw Skopje's biggest nightclubs and spent many an evening at the infamous city park. Aside from these day-to-day activities, IAESTE MK organizes several weekend trips. The first of which for me was the Galichnik weekend. This beautiful rural village is known for its annual wedding festival, where a couple is married in traditional Macedonian manner over the course of 2 days. The second trip was to Ohrid, a city by Lake Ohrid. Other weekend trips go to Bitola and Krushevo, but these were organized outside of the period of my stay.

Walking the streets of Macedonia didn't give me much of a culture shock. The people are minding their own business, they're pretty laid back and they seem more trusting of one another than us Belgian. For example, when someone pays with card in the supermarket, they'll just shout their PIN to the cashier, for everyone to hear. There wasn't a single moment I felt unwanted or out of place.



Let's not forget about the internship itself though. The company where I had my internship was Endava. This is an international IT company with one of its departments situated right in the center of Skopje. There I was taught a multitude of different topics concerning back end programming, but also Angular (encapsulating TypeScript, HTML and CSS) for front end programming. As an electrical engineer, most of this was completely new to me, but my coworkers and supervisors were always prepared to help. By always being the least experienced guy in the room, I've no doubt I learned the most.

TL;DR Learned a lot, had lots of fun, do recommend.



It's been exactly 35 days since I've come back from my internship in India and I still miss it every day. Those two months were filled with laughter, travelling, discovering and, of course, working.



I was working in the department of Mechatronics Engineering at Manipal Institute of Technology, the Indian MIT. The project I was working on, "Collision detection in virtual reality using haptic interfacing", was very interesting, but also completely new to me. I was very lucky to have a professor who was there to help me when I needed it and that way, I successfully finished my project. To celebrate this my professor even invited me over to his house and I shared my only homecooked Indian meal with him and his wife. Now that we are talking about the food, I have to tell you it is AMAZING. That is once you get used to their "normal" level of spiciness of course. The first few days I could only eat butter chicken, because that is what the Indians call "not spicy", with a lot of naan bread, but, trust me, it gets better.

Of course, no matter how good the work and the food were, the best part of my internship was meeting all those incredible people. In the beginning I was a bit scared of what would happen to me in an unknown country, all by myself, but from the moment I was introduced to the local committee members and the other interns, I knew I didn't have to worry anymore. Everyone was extremely nice and welcoming, I even got invited to a trip in my first 12 hours there.

That first trip in India was all about partying and chilling by the pool and it was also the perfect opportunity to get to know each other. I have to admit, ending up on the streets at 4 AM without a place to sleep really brings you together. Another weekend we rented motorbikes and drove through the beautiful ruins in Hampi, where we also washed off all our sins in the river. To get there we took a sleeper bus, which would be amazing if not for the bumpy Indian roads. We also drove to “the Scotland of India” with our party bus, which, by the way, is not made for people over 1.65m. There we hiked, saw elephants and tasted coffee and the best chocolate of India (still doesn't taste anything like real chocolate). Other weekends included a jeep safari, starting in a Bollywood dance performance and of course the last Namaste Manipal activity. Namaste Manipal was a week filled with activities like the international cuisine night, where our attempt to make waffles completely failed, the IAESTE ball, a scavenger hunt and a Bollywood party. One of those evenings was Indian themed, where we all wore traditional Indian clothes, decorated our hands with Mehndi and so much more.



It is impossible to summarize my IAESTE internship in 500 words, because I have so much to tell about the best summer of my life. I would recommend it to everyone who wants to spend an amazing time abroad meeting new people, discovering a country and getting some working experience!



It was the middle of August before I left on my third international experience, leaving home for Ecuador. After being an IAESTE member for two years I finally decided to go on an IAESTE internship. I could just tell you that it was so awesome, and I would just recommend everyone to do this. But let's convince all of you of this as well.



It was 4 am in the night when I left with a bus to Amsterdam to catch my flight to Quito, a capital at almost 3000 m high. The first days I strolled around the city and visited the amazing lagoon of Quilotoa a few hours out of town. That is also when I first met most of trainees. Okay no let's go back a bit.

Actually, I arrived at 5 pm in Quito with an enormous jetlag, met some trainees in the hostel who immediately convinced me to go with them to sing karaoke. And every day after again and again I met so many people with whom I did so much amazing stuff. We did a trip to Mindo, to visit waterfalls, swim in them and after that we were ziplining across the valley. Next thing I know I was on a local's family party, speaking only the Spanish words 'Hola' and 'Gracias'. The week after I climbed a volcano, while two weeks later I was rafting and biking up and down in a beautiful landscape.



Of course, I did not only trip and travel around. There was also some work to do, the internship itself. Every day again I went there enjoying the landscapes I got on my 1-hour bus rides. My work was in the fancy Universidad San Francisco de Quito. There I worked in the Chemical Engineering department on the upscaling of a bioreactor for bio-ethanol fermentation and did some studies on the separation as well. A new and challenging topic for me, and I learned quite a few things. But actually, the coolest thing was my work colleagues, which were Ecuadorian students of my age. They were working with me in the lab and every day I met some new people and learned cool things about their country I can't find in any travel book.



I think what I want to say, next to the professional experience and all the things you discover when you travel, the most important thing is that you meet so many amazing people. That is what all this is about for me. Oh, and I learned more Spanish than 'Hola' and 'Gracias'. This is just one piece of the big adventure I had there, so if you ever bump into me, don't hesitate to ask for the rest of the stories!

“Every day I met some new people and learned cool things about their country I can't find in any travel book.”



As an IAESTE member for the past 2 years, I had been looking forward to my own IAESTE internships for quite a while. While it took place relatively close to home, it was still everything I had imagined and even more. I did my internship in a small village in the North of Switzerland, somewhere halfway between Basel and Zurich.



As my internship started on the first of July, I left on the 28th of June, excited and curious to be away from home for two and a half months but also very nervous. Not knowing what to expect, it was a relieve to know that a colleague would be waiting for me at Zurich airport to show me around the company and then take me to my accommodation. I arrived in the guesthouse, where I met international PhD students and other interns of the same company. The village itself only inhabits 3000 people, but it is surrounded by green hills, with lots of hiking trails.

The work was very varied and well structured: first, I learned how to operate and calibrate several atmospheric sampling instruments. Then, these instruments were used to do several experiments in a smog chamber. Each day, a new experiment was started. After a couple of days, I was allowed to operate the chamber on my own. In between this, I got data from previous campaigns to analyze. For this purpose, I wrote several functions in Matlab® which will be used in the future. The colleagues were always ready to help me out if I was stuck and during lunch, they shared experiences and tips to get to know the country.

During the weekends, I explored the beautiful country of Switzerland. The local IAESTE members organize great trips that go really everywhere. I visited several cities: the capital city Bern, where we enjoyed rafting, the beautiful vineyards of Lausanne, including a wine tasting, Basel, the city close to the three-country border of France, Germany and Switzerland and Zurich, the biggest city. There were activities like swimming in the lakes and floating on the river, laser shooting, an opportunity to bungee jump from the Diga Verzasca (but I chickened out of that one) and hiking, hiking, hiking.

The most difficult thing I encountered was surprisingly enough the language. Swiss German is nothing like High German, and while everyone at the company and guesthouse speaks English, this was quite annoying when taking the bus or shopping. However, using English, French and a little bit German, I always managed to communicate.



While an IAESTE internship seems like a huge undertaking before you leave, it is an experience that you never forget afterwards. You get to know so many new people from all over the world, discover a new culture, no matter how similar it may seem to the Belgian culture, and be independent in way you've never been before. **WORK, EXPERIENCE, DISCOVER** is truly the perfect slogan for this organization.





Why did I chose Osijek? To be honest, I wanted to do an internship in September for 4 weeks. And guess what, this internship was for 4 weeks in September. The city was not that important for me, I just loved the concept of combining an internship with an international adventure. But in the end, Osijek did turn out to be a cool place. There is a dog shelter situated in a very nice environment where you can walk dogs, there were free salsa and bachata classes every evening and so much more. But in the end, the most important thing are the other trainees. During the period I was doing my internship, 5 other trainees were working there as well, from whom 3 stayed in the same dorm as me. We became close friends very fast. Moreover, the local IAESTE people spent a lot of time with us as well. We went out together for a drink, got invited to play some boardgames at someone's place and there was always someone coming with us if we had to take care of practical issues like going to the town hall or the bank.



Now about the job itself. My internship was at the faculty of Civil Engineering. The professors and the other personnel were very open towards international people. They couldn't stop promoting their country and give you advice about the places you must have visited in Croatia. So I felt very welcome there. Moreover, I worked together with my roommate, which was extra fun.

The job we had to do was not very demanding and the boss was very generous concerning free days of. Because of this, I had the opportunity to extend my weekends and make some nice trips. The first weekend, I visited a friend in Belgrade, the second weekend, I went a few days to a BEST course in Maribor (Slovenia) and the last weekend, I made a roadtrip around Croatia together with the other trainees. During this roadtrip, we visited Plitvice lakes, the coastside, Papuk Nature Park and Zagreb. As you can read, Osijek is perfectly located to make weekendtrips. Apart from Serbia, Hungary and Bosnia are only around 1 hour away by bus (and there are a lot of connections).



“Good friends can turn every place into a lovely place!”

To end this testimonial, I would like to give some tips if you are considering applying. When I applied, I was in my third bachelor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. I applied for an internship meant for Civil Engineering/Mining/Geology students. Though the description of the job sounded like something I could manage with my knowledge. So, I just applied and got accepted. Don't just check the internships where your field of study is mentioned. Also look at the internships only mentioning 'Engineering'. Finally, I recommend you to not be too critical about the destination. Good friends can turn every place into a lovely place!





As the place where I had been doing a student job for three years closed, I decided to look for a job closer to my field of study. That's when one of my fellow classmates told me about IAESTE. Immediately, I was sold on this great initiative; cultural expansion, new experiences, friends and a two-month travel. So, I thought why not give it a shot? I ended up applying for three internships and one month later I got the great news that IAESTE accepted me for the internship in Oman. The final confirmation of the company in Oman came in around mid-June. That's when the stress level started to go up. Is this really something for me? Won't I miss my friends and family too much? I'll have to do my own laundry...



So there I went only one month later on the French national holiday, quatorze juillet, off on a plane heading towards Muscat, Oman. I arrived around, what I thought was quite late in the evening, 11pm. I got to meet my roommate to be for the next seven weeks and a lot of very nice and open people upstairs in the shared TV room. We stayed up until 2am and that's when I first learned these people never sleep.

Next day I woke up at 5:45am with small eyes on a Monday, which as I knew it was the first day of a working week, to catch the bus to the university. That first day, which I soon became to learn was actually their second day of the week, I only had to sign some administrative papers after which I returned to the accommodation, caught up on some sleep and joined some guys on my first trip to the national museum and a marketplace.

The second day, well actually third, I followed *habibi* Ahmed to work. He had been reading a 465 page pdf file for two weeks and that's what kept us occupied at work for two more weeks. The working experience ended up having a lot of ups and downs. After the reading we got some nice example problems from ongoing projects. Later on in the internship, the employees were very busy meeting deadlines so we got a bit left at the sideline. Eventually the last week they made some more time for us and provided us with a lot of knowledge and access to interesting files and data.

Despite the working experience being a bit of a let-down, my Omani experience was one of the best I ever had. From the 50 engineers staying in the accommodation I became good friends with a lot of them. Through sharing fun experiences, late nights, awesome expeditions (Salalah, Wadi Shab, Dubai trip, desert trip), hookahs (shisha) and numerous rounds of Mafia (Werewolves of Miller's Hollow) we got to know each other very, very good. Next month we are meeting again with part of the group at the Oktoberfest in Stuttgart. After that some more trips are planned so this will remain friendships for life.

To conclude, this was a once in a lifetime experience and I am very happy that I stepped out of my comfort zone and took this chance. For everyone thinking about doing an laeste internship, I would fully recommend this. I do think there are better places than Oman for work experience, but the travel experience is worth it for sure.



“why not give it a
shot?”



I was thinking about going abroad for a longer time since a while. I knew the IAESTE-concept from going to an event once. When I saw the IAESTE-internships showing up it looked like the perfect timing for me. Should I go for it? Yes? No? Yes!! Why not, let's do it, I had nothing to lose. Quite impulsive I subscribed for being a part of this, without realising that this would be one of greatest adventures in my life.



Full of excitement I was waiting for my response if I was selected or not. And in May I finally got the redeeming answer that I was selected for going on an internship to India. Before leaving I heard a lot of stories about the daily life and the state of affairs of India. And after my journey some of the stories I can agree with and a lot of stories I can totally disprove.

The first and most common thing I heard was: 'It isn't safe in India for a girl alone'. This statement I can totally disprove. I never felt unsafe. I was surrounded by a great group of other IAESTE-interns and a well-organised IAESTE-committee, that became true friends for me. If you don't take unnecessary risks, you will only be a part of great experiences.



A second statement I heard before was: 'India is alike to commotion' Yes this is true and it is great! The Indian culture has so much to offer. The colourful clothes of the people, the beautiful and fun celebrations of Hinduism, the always relaxed cows, dogs and monkeys on the road not caring about the so many rikshaws, buses, cars and people wandering around them... But next to this India also has a lot of beautiful nature to offer, where it is so peaceful and quiet.



A third thing I heard was 'Go with the flow in India'. This is the best advise I had, I went to India with an open-mind. Be open to the local people and the culture and it will be great. I did a lot of things I wanted to do in Belgium before but where I did not have the time for: Yoga, surfing... and it was a lot of fun. Indeed some aspects of the culture are different, communication is not always that easy, the typical clothing is different... but I accepted this and it worked out.

The last story I heard before was: 'You like it or you hate it' and I totally loved it. India will be a part of me and I hope I will be able to enjoy the country another time, there is still so much that I want to discover. I am so thankful that I was a part of this, for the great moments and memories. And it was a trigger to experience more of this!





'Accepted', when I read this word on the IAESTE outgoing platform, I couldn't believe my eyes. But after some interviews (one with an IAESTE member of Vienna and one with my future company supervisor), this dream of me became more and more reality. On the 30th of July I could finally fly to Vienna. I arrived there quite late on a Sunday summer (much too hot!) evening, but luckily, I was already in contact with one of the members, who picked me up at the nearest train station, and accompanied me to my dormitory. That evening we still went out for some food, they showed me the IAESTE office, which was located in the university, but then I went to bed, because the next day was start of my two-month internship at TTTech. The first day of work I was a little bit nervous, but I was reassured immediately by my company supervisor and of course by all my kind team members. The company where I worked, TTTech, is specialized in developing safety platforms for autonomous driving; so cool! The main tasks for me were getting used with all the software programs they used, programming some supporting software (e.g. protocol checks) and of course also developing some additional features. I also attended some trainings to get familiar with this industry and all the products of the company. The first week of August, TTTech even organized an internship event. We got some information sessions about TTTech itself and to finish the day, we went climbing with all the interns of the company.



I had to work 38,5 hours a week, which was quite a lot, but I could more or less choose my hours, which was perfect. Of course I still had a lot of time after my working hours and during the weekends. The first week already, IAESTE organized a lot of evening events, like a movie night, or going to a festival, so this was a great opportunity to getting to know a lot of people.

Vienna consisted of two IAESTE groups: IAESTE Vienna & IAESTE Boku. The internships at Vienna were mainly software-electrical focused, while those at Boku were more focused on biotechnological topics. In total, we were with around 30 trainees. The next weeks, there was never a week without something organized by IAESTE; we visited a brewery, went partying together ... Together with another boy from Belgium, we even organized a cantus! During the weekends we mostly spent time together by doing sightseeing in the amazing city of Vienna.

Vienna is recently ranked as 'most livable city' to live in, and I can only approve that! The architecture is wonderful, public transport is just perfect (even during the weekends, buses etc. drive the whole night; which is perfect when you go out!) and I can still keep adding aspects to this list... All those sightseeing tours and having to guide everyone (after a few weeks, my parents visited me, and then some friends, and then some other friends...), made me become more and more a professional Vienna guide. Besides staying in Vienna (one can stay there for half a year and still having not seen everything), I also planned some trips. One weekend I went visiting a friend in Bratislava, this capital of Slovakia was only one hour and five euros away. Another weekend we went on a hiking trip in Slovakia again, an amazing experience that I'll never forget!

The language spoken in Austria is of course German, and with my very basic knowledge of high school, I thought this was the perfect opportunity to improve my German. So after a few weeks I went looking for German evening classes, because during the day I of course had to work.



Finally, I found an evening course, which took place on Monday and Wednesday from 7 p.m. till 9.30 p.m. I knew this would be hard besides my normal weekly schedule, but I was motivated so registered immediately. Und schon ein bisschen stolz kann ich sagen, dass ich Level B1-2 (intermediate) erreicht habe!

To summarize; I would immediately do this over again if I could. The people I met, not only from Vienna, but from all over the world, will be – together with all those unforgettable memories - forever in my heart!



UNITED KINGDOM



Arriving in Glasgow, I was very surprised by the city itself. Whenever I had heard people talk about Scotland in the past, they only mentioned Edinburgh. After I had been accepted for the internship, someone even told me: "Too bad, you got the worst one of the two." So, I took off to Glasgow without really knowing what to expect. I planned my arrival 4 days before the start of my internship to take the time to settle and explore the city. During the first days, it already became very clear that Glasgow was actually an amazing city. Old Victorian buildings towered majestically all around the city centre. The streets are broad and spacious, it feels like there is room to breathe and never ever have I seen so many parks in such a highly populated city. At the same time, Glasgow is not jam packed with tourists and it's still somewhat affordable. It's a fantastic place to live and work.



In the middle of this, there was the campus of Glasgow Caledonian University. I completed my internship there at the Department of Cyber Security and Networks. For 6 weeks, I supported a lecturer by making a survey of machine learning techniques applied to malware analysis. This consisted of doing a literature review in the first phase and some experiments in the second phase.

My work will serve as a seed for further research and the code I wrote will be used for educational purposes such as labs for the students. I had a lot of freedom during my activities, I could choose whatever I wanted to research, as long as it contributed well to the survey. The atmosphere at the university was very relaxed during the summer, so overall the work was very enjoyable.



This left plenty of time for me to hang out with other interns in Glasgow and visit countless bars. There seriously comes no end to all the bars and all the restaurants you can go to. Very often, live bands are playing their hearts out as well. Some members of IAESTE Scotland taught us about caelidh, which is a set of traditional Scottish dances. They took us to bars where bands with accordions played traditional music and gave live instructions on how to perform these dances. This was a very fun way of going out and getting to know each other. Caelidh is one of those things you wish you could take home, but you can't.

IAESTE Scotland organized trips during the weekends and showed us the best bits of Scotland. We did some beautiful hikes in the rain (of course), which was great for bonding with the others. At a whiskey distillery, we learned about the process of making whiskey and got a taste of what good whiskey tastes like. In Edinburgh, we visited the Fringe Festival and attended live comedy. These shows focus on interaction with the front row. The performers improvise on the stories coming out of the audience and try to make a joke out of it. I was very impressed by some artists! Another very memorable activity was, without a doubt, the infamous "Sub crawl". You take the subway, travel to the next station, get a drink in the nearest pub and repeat until the subway closes.



The whole internship was a very enjoyable experience. LC Ghent and LC Glasgow were both very nice teams, they were very responsible people and were very supportive. I would advise anyone who is hesitating to take the leap and to just go for it!



Work

I was scrolling through the different IAESTE internships until I came across this one at Sharjah Center for Astronomy and Space Sciences (SCASS), right next to the city center of Dubai.

Living abroad and working in the aerospace sector seemed like an exciting adventure; it definitely was! SCASS, or Sharjah Academy for Astronomy Space Sciences and Technology (SAASST) as it is called nowadays, is a high-tech research facility. I worked with GNSS data (a general term for GPS), to calculate positions of users like your phone. Apart from this challenge, there was also a workshop about very small satellites (CubeSats). Not only did I see the technical side, this internship also brought me to a UAE Space Agency conference. Every research group in the country, the Japanese space agency and various Japanese private businesses presented the progress on their research and gave proposals for future projects. The UAE Space Agency decides how much each project gets funded. It is unique as an outsider to see how these kinds of organizational decisions are made.



Experience

IAESTE isn't all about work, it is about experiencing. The weekend starts on Thursday night and ends Saturday night in the UAE. I had a very good relationship with my colleagues at work. We even met asides from the working hours to have dinner together or to take the car and explore the country. IAESTE also organizes activities each week and that's good because there is a lot to see in Dubai. The tallest building in the world Burj Khalifa, huge aquariums, the Dubai frame, the Palm, the souks in old Dubai,... Dubai is perfect during the day to be a tourist and at night there are a lot of different clubs to experience nightlife. I was so lucky to have met local and international people who wanted to show me both aspects of the city. I feel like I really experienced the United Arab Emirates. Dubai was the main place to go, but I also visited other places of interest like the Sjeik Zayed Mosque in the capital Abu Dhabi, the Rain Room in Sharjah and the zoo in Al Ain. However, it is not these places that made the biggest impression on me. It's the endless hospitality of the Arabian people and the ease to become friends with internationals.

Discover

My IAESTE-internship was an unforgettable experience, one of the best decisions I made so far. It allowed me to gain experience as an aerospace engineer and I met a lot of wonderful people. It's amazing to discover a country with new international friends. If you have any doubt about going on an internship abroad: just do it!



“It's the endless
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internationals.”



Salam, Khubi? Man Nathan am. Hey, How are you? My name is Nathan. Let me tell you about my unforgettable experience in Iran. It all started on the 6th of July. I flew from Brussels to Dubai and then from Dubai in just two hours to Tehran, the capital of Iran. Once arrived at the Imam Khomeini airport Sarah, an Ilaeste Iran member, was waiting there for me to pick me up. She drove me through the crazy Tehran traffic into the city center. It is said that the traffic in Tehran is one of the worst in the world. It feels like making your way through a dense jungle. What an introduction to Tehran!

Once arrived in the city center, we dropped off all my stuff at the dorm arranged by Ilaeste Iran. First I could refresh a bit and then Sarah took me to a cafe to see and meet the other interns. Most of the interns were at work but some had a day off and were hanging out in the cafe, drinking tea, playing board games or exchanging stories. A very common thing to do in Iran. After getting to know some of the interns I went to explore the city with a Polish and a Norwegian intern. The beauty of this vibrant city with both modern and historical buildings directly amazed me. This was the first of many times I walked across the Tabiat bridge.

The following day my internship already started. The internship was at a concrete company called Bonyad Beton. I worked at the design offices in the northern part of Tehran. My task was to help in the development and optimisation of design methods for the repair of concrete and rebars damaged by corrosion due to chloride penetration. A common problem due to the harsh conditions at the coast sides of Iran. During the internship, the company gave me the opportunity to visit the 19th International Exhibition of Building and Construction Industry in Tehran. This gave me great insight in what kind of materials Iranian contractors use and how they use them in typical Iranian constructions. Next to my normal day job, I also made some site visits to a couple of construction sites. One I will never forget is the site visit to the Iran mall. Which will be one of world's largest shopping malls. I enjoyed going to the job, it was a really nice work environment. Big offices with good working air-conditioning, there was a servant who constantly made fresh chai. Mostly I ate lunch at the office and tried a lot of different Iranian dishes like for example Fesenjan, Gormeh Sabzi or the most famous one Kebab. Sometimes I went out to have lunch with a Swiss intern friend who worked close by. Because our work place was in the upper part of Tehran we could always go to the fancy places and have an extensive lunch, that mostly ended with desserts and hookah.

It was unimaginable how cheap everything was for us in Iran. Because of the sanctions of the United States, the Rial's value has decreased a lot. Every morning a private taxi would pick me up and bring me to my work place. In the afternoon most of the times I walked back crossing the Tabiat bridge. The walk took me about 25 minutes but was really intensive because of the heat. After work there was always something to do. Going out with some other interns. Meeting up with local Iranians and do some sightseeing in Tehran or go to a nice cafe or restaurant. Before I came to Iran, I always heard from other people that Iranians are super friendly. I could not really imagine how it would be. It's really crazy. They help you with everything. Iranians make random conversations with you on the street, in the restaurant, in the taxi, at cafes. Really curious where you are from, what you are doing in Iran, if you are enjoying it, if they can help you with anything and so on. So it was really easy to go to the local restaurants and to the cool spots of the city where the locals often go to. Also they are really well spoken. Most of the Iranians can speak English and there are a lot of high educated people. Iranians really appreciate it when you try to speak some Farsi with them. If you even can speak a couple of sentences they are already over the moon. I learned as much as possible in the 7 weeks I was in Iran. An easy and very useful thing to know are the Persian numbers. So you can recognise the taxi you order with the license plate. It also makes it easier to pay in a restaurant or market.

In the weekends I always tried to go out of Tehran and travel a bit to see the other side of Iran. Some great trips with my intern friends and with some locals were made. We went to the mountains, the forest, the Caspian sea, the desert, some other cities and villages like Hamadan, Chalus, Ramsar, Jevaherdeh, Lavassan... Also, the trip that IAESTE Iran organised to Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd... was really amazing. The IAESTE trip was during my last week and It was a great way to end my internship in Iran. It was sad to leave Iran, my time over there was really enjoyable and I am so glad for this opportunity.

One of the best things about the internship for me, was meeting a lot of people from all over the world. I made a lot of new friendships and got to know lots of different cultures at once. It is an unbelievably experience to live in a foreign country far away, work there and be able to travel around and explore. Because I was leaving Iran on the same day as my Polish intern friend, we decided to visit Dubai together before going back to our home countries. A great ending of my IAESTE internship. Khodahafez!!



When I arrived on a Sunday evening, I encountered many novelties in a short period of time since I started working the next morning. Thanks to the help of the local IAESTE members, the transition went fine and it became clear to me that live in Malta is in fact not that different from Belgium. Over time of course, you get to know what differentiates the Maltese from any other country.



English is one of the two national languages, which made communication with locals and at work easy. Also, the inhabitants are open-minded to different cultures since the island is shaped by their multi-cultural past. It became clear to me that they know a slower pace of day-to-day live. People generally hurry less and do not obsess as much about punctuality, which can be a nice change compared to our efficiency-driven northern culture.

“They enjoy celebrating, getting together and sharing a meal.”

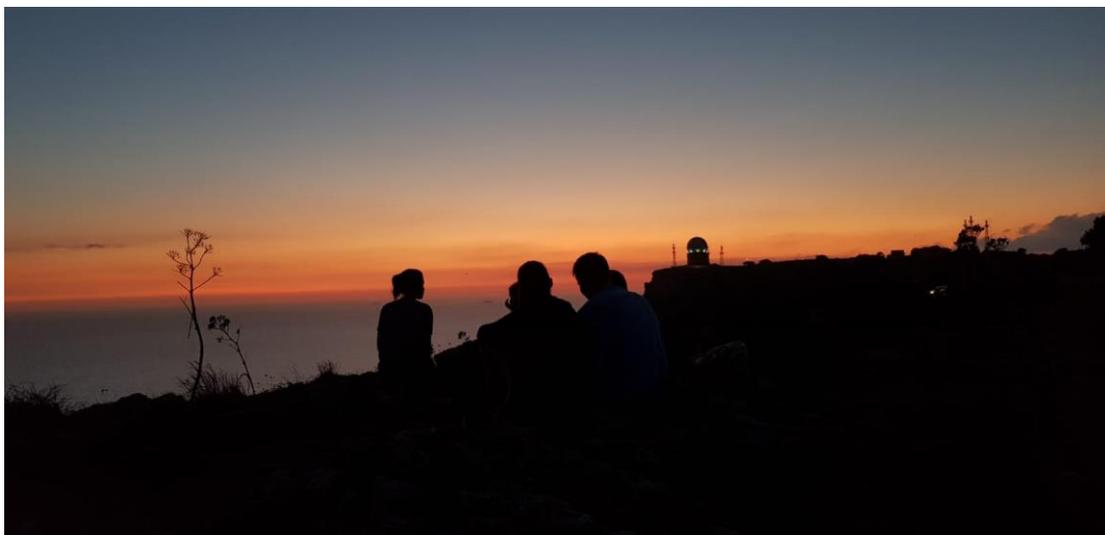
The internship took place in the Restoration Directorate of Malta, which is the governmental agency guiding the rich heritage of Malta into the future. All the students were offered a lot of design freedom on interesting cases. Sometimes more guidance and variety of work would have been nice, but the overall experience was good. The working pace was do-able and the staff kind and approachable. They are used to having students around and some were even former IAESTE members themselves! Our colleagues also shared tips to visit for example a jazz bar on a bridge or their favourite beaches.

Besides the internship, it was mainly the people I met and the experiences we had that made this trip memorable. I got to know a nice group of Europeans, exploring the island together. The local committee often joined us and shared insiders-info about their beloved island. The Maltese islands have a rich history worth visiting, such as their capital Valletta or the fortified city Mdina. As an architecture student, their past is intriguing, but unfortunately, the current boom in construction possesses less qualities and is mainly financially driven. There is barely any greenery left and the locals undergo an inflow of new residents. Luckily there is still some nature left. We visited the green island of Gozo and the stunning blue lagoon. After work or in the weekends, we often went to one of the many beaches, making the best out of the striking heat.

During my internship in Malta, I also learned that the Maltese people love to feast, definitely when it comes to their saints! Festivities had been going on and fireworks lit for weeks to celebrate the ascension of Saint Mary on the 15th of August, throughout the islands. They enjoy celebrating, getting together and sharing a meal.



All considered, it was a successful internship, exciting journey and an enriching experience, thanks to the supportive work environment, the fellow interns and the welcoming local IAESTE committee, guiding our way in the cozy, chaotic island of Malta. The only thing I regret is not having extra free time, once the internship was finished, to explore some more. Five weeks really is too short!





Hello, my name is Sander! Several friends of mine went last year on an international internship with IAESTE and told me that it is one of the best experiences they had in their life. They told me that I really HAD to do it, and everything they said was so true. I'm studying Computer Science Engineering and I've been in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, for 6 weeks.



My internship was mainly research in the networking division of the Computer Science department in the University of Cyprus. For six weeks I worked together with a professor and a PhD-student of the university. They gave me a lot of freedom to work on my own pace but always helped me whenever I was stuck with a problem.

I was not alone during my internship. I was lucky to be accompanied by 5 other trainees in Nicosia and 11 others in Limassol. 4 of the 5 trainees were even in the same dorm building like me. Logically, we spent a lot of time together as we lived in the same building and had a shared kitchen. Every night we did a lot of fun things together: we played darts in a bar, went bowling, cooked together, exercised in the gym, watched series and went for many evening walks in the natural park close by.

During my stay, there were two official IAESTE trips. On one trip we went to the blue lagoon with a boat, where we could swim and dive in extremely blue and clear water. The next trip, we visited some of Cyprus most beautiful places including *Aphrodite's Rock* and *Paphos' archeological site*. Going on internship with IAESTE is a once in a lifetime experience, you meet so many different people from different countries and cultures. One time, I went to a party from a colleague where there were more than 15 different nationalities. Most of us knew nobody at that party, but everyone was so open and welcoming that it seemed like we all knew each other for years.

My two best memories of Cyprus were two private beach parties I went. One time I stayed with the trainees of Limassol during the weekend and we all met on the beach where we talked the whole night about our countries and compared all our values and cultures. This with relaxing background music and some drinks, while watching the sun go down. To end this beautiful night, we all went together for a night swim in the sea of Limassol. My best memory of my trip to Cyprus was in my last week. During my period there, my fellow trainees and I made some Cypriot friends and in the last week of my stay there, one of them was having his birthday party on the beach. He all invited us on the beach of Larnaca, where we had a typical Cypriot birthday party with drinks and a lot of Cypriot food. And of course, again a beautiful night swim.

“It seemed like we all knew each other for years.”





Hi! My name is Emma and last summer I went to Botucatu, a small city in the state of São Paulo, Brazil where I did an eight-week internship in a lab of the UNESP university. Applying for this internship was literally the best decision in my life.

When I arrived by plane in São Paulo, I got picked up by an IAESTE volunteer who took me to the bus station. Because it was raining, I immediately got introduced to the crazy traffic in São Paulo. It took some time but finally we arrived at the bus station and I could take a bus taking me to Botucatu. There, my professor picked me up and immediately gave me a tour in the lab where I got welcomed in a very Brazilian way: extremely warm, in bad English and with an invite to go for food and drinks in the evening. This already tells you some important things you need to know when you are thinking about going to Brazil. First: the people are amazing. I have never met so much friendly, helpful, open and lovely people. They want to help you whenever you need something, they want to talk to you and show you around in their beautiful country. If I need to choose one thing I loved most about my whole internship experience, I would say it's the Brazilian culture where people are so loving and there's a happy atmosphere most of the time.

Second thing about Brazil: not many people can speak (good) English. Even the students and PhD researchers sometimes only speak Portuguese. I knew this beforehand and actually I kind of liked it, because it gave me the chance to learn some Portuguese. After being approved for the internship, I started doing some Duolingo to learn the basics. This was very useful and I can recommend it to everyone going to a country where they don't speak a lot of English.



Third thing: Brazilians love to eat and drink together. And I surely loved their food and drinks too, it was a great pleasure to taste a lot of special fruits, tasty dishes, sweets and not to forget the national pride: caipirinha. If you like to party, you will surely like Brazil too, because they love it 😊 Most IAESTE interns get hosted in the typical student houses called 'republicas'. It's a house where girls or boys (sometimes also mixed) live together during the semester. They live together much closer than students in Belgium, as if they are a family, and they often have pets like cats and dogs. The typical student parties are thrown in these republicas with cheap drinks and a lot of 'funk' music, it's amazing!



My internship itself was really interesting too. I was lucky to be in a lab where they use a lot of bioinformatics and I could choose a little project for myself supporting the research of one of the PhD students of the lab. The work pressure is not like we are used to in Europe and it was never a problem to get a day off for doing trips.

Although there were only 4 other IAESTE interns in Botucatu, I got the chance to meet a lot of other students from all around the world (prepare for a whole bunch of Polish and German people though) when travelling.

After these two months, Brazil really has a special place in my heart and when I get the chance I will certainly go back. I am very grateful for this whole experience and loved every moment of it!

“...a very Brazilian way:
extremely warm, in bad
English and with an invite to
go for food...”





My internship took me to the heart of Vienna, the capital of Austria. Mostly, I don't like doing city trips, walking around all day just to visit some crowded tourist attractions. So at first, I really didn't know why I applied for an internship right in the middle of this big city. But I actually liked the city life there! Getting to know a city by living in it for 6 weeks turned out to be a very nice way of exploring it: there's no pressure visiting all famous places at once, and there is also a lot to discover by just randomly walking through the city or by going along with the Viennese IAESTE people.

The day I arrived, the guy who picked me up at the train station added me to a big WhatsApp-group with all IAESTE members and summer trainees, which were more than 100 people! Through this way, we were frequently invited to some events, or just to go out for swimming in the Donau river or to have some drinks. At first, I was a bit on my own, but I quickly got to know the other people by attending some of the events. By chance, I wasn't the only Belgian trainee in Vienna this summer, and we even got the opportunity to organise a typical Belgian cantus there. It wasn't easy to keep it under control, but we had a lot of fun (and beer)!

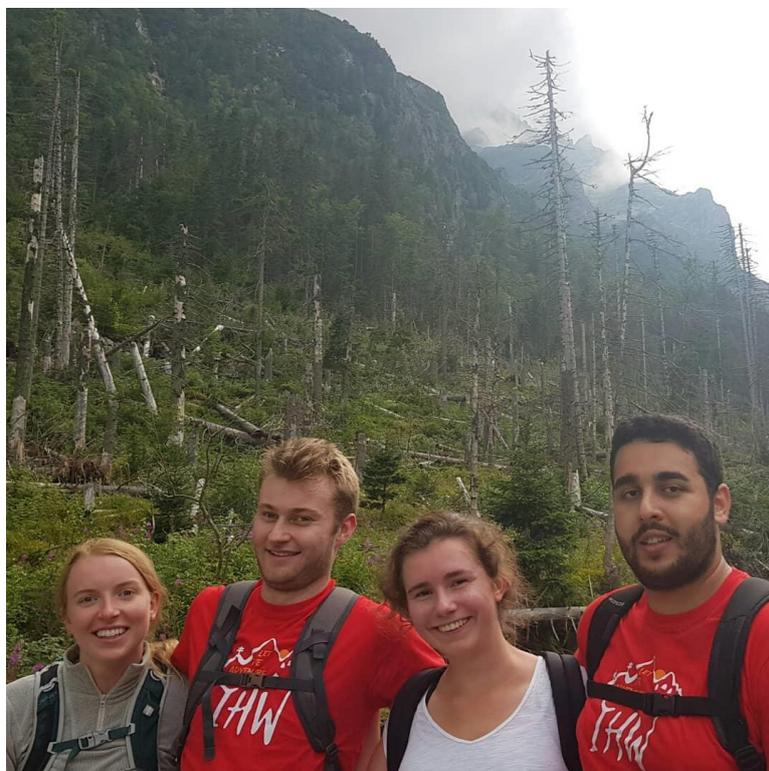


One weekend, I still needed a break from the city life, and I went to a hiking weekend in Slovakia together with some other trainees and members. To be honest, the weekend wasn't organised very well by the Slovakian people, but I still had one of the best hiking trips I've ever done! I found some other sporty people to walk with, and we even ended up running down the mountain.

But of course, there was also the internship itself! I worked at the TU Wien (the Vienna University of Technology), at a small research unit for transport planning and traffic engineering. They wanted me to improve two web applications, used for research on street design. My mentor and I were the only actual IT-guys in the research unit, so some of my colleagues even asked me to help them with their computer tasks a few times! Overall, the atmosphere was very relaxed, and they seemed to be happy with all the progress I made, even though I couldn't finish everything I was asked for.

“we even got the opportunity to organise a typical Belgian cantus there. It wasn't easy to keep it under control, but we had a lot of fun (and beer)!”

I have no regrets spending half of my summer on this internship: I've proven to myself that I'm able to work independently on some larger projects, which gives me more courage to start my master's studies. By meeting so many new people there all the time, this period was also a great training for my social and language skills (mainly English, I found it very hard keeping up with a conversation in German...). And last but not least, I got the chance to experience the beautiful city of Vienna. Ciao!





It was a long-time dream for me to travel alone and get work experience abroad. So I was very happy and lucky that I got the opportunity to do this internship at the AGH University of Science and Technology for 4 weeks in Krakau. When I was about to departure, I was scared that my English wouldn't be good enough. That fear slowly disappeared during my stay when I noticed that the some of the Polish people had difficulty communicating in English. They often used Google Translate in order to express themselves in English.



For my internship I was supposed to do some laboratory analysis for a water treatment system at the Department of Environmental Management and Protection. However, the water laboratory was not operational, so I had to ask for other work in the Environmental field. I got the opportunity to work with the staff of the soil laboratory.

They were starting a very interesting project where they determine the effect of tree species on mining soils to start reforestation of those soils. So not only did I learn new laboratory skills, I also improved my communication skills and got more confident in speaking English.

The LC of IAESTE Krakau made sure that the trainees didn't get bored during their internship. Every weekend, and even during the week, they planned some fun activities. The first weekend we went to the beautiful Ojcow National Park for a hiking trip. We also went karting and visited the largest rollercoaster park of Poland, Energylandia. I even had the chance to go to Auschwitz. This was a real eye-opener for me and an experience I will never forget.



All those places I visited were close to each other and easy to visit. If you have the chance to go to Krakau you will immediately fall in love with the city. The city centre is surrounded by a lovely green park where it's great to walk during the evening. The buildings are very nicely renovated and also the architecture was very unique for me. Other fun places to go are the cafes and bars that are located in basements. It made the farewell party of each trainee legendary. If you also like delicious and cheap food you will find what you need here. Some of the traditional polish food are Pierogi (dumplings) and Zapiekanki (kind of a pizzasandwich). All of these lovely places are the main reason why Krakau is the most beautiful city of Poland.

This internship changed my view of the world. I met so many amazing and extremely kind people from all over the world (India, Turkey, Thailand, Macedonia,...). I couldn't believe that you can make so many friends in such a short time. It made my world a little bit smaller because of that. After four weeks it still felt like I had only just arrived. Every moment was so intense and I experienced a unique combination of freedom and happiness that won't be equalled any time soon. So it was hard to leave this all behind. The best advice that I can give: if you're still hesitating if you should go on an internship, just go! Because otherwise you will miss one of the best opportunities of your life!

“it was hard to leave this all behind.”





Let me tell you something more about one of the most unforgettable and life-changing experiences I ever had in my life. Last summer I did an architecture internship in Bucharest, Romania. For six weeks I lived in a dormitory in Bucharest together with about 15-20 interns from all over the world. When I arrived at the dorm I was a little bit shocked. The room that I needed to share with three other guys was not that clean, there was a broken bed and the lights in the bathroom didn't work. 'Welcome in Romania' was a often used joke when we discovered something that didn't work out the way it should. Luckily it wasn't as bad as it seemed at the first impression so after some days I got used to it.



Most of the interns that were staying in the dorm were architecture students. During the day we worked in different offices and after work we went back to the dorm. Because we lived with a lot of interns, there was always something happening. Sometimes we had dinner together, did some sport activities or were relaxing in the living room of the dorm.

Also at night we had something to do. We went to bars in the city center to have some good Romanian beers, to parks for picnics or to clubs for parties.

In weekends we travelled outside Bucharest. I went to the beautiful mountains of Transylvania for hiking trips and to some typical Romanian cities. However, the most unforgettable memories were made in Vama Veche, a party beach by the Black Sea. We stayed for two nights at a camping site that was located on 50 meters from the beach. During the day we were relaxing on the beach and at night we had the best parties with beautiful sunrises at the end.

Before I came to Romania, I had some communication problems with my office (welcome to Romania ;)), which caused that I wasn't very excited to work there. Fortunately, the first day of my work a Romanian IAESTE member went with me to my office to show me how to get there. After seeing the office and talking with my boss I was immediately more excited to work there. In the beginning of the internship the Romanian IAESTE members also tried to plan some activities for us but because we were with a lot of interns, we started planning by ourselves. That's maybe the reason why I didn't see the members of IAESTE Romania a lot and why I didn't meet so many Romanian people. Of course, I'm very thankful that they picked me up from the airport and brought me to the dorm the first day and for the practical information they gave me.

The architecture office where I worked was very small. They were just with three employees working in the boss's attic. They had a lot of work and were often stressed, which meant they didn't have that much time for me. Because I was the only intern in the company I felt lonely sometimes. I was therefore jealous of the interns who worked with several people in the same office. But fortunately, the work they gave me was interesting.



Romania and also the work I did there were very nice but it wouldn't have been the same without the people I met there. I liked the most the moment when I arrived after work at the dorm and saw all the other interns there. I really felt at home in Bucharest.



This summer I spent 2,5 months in Colombia. To be honest, I didn't know a thing about this country when I decided to apply for this internship. Guess what? That's exactly the reason I chose it. I love discovering totally different cultures and Latin America was still on my bucket list.

Two weeks before flying to Bogota, I was sitting in a restaurant with my parents. We were talking to the waiter and they told him that I was going to Colombia. His first reaction was: 'I would never let my daughter go to Colombia.' I can safely say that I feel bad for his daughter. Of course, Colombia has a bloody history and a certain reputation. You have to be attentive and careful not to 'dar papaya', a Colombian idiom that simply means 'don't make yourself a target'. Besides this, Colombia has a lot to offer, it is one of the most diverse countries on the planet. The variety of fruits and vegetables is incredible, the nature is just breath-taking and the people are always eager to help. As I didn't speak any Spanish when I arrived, there were situations that 4 Colombians were trying to help me at the ATM, completing each other's sentences in their best English. I still find it incredible how fast you pick up a new language. At the end of my stay, I was, still without following any classes, able to hold a full-blown 20-minute conversation with a 78 year old Uber driver who didn't understand any English.

I was very lucky with the timing of my arrival. The new semester was just about to start and all the international students were arriving at that time. I stayed in a student home with 8 other students. During my first 2 weeks, I participated in some introduction days at the university where my project would take place. They organized a tour through Bogota, some general information about the university, a sports day, a trip to a volunteering center to help the less privileged people in the society ... Those days were so much fun and I made a lot of friends. The first picture for example, is taken on a trip to the coffee area we all booked together a month later.

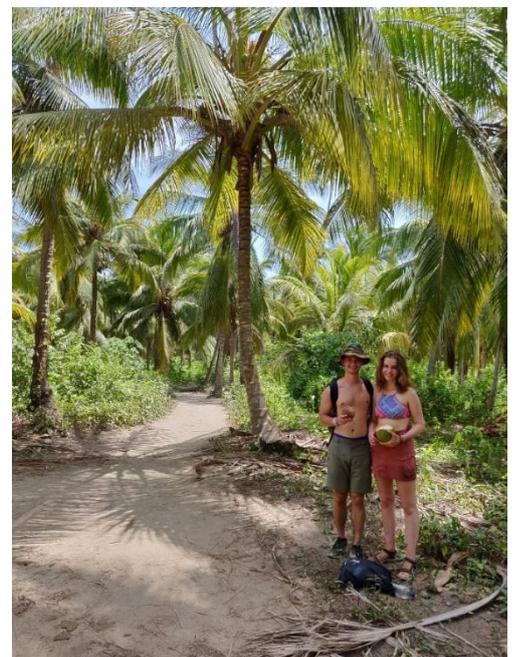


The internship itself was really nice. I had to help in some projects at the department of environmental engineering, organized by the university. They gave me a lot of freedom and were always open to suggestions. In the mornings, I chose to help in a project about the biofiltration of wastewater. They made an experimental set-up, comparing 3 types of compost and operating under different conditions to test which were the optimal parameters. My daily tasks consisted of measuring the amount of NH_3 and H_2S , keeping the moisture of the compost constant by adding water, weighing the compost ... Purely practical stuff. In the afternoon, I assisted in a project about the production of volatile fatty acids from wastewater. Besides the practical stuff (pH-measurements, preparing and characterizing samples, nitrogen determination...), I also helped writing an introduction for a paper. My colleagues were truly amazing people. One of my professors even invited me during my first weeks to spend the weekend with her and her family at Villa the Leyva, a typical colonial town. So that weekend, I was eating Tamales out of a banana leaf, with the biggest Delirium Tremens fans I've ever met. No kidding, Colombians love it.



During my other weekends, I did a few city trips to some of the highlights of Colombia. I discovered the history of Comuna 13 in Medellin, went to a huge dance festival in Cali where we ended up in a Colombian dance circle, hiked in Tayrona, as you can see in the third picture, a beautiful nature park, visited the Salt Cathedral ...

Doing this internship really opened my eyes: I learned a lot about working in labs, met some incredible people, learned a new language, saw some beautiful places on this planet... Thank you laeste for giving me this opportunity. I definitely recommend going on an internship to Colombia! You won't regret it, I promise 😊





IAESTE

BELGIUM

APPLY FOR IAESTE:

Deadline wishlist:

01/01/2020

Applications online:

04/02/2020

Applications close:

21/02/2020

Nomination:

25/02/2020

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KU LEUVEN

