



One year like no other - challenges & chances for IAESTE Switzerland

Looking back, the 2020 exchange year was like no other. Although it started successfully with the Annual Conference in Slovakia where we exchanged 141 internships, as of mid-March, everything changed with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic...

One of the crucial points in handling this unprecedented situation was to instil clear communication with all our stakeholders: we had to inform our students abroad about the new regulations and travel restrictions and we also had to constantly update our employers and interns here. A particular challenge for the Incoming Team was the constantly changing visa regulations which needed to be monitored closely.

Flexibility and patience became very important as the circumstances forced us to adapt: new internships needed to be found due to cancellations, others needed to be postponed, students' acceptances were

delayed and their arrival often uncertain due to air traffic being grounded. What became apparent was our dependency on aspects we could not influence. As borders were closed, universities shut, IAESTE offices not working anymore, we simply had to accept that many internships had to be cancelled (Outgoing 70; Incoming 42).

But with these unprecedented challenges came unprecedented solutions; for example, four Swiss students who could not travel abroad, replaced foreign students who could not come to Switzerland.

From July onwards however, as the borders within the EU/EFTA area opened, the situation finally improved. The exchange with certain countries was re-established and students respectively left and arrived in Switzerland to start their internships.

Despite all these obstacles a total of 79 foreign students have come to Switzer-

land for their internship and 28 Swiss students went abroad, demonstrating that all the hard work was worthwhile. COVID-19 directly affected the core of our business and brought a huge financial loss to our association.

But thanks to the moral support and understanding we received from everyone during this challenging year, we have overcome these disappointments and difficulties, and we are extremely grateful for it.

Although the future is uncertain, our team is still onboard, motivated, and full of energy and ideas to enable as many internships as possible in 2021. Thank you all for your continued encouragement and great collaboration. Stay healthy, stay safe!

**Sabine Lenz, National Secretary & Managing Director
IAESTE Switzerland**

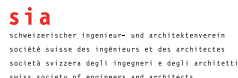
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Virginia Herrera, Swiss Employer, Geoprofile, Adligenswil

This year we were very excited to have an international student join our team for the summer months. Due to the unknown long-term effects of the coronavirus, doubts began to arise as to whether it was possible to go ahead with the planned internship. Unfortunately, we had to put her placement on hold temporarily.

As the situation became clearer regarding the effects of the pandemic, we resumed contact with the intern Leontina from Germany and we were able to take her on for her summer internship after all. This experience has been another example of how we can overcome setbacks better as a team and we are delighted that Leontina was able to join us for her placement despite the pandemic.

For the young generation in training, the corona crisis represents a particularly drastic experience. The possibilities of being able to move in an international environment with almost no restrictions and thus having all options open for shaping their personal career were severely reduced from one moment to the next. An option taken for granted suddenly became an uncertainty. And there is no telling when conditions will „normalise“ again.

The situation is also drastic for the universities. Student exchanges have practically come to a standstill and numerous exchange agreements have had to be suspended. For institu-

tions like IAESTE, which support international exchange as a core business, the corona crisis is even an existential threat, especially because it is unclear what long-term or even permanent changes will result from it.

We should support IAESTE in finding the way, now and after Corona, to continue to provide their valuable services that benefit our students.



**Dieter Wüest,
Head Academic Services ETH
(until June 2020),
Vice President
IAESTE Switzerland**



It is an understatement to say that I was not expecting this kind of experience when I sent in my application for this internship. It was due to start on March 23rd. When the borders closed, I decided to move my flight forward and leave on the 13th, the last possible day to enter the US. A few days after, the lockdown was declared. So, I started to work directly from home.

My main task was to recruit universities that would accept to host German exchange students in the USA. As the arrival of the participants was postponed from August to January, most of the tasks I expected to do were also postponed. I am not going to lie; I was very disappointed not to be able to welcome them in person and organize their travel. I am still grateful that I was able to do this internship.

I have developed important skills for the rest of my career. I am more comfortable doing video calls in foreign languages. I had to develop time management skills to motivate myself to work. It was difficult for me as I particularly enjoy the social aspects of work. But by forcing myself to work like this I think it has developed my flexibility and adaptability.

**Adelaide Ernst, Swiss Outgoing Student at Cultural Vistas,
New York, USA**

I started my IAESTE internship at Nestlé in Switzerland at the beginning of March, exactly when the COVID-19 situation in Europe accelerated and after just one week I started working from home.

Thanks to the support from my supervisor, I could continue my internship and keep learning and gaining experience. Now even though we returned to the office, we have not returned to normal as we must follow new rules e.g. keeping safe distances, wearing a mask. Due to the circumstances this has certainly not been an ideal start to my internship, but it gave me an opportunity to develop my personal skills as I had to learn how to adapt to changing conditions and different working environments during my internship.

Of course, during the first months we could not meet with other interns, but we stayed in touch through online meetings until the restrictions relaxed. As I live in a small city in the countryside, I spent my free time discovering the nature around and developing new hobbies like bread-making.



*Kristýna Šimková,
Incoming Student from Czech Republic at
Nestlé, Orbe, Switzerland*



Andreas Hugli,
furrerhugi.ag,
President
IAESTE Switzerland

At the beginning of March, we realised that the closed universities, the reluctant employers, and the trepidation of the students had brought our worldwide exchange almost to a complete standstill. We soon also realized that this situation would continue to be the case in the foreseeable

future due to closed borders and visa suspensions in many countries. So, we had to adapt to the new situation.

Our managing director reacted quickly and among other measurements submitted to the board of directors was the permission to place Swiss students with Swiss companies in the event that a postponement to autumn and a placement with a foreign trainee were not possible. Due to Corona, this request was made in writing. Other measures included postponing internships and applying for financial support at different foundations (unfortunately without any success). I was subsequently extremely pleased to observe how all the board members not only gave their approval within hours, but also offered general support even though they were already preoccupied with their own corona measures as re-

presentatives of universities, associations and companies. At the ensuing virtual board meeting, all board members were present and took note of the measures agreed upon and gave their assessments of the crisis and its development, which provided a valuable overall picture for our work.

Despite difficult circumstances it was great how the strategic and operational management of IAESTE showed flexibility and efficiency and worked together in an optimal way. Even though our international exchange cannot be guaranteed at the moment due to many uncertainties, it is amazing to see everyone pulling together with immense commitment to give our students the opportunity to gain unforgettable work experience abroad in the future.



In December 2019 I was very happy to join the team of IAESTE Switzerland as the Outgoing Exchange Coordinator and hoped to realize many great internships around the world. But then Covid-19 came and changed everything. Instead of helping the students to prepare their internship I was trying to save as many placements as possible by postponing them or by trying to find new suitable offers when the original offer has been cancelled.

Even though my first year at IAESTE Switzerland is not how I expected it to be it truly is a great experience: From the students who have been beyond understanding for all the delays in decisions and cancellations to the IAESTE offices worldwide who all fought for every single internship. I'm amazed and inspired by the commitment from everyone involved. So I am very motivated to keep on working to realize many more great internships around the world and that many more students may enjoy an amazing experience abroad.

Ina Keilwerth, Outgoing Exchange Coordinator,
IAESTE Switzerland

It was a long journey until I finally managed to relocate from Athens to Geneva, due to the unusual circumstances of the pandemic that shook the whole world. But, as it is well known, “when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.” The whole procedure started in December when I submitted my papers for the requested placement. At the end of February, I had the coveted answer that I was hoping for and immediately started preparing for my internship scheduled to start on the first of May. Of course, there was a change of plan and no certainty about what would follow.

There were moments of stress and doubt, but I had the maximum amount of support from everyone involved. The communication with IAESTE, my LC Tutor, the employer, and the accommodation manager was excellent, making everything easier and erasing any uncertainty. I cannot help but thank everyone for the impeccable collaboration and understanding during this difficult and unprecedented situation.

Being now in Switzerland I can tell you with confidence that this is a valuable experience for someone to try. Not only for the chance to work alongside respected and well-known people but also for the experience in its entirety.

Collaborating with IAESTE has been a rich and worthwhile journey that I recommend to everyone.



Georgia Malapani, Incoming Student from Greece at Burckhardt+Partner SA, Lausanne, Switzerland

For us as a Local Committee (LC), the situation was also unprecedented. I think the most difficult change was the fact that we cancelled all in-person meetings for 4 months. We still carried out our meetings using video calling, however we very much missed the physical presence of our friends. Unfortunately, it was not possible anymore to get together, so we had to think outside the box. In a time of crisis, communication is key. So, to keep up the IAESTE spirit, each LC organized an online pop quiz with different prizes to win, which varied from

a nice collection of swiss chocolates to a bookstore voucher. This motivated trainees and members to keep in touch through different online tools, where we had cyber beer hangouts and shared “office banter”. We discussed how our work was going, the books we have been reading, the movies we watched

and of course our failed bread baking experiences. In the end it was fun with a deeper meaning as we got to find out more about each other and realized that challenges only make us stronger and ultimately bring us closer.

Things are still not fully back to normal (the normal we knew one year before), however we are grateful that we have incoming interns again and that we were able to show them the best that Switzerland has to offer during the summer.

Raluca Sandu, Vice President of Local Committee Bern



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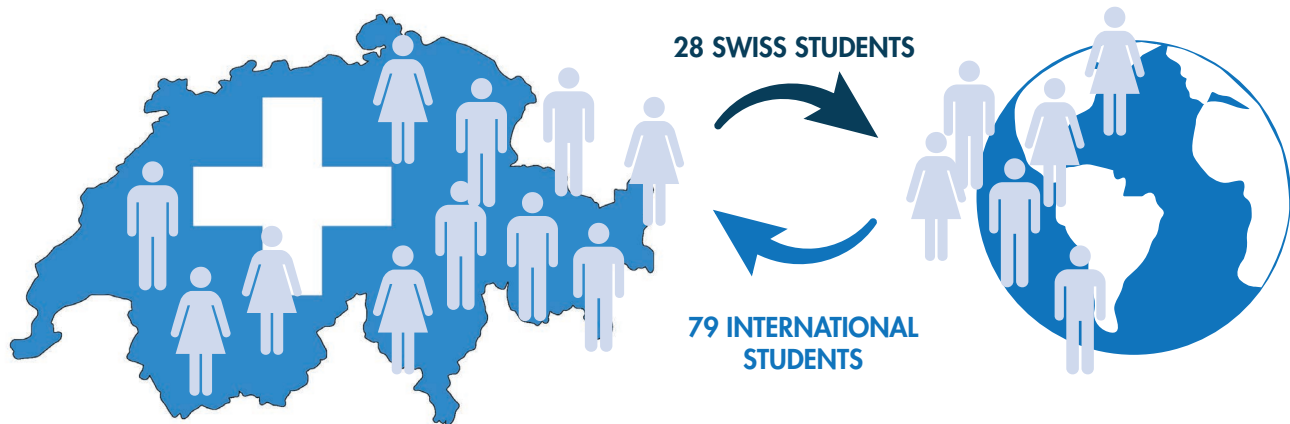
Exchange Figures 2020

IN: 79

2019: 111




OUT: 28

2019: 123



Countries

Students sent & received

	2019		2020	
	sent	received	sent	received
Afghanistan	0	0	0	0
Argentina	2	2	2	4
Australia	1	1	0	3
Austria	6	3	3	1
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0
Belarus	0	1	0	0
Belgium	3	5	1	2
Bolivia	0	5	1	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	1	0	0
Brazil	4	2	0	4
Canada	2	6	0	3
Chile	1	1	1	0
China incl. HK & MO	8	1	1	0
Colombia	0	0	1	1
Croatia	0	2	1	0
Cyprus	1	0	0	0
Czech Republic	3	1	0	3
Denmark	2	1	0	0
Ecuador	3	2	0	3
Egypt	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0
Gambia	0	0	0	0
Germany 	1	1	4	3
Ghana	0	0	0	1
Greece	0	11	0	4
Hungary	2	0	0	0
Iceland	1	0	0	1
India	5	5	0	3
Indonesia	0	0	0	0
Iran	2	3	0	0
Iraq	0	0	0	0
Ireland	1	0	0	0
Israel	0	0	0	0
Jamaica	0	0	0	0
Japan	3	1	3	0
Jordan	0	2	0	1
Kazakhstan	1	1	0	0
Kenya	0	0	0	0
Korea, DPRK	0	0	0	0
Korea, Republic of	0	2	0	0
Kuwait	0	0	0	0
Lebanon	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0
Macedonia	2	1	0	0
Malta	1	1	1	0
Mexico	3	0	0	0
Mongolia	0	1	0	0
Nepal	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	1	1	2
New Zealand	0	0	0	0
Nicaragua	1	0	0	0
Nigeria	4	0	0	0
Norway	3	2	1	1
Oman	1	1	0	0
Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Palestine	1	1	0	0
Panama	0	0	0	0
Peru	2	0	0	0
Philippines	0	0	0	0
Poland	5	7	0	3
Portugal	6	4	0	1
Qatar	0	0	0	0
Romania	0	1	0	2
Russia	1	1	0	0
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0
Serbia	2	3	0	0
Slovakia	2	3	1	0
Slovenia	1	2	0	1
South Africa	0	0	0	0
Spain 	4	9	2	8
Sri Lanka	1	1	0	0
Sweden	2	3	0	4
Syria	0	0	0	0
Tajikistan	3	3	1	1
Tanzania	0	0	0	0
Thailand	1	0	0	0
Tunisia	0	0	0	0
Turkey	3	2	0	0
Ukraine	0	0	0	2
United Arab Emirates	0	2	0	1
United Kingdom 	5	10	0	8
United States	1	0	3	0
Uzbekistan	1	2	0	0
Vietnam	3	0	0	0
Yemen	0	0	0	0
Non-Member Country	0	1	0	4
TOTAL	111	123	28	79

Study Fields

Students sent & received

	2019		2020	
	sent	received	sent	received
Aeronautical Engineering	0	0	1	0
Agriculture	0	4	0	3
Architecture	3	19	0	10
Biochemistry	1	0	1	0
Bioengineering	2	0	0	1
Biology	11	3	2	2
Biomedical Science	2	2	1	0
Biotechnology	1	3	0	0
Chemical Engineering	0	0	1	9
Chemistry	5	15	0	6
Civil Engineering	2	3	1	1
Computer Science	14	31	3	20

Economics & Management	3	1	1	1
Electrical Engineering	5	17	6	4
Energy Engineering	0	1	0	0
Electronics	1	0	0	1
Environmental Engineering	9	5	1	1
Environmental Science	1	0	0	0
Food Technology/Science	5	2	2	2
Forestry	0	0	0	0
Geography	0	0	0	0
Geology/Geoscience	3	0	0	1
Industrial Engineering	4	1	0	3
Material Science	1	2	0	0

Mathematics	5	1	0	0
Mechanical Engineering	22	12	5	8
Media and Marketing	0	0	0	0
Mechatronics	0	0	0	2
Microbiology	0	0	0	0
Other	3	0	0	0
Pharmaceutical Studies	4	0	0	0
Physics	3	1	3	3
Power Engineering	0	0	0	0
Process Engineering	1	0	0	1
Telecommunications	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	111	123	28	79

Swiss Employers offering Internships in 2020

A A.I.A. GmbH Zurich
 ABB Schweiz AG Baden-Daettwil / Lenzburg / Turgi
 Agroscope Zurich / Nyon
 AlgoTrader Zurich
 Ansaldo Energia Switzerland AG Baden
 ARTIDIS AG Basel
 ASSA ABLOY (Schweiz) AG Richterswil
 Asyrl Villaz-St-Pierre
 atelier ww Architekten SIA AG Zurich
 Attolight Lausanne
 Atus AG Neerach

B Bachema AG Schlieren
 BFH – University of applied Science Berne,
 Engineering and Information Technology Burgdorf
 BFH – Photovoltaik Laboratory Burgdorf
 Biognosys AG Schlieren
 Bühler AG Lausanne
 Burckhardt+Partner AG Basel / Berne / Lausanne / Zurich

C CABI - Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International, Delémont
 Caprez Ingenieure AG Chur / Scuol
 CASCINATION AG Berne
 CERN Geneva
 Creoptix AG Waedenswil
 Cyclops Labs GmbH Zurich

D digitalSTROM AG Schlieren

E Embotech GmbH Zurich
 Empa – Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology Duebendorf / St. Gallen
 Enea GmbH Rapperswil-Jona
 EPFL – École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, Integrated Actuators Laboratory Neuchâtel
 EPFL, Laboratory of Construction Materials Lausanne
 EPFL, Machine Learning and Optimization Laboratory Lausanne
 Ericsson AG Berne
 ETH Zürich – Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule
 ETH, Institute of Energy and Process Engineering Zurich
 ETH, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Crop Science Lindau-Eschikon
 ETH, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Grassland Sciences Zurich
 ETH, Institute for integrative Biology Zurich

F FAIRTIQ AG Berne
 FHNW – University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Institute of Polymer Engineering Brugg-Windisch
 FHNW, Institute for Data Science Brugg-Windisch
 FHNW, Institute for Interactive Technologies Brugg-Windisch
 First Climate (Switzerland) AG Zurich
 FKH Fachkommission für Hochspannungsfragen Zurich-Oerlikon

G Geoprofile GmbH Adligenswil
 Geocom Informatik AG Burgdorf
 Greenfish St. Gallen

H HEIG - Haute Ecole d'Ingenierie et de Gestion, Institut for Information and Communication Technology Yverdon-les-Bains
 HHF Architects Basel
 Hitachi ABB Power Grids Switzerland Ltd Baden-Daettwil
 Hochstrasser Glaus & Partner Cons. AG Zurich
 Hombrechtikon Systems Engineering AG Hombrechtikon
 HSLU - Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Art, Medical Engineering, Lucerne

I Institute for Applied Plant Biology Schoenenbuch
 IntelliCard Solutions AG Rapperswil-Jona
 Intraso AG Hünenberg
 Ionair Lucerne

K Kardex Remstar Zurich

L Leclanché SA Yverdon-les-Bains
 Lichtkompetenz GmbH Zurich
 Lüscher Bucher Theiler Architekten GmbH Lucerne

M Marcello Nasso Architekten Zurich
 Mercury Mission Systems International SA Geneva
 Mettler Toledo GmbH Greifensee / Naenikon
 MIRO Analytical AG Wallisellen
 Moser wegenstein architekten ag Zurich
 MSD Merck Sharp & Dohme AG Lucerne
 Mungo Befestigungstechnik AG Olten
 mvt architectes Geneva

O O. Rochat Architectes sàrl Lausanne
 Ovivo Switzerland AG Witterswil

P PSI Paul Scherrer Institut (PSI) Villigen
 PXL Vision Zurich

Q Qualysense Glattpburg

R Rapp Architekten AG Muenchenstein

S Schäublin Architekten AG Zurich
 Solcept AG Wetzikon
 Strickhof Lindau
 Supertext AG Zurich
 SYNICS AG Regensdorf

T Tretech Sàrl Lausanne

U u-blox AG Thalwil
 University of Basel, Biocenter Basel
 University of Berne, ARTORG Center for

V Vatorex Winterthur

W Waldhauser + Hermann AG Basel

Z ZHAW – Zurich University of Applied Sciences, IEF, Institute of Energy Systems and Fluid Engineering Winterthur
 ZHAW, Institute of Computational Physics Winterthur
 ZHAW, IMS, Institute of Mechatronic Systems Winterthur
 ZHAW, InIT, Institute of Applied Information Technology Winterthur
 ZHAW, ZPP, Centre for Product and Process Development Winterthur
 Zulauf AG Schinznach-Dorf
 Zweifel Pomy-Chips AG Spreitenbach

3Brain AG, Waedenswil



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