



# Experience Report

Plant Biotechnology Centre

Plant Health Directorate – Malta

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After finishing my MSc degree in cellular and molecular biology at the university of Bern, I was looking for a new experience abroad. More than two years ago, after finishing my BSc, I already took the opportunity to do an IAESTE internship in Zagreb. As this was a great experience, I did not hesitate to look for an interesting IAESTE internship again. I wanted to get a look in either an industrial or governmental institution, as I got experience in research groups at universities yet. So then I applied for the internship in Malta, since this fulfilled my conditions and I did not know the country yet, which made it even more interesting.

## Arrival

First, the IAESTE guys from Malta forgot me at the airport, or let's say, they were party a bit too much the night before and still quiet hangovered ☺ After some hours at the airport, I then got a call from Ryan who came to pick me up. Another IAESTE colleague joined and we did a short tour in Valletta, the capital, as I did not have the accommodation yet. I was impressed how much those two knew about the history of their country! By the evening, the two accompanied me to the apartment they organized and I could get my room. I had a shared room in a shared flat with seven to eight flat mates which were rather doing their own thing than socializing with the others. But this was ok for me as the room was really cheap and I went hiking basically every weekend anyways.



1: My bed (left) in our room

## Work

On my first day, Ryan was bringing me to my work place. The lab head was ill the entire first week, and it seemed that nobody else in the team really knew that I come and what I should do. I then started with reading relevant literature and got a first introduction in the lab and what they are doing. The other people in the lab and office were very friendly and helpful and then made it possible that I could join them for inspections which were very interesting to me. For the work, I took a lot of initiative and therefore I could do interesting things and also learned a lot, especially because the internship was not really in my specialization field of study. I think persons that don't really work on their own initiative would be a bit lost there. The other employees were very warm and welcoming. The one that took me with him for inspections became a true friend and I could also borrow a bike from him which made my trip to work much shorter. The work mentality is quite a bit different than in Switzerland and we always had time for a tea, coffee or some sweets.



2: My dear friend Joe.



3: Twinning with Belgium.

and Gozo, visit some temples and old towns in weekend trips during my internship, which was really great to do! Malta has an enormous culture and history as well as a picturesque and breathtaking landscape. I enjoyed my time in Malta a lot!

## Life

Since I was the only IAESTE trainee on the island in this time period, there were not really weekly meetings or so. There was the twinning with Belgium, which I could join and which was a nice experience. Furthermore, I joined few times some IAESTE members to go out with their friends for a beer. For me, this was perfectly fine, as I wanted to hike and discover the island which I did mainly on my own. I managed to hike around Malta



4: Farewell apero with office members.