

IAESTE Internship in Sevilla

I had the opportunity to go to Sevilla to do a 6 months internship in an environmental engineering office. I flew there in December and stayed till end of May.

The company called *Sincosur* was pretty small, we were only five people working there: the director, the accountant, two engineers and myself doing the internship. Due to this small size, the work atmosphere was really relaxing and almost like a little family. The office was specialised in urban acoustic and got a lot of projects from the Spanish State.

It was really interesting because I could work on various projects, which were all very distinct from each other. We worked for example for the executive power of the city of Malaga, who wanted an accurate noise map. To manage this, we got a lot of data about repartition of population, traffic density, topography, infrastructures, constructions and road types. Then, the first step was to digitize all the data and organize it in an efficient way. In order to do this I spent a lot of time using and programming GIS softwares, like *Arcgis* and *Quantumgis*. The second step consisted then of calculating and modelling the repartition of the sound in the city and quantify the loudness. Therefore we used a software called *CadnaA*. This software permitted, inserting precise data about traffic frequency, population density and topography to modelise how the sound propagates itself. It allowed also, modifying choosed parameters, to experiment hypothetical situations.

What I liked in this internship was that I could work a lot on the projects by myself. I had entire liberty and my own responsibilities. For example, they let me program little scripts to automatise certain tasks. I could try and then propose the best solution.

As I arrived in Spain I had only some notions of Spanish, but this wasn't a huge problem. I learned quickly the most important words to work and to use in daily life. Then, day after day my Spanish became more fluent and at the end of the internship I am proud to say that I can have a conversation with a real Sevillian. My work colleagues were all very nice, I never had any communication problems and they were always willing to explain me things twice or repeat it in another way. Spanish work days are organised differently than in Switzerland. This was a bit difficult for me at the beginning. The Spanish work day usually begins at 9:00 till 14:00, then we had two hours break and began again at 16:00 till 20:00. I was a bit lost with finishing so late, I had the impression not to have got any free time. But, quickly I got used to and enjoyed the Spanish night life.

The Sevillans I met were all very nice and helpful. I shared a flat with two Spanish girls, from the province of Sevilla, so they explain me all the useful tricks about the

he city and told me lots of stories. I had a perfect view of the spanish culture and was glad that everybody was open and intersted in what I was doing in Sevilla. I lived a lot of adventures in Sevilla and in Andalucia. This region is amazing and has got many places to discover, I enjoyed travel during week-end to get to know other andalusian cities and villages. Then, as the summer arrived, my flatmates showed me the best beaches and fresh rivers near Sevilla. This was very useful, because with the begining of May it became really hot. Sevilla is also full of bars and restaurants, so you never get bored when going out.

Sevilla is an amazing city with a lot of cultural options. The most famous monument, the cathedral with its Giralda (old minaret) is beautiful and is one of the world's biggest cathedrals. The little streets and places with orange trees in the old city were lovely and we spent hours just walking through the city looking at the architecture of the old buildings. Sevilla was also a good starting point to travel to Portugal and Marocco. This internship was a fantastic experience that I would repeat with pleasure, so I recommend it truly to everybody!