

Personal Traineeship Report

Trainee: Stavros Balis

Incoming City: Zurich

Outcoming City: Athens

Company: Burckhardt + Partner AG

Period: November 2017 - July 2018

First internship. First time in Switzerland. First IAESTE experience.

IAESTE gave me the chance to have my first working experience abroad. For nine months I worked as a trainee for an architectural office, called Burckhardt + Partner, in Zürich. Although in the beginning of my internship I was not so enthusiastic, since I thought that Zürich was not a city that would fit me, I have to say that at the end I changed my mind completely. During those months, I had the opportunity to live in very different way of life. I had to get used to new daily routine and lifestyle that made me more independent and more organized. What I really appreciated in Zürich was that it is a international and multicultural city that doesn't make you feel like a foreigner and the locals that I met were all very friendly and polite. Also, the quality of life was different enough from what I was used to and all the infrastructure of the city makes your life easier and better. Typical example? Swiss trains!



Referring to work, it was again very positive that I was working in an international office with colleagues from all around the world, so everyone could contribute something different in the final result of each project, according to their background. In the office I was lucky to work with a small team that was always willing to help in any situation that occurred. As a result, I could learn fast the way of working and get experience of several projects of different scale, that improved my personal development. What surprised me more at work was the very good working conditions, that are quite different from my country, such as the working hours (8), the over hours and the compensation, the holidays, and the salary! In general, I would say that in Switzerland your work is respected and you can get a very good level of living conditions. What I enjoyed mostly about working in my office was that it was located in a very beautiful district inside the old town and gave me the chance to have great lunch breaks with my colleagues by the river, that was very close to the office!



Zürich is also a city that offers you a wide range of activities and during spring and summer becomes a completely different city. I was enjoying a lot to see young people having fun outside in public spaces, having barbecues by the lake, swimming at the river and enjoying music concerts and festival. What I missed when I left from Zürich was the swimming in the river. Although I come from a country with plenty of beaches, swimming by the river was a different experience. It was more like a small party everyday, with young people laying around the river and having beers and I really enjoyed the fact that I could go swimming directly after work every day.



My experience in Zürich would be different without IAESTE. IAESTE from the first moment helped me a lot to settle down and get familiar with my new life. My tutor, that we became good friends, was always willing to help me with any problem. IAESTE also organized several events, such as weekly meetings and excursions, that were a very good way to socialize and meet new people from all around the world. What was special about IAESTE events and people there, was that you were always part of the group and you were always welcomed by the others. IAESTE was a very good step to start a new life and establish yourself in a new city, but mostly IAESTE was an organization, where you could meet good friends!!!