



IAESTE  
NETHERLANDS

Zürcher Hochschule  
für Angewandte Wissenschaften



School of  
Engineering



IAESTE  
SWITZERLAND

Intern Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW). 1 Sept. 2020 – 31 Jan. 2021

When I started my search for a cool and challenging internship about a year ago, most companies I approached either cancelled their vacancies due to Covid-19 or stopped sending out internships offers at all. One of the few countries where companies were still hiring was Switzerland. Luckily, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) was still looking for interns to help with their projects. Despite the low infection rate at the start of the internship, I ended up working from home for the last 50% of it. But that's not what I want to talk about in this internship report, I want to talk about all the things that were still possible despite Covid-19 and why these were maybe even more impressive because of it.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2020, I started in the department of Energy Systems and Fluid Engineering (IEFE), on the ZHAW. My project was in modelling and theoretical analysis of vapor-compression refrigeration processes. That meant in practice that I got to code a model that simulates one of the more complex heat pump systems. To validate that model, I made measurements on a replica of that model in the Refrigeration Lab. The IEFE is a very welcoming group of mainly Swiss people that all share affinity and a passion in finding sustainable solutions for future energy systems. My colleagues were very open, helpful and loved to spend their Friday afternoons at the local pub with the team, when it was still possible. Although most colleagues spoke good English, they never lost an opportunity to teach me some "Swiss German" words and vice versa. Even if you have some basic knowledge in German, the Swiss German language can be trickier than you think!

In September, IAESTE was still organizing weekly meetups in and around Zurich for all the interns that worked in the area. These meetups were usually in a local pub or outside in one

of Zurich's beautiful parks. My first meetup was organised next to the Limmat river, a river that originates from Zurich lake and runs straight through the city. Hand in hand with a with 20-degree weather and a late September Swim, I met a lot of awesome people that I ended up spending the rest of my free time with. Since that meetup, I haven't spent a single weekend at home, and with my fellow swim and beer lovers, I made a promise to make the most out of every bit of free time that we had left during our internships. This resulted in a new adventure every weekend, ranging from City trips to Bern and Lucerne, to hiking trips in the Swiss Alps, to swimming in ice cold meltwater to climbing a freaking mountain... Who knew that waddling through 1-meter thick, fine snow at 4:00 AM could be so exciting! When the winter season kicked in, the occasional ski trip was not being left out. And a free tip for everyone: if you don't have a sledge, then a snowboard is a perfect replacement in case you love getting snow in your face 😊.

In spite of Covid-19, this internship has shown me that wherever there is a will, there is a way. It has taught me how to work independently and it showed me how a project can still work very well remotely. It has also made me fall in love with the country and with the people that were in it. So, if you're still not convinced, then I don't know what will!

I'd like to finish by up with giving a big thank you to Frank and Christian from the ZHAW for all their help and guidance, and to the Dutch and Swiss IAESTE's offices for making it all possible.

