

IAESTE Experience Report

Intern at Paul Scherrer Institute 1. Sep 2020 – 19. Dec 2020

The IAESTE internships are quite profiled in Trondheim, so every year I always take a look to see if there are any internship that will suit my field of study. In February 2020 I found a perfect one in Switzerland at PSI working on the catalyst that is treating the exhaust from the diesel engine, the DOC. Over the summer of 2020 I was going to work with different techniques that I would also perform on my master thesis, it couldn't get any better!! Then Corona came, and it became clear that it was not that easy to spend the summer in Switzerland. Nevertheless, as the Corona restrictions were eased I was asked to do the internship in the fall instead. Why not? Fall 2020 I took a leave from my studies and found myself in Switzerland instead of Trondheim. This was absolutely the best decision ever!!!

At work I was surrounded by very skilled colleagues, who happily answered every question I had (and there were a lot!). I spent a lot of time in the lab, where after a while I worked independently and got to plan all my experiments. It made me very confident and secure, which are skills I'm exited to bring into my master thesis! The research team was a very international group, so everybody spoke English. It was a quite social group, eating lunch together every day and sometimes BBQs when it was still possible. As the Corona restrictions got stricter, I had to do home office twice a week, but my supervisor still checked in on me and helped me over Zoom. All in all I really really liked working with this amazing research group! I liked it so much that I even asked if I could come back for my master thesis! So, in April (less than a month from now!!) I will return, and I am super exited!!!!

In the beginning, the weekly meetings of IAESTE were still occurring. Here I met super cool people from all over the world!! As PSI is located in a small town north of Zurich, it was always cool to go to Zurich every Thursday grabbing a beer with the other IAESTE interns :D Living in the guesthouse of PSI, there were also other interns who were always up for hanging out! We had multiple game nights, movie nights or socialized in the kitchen 😊 So Switzerland was never ever boring!

Living in a foreign country meant that it had to be explored. My absolute favourite memories from this internship were the weekends!! We ended up being a group, a mix between IAESTE interns and PSI interns, who went to a new place every weekend! We went everywhere from the Swiss Alps to



exploring the cities. Creating incredible memories as swimming in the ice-cold lakes in the Alps, climbing mountains with amazing views and drinking beer :D I really hope we can all go on adventures together again, because they are all fabulous!!

I also just have to mention the PSI swim club because it is epic!! It started as a small suggestion to two friends as “let’s go swimming in the river every week”, to people from all over the PSI joining for a swim every Thursday at lunch! We even made t-shirts with a super cool logo!! (See picture 😊)

Going to Switzerland in the middle of a pandemic, I didn’t have a lot of expectations. It really blew my mind how much fun I had, how many incredible people I met and how much I learnt! It was absolutely crazy bananas amazing!!!

