

Two Months in Belgium

Report of an IAESTE internship – July – September 2023

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Experience of being abroad

One great experience was when I went on a road trip with another intern. We just started in Ghent and drove from one city to another. Sometimes we would ask a stranger where to go next. It was funny because every city we visited had something special going on. In one place there was a balloon festival, in another city there was a market. Belgium is a small country like Switzerland, so it is possible to travel almost across the whole country in one day.



Figure 1: View over Ghent

Work

I was working as a mechanical engineer intern at the start-up called “C-Battery” in Oudenaarde. C-Battery is specializing in the creation of battery packs for industrial energy storage to power for example a construction yard. During my internship I was working on some developments on the battery packs and helped to design some new containers to store the batteries.

I was able to work very independently. The internship gave me the confirmation that I have chosen the right field of study and that I can imagine doing similar work in the future.

Culture

Belgians like to drink beer and ride their bikes in their spare time. The weather changes a lot. It can be sunny one minute and raining the next. That’s why it’s best to always have a raincoat with you. In the Dutch-speaking part of the country, most people speak good English.

Almost every weekend I visited a different city in Belgium, tried delicious waffles, French fries, and of course Belgian beer. By the end of my internship, I had seen more of Belgium than many of the locals themselves. Belgium is known for its castles. Many of them are open to the public. I went to watch a horse fishing. This is an old tradition where they go shrimp fishing with horses.



Figure 2: Horse fishing at the North Sea

IAESTE

IAESTE made the whole organisation easy. They helped with the whole process and were very helpful with any questions.

In Belgium there were some events organised by IAESTE. At these events, you got to know the other interns and it was easier to make friends. They were always fun and interesting. Once we baked Belgian waffles and played city games. You always had a local contact person who could give you useful tips on what to do in the country. This internship was a very good experience, and I would do it again.



Figure 3: Hiking trip to Dinant



Figure 4: Typical buildings in Belgium