

The Sextant

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First International Welcome Week for 60 Exchange Students proves sustainable



«We learned
how to adapt to
Swiss culture»

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The first International Welcome Week for exchange and international students at the Schools of Business, Engineering and Social Work has proved to be of significant support to helping participants adjust to the study environment and culture in Switzerland. "Through this exposure we sort of learned how to be, how to adapt ourselves to the culture and behavior here in Switzerland and made it much easier once the studies started," Walid Kebir, an exchange student from the Paris Descartes University said.

Throughout the week prior to beginning their winter semester, nearly 60 students were introduced to the Swiss way of doing things through 5 intense days visiting companies, organisations, cities and working on assignments. "We got to explore and see companies like Novartis HQ - how amazing is that?" asks William Ladd, an American who studies in Beijing. "The way the week was organised, with all its business content, prepared us and gave us a taste for how it would be - that everything is also practice oriented, that we had to learn. We heard that exams and assessments would be difficult and we'd have to work hard. The week gave us some tools and experiences which help us to succeed now - it sort of was part of the path - the underlying currents and styles were there."

Halfway through their semesters now, the participants feel the week also helped remove initial concerns. "I was not sure about language, whether my English would be good enough," remembers Olivier Chau, another student from Paris, "but then during this week I discovered all the other students were in the same situation and this gave me confidence and made it easier to adapt to lessons here. We became used to everything being in English all day- not only the lectures or tours but also talking with all the students and other people we met". Thuy Anh Nguyen, a dual degree student from the Foreign Trade University in Hanoi (Vietnam), was initially worried about venturing out alone. "We were given maps and directions and would meet at railway stations so we became acquainted with trains, trams and buses. For instance, after visiting the Department of Education in Bern I decided to stay on and explore the city. I became lost and just kept walking until I stopped some people and asked. Without this information and experience I might well have just stayed in my room for many weeks," said Thuy Anh.

The week also introduced the foreigners to Swiss punctuality. "When we were told to be at the station at 8.30 sharp," Olivier recounted, "this really meant 8.30. And this is how lessons here are as well - everything is punctual. The FH students here mostly have work experience and are older than us so they have a more business-like approach which we have adapted to."

Predictably, one key benefit was becoming acquainted with fellow exchange students. "When you come here you're all alone," William recalled. "I had gone through this experience before when I started studying in Beijing and you don't know anyone or where anything is. I wish there had been a Welcome Week there as it's really helps to become acclimatised and meet your future classmates." Participants had to work in groups on a key assignment where they researched answers to three questions about Switzerland they had set themselves at



Olivier Chau : Language worries allayed. (Photo: Babak Kummer)



Participants in the International Welcome Week crossing the Bundesplatz in front of Parliament in Bern. (Photo: Jonas Bürgi)

the start of the week. "This task was good and helped us get first experience of working in multi-national groups," according to Walid.

Thuy Anh especially appreciated the introduction to the different style of study behaviour. "In Vietnam there is usually only one-way communication where the professor lectures to the class. Here it is two-way and I admire these students who just say what they think and are very open - this is new to me. Experiencing this in that first week enabled me to learn to be more vocal myself once lessons had started here and we had similar group tasks to do," Thuy Anh said.

Of course, the week also included social and sightseeing events (see box for an overview of highlights of the week) but according to William it was not a party week though the social elements were much appreciated. "I came here for a university education in a country known for its finance and banking expertise. If I wasn't studying every night it would be a waste," he said.

The value of welcome or introductory (or Freshers) weeks was questioned by university and secondary school heads in the United Kingdom recently. The Guardian newspaper reported that the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference felt "cash-strapped prospective students want to get on with squeezing out value for money from their expensive university courses, not waste time partying or picking up flyers for societies and clubs."

Participants in the International Welcome Week felt overwhelmingly that it had not been a waste but a valuable and sustainable induction. As much of the content was business related, 2 ECTS were available for attendance, the group work task and an individual essay. William's university will not award him the credits but he felt this was not an issue: "The important thing was to experience it and be prepared for my education here." ■

Brigitte Sprenger

International Welcome Week: Understanding Switzerland 12- 16 September

Some highlights:

- A "Money and the Mind" city tour of Basel following former trading routes to explore the economic position of the present day city
- During a visit to the Novartis Campus, participants received a talk on the company's global business and were toured through the campus
- A guided tour through a "Living with Energy" exhibition at the Axpo Group
- A visit to ABB, one of the largest engineering companies in the world
- The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation presented the Swiss political system and the education, research and innovation landscape

IBM Students on the Cardiff Course: A Trail of the Unexpected

Seventeen BSc International Business Management students delved into the world of major sports events during the Cardiff Course run by Tim Lewis from 7 to 12 October. Based on inputs and tutorials, students were tasked with originating and promoting events via traditional and new media to achieve a positive global image for Cardiff in the lead-up to a UEFA Champions League final*.

To support them in this task, students toured several large Welsh stadia, were given input on the Welsh language and culture, a lecture on event management by the Football Association of Wales and taken to rugby, ice-hockey and football matches.

Course founder Tim Lewis has been running the week-long course on Sport and Event Management as well as Media and the Sociology of Sport since 2008. Lewis, lecturer, cartoonist, author and an event manager who has worked on the Commonwealth Games, FIFA World Cups, UEFA Champions League Finals, Olympic Games, Rugby World Cups and international cricket, originally lectured on Event Management at the FHNW School of Business in Basel. He then returned to Wales and developed the Cardiff Course including content about the UK's political and sporting cultures. Today, FHNW students learn of the importance of local sensitivities and tradi-

tions when considering how to brand an event. Due to the lectures' popularity they are now held in the UK as a third semester elective subject for IBM students.

"There are perhaps few better ways to study local traditions, media and sports management than to learn how sports such as cricket in Wales have developed and are promoted," says Tim. "For example, in order to understand how Cardiff could stage the England v Pakistan cricket match this year, many aspects of history and culture need to be considered. These include the role of a local land owner redirecting the River Taff during the Industrial Revolution, the influence of the British Commonwealth along with the role of the England team which also represents Wales."

FHNW students returned to Basel with a greater awareness of the need to acknowledge local tradition in event management.

■ *Tim Lewis/Brigitte Sprenger*

for further information

www.facebook.com/livingoffside
*This UEFA Champions League final will be played in Cardiff on 3 June 2017



FHNW students Nicolas L'Hermite and Ilfa Mahdi wearing the national cricket colours of Wales and of Pakistan during the 2016 Cardiff Course.
(Photo: Tim Lewis)

Bali Prize for Andreas Hinz



Prof. Sudarso Kaderi Wiryono (far left), Prof. Dr. Markus Freiburghaus (centre) and Dr. Andreas Hinz (far right)

Two FHNW School of Business lecturers were honoured at the International Conference on Management in Emerging Markets in Bali in August. Dr. Andreas Hinz of the Institute of Management received the prize for the best paper with his "Entrepreneurial Behaviour Revisited: Linking Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy with Effectuation" and Prof. Dr.

Markus Freiburghaus addressed the 100 conference participants on the Future of Management Education as guest speaker. The conference was organized by the School of Business and Management at the Institute of Bandung (SBM ITB) in Indonesia and headed by its dean Prof. Sudarso Kaderi Wiryono. ■

Partner Profiles

The School of Business cooperates with 130 universities around the world. A full list is on www.fhnw.ch/business/international. Each issue of The Sextant profiles half a dozen of these partners.



University de las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Where The ULPGC is located in the Autonomous Region of the Canary Islands (Spain), which attracts tourists because of its mild climate and landscape. The city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (377,000 inhabitants) was founded in 1476 by Castilian conquerors and has three excellent city beaches, and dynamic cultural activities and nightlife.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size 21000 undergraduate and graduate, 1000 ERASMUS students each year

Study Fields A total of 15 centres teach 45 undergraduate degrees and 34 official post-graduate programmes and 19 doctorate programmes. Courses are taught in Spanish and in English and there are various degree programmes in Economics, Tourism and Business Administration and Management.

Campus Housing is currently managed by the University Accommodation Service (SAU). There are two residence halls, a complex of apartments and four bungalows.

Website www.english.ulpgc.es/



Sheridan College, Canada

Where Toronto is Canada's biggest city (about 2.5 million people) located on the great Lake Ontario. It's considered a vibrant, multicultural and eclectic city, and is both a commercial and cultural capital. Due to its location there is access to numerous parks, beaches, and marinas. All Sheridan campuses are in the Greater Toronto area.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size 18,000 full-time students and 35,000 continuing education students

Study Fields There are about 20 different BSc programmes or streams so there is a great variety. Main areas are Administration, Business Analysis, International Business Management, Office Administration (executive, health services, legal), Project Management, HRM and Tourism. **Campus** Sheridan's newest campus opened in the fall of 2011 as the home of the Faculty of Business and is tucked right in the heart of Canada's sixth-largest city of Mississauga, in the greater Toronto area.

Website www.sheridancollege.ca/admissions/international-centre.aspx



Vietnam University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City, International School of Business

Where Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, is Vietnam's largest city with nearly 14 million inhabitants. The core of the city has retained its French colonial character with wide boulevards, elegant hotels and an opera house. There are hundreds of cinemas and theatres, amusement parks and three beach resorts.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size Nearly 1200 students, mostly Vietnamese students. (Vietnam University of Economics has over 100'000 students).

Study Fields International Business, Design, Logistics engineering, Business Logistics, Energy Technology and Data Networks Engineering **Campus** The main ISB campus is located in downtown Ho Chi Minh City.

Website www.uieh.edu.vn



Nihon University, Japan

Where The Greater Tokyo Area is the most populous metropolitan region in the world. It is considered both the most expensive city for expatriates and the most livable and safest city. It will host the next Olympics (2020). The College of Economics is located in the centre of Tokyo, very close to the major political and financial institutions of the nation.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size It is Japan's largest university with around 100'000 students of which about 1000 are international students.

Study Fields Nihon University offers a wide variety of academic fields of study, spanning 83 departments in 14 colleges and schools. The Department of Economics runs bachelor programmes where after the foundation year there are various options.

Campus The College of Economics has five buildings on the busy Haku-san Street, very close to the famed Jimbocho, an area noted for its number of bookstores. At the end of Haku-san Street are the tranquil grounds of the emperor's palace, a short walk beyond that the seat of government, the National Diet, and the financial district and notable shopping areas. Exchange students reside in accommodation provided by the college. Gender-segregated dormitories.

Website www.nihon-u.ac.jp/intldiv/en/



California State University of Los Angeles

Where Los Angeles is the USA's second most populous city with about 2.8 million citizens. Located on the Californian coast it promotes itself as Cultural Capital of the world, especially of the film industry. Additionally there are numerous sports facilities. The university campus is on a Los Angeles hilltop close to Hollywood, the Pacific Ocean, and major attractions like the Santa Monica Pier, Disneyland, the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Universal Studios Hollywood, and Beverly Hills.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size 28,000 students

Study Fields Cal State LA's six colleges run programmes in the sciences, arts, business, criminal justice, engineering, nursing, education and the humanities. The BSc in Business Administration offers a full range of courses.

Campus On the 70-acre hilltop campus there are restaurants, food courts, a Student Health Centre, bookshop, theatres, gallery and athletics fields. There are four types of living accommodation available: Homestay, Apartment, Extended-Stay Hotel, or at the Dormitory on Campus - the International Office helps.

Website www.calstatela.edu/international



ISG International Business School, Paris

Where The school is in the heart of Paris, in the prestigious 16th arrondissement surrounded by grand houses and boulevards. It's a short stroll to the famous Champs Elysées and then another short stroll to the Eiffel Tower and Trocadero. Paris, as the historic capital of France, has a population of just over 2 million for the city, but there are nearly 13 million people in the greater Paris area. Highlights are especially the museums, grand palaces and buildings, street art, fashion boutiques and street cafes.

Cooperation Student exchange

Size Just over 2000 students, from 50 countries

Study Fields There is an entire International BSc is taught in English (language requirement for courses taught in French). Bachelor in business taught in English, the syllabus approved by Middlesex University in the UK and in year 2, for example, there are courses in Accounting and Management Control, Supply Chain Management, Marketing, Management of Information Systems, Business Law, Financial Management, HRM, Geopolitics and OB.

Campus The historic school building contains modern equipment and services and is very central (16th arrondissement) but offer no halls of residence. Students need to find their own accommodation though a long list of various potential housing options, including domestic stays, is provided.

Website www.isg.fr

Mentor Prof Dr Rolf Meyer visits former IM student Plans to add Vocational Centre to Alumna's Successful Ugandan school



A pupil of the Beatrice Secondary School Kyankwanzi competes in the science competition during Rolf Meyer's stay

While finally visiting the very successful secondary school in Uganda which he helped found, Prof Dr Rolf Meyer also developed new goals with his former student Regina Nasseremba: setting up a vocational centre next to the school. "Ideally this would lead to a small IT incubator enabling many Ugandans to find jobs, perhaps with remote access, to earn a decent wage," Rolf Meyer said.

The Beatrice Secondary School Kyankwanzi, in the heart of Uganda, now has 300 students, mostly boarders, in 12 buildings on a 35 000 square metre plot. "I felt so very proud of Regina's achievement," Rolf Meyer reports, "and there are plans to continue expansion. As in the original business plan, the aim is

still for 1 000 students and to further improve ranking. Currently the school is ranked first in the province but Regina is aiming to be at number 5 in the country."

During his five day stay with Regina, they also discussed adding a vocational centre where those students who are not aiming for a Baccalaureate could go train as electricians, constructions workers or in ICT fields.

"There is a real need for these tradespeople and especially with the good level of English the pupils have they can be trained and supported to work remotely for companies that are situated elsewhere. What is needed though is access to a reliable internet connection."

Regina, who started building the school within a month of graduating from the BSc in Business Administration (International Management) in 2010, received significant help not only from her original sponsor family in Switzerland (after whom the school is named) but also from Rolf Meyer who supported her with co-developing a business plan, funding and setting up an NPO association. The IM Alumni Association also donated profits from a charity auction to Regina and her school in 2012.

For further information, including the sponsoring of gifted children from poor families, go to www.bssk-uganda.org ■

UFO – not for aliens



After the photoshoot for the front page we asked our foursome whether they would also pose in the UFO and they very kindly agreed. The UFO ("Ufenthaltsraum Olten" – Swiss German for student common room) opened at the start of the semester and offers a quiet room, a kitchen, a lounge, a study room – basically a nice place where students can just relax or have fun (as did from left, Olivier Chau, Walid Kebir, William Ladd and Thuy Anh Nguyen). The room is situated behind campus in the same building as the Kraftwerk gym. (Photo: Babak Kummer)



Rolf Meyer with 2 ½ year old Jodie, Regina's daughter

To celebrate and honour Prof Dr Rolf Meyer during his visit, there were numerous competitions and displays in sports, debating, singing, dancing, drama and (as in the photo above) science. In Anglo-Saxon tradition the students belong to houses (think Gryffindor - ed.) and a prize was available to the winners: half a cow which was subsequently grilled and shared among the successful students. ■

Who's Where?



Tim Halter, a BSc in International Management student at Campus Brugg, currently on exchange at Japan's largest university, Nihon

When you go south from Tokyo it's like going to the Ticino in Switzerland. The Japanese people in the historical cities of Kyoto and Osaka are quite a bit different to people from Tokyo. They seem to be more easygoing, louder and relaxed. This was an interesting discovery I made after taking the 400km/h high-speed Shinkansen train from Tokyo to Osaka. I live about 40 minutes door to door from my campus, which is located right in the centre of the city next to Tokyo station. My journey involves walking to the train station from my dorm and using the most punctual train system in the world. The trains are never late and put even Switzerland to shame. In a city of around 40 million inhabitants it is quite the achievement. Although luckily I do not have too many classes in the morning, during rush hours is where a foreigner would get the biggest surprise. At this time and enormous mass of people guides itself efficiently onto trains and the people squeeze themselves in to fill the train to the last inch of space. There are even specially trained employees who

guide the masses and push in people to make sure the trains are filled fast and fully. The Nihon University is the largest in Japan with 100'000 students, although they are divided into 16 different campuses. Nonetheless due to the size the offers are almost limitless. I have been able to pick and choose courses and clubs to join. One really special thing is that when you enroll at the university you have to join specific seminars on the top floors of the 16 story buildings. These seminars are special readings by students for students, where they teach specific chapters from books they are reading. Finally a very „shocking“ experience you make in Japan is that once or twice a month every single Japanese mobile phone lights up and repeats: „Jishin, Jishin, Jishin!“ which means: „earthquake, earthquake, earthquake“ and most Japanese then run to save their stuff falling from their shelves! A couple of seconds after this warning the earth starts shaking. Then it stops and after a few minutes you go back to your normal life. *TW*



Dr Wee Yu Ghee, visiting faculty from Malaysia

I discovered, a few weeks into my three month visit here, that my expectations of the Swiss were misaligned with my beliefs. Interestingly, you cannot really find many Swiss in Switzerland - there is such diversity here. I meet many people who say they are Swiss but then you discover that they are expats or have foreign roots. This made my journey here less intimidating as it is relatively difficult to adapt to a homogenous pool. In this, Switzerland is like Malaysia - we too have a mix of backgrounds, mostly Malay, Chinese, and Indian.

Department at the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business. In order to regain my energy and soul as an educator, I choose to expand my horizon through a three-month attachment here in FHNW. I enjoy co-teaching some classes and am also involved in designing as well as facilitating some international projects at South East Asian Centre.

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), which I currently serve, is situated in the very beautiful, sunny, north-east corner of Peninsula Malaysia. Kelantan is a unique state and peculiar in its own ways. It has been ruled by the Islamic Party of Malaysia since 1990, and thus there are some restrictions in the state, for instance, there are no cinemas, bars and casinos. But there is no gender segregation and Kelantan is a modern, developed state famous for its cuisine, art and Kelantanese dialect. I have served UMK for more than eight years and we have the good fortune that every academic staff member is entitled to a one-year sabbatical leave for every five years served. This year, I have the good fortune of being released from the administrative post as the Head of

While teaching entrepreneurship at the School of Business here, I learnt that Switzerland is ranked eighth of the most entrepreneurial countries in the world. Clearly there is an excellent infrastructure and a supportive policy which facilitate business startups. Nonetheless, entrepreneurship is also seen as an opportunity cost among the young, an inevitable phenomenon because the unemployment rate is very low in the country. Comparatively, in Malaysia, decent employment opportunities for fresh graduates are scarce and the quality of life is somewhat lower, hence entrepreneurship has become an alternative option for the young to gain better financial freedom. Technically, an entrepreneurial spirit must be nurtured from an early stage and this indicates the importance of having creative and enterprising teachers in schools and to ensure its continuity, at all levels including universities. *BS*



Kamilla Chlipala is currently on an exchange semester from Krakow University, Poland, at the FHNW Basel campus

Why can I not imagine myself without a master's degree? Until now I have dedicated so much of my life to get this far, so not finishing off with a masters would be a shame. Growing up in a small 1000 inhabitant village outside Kraków, each level of education was in a different place for me. Each time I was the new person in class so I naturally had to develop my social skills a lot.

The Kraków University of Economics is a wonderful university. With about 10'000 students it is the second largest university in Kraków. It has one big campus with a lot of buildings, cafés and places to eat where you can meet your friends between and after classes. There are around 50 clubs at the university, so especially for students like myself who did not know anyone, there are a lot of opportunities to get to know people, learn new skills and contribute to university life. Life was a little boring in the first month for me so I decided to find out about the clubs. AIESEC* and ESN are the two biggest in

Kraków and I decided to join AIESEC. There I organized parties, events such as bowling and skating and was there to help foreign students with their problems. Also I coordinated volunteers to go help out at kindergartens and other schools to teach the kids English, which was wonderful to see and also gained the organization some money to organize events. My study programme is a bachelor called "individual path of learning". It is a new project and my classmates and I are the second year doing it. Basically we have the freedom to create our own curriculum throughout our studies. Each semester we have to take at least 30ECTS but we can choose whichever courses we like, as long as they are part of the economics and international relations departments. There are fifteen of us in a year and each student also has a tutor. My tutor is the best lecturer I have ever met and he supports me no matter what the issue. *TW*

TheSextant

Nr 16 / Autumn 2015



Marya Imbach, MSc in International Management student who went on the Enter Silicon Valley on-site seminar (19 August - 2 September 2016)

My parents have worked for 20 years in IT in Minsk, Belarus, so I grew up being indirectly and directly in contact with new technologies. I first graduated in intercultural communication and languages and then went on to the MSc in International Management. However, I remained keenly interested in IT and technology innovation. So when the news came of a new student seminar called Enter Silicon Valley for the Master students where we would visit major tech companies and be able to interview some of the managers I knew I wanted to join.

Access is important. It's one thing to read an article about a company like Google or Facebook but to actually see and hear these people, see what the environment they work in is like, that is something very different. For instance, when we visited the 1 million square metre headquarters of Adobe I could feel the intensity and busyness of all the employees. Personally I also enjoyed the visit to Autodesk where we toured the laboratories they have. They experiment with different cutting techniques, for instance, and then also develop the software that goes with it. For me, to actually see where innovation happens was exciting and new. The seminar was extremely intense. We had teams that prepared for each of the visits- researched a company for instance that we would

visit, and then this team would brief the delegation on who and what the company was and did. There were debriefings after these visits and we would try to analyse the business we'd explored and researched and complete a business model canvas. Next to this of course there were the actual company visits, the travelling between various locations and naturally, some sightseeing and socializing. At the end you're extremely tired but it was great and I'd do it again.

A highlight? Well I'm now working on my Master thesis and researching mobile payment technology and linking it to financial services - Fintech for short. One of our visits in the USA was to Stanford University where a professor lectured on innovation, especially comparing the approaches in the USA as compared with Europe. He also talked about Russia then and during the exchange session afterwards when students could talk with him informally, this professor discovered that he and I had some mutual acquaintances. As he had some interest in what was happening in Belarus and I could tell him about my thesis, he very kindly offered to support me by giving me an interview for my thesis and finding a better construct. This illustrates what a unique opportunity it is to be given access to leading people and companies. *BS*



Max de Boer, MSc IM student on a traineeship in Brussels

The biggest challenge is processing all the information and understanding the complexity. Each week there are numerous events and publications with news from research projects at the EuroTech universities, or from the European Parliament or other science stakeholders. One of my tasks is then to write succinct reports analysing and summarizing key information for my employer Swisscore which is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and the Commission for Technology and Innovation and acts as a bridge between Swiss and European knowledge programmes. Last month we held a Swiss Science briefing where for instance the University of Fribourg presented results on their sleep research. They'd had an European Research Council grant to investigate sleep in an interdisciplinary approach involving disciplines such as psychiatry, neurology and biology.

Officially I'm a Trainee for Research and in Brussels for six months. Half my time is working for Swisscore and the other half is spent on my Research Project as part of my Master thesis. It's relatively intense at the moment as we're at the

mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 the EU programme for research and innovation, so here in Brussels there's a lot of evaluation of all the stakeholders and developments. What helps a lot is that there's a network of all the education, research and innovation liaison officers here - that's about 30 people. We had two training weeks at the start. Different countries organized activities so that we could build up our networks and get to know each other. We share our expertise.

During that training week the Dutch organized a walking lunch around the European Quarter. Brussels is the world's largest lobby city even before Washington, so everything is huge and complex. I remember feeling like a chicken without a head at the start because you just don't know where things are - it's a concrete jungle with a fast political pulse. It's really important therefore to leave it occasionally and remember there's a life beyond the Eurobubble. Brussels is an amazing and dynamic city with fascinating and beautiful architecture and a vibrant culture. Basically I have the unique situation of having the best of two worlds while I'm here. I love it. *BS*



Prof Robert Buttery, Chair of the EAIE Business Education Committee which met in Liverpool in September*

One of the hot topics at the moment is accreditation for business schools. Everyone is rushing towards obtaining accreditation as it attaches quality control to a school and supports its reputation. But mostly, European business schools only know about the three main accreditation boards and these may not always meet the very different needs. One of our aims as the EAIE Business Education Committee is to investigate different, preferably holistic options and be able to inform all our members about them. After our meeting in Liverpool we, for instance, investigated the CEEMAN network which promotes education quality in especially Eastern European countries. We hope then to organise a Session on this topic at the next EAIE conference in Seville in 2017 to inform members about all the options that they can make informed decisions about which accreditation to pursue.

Working on this committee is extremely rewarding. There are six of us, four elected members and two resource support members, from busi-

ness schools in Poland, The Netherlands, the UK, Italy, Slovenia and me, from Switzerland. We Skype weekly meetings and meet in person once every three months we meet face to face where we work on the tasks set us. Preparing Sessions on topics that currently challenge European schools is important as we can inform the direction business education will take. We are also working on gathering best practice examples of social entrepreneurship, for instance and on increasing the number of business schools members from the south and east of Europe.

To be working with people who are on the same page is immensely rewarding, for me personally and of course it also opens many doors for our FHNW School of Business. We gain access to leading decision-makers and information and are in a unique position to help move things forward. *BS*

**European Association of International Education*

A Day in the Life of Katrin Höller



Katrin Höller (Photo: Herbert Höller)

Katrin Höller, a part-time BSc in Business Administration student, Campus Brugg, who went on a two-week Shadowing Experience project to Bratislava, Slovakia.

I packed my suitcase full of books and my fitness gear as I expected to have my evenings alone and lots of time in my hotel room. In the end I returned with the books unread as my colleagues at the SwissRe office there had organised outings ever single night. Most of the people were very young and from the first day they came and said come on, come with us. On the first day already they took me to a football match and it continued like that. Because it was still warm this meant we could go hiking or sightseeing after work. They took me, for instance, to the Bratislava Castle and the castles of Pajštún and Devín. Other evenings we would go for drinks.

That was one of the biggest differences – how social the people in Bratislava were. I work

80% in project management and administration at SwissRe's head office in Zurich and my fortnight in Slovakia was in some ways merely a geographical relocation. I worked on my project there which then included meeting with people and having training sessions. Additionally, I wrote some blog posts and a final report on the experience to qualify for the 3 ECTS for the study project.

In Slovakia they tended to start work about an hour earlier than in Zurich but this meant they also stopped working earlier. They have to work about 38 hours rather than the 42 so this meant more time to also socialise in the evenings.

Rarely do they go out for dinner as it's relatively expensive. This meant they usually took their own lunches to work. In the Bratislava offices there was no canteen like in Zurich, instead there were lovely areas where people would gather and could microwave their food

and eat together. In Zurich too, it is customary to network over lunch, to discuss work. But in Bratislava the networking tends to be done after work. Often food would be shared – especially sweet food. I discovered that many colleagues go home over the weekends as their families live out in the countryside, often on farms with their own chickens and other animals, and they would return with food that had been produced on their home farms and would share this over lunch. Additionally, it was quite a big thing to celebrate name days, as well as birthdays. Then homemade sweets or biscuits or cake would be taken along and placed on their desks and you could just go from desk to desk and sample it: they would tell you for instance, this is made with eggs from my parents' farm.

I generally had the impression that work colleagues mingled more with each other, they talked more. In Switzerland you might be sitting only a few yards away from a colleague but you would either phone or mail them about a work matter. In Bratislava people tended to get up and walk to that colleague's desk and talk about it. I enjoyed that. In Zurich it tends to be very quiet in the office. This doesn't mean that work didn't get done in Bratislava – my impression was that they were just as productive and efficient as we are. They just talk more with each other. They also have more teams there so it's easier to collaborate I think. Some teams would not be physically present in Zürich so I would have to call them but in Bratislava the team is literally there so you can just walk over and talk to them. Perhaps it was also a generation thing – my colleagues there were generally younger.

Language did not present a problem – many of them spoke either English or German. Bratislava is very close to Vienna. Many of them learn German at school – this was a big surprise.

The two weeks were very intense. I still had to keep up with the daily business of my own job but then on top of that were the tasks of the project in Bratislava and on top of that again were the blogs I had to produce for my studies. For the blog I had to concentrate on questions like – what I experienced, what the work experience was like and then cultural differences between the two offices. The content had to include intercultural competence in a business environment before and after the visit as well as on-site. I found the whole experience extremely worthwhile. As part-time students we rarely have the option to go on a semester abroad without resigning our current job. This was a viable alternative and really gave me a taste of being immersed in another culture. So I've determined for myself that if there's an opportunity to go and work abroad after I've completed my studies, I will certainly do that. ■

Brigitte Sprenger