

RELAZIONE AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO 2009/2010

_Cognome	Radeta
_Nome	Marko
_Matricola	734303
_Anno di corso	2.LM
_Corsi di studi	DESIGN DELLA COMUNICAZIONE
_Sezione	C1
_e-mail	marko.radeta@mail.polimi.it
_Sede di scambio	Zurcher Hochschule der Kunste
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TESTO DELLA RELAZIONE

Every possibility to have an experience outside the given natural surroundings and frames by birth is very unique. It is the moment when we follow our instincts and learn more about ourselves, our characters, our passions...

It is without doubt, to recommend the experience that I had in Zurich, and it's "University of Arts", to all of you that you have a wish to learn more about other cultures, languages, to travel, and experience the different student-life.

As I believe that you have already packed the suitcase full of dreams, allow me to share with you something more about the practical things that you might want to consider putting it there. We will do this throughout an auto-interview which while trying to recall my own questions which I had before and during the exchange experience.

Let's start from first - How to decide rather I should go/or not?

- Absolutely without a lot of thinking, this might be a great opportunity to spread your own sights, viewing at the things, make connections, learn a new language, prove yourself in other country, etc.

If I would choose to go - do I have to prepare myself a lot?

- I strongly suggest that you take the intensive course of language on which you will be studying in your preferred University. In my case, it was Swiss-Deutsch, it was very difficult to find somebody to teach me that specific language - because it does not really sound like a Deutsch. But, you can definitely rely on use of your English skills. And if not, well, there are always legs and arms to explain the better things, while you will meet lot of people full of patience for you to express yourself.

Also, learning about the culture is not necessary, but it is a great plus that can open the doors of communication, make friends, or in my case, to go on snowboard weekend.

Prepare yourself with photo-camera; you will might want to record lot of nice moments that you will discover there.

What shall I do if I do not understand the classes because of insufficient language skills?

Absolutely improvise and relax yourself. Try to write down the words, buy a vocabulary, first two or three months might be very hard, but you can always come to a professor and share with him how you understood the class. Just like in Japan (people appreciate the effort more than a final

result, if the professors know that you did the best, they will help you out on Italian, French, German, English, Swiss-German. There must be some way always that you can communicate). Besides, the science is about the design, so it is very less-word-expressive if I can call it like that. It is really beautiful, do not be afraid!

What exactly do I do on my classes?

-Collective research, group brainstorming and participation in choosing the right way to solve some problem, individual research, speaking with professors in small groups made of three or four persons where everybody share their opinions for having the closer collective truth. Also, watch a lot of examples, videos, movies, designs, infographics, research's... And of course: listening, listening, listening... You might find this interesting, in the course of Trends: The next big thing - we were sitting on top of the roof with the professor because it was a really beautiful weather (announcement for persons suffering from bad weather: Zurich might be very cloudy and rainy, but the people always wear smile and they are always friendly enough to help and be there)

What about the length? Free time?

- Usually the classes are organized that you have one by one project to do. Thus, one by one exam needs to be taken. What does it mean? Let's say that you have one exam, you are doing it for three/four weeks and you finish it on your last week. The evaluation of professor is usually in group where they propose the mark for you. If you think that you deserved higher marks, you should give reasons for them. (I succeeded to have all B's and one A which are very high marks. Also, consider that my level of German is beginner/intermediate. Therefore: "Si puo' fare!")

Yes, the length of the class per day might be organized like this: it starts around 9:30 - 12:30. Then you should have a lunch brake and you continue from 15:00 until 18:00. The schedule is not so strict but I warmly suggest that you attend all of the lectures (you will find out more easily what exactly you have to do, and the professors will feel confident about you)

So, as you see, you have a lot of free time to enjoy on the river, to walk the city or to enjoy local or oriental nearby food. (The city is walkable, and the University of Arts as it is on the river it is also 1 minute by tram from Central station, but if you walk it could be 5 minutes, yes, you think good, very far away)

Does the University organize some non-lectures happenings?

- Definitely yes, once you will have your @zhdk.ch account you will be attacked with the see of possibilities - from trips to other cities, over going out to galleries.

Our head coordinator organized us a Welcome Day and gave us all the necessary information. Shortly, in one week we went together to Bern and saw Einstein's museum. Amazing! Especially the first room with mirrors that visualizes all the walls as going to infinity! Sounds tempting for science and art lovers!

How is life in Zurich?

People, I do not go out so much. I was spearing money and travelled all around the Switzerland and beyond. It might be very expensive using train, for example, one 24h ticket for public transport in Zurich is 6 Swiss Franks (near 4 euros). But there are discounts such as Half-Fare card for which you pay once 150 SF for which you pay double less within all the trains in Switzerland. As for night life, there are really millions of happenings, but I suggest you visiting the glaciers, go snowboarding, hiking, mountain-biking, go to Cabaret Voltaire (Dadaism was born there, club in Zurich - actually my last product is in selling there - ask for iBible), go to forest, climb the Ulterberg, take mini-scooter or slalom board - they use it from 7 years to 77 there!

Each Wednesday there is a fair of food on Central station, and if you are coming in spring semester you can also discover a real ball!

Is it very expensive there?

- Zurich stands for one of the most expensive cities in Europe. But not necessarily, I succeeded to find a place to stay for around 250 Euros over the agency called WOKO (remember them, they are brilliant, but know that you have to tell them 6 months in advance that you are in searching of a room!) My room was in Tannenrauchstrasse near the lake, little bit outside of centre. What to tell you more? I do not want to get out of there at all! :)

Yes, there is also a discount if you are less than 25 years, where you can travel almost for free anywhere in Switzerland after 7 p.m.

All the information will be provided by your student coordinator in Zurich. In my case it was Markus Sutter, he was there not 24/7 but 25/7. And to tell you just a little bit more about his character, once he had a famous punk band in Switzerland. I conclude that the art and business can go together!

Some additional advices?

- Be friend with Google Translator, it can really help!
- Sometimes you will feel that the Swiss people are cold, have a bit more patience, it takes time for other culture to accept you as your manners.
- About personal organization, you will find out how everything is functioning brilliantly, from trains in second, to a nice "Have a nice spring evening" from the bus driver saying it in microphone on your wait exiting the bus. You will simply be aware that if you loose the bus in 16:53 that there will be a bus at 16:58, and so on. It may sound like a living the life of a machine, but indeed, the "Swatch" it is there to help you.
- There is a low-cost company "EasyJet" flying from Geneve and Basel.
- Contact Flying Teachers. Google them. Organize your friends from exchange to take the course of language there. University is giving scholarships and paying for you language courses! (My scholarship was 1500 CHF, and the amount of money that they invest in you for language course was around 500 CHF. Very decent! You can also work on Saturday and Sunday!)
- Monday is usually a theoretical class. Don't let this discourage you. You will have a possibility to hear some great and interesting things!
- Smile, and be aware that it is an honor if they have chosen exactly you for being their guest!
- Try to speak German, even if you can not make a sentence, you will be amazed how the people can start a nice conversation with you just by seeing your efforts!
- There is a free renting of a bike from 09:00 - 21:00. Use it, it is faster than a tram! For me it takes 12 minutes from the home to University by bike. (With tram is at least 25 min.)
- Go to Zurich's theatre
- Take part in a IESN Zurich (International Exchange Students Network) there are possibilities that your head could twist from reading them. From yoga, sports, gym, dance, acting, traveling, concerts...

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