



N.16 – 4.2017

WHY THIS NEWSLETTER

“Come and go” is the International Relations and Study-abroad newsletter which aims at keeping our readers up-to-date on the latest news and events related to our activities. It is published 4 times per year and reaches approx. 4'000 readers, in particular USI students, faculty and staff, incoming students and staff from our many partner universities and other collaborators. We do hope you will enjoy reading it!

INTERVIEW WITH CARLO SECCHI, STUDENT AT THE ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE

Carlo Secchi is a student at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio and he experienced both study and internship experiences abroad. Take a look at his inspiring story.

Carlo, thank you for accepting our request of a short interview to share with our readers.

Please, tell us something about yourself and your academic background.

“My Name is Carlo Secchi, a 24 years old student from Napoli, Italy. Architecture fascinated me since I was very young. After graduating at Liceo scientifico G. Mercalli, I was hesitant about which university to apply for. At first, I enrolled myself to Univeristà Federico II di Napoli, where I understood that architecture was the right path for me. The following year, I moved to Ticino and started studying at Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio; it was love at first sight! A real “accademia”, where to find the right mix of scientific and humanistic knowledge. After one year of internship between Lausanne and New York, I am currently studying at ETSAM in Madrid.”

Why did you decide to have both a study and an internship experience abroad?

“Should I go with the easy answer? I always felt the necessity to change. One of the great lessons my parents gave me, is that travelling and knowing other cultures enriches you in many aspects; and most important, it opens your mind.”

In which way have those periods abroad enriched you, academically, professionally and personally?

“Thanks to a different method I could prove myself the flexibility of my learning skills. Developing my Spanish and English, I got the chance to interact with diverse qualified professionals who helped me to assimilate the base and priorities in a working environment and, last but not least, I realized what real work means and what I would like be doing in the future.”

What are the main differences between the two experiences?

“Both working and studying abroad is challenging. When you have a job, most of the times, you feel part of a group and gain your own independence; duties and responsibilities first. When you are a student, you think to have more time but it is only an illusion. Feeling the academic pressure is stressful but usually rewarding.”



Carlo Secchi (right) during the atelier of prof. Walter Angone at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio.

“As a result of studying abroad, people have a more sophisticated way of looking at the world. Internships are a good way to experience local culture in the workplace and to improve foreign language skills, as well as to expand work experience.”

How a study and a working experience abroad makes you smarter?

“You achieve the ability to make connections among many ideas, which you gain through experience. Having an international career or identifying with more than one culture, makes you a better problem solver and lets you display more creativity. You also come in contact with a lot of stress, which is the stimulus for us to grow.”

“We have to realize that time of stress are also time that are signals of growth, and if we use the adversity properly, we can grow through adversity.” (Dr. Abraham Joshua Twerski).

Do you think such experiences will help students in their future career path?

“Yes, definitely. As a result of studying abroad, people have a more sophisticated way of looking at the world. Internships are a good way to experience local culture in the workplace and to improve foreign language skills, as well as to expand work experience. Backgrounds like those are worth living and will always be unforgettable.”

EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES CONTINUE TO BE VERY POPULAR

2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus programme. The programme values “to expose to other cultures”, “to mutually understand each others”, “to be open”, and “to travel widely” are nowadays of crucial importance and contributed in making Erasmus programme a success story (since 1987, 9 million people took advantage of it).

Since its creation, the programme has developed and expanded greatly: it now includes workplace traineeships, staff training and teaching activities, and cooperation projects between universities, research organisations, companies, NGOs, local, regional, national authorities and other socio-economic actors – within Europe and beyond.

Unfortunately, our country cannot take part in the celebrations, due to the decision of the EU, in 2014, to suspend the participation of Switzerland in the European education programme.

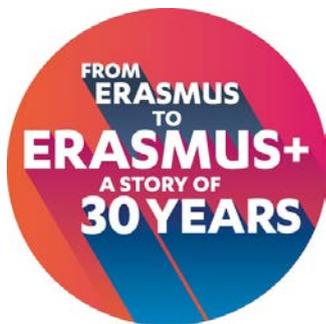
The Swiss Government put into place an interim solution (SEMP) giving priority to mobility. Therefore, USI can continue to offer its students the possibility of experiencing a mobility exchange and to host students from partner universities.

In the month of February, more than 100 applications were submitted by USI students interested in spending a semester abroad during the academic year 2017/2018 to the International Relations office.

With over 80 partner universities worldwide, USI students have access to a large, international network.

The internal selection process is completed and students were placed according to their academic scoring and the placement preference they have indicated.

The final result of the selection is the following: 32 students will spend a semester at another Swiss university, 46 will study at a partner university in Europe (Spain being the top destination), 10 students will leave for Australia, 6 will be hosted at Nanyang Technical University in Singapore, 3 students will enjoy a semester in China, 2 in Brazil, 2 in Peru and 2 in Russia. We seize the opportunity to remind to students of the Lugano campus that it is still possible to apply by October 15 for spring semester, but without any guarantee that there will still be available openings.



The official logo for the 30th anniversary of Erasmus programme.



Group picture taken during the welcome day.

As for the **incoming students**, in the current semester we are hosting respectively 33 exchange students at Lugano campus and 34 students at Mendrisio campus.

Among them 47 students are spending a semester or two at USI in the frame of the Swiss European Mobility program (SEMP) coming from Germany, Italy, Finland, France, Greece, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Sweden, Belgium and Poland.

12 students study at USI thanks to international agreements with partner institutions outside of Europe. They come from Singapore, Australia and the US. 8 more students are hosted in the framework of the Swiss Mobility programme.

DISCOVER TICINO: THE RABADAN CARNIVAL



The Rabadan big parade on Saturday afternoon (courtesy of Bellinzona Turismo)

To welcome our newly arrived exchange students from both the Lugano and the Mendrisio campus we had the pleasure to invite them to discover Bellinzona and its carnival tradition, which was at his 154th edition. The 2017 edition took place from 23th to 28th February. The group of guest students participated in the Saturday night, when carnival bands, called “Guggen”, from Ticino and from the other regions of Switzerland give concerts far into the night. What better occasion to write about this tradition in this Newsletter?

Carnival represents a very important, colorful, joyful and noisy tradition of Switzerland and Ticino, which brings together hundreds of people. The best-known Swiss carnivals are held in Basel and Lucerne. The Carnival of Bellinzona, Rabadan, which literally means noise in local dialect, is the second largest carnival in Switzerland and the largest in Ticino, but by no means the only place in Ticino where carnival is celebrated: besides the larger events organized in the main towns and cities, such as “Nebiopoli” in Chiasso and the “Stranóciada” in Locarno, over 130 smaller local carnivals take place in Ticino.

Carnival in Bellinzona and many carnivals in Switzerland traditionally lasts from last Thursday before Lent to Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, the Christian fast lasting 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter, following the Roman rite. Basel’s carnival and other smaller carnivals in Ticino, such as “Or Penagin” in Tesserete and “Re Naregna” in Biasca, break with tradition by beginning on the Monday following Ash Wednesday according to the Ambrosian rite.

Bellinzona is the capital of Canton Ticino, the small city, with a population of about 18.000 inhabitants, is located at the crossroads of the St. Gotthard, Lukmanier and San Bernardino routes and is renowned for the three Castles: Castelgrande (which lies in a hill in the city center and is reachable by elevator from Piazza del Sole), Montebello and Castello di Sasso Corbaro, included in the UNESCO World Heritage in 2000. Usually a calm and relaxing city, Bellinzona definitely transform itself during the carnival period.

Every year, Rabadan welcomes as many as 150.000 visitors. The festivities traditionally start on the Thursday evening when the Mayor of Bellinzona give the keys to the city to King Rabadan. On Friday afternoon, the entire city is brought to life by the children parade of the elementary schools and kindergartens of Bellinzona and surroundings. The celebrations continue on Saturday afternoon with the “Guggen” parade, the so-called typical carnival bands coming from the German and French part of Switzerland and Ticino, and on Saturday night with the “Guggen” concerts in the main squares of the city far into the night.

The origin of the word “Guggen” is not clear, the most common explanation is that it may derive from the German “Sack/Tüte”, meaning, “bag”, other unsourced explanations include the word used for a small children’s trumpet or a (Swiss German) word for “scream”.



The Guggen concert on Saturday night.
(courtesy of Bellinzona Turismo)

The “Guggenmusik” is a strongly rhythmic music of distinctive style played with brass instruments, clash cymbals, lyre and drums. Although melodies remain clearly recognizable, they sometimes played “off-key”, intentionally and often quite skillfully. Driven by a dominant rhythm section, the music sounds twisted and thrilling, very danceable and perfect for spontaneous street concerts during Carnival. Today there are many types of Guggenmusik to make carnival celebrants dance. Bands usually play well-known pop songs but also folk tunes and children’s music.

The first “Guggenmusik” band in Ticino was created in 1959 in Bellinzona, the “Ciòd stonaa”. The name of the group means “off-key nails” in Ticinese dialect, as inhabitants of the region of Bellinzona are historically also called nails, the origin of this nickname seems to be dated back to the 1700-1800 and could be attributed to the fact that they were seen as hard-headed people or cheapskate (in local dialect slang expressions) from the other region of Ticino. Since 1959, in Ticino, about 20 groups with funny and satirical names.

The big parade follows on the Sunday afternoon, with about 20.000 spectators lining the streets of Bellinzona. On Tuesday about 2.000 portions of “risotto and luganighe” (sausages) are served up to the public. During the period of carnival, people celebrate out on the streets and in the tents all night long, our colorful and joyful exchange students were totally in tune with the carnival atmosphere and enjoyed the crazy night in Bellinzona.

Useful information: Bellinzona Turismo website: www.bellinzoneaturismo.ch

NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

We are pleased to announce that USI can now offer new destinations inside and outside the European boundaries.

Academy of Architecture

- **Kyoto Institute of Technology**, field: *Architecture*.

Two USI students, Michaela Benesova and Yashar Yektajo, decided to share their experience about this new collaboration.

“Ten students were preselected from each university to attend the design studio of professor Valerio Olgiati. During the first ten weeks in Mendrisio, each student developed her/his own project, attending several public critiques with the professor and table discussions with the assistants.

Everybody moved then to Kyoto for four weeks of preparation, model construction and the final reviews of professor Olgiati and the guest critics arch. Go Hasegawa and professor Erwin Viray. The stay in Kyoto became a culturally rich experience also thanks to the opportunity to visit many temples, gardens and palaces with the professor and local guides. Especially from the point of view of a student that has been part of the Accademia from the start of his studies this experience has been very precious: we have developed the ability to improvise and adapt within a society with a completely different culture, forcing many of us out of the comfort zone of our habits onto new challenges. We have come back to Mendrisio enriched by a cultural and intellectual experience that is an asset to our repertoire, that we will surely continue to develop.”



Tofukuji Temple in Kyoto.



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Other destinations in brief:

Faculty of Communication Sciences

- **Università degli Studi di Perugia**, field: *Journalism and Information*, Bachelor level;

- **Università degli Studi di Padova**, field: *Languages*, Bachelor and Master level;

- **Università di Roma - La Sapienza**: field: *Languages*, Master level.

Faculty of Economics

- **Witten/Herdecke University**, field: *Business studies & Economics*, Bachelor and Master level.

Faculty of Informatics

- **Friedrich Schiller University Jena**, field: *Computational Sciences*, Bachelor, Master and PhD level;

- **VSB Technical University Ostrava**, field: *Engineering*, Bachelor, Master and PhD level.

Institute for Research in Biomedicine

- **Università degli Studi di Bologna**, field: *Life Science*, Master and PhD level;

- **Humanitas University, Milan**, field: *Life Science*, Bachelor, Master and PhD level.

The complete list of bilateral agreements is available at our website: www.relint.usi.ch.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New collaboration agreement between USI and swissnex Boston

Università della Svizzera italiana and swissnex Boston are pleased to announce the signing of a new Collaborative Agreement. Starting February 1, 2017, and until the end of January 2018, USI will collaborate with swissnex Boston on a series of initiatives to increase the visibility of USI in the East Coast both in terms of training and of research, and to establish and strengthen academic and corporate collaborations in the region. The Agreement goes by a series of points, including: support and co-organization of USI activities in Boston (e.g., visits by USI delegations universities or companies in Boston and the East Coast); hosting at swissnex Boston USI professors or researchers during sabbaticals, and helping with contacts at research institutions and private enterprises; promoting USI study programmes. In the month of June, in collaboration with USI Alumni, there will be an USI alumni night in New York, with speeches, a networking reception and refreshment with USI graduates in the region.



More about swissnex Boston at: <http://www.swissnexboston.org>.

For information or queries contact our service.

USI member of SAR Network

USI will be member of the SAR Scholars at risk network showing the willingness to sustain scholars facing grave threats and to promote academic freedom. SAR Scholars at Risk network is an international network of universities and institutions promoting the academic freedom and defending the human rights of scholars worldwide by arranging temporary academic positions at member universities, to keep scholars working until conditions improve and they are able to return to their home countries; providing advisory services for scholars and hosts; organizing campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries; monitoring attacks on higher education communities worldwide; deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere.

SAR Network began at the University of Chicago in 1999, since then, many institutions worldwide have joined the Network. In 2015, the SAR-Switzerland Section was created in order to organize and promote the activities of SAR network Swiss members in Switzerland. As members of the international office, we attended the first meeting on November 28th in Bern in order to learn more about the project in the prospect of a possible membership of USI, which was lastly confirmed over the last few days.

SAR Switzerland Section counts now 11 Swiss universities and institutions: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH Zurich), University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), University of Teacher Education Lucerne (PH Luzern), University of Bern, University of Fribourg, University of Geneva, University of Lausanne, University of Lucerne, University of Neuchâtel, University of Zurich.

More about Scholars at Risk: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>

SNIS Award for the best PhD thesis in International Studies.

The 2017 edition of SNIS Award that rewards the best PhD thesis in international studies received in a Swiss university is now open for entries. In line with the SNIS objective to support outstanding young researchers at the beginning of their career and to promote the interdisciplinary field of international studies, the envelope of this prestigious award has been increased to CHF 10'000. Candidates for the entry of submissions must have received their PhD degree in a Swiss University in the calendar year 2016, with "summa cum laude", or a mark equal or superior to 5.5.

The SNIS considers that international studies deal not only with the analysis of international relations, but also with political, economic, social, environmental, legal, and health issues that extend beyond national boundaries. A jury composed of professors with expertise in one or several areas relevant to international studies will evaluate the PhD theses submitted.

Please consult the SNIS website: www.snis.ch.

The submission deadline is 4 May 2017

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