



N.18 – 10.2017

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!

THE EAIE 2017

Founded in 1989, the EAIE (European Association of International Education) is a centre for expertise, networking and resources in the field of internationalization of higher education. It annually holds the Europe's largest international higher education conference. In 2017, the 29th edition of the EAIE was held in the Seville Conference and Exhibition Centre (FIBES Sevilla) and the main theme was “A mosaic of cultures”. This major event focused on the following main topics:

- a *conference* that this year attracted 6,000 academics, university administrators and international higher education experts from 95 countries to participate in sessions, workshops and round tables on a diverse range of topics including: whether universities should support or suppress student pro-tests, how higher education can further sustainable development, graduate employability in the world of Brexit and Trump, whether universities are the pillar of a city's internationalisation strategy and worldwide trends in international branch campuses;

- a *fair*, where over 640 exhibitors could promote their higher education offer to an institutional and international audience, create new partnerships or improve current ones;

- *campus tours, workshops, sessions and networking event.*

This EAIE Conference was particularly important for the Swiss delegation since Geneva will host the 2018 EAIE Conference edition.

USI (represented by the International Relations Service staff) had the chance to promote itself thanks to the Swiss higher education booth hosted at the exhibition.

The Swiss delegation, together with representatives of selected partner universities, were invited by the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Giulio Haas to a reception along the Guadalquivir river. This was a special opportunity to meet colleagues from partner universities in a relaxed atmosphere, but also to explore the possibilities for new collaborations.

During one of these meetings arose the idea of creating a new section of the newsletter entitled “Discover an USI partner university”.



Seville Conference and Exhibition Centre



The Swiss reception with the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Giulio Haas

We decided to start with a partner university of Bavaria, Germany's largest and southernmost state sharing borders with Austria, the Czech Republic and – across Lake Constance – with Switzerland. The Free State of Bavaria sprawls over 70,551 square kilometers, which makes it bigger than Denmark, the Netherlands or Switzerland. USI currently has four SEMP agreements with Bavarian universities, namely: Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, and Technische Universität München.

The Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg has a SEMP exchange students agreement with the Faculty of Economics, in the field “Business and Economics” for three Bachelor or Master students.

DISCOVER AN USI PARTNER UNIVERSITY: UNIVERSITY OF BAMBERG

We asked our colleague Davide Bacchini, International Office Coordinator at the University of Bamberg, to describe his prestigious university and at the same time we had a chat with Matteo Da Ros and Fabian Herreiner who are currently on a SEMP exchange from the University of Bamberg.

Davide Bacchini: “The University of Bamberg, one of the oldest universities in Bavaria, is a medium-sized university in Bavaria, the southern part of Germany, with about 13,500 students (incl. about 1,000 international students). The University consists of three campuses. Most of the Humanities courses are held in the old part of the city. Here students can discover the largest city centre under preservation in Germany, which was also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993.

In addition to that, the University has a campus in the eastern part of Bamberg. Here you will find the departments for Social Sciences, Economics and Business. The short distance to the city centre is quickly covered by bicycle or by public transport. Our third campus was opened during the academic year 2012/13. It houses the departments of Computer Sciences and is only short walk or bike ride away from the city centre.

Research and studies in Bamberg have a strong European and international component. In particular the “International Business”, “European Economic Studies” and “International Information Systems Management” programs exhibit a strong international focus. The Faculty of Information Systems, Applied Computer Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Business Administration offer several courses taught in English. The Otto-Friedrich-University of Bamberg has exchange agreements with approx. 300 universities in 60 countries. The International Office coordinates student exchange programs and offers advice on all areas of studying abroad. Accommodation in one of the student residences is organized upon request for all exchange students who will study at the University of Bamberg. The International Office offers a three week intensive German course and orientation program for exchange students before the start of each semester. During the course, the students not only improve their German language skills but also learn about German culture and geography. They are also introduced to the organization of the University of Bamberg, general student services, the libraries, the course registration system, etc. During the semester, exchange students can participate in a variety of organized excursions and cultural events.

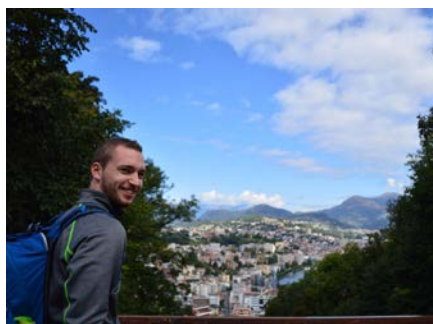
The University also offers a Buddy Program, called TANDEM, which matches each international guest with one Bamberg student. The German students are available to assist the international participants with the first mandatory administrative steps in Bamberg and to ease the transition period. The German tandem partners also provide their international partners with a personal introduction to student life in Bamberg.”



Library by the river Regnitz
(Courtesy of Bamberg University)



Aerial view of Bamberg city centre.
(Courtesy of Bamberg Tourismus and Congress Centre)



Fabian (above) and Matteo (below) from Bamberg up to hills of Ticino.



Fabian and Matteo what is the main difference you find between USI and your university?

Fabian: “The University of Bamberg is bigger compared to USI. We have 13000 students (lots of them are internationals) and the university spreads across the city. There is not just one single campus but there are several locations. This is not a problem, as students can use public transport for free in Bamberg. The number of students per course is usually higher as well. Another main difference is the student life. As the city is not very large, the students form a huge group of the population. Therefore, you will find a lot to do there as a student.”

Matteo: “In Bamberg there is no campus, since the university has buildings in all the city. As a student of Information Systems I had to attend lectures mostly in two different city districts and sometimes even in the city centre. That means, that I had to ride my bicycle to different districts between consecutive lectures. Conversely, the USI has a campus located in one place of the city of Lugano and in the adjacent streets.”

What would you say or what advice would you give to another international student thinking of attending University of Bamberg?

Matteo: “The welcome program for international students is very rich and useful and students’ tutors are very engaged to help the new guests. I would advise to join this program to know the beer culture in Bamberg with its eleven breweries and visit the various churches, buildings and the seven hills surrounding Bamberg. The tutors for international students are also very recommended, because they help to do the various bureaucratic procedures, once students arrive in Bamberg.

Only a few lectures are taken in English: if students don’t speak German, the program offered in English is limited and international students should ask for information about the teaching language of the various courses. However, in the Faculty of Informatics there are more lectures in English than in other faculties.”

Tell us about your hometown. If I came to visit you, where in your hometown would you take me? What would you show me?

Fabian: “Bamberg has a beautiful old town with lots of interesting buildings. Many of them are older than 500 years. That is the reason why Bamberg is part of the UNESCO world cultural heritage. Besides, I would definitely recommend visiting the “Altenburg” which is a castle on a hill above the city. Here you can get a beautiful view of the area. Bamberg is also known for its cuisine and the beer brewing culture. Eating in one of the various brewery taverns and having a local beer is something you must do there. Dare to do it and enjoy your time there! You will certainly not regret it!”

More information: [Otto-Friedrich Universität Bamberg](https://www.uni-bamberg.de/)

DISCOVER TICINO: A TRAIL THROUGH MYSTERIOUS LUGANO

To welcome the newly arrived exchange students, the International Relations Service organizes at the beginning of each semester a day-out activity aimed to get to know each other and discover a part of our region. Ticino, with its mountains, woods, crystal clear waters, awesome panoramas, pretty villages, castles, lakes, culture and architecture, always offers new opportunities for excursions and sightseeing trips.

This semester, we decided to make it more challenging than usual: we invited our incoming exchange students to join a treasure hunt, run by “Foxtrail”, in order to explore and discover the city of Lugano.



The treasure hunt starts at Lugano train station.

“Foxtail” organizes various treasure hunt trail experiences in popular Swiss destinations bringing participants to both famous sights and less known hidden areas of town; as was the case in Lugano.

It was a good combination of fun, orienteering, art and problem-solving, breaking codes, solving tricky riddles, finding out hidden messages and places throughout Lugano. Here are two enthusiastic echoes:

“I had a fantastic day full of happy faces and beautiful landscapes exploring the city of Lugano! It was definitely one of the best ways I got to know the city and found new friends!” (Paulius, Copenhagen Business School)

“I really enjoyed the Foxtrail activity, because it was a great chance to discover the city of Lugano.” (Lucas, Ulm Universität)

For those who could not participate, here is a brief description of some of the places along the walk.

Some places are worth mentioning, beginning from Parco Tassino (21,000 m²) and the pink Enderlin tower (named after the nineteenth wealthy family that owned the park): the park lies near Lugano Station in a sunny and peaceful position with an amazing view on the city, the lake and the surrounding mountains. The position encourages the growth of many species of rose, magnolia trees originating in New Zealand, Japanese cornus and rare varieties of blue, red and white Chinese wisteria and a wide selection of shrub roses. Around the park are sweet gum trees, honey locusts Ilex, chestnut trees and evergreen magnolias.

The Funicolare degli Angioli, nowadays unknown to many visitors, started its activity in 1913 to link the shore of the Lugano lake to the Bristol Hotel, the first Grand Hotel in Ticino, opened in 1903, closed in 1981 and now a condominium. In 1973, the funicular was acquired by the City of Lugano, which decided to suspend the exploitation in 1987 to think of a new financial and technical solution. It seems that a project to replace it with an electrical stair already existed, but today, as then, the funicular is still there.



The pink Enderlin tower at the Parco Tassino.

At the bottom of the funicular we encounter Lugano’s new cultural centre, LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura, which was created with the aim of adding value to the cultural and artistic life of the city and the region. The new cultural center delimits the new square Bernardino Luini, the particularity of the whole project is the absence of any physical separation between the streets and the building.

On the north side of the square rises the convent and the church of Santa Maria degli Angioli. Built between 1499 and 1500, the church hosts an early Renaissance Masterpiece, reputed as being the most famous fresco of that period in Switzerland, with Christ’s Passion Scenes. The church is part of the convent of the Order of Franciscan Friars, founded in 1490 and active until 1848.

The combination of new and old is one of LAC’s characteristics and the preservation of both the original facades of the former grand Hotel Palace (another historically important Hotel in Lugano today converted into luxury apartments), and the remains of the convent and the cloisters, were decisive.

Via Nassa, connecting LAC to Piazza Riforma, in the city center, is not only a famous shopping street hosting many different shops, from jewellery and clothing to gastronomy, but also one of Lugano’s historical streets with ancient city porticoes.



Lost or just admiring the landscape?

The Lugano Station pedestrian tunnel, Besso Tunnel, is a very good example of a nonplace valorization thanks to the (S)guardo (“look” in Italian) Lugano project, an installation which aims to relate the public and the urban environment around them: they selected locally newspaper and coated the interior of the tunnel. From last summer, the Besso tunnel also hosts a

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new photographic installation: a series of large format portraits of people from all backgrounds, citizens, natives, foreigners lined up side by side as in an embrace, to raise awareness on issues of local or global interest on a crossroads of human relations.

Participants' efforts have been rewarded with an aperitif at Restaurant Lugano Ciani, located inside Parco Ciani. The Park is the green area of Lugano, near the city center and hosts century-old trees, flowerbeds, small squares, sculptures and fountains through the many paths. An area well appreciated by locals as well as by tourists, where many events take place during the year.

Useful links:

[Lugano Turismo](#)

[Foxtrail](#)

ONLINE SURVEY ON EXCHANGE STUDENTS SATISFACTION

About the survey

Each semester, students who have been studying at USI as part of a study abroad programme are asked to evaluate their time spent here. The main goal of this survey is to know the opinions of our guest students on the University, the city and the support offered by our service. Where possible and where necessary we will then implement improvements in order to maintain and develop the study abroad experience at our university.

In May students studying at the Lugano Campus during the Spring term 2017 were asked to complete an online survey regarding their exchange experience.

The response rate was slightly low: 26 respondents out of 62 incoming students. One possible explanation could be that SEMP students are requested to fill in the report in order to receive the last instalment of the scholarship, whereas incoming students participating in another mobility programme do not.

Demographics

Approximately 54% of the exchange students of the mentioned semester were females. The students came from 12 different countries with the majority coming from Finland, Germany and Italy. 15 studied at the Faculty of Economics, 6 at the Faculty of Communication Sciences and 5 at the Faculty of Informatics.

International Relations and Study Abroad service assistance

The International Centre is open to welcome students when they arrive, assist with questions, or find the appropriate person to answer a question. 88.4% of respondents evaluated as Excellent or Very Satisfactory the support provided by the International Relations Service. Here are some free comments:

“It is a worth it experience because it really helps you become so much independent and mature.”

“Living abroad is an experience that broaden one's perspective about different cultures and people and gives an idea of any future plans one might have regarding career, place to stay and so on.”

“Be prepared to study a lot at USI: in particular there are many group works to accomplish.”

Our Service offers several information materials for students looking to do a semester abroad in Lugano. Students rated the different resources

and here are the results: the most used mean of information is the website (www.usi.ch/relint), but also the Exchange students handbook and the reports of former USI incoming students were judged useful or very useful.

Studies

The survey gave 8 reasons to study abroad. The most chosen options are: 1. to live an international experience; 2. the willingness to live in a foreign country and to know a new culture; 3. for the courses offered at USI. The importance of this last aspect is also underlined by the answer given to the question: "How many ECTS credits did you foresee in your Learning agreement?" The average was 25 ECTS, which is very close to a full-time semester of 30 ECTS.

Aspects to improve

The most consistent areas of complaints are: the lack of academic information provided prior to arrival and the living costs. Students suggested that course lists and information given about exams should be available earlier for planning purposes. We will make efforts to improve this aspect.

As for the costs, the respondents indicated that in average they spent an additional amount of CHF 1343.50 compared to what they would normally spend in their home country. Unfortunately this is an aspect we cannot change, but be reminded that exchange students are eligible for numerous price concessions: they can opt for the student housing USIHOME, they can request the exemption from the Swiss health insurance, and if they come in the framework of the SEMP programme they receive a grant.

Conclusions

The main goal for the future is to extend the survey by including both incoming students at the Mendrisio Campus and outgoing students. This should increase the significance of the results.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Interested in studying abroad and want to know more?

The International Relations and Study Abroad Service offers two information sessions.

The first one will take place on **October 19 in the Auditorium from 12:30 until 13:30**: exchange programmes, partner universities, application procedures, entry requirements, scholarships, etc. will be presented. Our colleagues of the Career Service will present the SEMP scholarships and the Career Service Scholarship for International Placement. Other two special programmes will also be presented: Eurocampus, an intensive study semester in intercultural communication and ICE (Intercultural Communication and Economics, a new Bachelor specialization in the faculty of Economics and Communication Sciences). The brand new edition of the Study abroad guide will also be distributed. You will learn everything that you need to get the best from your study abroad experience.

In addition to this session, on **November 16 in the Aula Magna Foyer from 12:30 until 13:30** selected exchange universities will be present to meet with you. Host students spending a semester at USI in the framework of an exchange programme will represent their home universities. It will be the right occasion for asking specific questions and for picking up information materials.

Registration for the presentation and the fair is not required.



Two information sessions for students wishing to study abroad.



ICE: Intercultural Communication and Economics. A new Bachelor Specialization

A new opportunity is open for Bachelor students in the faculties of Communication Sciences and Economics. This new inter-Faculty track called Intercultural Communication and Economics (ICE) is in partnership with the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland.

The program is taught entirely in English and designed for third year Bachelor students to increase their insights into the challenges facing modern society. Students become well balanced individuals capable of understanding the economic, societal, and environmental impact of their decisions and gain key skills that will integrate international agility with a firm grounding in the local context.

Courses, workshops and other training activities put a premium on problem solving skills, intercultural competence and extramural exposure to professional work environments.

Students from USI receive a scholarship to participate in ICE and join students from Hanken School of Economics to study for a semester in Finland. All courses are recognized by both universities and included towards the USI bachelor's degree.

ICE is part of the World Challenges Program (WCP) at USI, a new initiative that brings together existing, emerging, and new research projects that address key societal issues from developing awareness among the next generation to new approaches to responsible consumption patterns and food production management.

Interested students can write to wcp@usi.ch or inquire at the International Relations and Study Abroad Service Office.

Welcome!

This semester USI welcomed 36 newly arrived exchange students in Lugano Campus and 23 in Mendrisio Campus at the Academy of Architecture. They will be studying at USI during the Fall Semester or the whole academic year 2017/18: 43 of them come from our European partner universities in the frame of the SEMP programme, 11 of them are involved in the International exchange programme, 4 students come from Switzerland and 1 is a free-mover student. We wish all of them a pleasant and successful semester at USI!



Group picture of the newly arrived students at USI main entrance.

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