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!

ERASMUS+ AND SWITZERLAND

The European Commission confirmed on February 26, 2014 that Switzerland will not be able to participate as a program country in Erasmus+ for the academic year 2014-2015, but only as a third country (partner country).

The position of USI

The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) highly values the partnerships and the successful collaborations of the past years with the European partner universities, and is working with the Swiss authorities to ensure the mobility of students for the upcoming academic year. Immediately after the EU decision, USI informed all European partner universities about the firm intention to provide on its own financial means to continue the exchange for both outgoing and incoming students, should it lack a contribution from the Swiss Confederation.

The feedbacks are so far very positive: they all appreciated this effort and are keen to continue the existing bilateral agreement.

In the meanwhile, an official request of funding has been submitted to the National Agency, ch Foundation.

We will of course keep you updated in the next editions of the newsletter.

All official documents and updated information are posted on our new informative webpage.

AUTUMN TERM 2014-15: QUICK FACTS

The selection process of USI outgoing students who will spend next Autumn Term abroad is completed.

More than 100 applications were submitted to the International Relations office. Applications were evaluated based on satisfying minimum requirements, in particular the transcript of records of the past exam sessions and the certificates of language.

The final result of the selection is the following: 23 students will spend a semester at another Swiss university, 60 will study at a partner university in Europe, 12 will be hosted at Nanyang Technical University in Singapore, 2 students will leave for US (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University), 2 students will enjoy a semester in Australia (University of Technology, Sydney), and 1 decided to organize his period of study on its own and go
to a university in Argentina as a freemover.

Unfortunately not all students could be accommodated according to the first choice university, because for some destinations the competition was tough.

**INCOMING STUDENTS SPRING TERM 2014**

In February 2014 we welcomed 37 students from 22 partner universities from all over the world, coming to USI for the Spring Term. We are also glad to announce that 3 students who came to Lugano for the Autumn Term 2013-14 have decided to extend their stay also to the Spring Term.

The welcome day officially opened with the lunch in the USI canteen together with the International Relations team, where the newcomers could taste a typical local menu. The session continued with some general and logistical information about studying at USI, as well as detailed explanation about the bureaucracy required by the City of Lugano and Canton Tessin for foreign students, followed by some more specific information about the different study programs, thanks to the availability of the course advisors. The USI SUPSI Sport Service closed the informative session by presenting the rich sport and leisure offer. The day concluded with a welcome aperitif at Back-to-Beck Bar, where we all had a chance to further get to know each other in a more informal atmosphere.

Furthermore, a number of social activities has been organized during the first weeks of classes, with the precious support of our intern Stefano Nussbaumer. It is worth mentioning the masked night at Rabadan, the most famous Carnival of Ticino, and the sledding in Splügen (a ski resort about 1 hour drive from Lugano) followed by the original Swiss cheese fondue. Few more activities will be offered throughout the semester, allowing students to discover new places.

Personal experiences and feedbacks of exchange students at USI are collected and published on our website

**NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS**

**AUSTRIA**, Technische Universität Wien, for the Faculty of Economics, only as of Spring Term 2015

**CZECH REPUBLIC**, Charles University, Prague, the existing agreement has been extended to the Faculty of Economics, both study levels.

**ENGLAND**, The University of Northumbria at Newcastle, for both teaching mobility and students at the Faculty of Communication Sciences (in particular Master in Media Management).

**FINLAND**, Hanken University, for the Faculty of Economics, at both study levels.

**FRANCE**, Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, the existing agreement has been extended also at master level for the Faculty of Economics.

**GERMANY**

Kühne University, Hamburg, for both the Faculty of Economics and Communication Sciences, only Master level.

Ulm University, Ulm, for the Faculty of Economics and both study levels.

Technische Universität Dresden, for the Academy of Architecture
We hope for fruitful and enriching collaborations and we look forward to welcoming new students in Lugano.

We remind you that the complete list of all partner universities is available on our website.

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**TESTIMONIAL**

Hi Lara, please tell us something about yourself.

“Hello. I am an Economics student, third year of Bachelor. During the 2013-14 fall semester I studied at Université Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne.”

Why did you decide to go on Erasmus?

“I would like not to miss out on anything that the student life has to offer; the Erasmus program allows to travel, to study in a different environment and to get acquainted with new cultures and new people. I am glad I decided to do it, and I highly recommend this experience to anyone else.”

Why did you choose to go to Paris and to Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne?

“Truth to be told, at first I wanted to go to a university in the United Kingdom; the problem was that at the time there were no exchanges programs possible with that area (they opened a spot about a week before the end of the program admission period); therefore, I decided to go to France because I wanted to improve my French skills. I chose Paris 1, after some changes of mind, for two main reasons: it is one of the oldest and most acknowledged schools in Europe, and it is the “academic home” of many people who left a mark in the history of mankind.”

Could you tell us which are the main differences that you have found between the French education system and the Swiss one?

“The Sorbonne is a much bigger school than USI is, so from time to time it lacks in organization, which could be a bit overwhelming at the beginning. There are so many other students there, it is not possible to be an entity separated from the others. Often there is a general lack of support material for the lessons, and attendance is more advised then it is at USI. Difficulty wise, the classes I took were similar at the one offered at USI in the required study level, although they were a bit more theoretical.”

What was the best thing about living in Paris?

“Paris is a city full of both multiculturalism and art, and often the two get intertwined. The constant inflow of tourists, the musicians in the metro, the marvellous buildings, the free access to almost all museums and a lot more make it a city peculiar and magical. Quoting Ernest Hemingway: “If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”

What do you remember the most about this experience?

“The great friends I met there and the heavenly taste of a egg-cheese-mushrooms crêpe.”

What would you say to the other USI students wishing to experience a semester abroad?

“Enjoy every tiny bit of it! The opportunity to participate to an exchange program is something that happens once in a lifetime; you will be able to meet amazing people from all around Europe/World and hopefully make some unforgettable memories. Good luck to you!”

Describe your experience in 3 keywords.

“Intense, fun, memorable.”

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Lara Karaca, bachelor student at the Faculty of Economics, explains her experience at Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne.
Ana Javornik, doctoral student and teaching assistant at USI, shares with us her experience of teaching mobility.

INTERVIEW: ANA JAVORNIK
We have interviewed Ana Javornik, doctoral student and teaching assistant at Institute of Marketing and Communication Management at USI, who spent few weeks at Kozminski University (Warsaw) and at University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) within the Erasmus teaching mobility framework.

Hi Ana, thank you for your availability and for sharing your experience with us. Please tell us something about yourself and your current position at USI.

“Thank you for the invitation to the interview, it is a pleasure to share my impressions from the mobility program with your audience. I come from Slovenia, a beautiful little country on the other side of Alps, and moved to Lugano in 2009 to pursue Master’s studies in Corporate communication at USI. The Master’s program was a great experience – it offered a high quality knowledge in communication and economics and the opportunity to meet really interesting people from all over the world. Immediately after graduation, I embarked on the exciting journey of doing a PhD at the Institute of Marketing and Communication Management, where I am currently a third year doctoral student. My research focuses on effects of digital communication on consumer behavior. I am also assisting Master’s and Bachelor’s classes in Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Digital Communication, Service Marketing and Marketing.”

We learned that you have done two teaching mobility experiences: one at Kozminski University in Warsaw, and one at the University of Ljubljana and we would love to hear your impression about both. So let’s start with Poland: why did you choose that particular university?

“The Kozminski International Office was looking for visiting lecturers from abroad and I came across their call through the International office at USI, which sent a mail about this opportunity. I contacted the International offices here at USI and at Kozminski and they were both very helpful with information, which certainly encouraged me in making the decision to take part in the program. Additionally, Kozminski University’s reputation is excellent; it has very good rankings and is generally one of the best business schools in Central and Eastern Europe. So there was the combination of institution’s excellence, friendly and professional communication all along the process and the chance to design and deliver my own seminar to the students. For a first-year PhD student, which I was at the time of application, that seemed like a great opportunity and I was in no way disappointed about it.”

How long did you stay and what did you do there precisely?

“I stayed in Warsaw for a week and delivered a 4-day seminar to an international class of their undergraduate students. The seminar focused on Marketing management and covered selected topics about marketing strategy. As I am in favor of an interactive teaching style, where the whole class participates, I also distributed them a class assignment, which they had to present on the last day in groups. That is a wonderful part of the class for both the teacher and the students – when the students can use the knowledge that the lecturer has delivered and apply it to concrete examples.

Throughout the class I also used a lot of video and visual material, because it is crucial in marketing to show and discuss concrete cases and campaigns. According to the feedback that I got from my teaching evaluation, they were very content with the class, which really meant a lot.”

How did you like Warsaw? Would you recommend it as a study destination?

“The city has certainly undergone processes of modernization in the last twenty years and thus represents an interesting mixture of rich history and...”
urban development. The old part of Warsaw is especially charming, with the old market place, the palace and its walls. The Polish cuisine does not disappoint, as it is diverse and tasty; my favorite pick was the traditional Polish apple pie, Szarlotka. Does it represent a good study destination? That of course always depends on one's expectations, but I am sure that for an open-minded person who is interested in getting to know more about Central and Eastern European culture, Warsaw would certainly be one of the top choices. And the University offers an international environment, which adds to the quality of the study exchange experience. Also, everyone I was in contact with spoke very good English.

And now, let's move to Slovenia. What did you do there and how did it differ from Warsaw?

“I was introduced to prof. Makovec Brenčič and prof. Žabkar from the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana through a common acquaintance and we talked about possibilities of collaborations. As they were interested in my work about digital marketing, they invited me for a visiting seminar. Again, it seemed like an exciting opportunity, especially because they are both very well-respected scholars in the marketing field. I prepared a set of lectures on Digital consumer behavior, which I delivered in both Slovenian and English in two different classes of undergraduate students.

This time, the focus was more on the newest trends in digital marketing, around which I based the class discussions. Unlike in Warsaw, there was no final classwork, but I made sure to have a lot of questions for the students, which stimulated the debate.

The very interesting part here was to deliver the same content in two different languages, which is a really stimulating practice for a lecturer. Additionally, the difference between the two classes in Ljubljana (one was composed of international and one of Slovenian students) brings out so many varying cultural aspects that the lecturer needs to take into account. The international class mentioned very diverse topics for discussion, as they knew different practices coming from such different backgrounds, while we could focus more on the local, Slovenian cases with the Slovenian students. A lecturer has to take such factors into account and adapt to them in order to deliver a good quality class experience and valuable knowledge to students.

In terms of the destination, I studied and worked in Ljubljana for 7 years, so the experience was certainly a different one, as I am so familiar with the place and I like it so much. But especially for that reason, it is a great feeling to lecture in the city where you have started your studies. Ljubljana is an adorable place to visit because of its combination of having basically everything that big cities have to offer and at the same time being very cozy due to its smaller size. I would certainly recommend it as a destination for a study exchange.”

What did you like most and least about the two different education system, also compared to the Swiss one?

“In Warsaw, I really liked the vibrant atmosphere of a younger and rising university, which strives for excellence. You can very much feel their motivation to do a great job with the research and teaching and their openness to new knowledge. Also, I was amazed how much the scholars from Kozminski collaborate with practitioners, to the extent that they are in constant contact with the companies, startups and so on. I could not sense a strong hierarchy, but only a general motivation of the academic community to do an excellent job with joint forces.

On the other hand, the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana is an already established institution with very good reputation and longer tradition, which is also a great advantage. It seemed very professional and clearly also
well organized. They also have a strong link with the business environment and encourage students to get involved in collaborations with companies or organizations outside the classroom through internships or project work and I think that is great.

How to compare it to the Swiss system? I would say that what defines an academic institution does not have to do so much with a class or a university being Slovenian, Polish, Swiss or any other, but is about it being international, open to other cultures and ideas and prepared to see research and teaching from different angles. If the university does not stick to its national boundaries and is curious about knowledge coming from abroad, the exchange of expertise and ideas definitely brings a value to it and enriches its national character, whichever that is.”

**Overall, do you recommend a teaching experience abroad to your colleagues? Was it enriching both for your professional and personal growth?**

“For someone who is interested in academic career and aspires to become a lecturer and a scholar, such experiences are without a doubt priceless. First of all, you have the ability to design your own seminar or set of lectures, so you are in charge, which sets a very different responsibility on you.

Secondly, exchanges always offer you opportunities to connect with people in your field. For instance, prof. Makovec Brenčič and prof. Žabkar from University of Ljubljana were wonderful to talk to, given their expertise in the area. Also, I had a chance to have a long debate with Prof. Mazurek at Kozminski University who is working in the field of Digital marketing, which was very insightful and interesting.

Thirdly, lecturing to audiences in different countries and of different cultural backgrounds is something that builds your cultural sensitivity, flexibility and ability to work in international environment, which is crucial for an academic career, as we tend to move around rather a lot.

Also, you are exposed to different institutional settings and have the opportunity to see distinctions and similarities between universities, which offers you the opportunity to reflect about academic environments.”

**DISCOVER TICINO: WALKING TO GANDRIA ON THE SENTIERO DELL’OLIVO**

We are slowly entering spring, and with the sun shyly appearing from behind the clouds, everyone is happy of spending few more hours outdoor, after the long and cold winter.

In this issue, we would like to suggest a very easy yet charming walk that will lead you from Lugano to a nearby small village. The path is called “Sentiero dell’Olivo” (Olive path) and the village is Gandria, known for the well-preserved historic center and the old houses perched on the shore of Lake Ceresio.

The path starts in Castagnola, some 200 meters beyond the beautiful Villa Heleneum, where the Museum for Extra European Cultures is located. The path runs for some 3 kilometers, through terraced areas covered with natural vegetation and well exposed to the sun, a condition particularly favorable to olive trees and other plants which thrive in warm dry soil and plenty of sunshine. Plants lovers will appreciate the Mediterranean characteristic of the species, from old olive trees, to green cypresses, bay trees, myrtle, pomegranate, as well as wild herbs like oregano, thyme, sage, and much more. The “Olivo di Carlin”, a very old olive tree 10 meters high with a 45cm
A typical path through the village

diameter to its trunk, is the king of the path.

The path is indicated with green signs, and offers explanatory panels along the way that illustrate the history of the olive trees, from its cultivation to the final products.

Once you reach Gandria, you will be amazed by the beauty and charm of this tiny little village, where cars are banned and the only noise you hear are the boats on the lake. A couple of small stores selling local food and art crafts as well as few restaurants on the lake welcome the many tourists that every year visit this unique place.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New rules concerning Summer Schools
The interest of USI students for Summer Schools or special programmes organized by partner universities is fast growing. This is the reason why the Faculty Councils of the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Communication Sciences decided to introduce new rules in the respective regulation for student mobility. In particular, students enrolled at the Faculty of Economics (both levels) can earn up to 6 ECTS points, whereas students enrolled at the Faculty of Communication Sciences can earn up to 9 ECTS points, with a maximum of 30 ECTS points obtainable through mobility programmes. These points are to be earned through course attendance and examination (or other assessment forms). Summer school offers are published on our website. The updated Regulations for Student Mobility are available here.

Meeting with International Relations team of Cracow University
On January 21, we had the pleasure to meet and welcome on Campus the team of the International Relations Office of the Cracow University, Ms. Magdalena Krasowska and Ms. Kasia Nycz, who were travelling through Switzerland and Germany to meet with other International Relations teams. Cracow University is not one of our partner universities, so this was a good opportunity to share information about the programs offered and discuss potential collaborations. After lunch, we walked our colleagues through the Lugano Campus, and explained them a bit more about student life in Lugano. We thank them for the visit and wish for future collaborations.

Prize giving event
In September 2013 the International Relations Office launched a photo contest for USI outgoing students. Under the title “Your host country // Your host university” students were asked to send a picture that represented either the host country or the host university. The three best photos will be awarded a prize. The prize giving will take place on May 22 in room 402 at 5pm. Look forward to seeing the terrific pictures? Join us at the event or don’t miss the June edition of our newsletter.

Meeting with Mirkkä Mättä Pescador from Uppsala University, Sweden
On Monday, March 31, we welcomed Ms. Mirkkä Mättä Pescador, from the International Relations Office of the Uppsala University, Sweden. This meeting gave us the opportunity to discuss our current partnership and to introduce her to our two students who have been nominated for Uppsala University for the Autumn Term 2014-15. Thank you for the visit!