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!

PAST AND FUTURE OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME

The month of April was crucial for the activities of our service.

The National Agency published the figures concerning the Erasmus programme in Switzerland for the year 2012/2013, comparing the results of the different Swiss universities. The numbers demonstrated the commitment of USI in strengthening the network of successful collaborations and in offering to its students the support in order to raise their international profile.

In the academic year 2012/2013 138 USI students participated in the Erasmus programme: 61 spent a study period abroad whereas 77 did a work placement in an enterprise in Europe. Since the official participation in the Erasmus programme (2011), USI has been the Swiss university which has obtained the highest number of this last type of scholarships. In the academic year 2012/2013 out of 272 students enrolled in a Swiss university who did an Erasmus internship, 77 (corresponding to 28%) were enrolled at USI.

From a financial point of view, the total of Erasmus grants paid to USI students doing an internship in a European country for the period 2011-June 2014 is almost 600,000 Euros. If we also consider the other type of Erasmus grants (mobility for study, teachers and staff mobility) the total amount for the same three-year period reaches Euro 845,800.

On the other hand, the Federal Council meeting on April 16 approved an Interim solution for Erasmus+ in 2014. The interim solution gives priority to mobility activities and is based on the principle that Switzerland wishes to regain full associate country status. For the academic year 2014/2015 the Erasmus+ programme is replaced by the Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP). The Swiss National Agency, ch Foundation, published the Grants for mobility for the academic year 2014-2015. The scheme of grants for mobility is now available here.
DOUBLE INTERVIEW: MARINA MARKOU (UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA, GREECE) AND CRISTINA SPINEDI (USI, FACULTY OF INFORMATICS)

Enjoy the double interview of Marina Markou and Cristina Spinedi. Marina works at the University of Ioannina, Greece, within the Biological Application and Technologies Department. She decided to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Lifelong Learning Programme and came to USI to spend a one-week training with the colleagues at the Faculty of Informatics. Cristina Spinedi and the administrative team welcomed Marina during the week of May 5-9, 2014 and involved her in the daily activities of the Faculty.

The program was rich and intense: Marina had the opportunity to visit the campus, understand how USI is organized, and dive in a bit more in the different activities of the office such as marketing, quality control, administrative tasks, accounting, IT and student affairs as applications, enrollments and graduation, just to name a few.

But let’s hear from them a bit more about this week and about how this experience has enriched them.

Marina, Cristina, please tell us something about yourselves.

Marina: “I was born in Florina, Greece. I have a degree in Physics and a Master’s and a Doctorate degree in Meteorology and Climatology. Since 2002, I have been working with administrative tasks at the University of Ioannina, Greece.”

Cristina: “I graduated from the University of Fribourg with a degree in Economics and Social Sciences in 1996. After one year of employment in a company operating in the maritime sector, I assumed the position of marketing assistant at a computer company active throughout Switzerland, for the next 8 years I served as the marketing manager. I began working at the Faculty of Informatics at USI in 2006 as responsible of the Dean’s office just two years after its foundation. The opportunity to take part in the creation of the structure of the Dean’s office was and is a challenging adventure. I am married and mother of two little girls. In my spare time, I like to volunteer as an instructor of rescue courses at the SSSL (Swiss Lifesaving Society of Lugano).”

Marina, why did you choose USI for this experience?

“I had the opportunity to visit USI Università della Svizzera italiana last year. During this visit, I met Ms. Elisa Larghi, who works in the Dean’s Office at the Faculty of Informatics; she was very helpful in explaining to me the duties of the staff at the office, which matched my duties at Ioannina. Additionally, Lugano is really beautiful, pedestrian friendly, and has a very well organized local and wider-area transportation network.”

Marina, what were the three highlights of spending one week in a different team?

“The three highlights for me were experiencing well-organized and simple office practices and procedures, meeting and interacting with new colleagues while enjoying the cultural differences, and last but not least practicing my English and learning some basic Italian word and phrases.”

Cristina, what were the three highlights of hosting a colleague from a different university?

“If we want to summarize in three key terms the highlights of this exchange experience, I would say: internationality, organization and friendship.

In addition to being the official language and teaching of the Faculty of Informatics, English is a part of our daily lives, it acts as a glue and a cultural bridge. And it is mainly thanks to it that this experience of exchange could be accomplished and materialized.
What struck me the most in this exchange was to find out how political and cultural aspects influence the organizational structure and decision-making process in the university’s department where Marina works. Despite having the knowledge, but all in all fragmentary, about the cultural differences of our two countries, as we share our internal processes these obvious structural differences clearly emerged.

We shared 5 days of training together, but also had the opportunity to exchange personal experiences. Certain topics we talked about such as the reciprocal schooling route, the family, the working environment and everyday life in our own country have topped this experience to create a bond of friendship.”

What do you both think is the added value of doing such an experience?

**Marina:** “For me, it is to compare the different ways of carrying out procedures in the office here in USI and in Ioannina, pinpoint the good elements of each side, and try to combine them in order to achieve a more effective and more simplified way of doing things.”

**Cristina:** “Speaking of Erasmus it comes immediately evident in our mind about the student exchange programme. The “Lifelong Learning Programme” is an excellent opportunity offered and available also to administrative staff. Perhaps even more in the professional life, where often the knowledge is somehow “frozen” in static processes, this kind of exchange represents a stimulus for questioning, analyzing and, if necessary, revolutionizing the way we work to offer an even better service.”

**Marina, do you feel you will be able to apply what you have learned here, in your daily job?**

“During my visit, I have learnt many things about the administrative procedures in USI. In Ioannina, many of these procedures are more complicated and more time-consuming, but they are not easy to change as they need to follow guidelines set by the Greek government (currently there is an effort to reduce bureaucracy in Greece, so we may soon have simpler procedures). However, there are cases where procedures can be made more efficient. Student certificates is an example; printing such certificates can be automated both improving the quality of service as well as enabling me to devote more of my time to more subtle administrative issues.”

**Cristina, what did you learn from Marina that you may implement with the team?**

“The week program was full of issues treated in a shared manner. Marina could therefore benefit from spending time in the front and back office collaborating with all the members of the Dean’s Office of Informatics team (Elisa Larghi, Diana Corica, Danijela Milicevic and myself). To sum up this experience I have gathered feedback from the team and have detected several suggestions for improvement. Some of them have been identified thanks to this sharing experience: it has also enabled us to convey details about our processes, and identify areas for improvement.”

**PHOTO CONTEST**

In the beginning of the Winter Term 2013/2014 we have challenged our outgoing students with a photo contest. Under the title “Your host country // Your host university”, the students were asked to send us a picture representing at best their semester abroad. An internal jury then selected the three winners, who were celebrated with an official ceremony and apero on May 22, 2014. This was also a good occasion for greeting goodbye to our incoming students, as their time in Lugano and at USI is almost over.
The winners of the photo contest are:

**Myrta Zemp**, Master in Marketing, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

**Fabrizio Bertoni**, Master in Management, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

**Mario Schuler**, Master in Corporate Communication, University of Sydney, Australia

We congratulate the winners and thank all those who have participated.

**DISCOVER TICINO: THE MUGGIO VALLEY**

The Muggio Valley, lying between the slopes of Monte Generoso and Monte Bisbino, is the southernmost valley of Ticino and of Switzerland. The typical prealpine landscape, the unspoilt surroundings as well as the fauna and flora are a tourist attraction in itself. But an added interest for an excursion in the valley is represented by the various activities offered by the Association of the Ethnographic Museum Valle di Muggio (MEVM). The main goal of the Association, active since 1982, is the preservation of the rich rural heritage of the region.

The Association created the Museo Etnografico della Valle di Muggio, that is characterised by a different approach: it can be considered an open-air museum. The information centre at the Casa Cantoni in Cabbio offers exhibitions, but it is worth while to visit the surroundings. Among the other activities, MEVM has, for instance, promoted the restoration of rural functional buildings (the “Nevèra”, a typical icehouse used in the past by local farmers to keep milk cool; the “Graa”, a building for drying chestnuts; the “Roccolo”, a tower for catching birds, and the Bruzella mill that produces the typical red corn polenta).

In recognition of the achievements, the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation awarded the Swiss Landscape Award 2014 to the Museum of the Muggio Valley.

More information about this destination and how to get there:

Museo Etnografico della Valle di Muggio (MEVM)
Casa Cantoni
6838 Cabbio
www.mevm.ch
Mendrisiotto Tourism: http://www.mendrisiottoturismo.ch

**IRUS MEETING AT EPFL**

As announced in the edition n. 3 of our newsletter, on April 10, the Spring IRUS meeting took place at EPFL. After the official welcome addressed by Prof. Morgenthaler, Dean of International Relations, the participants started to discuss about the interim solution for Erasmus+, which has been the main topic for the Swiss IR offices in the last three months. One of the main results of the meeting was the proposal to organize a session entitled “Switzerland not without Europeans!”, in occasion of the EAIE 2014 in Prague. Details about this event can be found here.
SWISS GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 1961 the Swiss Government, through the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS), offers scholarships to young talented researchers. These scholarships are offered to postgraduate researchers wishing to undertake a doctoral or postdoctoral research, with the main objective to foster academic mobility while enabling the best young researchers from all over the world to interact with their Swiss counterparts. All relevant information regarding eligibility criteria and the application procedure can be found on the FCS web-site: www.sbfi.admin.ch/scholarships_eng.

The FCS representatives for Università della Svizzera italiana are Prof. Michael Gibbert, member of the commission in charge of the final selection of the scholarship holders and Dr. Arianna Imberti Dosi, head of the reception service. The final selection of candidates for the academic year 2014/2015 ended last May. USI will host three foreign scholars, namely:

- Mr. Machado Mendizabal Odorico, from Brasil, supervised by Prof. F. Pedone, Faculty of Informatics;
- Dr. Murale Venugopalan, from India, supervised by Prof. M. Gibbert, Faculty of Communication Sciences;
- Dr. Ndivo Rayvisic Mutinda, from Kenya, supervised by Prof. L. Cantoni, Faculty of Communication Sciences.

Moreover, the reception service will also be in charge of Swiss Scholarship holders hosted by other important research and study institutions in Ticino: an Italian candidate will study at Scuola Dimitri, 2 artists (one from Italy and one from Russia) will study at Conservatorio, 1 researcher from Cuba will be hosted at IOSI (Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland) and another from China will pursue her research at IOR (Institute of Oncology Research).

USI considers that this scholarship programme is a crucial instrument in order to offer favourable conditions and opportunities for research, in particular, to students from developing countries and emerging economies. The USI General Secretary decided to reward the USI supervisors with a contribution of Sfr. 5,000 in the form of a research incentive.

The next offer for the academic year 2015/2016 will be online from August 2014.

In order to have a tangible feedback about the programme, take few minutes to read through the testimonial of Dr. Giulia Miniero, a current Swiss Scholarship holder at the Faculty of Communication Sciences.

Giulia Miniero please tell us something about yourself.

“I am a post doctoral researcher at USI in the Institute of Marketing and Communication, thanks to the Swiss Confederation Excellence in Research Scholarship. I took my PhD at Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) where I also took my master.”

How did you learn about the Swiss Scholarship programme?

“I learned about the scholarship from my supervisor, Michael Gibbert, and by looking at the international research opportunities offered within EU. The scholarship was mentioned as one of the most interesting opportunity for a post doctoral researchers that want to spend a year in a different country.”

Dr. Giulia Miniero, Swiss Scholarship holder at USI.
**Which are your main research interests?**

“My research interests are in consumer behavior, specifically I study how individuals process information and make decisions. With reference to the project funded by the scholarship I am trying to understand how consumers cope with frustrating consumption experiences by writing their emotions and feelings.”

**Could you briefly describe the added value of your studies in Switzerland for you academic curriculum as well as your future career.**

“Studying in Switzerland has opened up my academic network by giving me the opportunity of experiencing a different professional environment. More in details, USI represents a unique combination of expertise in both marketing and communication thus participating to seminars, sharing research ideas and interacting with the faculty members and the doctoral students has been incredibly insightful and inspiring for my research.”

**Sum up your experience at USI with the status of Swiss Scholarship holder in three words.**

“Inspiring, prolific, exciting.”

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Testimonial**

Max von Bülow, one of our incoming students during the academic year 2012/2013, has recently been featured on the [LMU Blog Medieninformatik](#). He was asked to share his experience in terms of preparation for the semester abroad, arrival at host university, courses and other academic activities at USI as well as social life in Ticino and surroundings. His nice words are accompanied by beautiful pictures taken during his stay. We thank him warmly for taking the time to write about us!

Reached by e-mail, he confirms that he still misses Lugano a lot. We hope to see him here in his free time! You can read the full interview [here](#).

**Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) ranked 13th worldwide in the top universities under 50 years old**

Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) is in 13th position worldwide, 7th in Europe and 1st in Spain in the recently released “100 Under 50” ranking, a list of the top 100 universities in the world under 50 years old.

We congratulate our partner university for this achievement and look forward to continuing our successful collaboration.

**Farewell to our intern Stefano Nussbaumer**

Tuesday, June 3 was the last day of internship at the International Relations Office for our intern Stefano.

Stefano worked both at the International Relations and Study-abroad office at the Lugano Campus and at the Administrative Office at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio. The two teams would like to thank him once more for his help and support during the past ten months and wish him all the best for his future professional challenges!