



Università
della
Svizzera
italiana

THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS NEWSLETTER “COME AND GO”

N.6 – 10.2014

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!

CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE TEAM

As of October 1, 2014, Sara Fedele is the new collaborator at the International Relations Office. Sara has taken on the duties of Ilaria Juon, who rejoins the EMScom team full time. Sara joined USI Università della Svizzera italiana in 2012, as Marketing Manager at the Executive Master of Science in Communications Management (EMScom), where she still works part time. We welcome her warmly and we thank Ilaria for her precious work during the past one and half year.

“I am happy to start this new adventure and be part of the International Relations and Study-abroad office team. Also, I thank USI for the opportunity to discover and operate in a crucial department within this organization, and further develop my knowledge in this field. I hope the experience I gained so far will be helpful and useful for the purposes of the organization.”



A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR HAS BEGUN

A new academic year has just begun, and new exchange students from all over the world have arrived at USI. This September, we welcomed 35 students in Lugano and 40 in Mendrisio as part of the different exchange programmes, namely the SEMP (Swiss European Mobility Programme), the Swiss Mobility and the International agreements programme. These students, who come from different countries – such as Germany, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, UK, Spain, Portugal, but also from Switzerland, U.S. and many others –, will spend a semester or a whole year at USI.

Even if the two campuses are quite distant from one another, the Lugano



A moment during the welcome day at Lugano Campus, September 11, 2014

and Mendrisio teams work constantly together, in order to offer similar opportunities to their respective students.

An Orientation Day has been organized on the two campuses. In Mendrisio, it was held on September 3: the International Relations team welcomed the exchange students and explained the first important administrative steps to be undertaken in Switzerland. These procedures are probably well known by people already living in Switzerland, but it must be said that it may be quite confusing for someone who comes from another country. First duty, then pleasure: after the administrative aspects, the USI team organized a Welcome Drink.

Similarly, the Orientation Day was held in Lugano on September 11. The students and the staff firstly had the chance to taste the typical Ticinese dish “polenta and spezzatino” at USI Canteen. In the second part of the day, several USI services were present to assist the students: study advisors of the different study programmes answered students’ questions regarding the courses; the USI/SUPSI Sport Service presented its offer for the year, (if interested: www.sport.usi.ch); the [ESN Lugano](#) illustrated the wide range of activities, such as parties and trips in Ticino and in Switzerland. The day ended with a guided tour of the campus organised in cooperation with the Advisory service.

As a matter of facts, these two days followed the rich array of cultural and social activities offered in the framework of the intensive Italian courses, which took place both in Lugano and Mendrisio few weeks before the beginning of the semester. In Lugano, the students went on a guided tour of the city, visited an exhibition on Hans Richter and watched together the multi-awarded Italian movie “La vita è bella”. In Mendrisio, students visited the Art Museum dedicated to Antonio Croci – an architect who was born in Mendrisio in 1823 – and his famous work, the Casa Croci, an unusual building built as a home. The Italian course itself has certainly been a good chance for students to get closer to the local culture.

The next event is a one-day trip to Bellinzona, the capital of Ticino, on October 18. This medieval city is well-known for the three historical castles protected by the UNESCO, and the traditional Saturday market, established centuries ago.

The academic year has just begun, and we wish everyone – students, professors, and collaborators – a successful autumn term.

TWO INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR USI STUDENTS WISHING TO SPEND A PERIOD ABROAD

The International Relations and Study-abroad office is pleased to announce that two information sessions for USI students interested in studying abroad during the academic year 2015-2016 will take place in Lugano on:

Thursday, October 23, 2014, Auditorium, 12:30-13:30: Information Session. Exchange programmes, partner universities, application procedures, entry requirements, etc. will be presented. Our colleagues of the Career Service will present the SEMP scholarships and the Career Service Scholarship for International Placement. The brand new edition of the Study-abroad guide will also be distributed.

Monday, November 10, 2014, Aula Magna Foyer, 12:30-13:30: International Fair. 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.



The International Fair 2013

STUDY TRIP IN INDIA

We are very pleased to publish the report of Wessel Steenhuis, a student at the Delft University of Technology who spent the Spring Term 2014 as an exchange student at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio. Wessel had the chance to visit India in the framework of the design studio run by prof. Jain. The study curriculum at the Academy is built on the integration of practical work within the design studios with technical-scientific courses which explore contemporary problems and historical-humanistic courses investigating historical, artistic, philosophical, critical and sociological issues.

And now, please enjoy reading about Wessel's trip.

“Being part of design studio Jain, I travelled together with the rest of the studio to India during the spring semester of 2014. The trip was focused on water, the central theme of the studio. Since water plays an important role in the spiritual life on India, the country contains a lot of interesting and beautiful structures devoted to the theme. During the trip we visited inter alia step wells; constructions of sometimes multiple floors located under the ground, richly decorated and completely devoted to water. Next to these works, we also visited key-projects by Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Balkrishna Doshi. Also buildings by our professor Bijoy Jain, head of Indian architecture office Studio Mumbai, were part of the program.

The relative short period of stay and the busy program made the trip nicely chaotic, a description that also fits the country. Being with a group of more than twenty people, every day was a new challenge. This sometimes resulted in missing persons in the busy Indian traffic, but it was mostly a source for rich experiences. In the end we travelled on foot, with buses, tuktuks, trains and other types of transportations through the varied region around Mumbai, visiting towns as Ahmedabad, Alibag, Udaipur and off course Mumbai. Experiencing the Indian life just by moving around, but also through the delicious food, the rich culture and especially the very friendly people. The broad knowledge of Bijoy Jain and local guides about the history, architecture and culture of the country gave the trip extra depth, and also showed us India from the eyes of her inhabitants.

Altogether, the trip was a very rich experience. The good atmosphere within the group, the interesting program and the fascinating country made it very pleasant.”

TESTIMONIAL

Valerio Pianezza, USI Alumnus, Master in Management and Informatics, has received an Erasmus Mobility for Placement grant (www.careerservice.usi.ch) that allowed him to do an internship at Support Service Group (Swindon, UK).

Let's hear from him about his experience, and thank you Valerio for your availability.

Hi Valerio, thank you for accepting our invitation for this interview. Please tell us something about yourself.

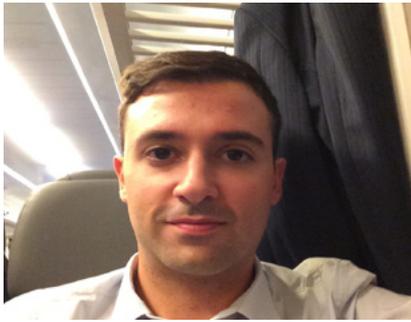
“I made my Bachelor in Business & Management in Torino, taught entirely in English. After it, I moved to Lugano to continue my studies with the Master in Management & Informatics. I particularly appreciated its internationality and its multi-disciplinarity. During my Master, I participated to the Career Forum organised by the great Career Service and I got an internship opportunity in England. Always thanks to the Career Service, I obtained a full time job in Syngenta, Basel.”



The Banganga Tank in Mumbai



Sun Temple in Modhera



Valerio Pianezza, USI Alumnus, Master in Management and Informatics

“Go for it. It can only improve your cultural background and give you higher chances when you knock at the door of the job market.”

Why did you choose England?

“At that time, my main objective was to find an internship, possibly in Switzerland, in order to gain some basic professional experience. However, I was open to any opportunity showing up and I took it. England, this case.”

What was the internship about? Please describe a typical day at the office.

“The company where I made my internship and wrote my thesis provided security services throughout all the UK, mainly manned guarding. As an example of one of my tasks, I operationally managed the labor force (security officers) and allocated them according to clients’ request. Another function I had was the overview and control over the cash flow coming into the company. Plus, I had to ensure that the process, from the issue of the invoice to the payment, was smooth. Generally speaking, the internship consisted of a job rotation, meaning a horizontal moving among departments of the organisation every 3-6 weeks. During my experience of five months, I worked in three different positions. A typical day at the office looked like this: beginning at 9, quick “warm up” practices before starting (computer and coffee), work until 13-14, lunch break and then again working until 17:30.”

How was the working environment?

“It was a very young environment. There were at least other 12 interns more or less my age (24), coming from other universities across Europe. In fact, it was also very international.”

Do you think such an experience will help you in your future career path?

“I can say that this experience helped me in my career path. When I got my current job, this UK experience played a fundamental role in the recruitment process, in terms of CV and language improvements.”

In which way has this period abroad enriched you, both professionally and personally?

“From a professional point of view, it sharply improved my English skills and my capability to deal with tasks and to organise them in a more efficient and effective way. Personally, an experience abroad has always a positive impact on your mentality. It helps you to understand that diversity doesn’t mean only differences, but also unity with other people who don’t share your cultural background. It teaches you to be flexible and open and on top of that, you can learn a lot out of it.”

What did you like most about this experience?

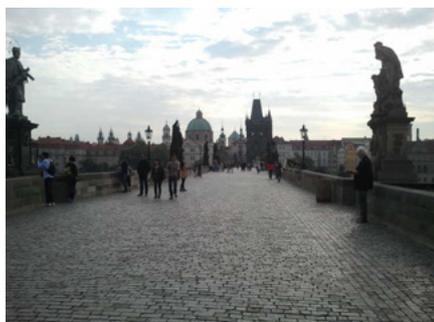
“The daily contact with British people. And donuts, of course!”

What would you say to other USI students wishing to benefit from this kind of grants?

“Go for it. It can only improve your cultural background and give you higher chances when you knock at the door of the job market.”

Please describe your experience in 3 keywords

“International, formative, enriching.”



Charles Bridge, Prague

THE 26TH ANNUAL EAIE CONFERENCE

Arianna Imberti Dosi and Fabiana Bernasconi attended the 26th Annual European Association for International Education (EAIE) Conference (www.eaie.org) that took place in Prague on September 16-19. The theme of the 2014 edition was “Stepping into a new era” and brought together more than 5000 higher education professionals from 90 countries. As in the previous editions, the event offered a lot of activities: campus tours, workshops, sessions and networking events. The Swiss delegation, together with representatives of selected partner universities, were invited by the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Markus-Alexander Antonietti to a reception at the beautiful Swiss residence. This was a special opportunity to meet colleagues from partner universities in a relaxed atmosphere, but also to explore the possibilities for new collaborations. USI had the chance to promote itself thanks to the Swiss higher education booth hosted at the exhibition. In addition, Arianna Imberti Dosi seized the opportunity of this trip to meet one of USI outgoing students, Fulvio Dal Castello (MEPIN, Master in Economia e Politiche Internazionali), who just started his exchange semester at Charles University Prague.

To sum up, the EAIE Conference is a key event for sharing knowledge, gaining innovative ideas and fostering new partnerships for professionals in the field of education.

DISCOVER TICINO: CORIPPO, THE SMALLEST VILLAGE IN SWITZERLAND



The stone houses typical of the region (courtesy of www.corippo.ch)

In this issue we would like to present a very special place located in the breath-taking Verzasca Valley: Corippo, the smallest village in Switzerland.

Corippo, is indeed the smallest municipality, counting only 12 inhabitants. Despite its small size, Corippo possesses everything a town needs: an official website, a coat of arms, a church, a restaurant and a mayor who coordinates the town council, composed of three citizens. For the time being, the village maintains its own independency, but it may merge with bigger villages of the valley in the near future.

The houses are built from granite excavated from local quarries preserving an architectural style that has been in place for several hundred years. For this reason, the village was placed under a conservation project, and in 1975 it was named “an exemplary model for historical preservation” by the European Architectural Heritage Congress.

The Italian writer Piero Bianconi described Corippo as “Verzasca’s gentlest village”, and everyone visiting this unique place can only agree with this statement. Nowadays, Corippo is a gem to be discovered within the Verzasca Valley and beyond its more famous places such as the Verzasca Dam, Lavertezzo and Sonogno.

How to reach Corippo

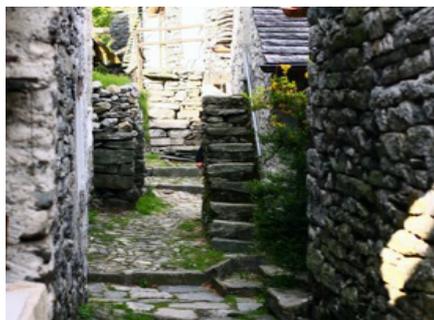
By car: from Riazzino, follow the signs to the Valle Verzasca. Keep driving past the Verzasca Dam; after the lake you will see a sign to the left indicating the village of Corippo.

By public transportation: take the train to Riazzino then the Autopostale (yellow bus) to Valle Verzasca. From the crossroad after the lake you will need to walk for approx. 20-25 min.

Useful links:

Official Corippo website: www.corippo.ch

Official Swiss Railway System website: www.sbb.ch



A narrow path in the village (courtesy of www.corippo.ch)

Autopostale: www.postauto.ch

Ascona-Locarno tourist office: www.ascona-locarno.com

Trivia

In 2009, Corippo has been the main site for the movie shooting “La valle delle ombre” by Mihály Györik.

The Verzasca Dam has been the setting for some scenes in the James Bond film “Goldeneye” starring Pierce Brosnan. Following the fame of the movie, bungee jumping lovers can experience the ultimate adrenaline rush at the dam: the 220 m high jump is also called 007 jump or GoldenEye Bungee Jump.

In the past century, the village of Sonogno (and generally speaking the whole valley), has experienced a heavy flow of emigration to the US. This is the reason why, still in our days, it is possible to find the particular breed of goats “Nera di Verzasca” also in California and in other parts of the US. The [Museo della Verzasca](#) and a wine bar both located in Sonogno are the right places to discover more about the past and present of this beautiful place.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Staff week

During the week of September 22-26 the teams of several USI services hosted a colleague from the Università degli Studi di Milano. Mr. Ambrogio Ghiringhelli, Administrative Responsible at the Department of International, Legal, Historical and Political Studies, decided to profit of the opportunity offered by the Lifelong Learning Programme and came to USI to spend a one-week training. In particular, he expressed the desire to get involved in the daily activities of four services, namely: the International Relations and Study-abroad office, the Career Service, the Quality Service and the USI/SUPSI Research Service. Both Mr. Ghiringhelli and the USI colleagues agreed that this kind of activity is highly beneficial not only for the guest but also for the staff members of the hosting university.

Interim solution will be pursued in 2015 and 2016

The Swiss Federal Council announced on September 19 that the interim solution for Switzerland’s involvement in the European education programme “Erasmus+“, will be pursued in 2015 and 2016 unless Switzerland’s status in the programme changes. This interim solution has been put into place for 2014, after the suspension of negotiations on Swiss participation in Erasmus+ in February 2014. Priority is given to mobility (key action 1) in school education, vocational education, higher education, adult education and youth. As stated in the official communication, “for the higher education sector the main features are:

- Swiss higher education institutions (HEIs) can apply for Swiss funding of outgoing and incoming mobility activities (key action 1) with any Erasmus+ programme country;
- These activities include all types of mobility (for study or traineeships, for teachers and staff). Traineeships in Switzerland can only be funded if they are coordinated by a Swiss HEI;
- Student mobility for studies and staff mobility for teaching are based on inter-institutional agreements between Swiss and European HEIs;
- In 2014, the amount awarded to students coming to Switzerland for study purposes is between CHF 360 and CHF 420 (approx. EUR 300-350), for traineeships CHF 420 (approx. EUR 350). The amount for 2015 and 2016 has not yet been set.” More information: www.ch-go.ch



“The Swiss Federal Council announced that the interim solution will be pursued in 2015 and 2016”
