

# ERASMUS @ Switzerland

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(Activity report)

**Abstract**—Life in ERASMUS is a unique experience, full of activities that can be completely new; once in a life time chances and you don't want to miss one. I decided to go for the beauty of Switzerland and a top of the list university, even if this would mean living under a very restricted budget and not having the usual 24/7 party environment that is possible at some other destinations. Nevertheless the experience didn't fall short on any aspect. An active and diversified social life; very interesting courses and projects; trips around central Europe and visits from friends and family; the Portuguese culture on one hand and the Swiss on the other; Winter sports and classic football matches. I made the best out of every minute spent there, with new friends and old friends and difficult decisions on what to do and where to be every single day.

*Not really an ABSTRACT of the document*

**Index Terms**—Independent Studies, ERASMUS, Switzerland, EPFL, Lausanne, Studying abroad, activities.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*Did not*  
BACK in February 2013, ERASMUS was a completely new possibility in my future planning agenda. A couple of months before I had prepared a quite demanding application to a master program at Oxford and as I got turned down my focus was on the chance to pursue this degree at IST. When the applications for ERASMUS opened I got the generic e-mail from the International Relations Office and just thought: "Why not?". As I was browsing the list of possible universities I realized how little I knew about universities outside the UK. I had the ambition to study there because of my fondness for the British culture, something that I must have developed back in the days when I studied at the Queen Elizabeth School in Lisbon. I didn't like the idea of a french speaking country (part of it at least) but all courses were in English and the campus looked as amazing as the reputation. I applied to EPFL as a first choice and that's where I would study the following semester. The moment I got the

*punctuation!*

admission letter my life changed. Study plans, search for a place to stay, book flights... and this was only a preparation to what was expecting me in Lausanne.

## 2 ENVIRONMENT

"Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected."  
-Steve Jobs

Talking about my ERASMUS adventures without giving a context would be to propose you to watch a silent, black and white, low-res movie. Let me introduce you to the sounds and colors and details of this fantastic place where I spent the most thrilling 6 months of my life.

### 2.1 Lausanne

*it is* **DO NOT USE CONTRACTIONS!**  
Even if it's the fourth biggest city in Switzerland, Lausanne has only around 130.000 inhabitants and a lot of these are students and young employees. Placed in a steep side of a hill, the gothic cathedral and its surroundings face the beautiful lake Léman and the majestic Swiss alps. The town is very friendly, filled with shops, restaurants and pubs. Every one cares about their life only and you can be whatever you want as long as you respect the others and the rules. Everything is really

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(1.0) Excelent (0.8) Very Good (0.6) Good (0.4) Fair (0.2) Weak	ACTIVITY					DOCUMENT						
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Figure 1. Lausanne

expensive and expectations are really high on everything. Everyone is helpful and everything works, looks good and matters. Unemployed portuguese architects do just fine around here. The rules are strict and the social pressure will make you fall into place before you need to be warn by any authority . Things work, things work really well. A train or a bus will take you anywhere, fast and with no delays, with quality, just like any other Swiss service. The place and the people and the spirit inspire you to always think big and think good.

## 2.2 École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)

EPFL is one of the best universities in the world in Engineering and was already considered the best in Europe in fields such as the one I'm studying, Computer Science. With around 7000 students it's a bit smaller than Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) in absolute numbers but the percentage of international students and staff per student is much higher. The campus is fantastic, always full of life, with intelligent cars wandering around, people playing ping pong with negative temperatures outside, Tesla cars being tested, drones flying around, a food market in the main patio... and by the end of the day people head to a stylish pub called Satellite, on the top of the central building, and have a beer all together. The labs are amazing and all the professors and teaching assistants are very dedicated to their students and classes.



Figure 2. Rolex Building @ EPFL

The exilibris of EPFL is its newest building, the Rolex center, a fantastic piece of architecture with all its walls made of glass, allowing the special light from the lake to come in and the students and researchers to work with a marvelous view. I had the luck of having my thesis coordinator working there, on a fantastic office with an open-space full of international brilliant minds and a contagious motivation. The CS building is also a very recent one, with a big atrium on the center where you can see everything that's going on. All the classroom and offices and server rooms' walls are made of glass giving it a very unique and dynamic look. Up on the last floor, a big bar and cafeteria with a huge balcony from where you can see the alps filled with snow, is the best place to dwell on the most profound insights. Walking a bit away from campus, in the direction of the lake, is the famous Dorigny sport center. There you can play all kinds of sports for free if you're university student or staff. I find it hard to play football there because it's impossible not to be distracted by the mesmerizing surroundings. If I never make it to a British or an American university in my life, EPFL was a fantastic close call not only academically but also for the whole environment.

## 2.3 Zenith

Zenith is the name of the student's residence I lived in while studying abroad. It was the only residence I wanted because it's the furthest one from the university and downtown (out of 10),



Figure 3. Zenith Room 216

located in a vineyard just outside a charming little town by the lake named Morges. The building is part of a professional high-school campus that has a focus on agriculture studies. It's quite old and takes in high-school students, undergraduates and graduates and even some people already working (like the opera singer that woke me up every now and again with her morning practice). The bathrooms were shared and so was the kitchen. Around 50 completely different people, coming from all corners of the world, under the same roof. Room 216 was where I set grounds. The room was really small and took nothing more than a bed, a table and a chair, a wardrobe, a sink and a big window to a common balcony with a partial view of the beautiful lake Léman.

### 3 PLANNING NO PLANS

*"Failing to plan is planning to fail."* - Alan Lakein

One of the most important activities in this whole experience was to deal with all the logistics involved. Living in Switzerland can be a lot cheaper if we plan ahead and purchase the right discount cards. I've always enjoyed



Figure 4. Zenith Room 216 view

improvisation and the single idea of having to plan all the details of my trips takes a lot of my motivation away but this time around had to be different. If I wanted to have no plans on some things I had to plan carefully some others, otherwise I'd be going home, broke, after one month or so. I was only staying for the first semester mainly because of the financial restrictions (the scholarship provided is not enough to last one month and would be only transferred later in 2014) but even one semester was a challenge.

The flights were quite easy to book because I did it with anticipation and the big immigrant community there is synonym of lots of flights in and out of Geneva (40 minutes away by train from Morges). Finding a place to stay was a completely different story. With 6 months of anticipation I subscribed to FMEL, a foundation to accommodate students there, but by then all the places were already taken. I heard of students living in the camping park so this was a really big problem. I got an offer to go to Zenith one day before my departure and by then some other Portuguese students were already in Lausanne looking for apartments to rent together. I was relieved even if this meant I'd be staying half an hour away from the university and a bit more from Lausanne downtown. The procedure to take the room was really complicated, with contracts and a huge amount of money for security deposit and the first rent payments. This small, prison-like cubicle was as expensive as a small flat in central Lisbon but I had to take it. By the time



I had my room I was going bankrupt on the transportation chapter so I had to do something about it quickly. After getting my things to the residence I went to the railway station and bought an expensive but vital transportation card for both trains and buses. Two trips in the Lusanne metropolitan area was about the transportation budget for a month back home. After this I still had to get fidelization contracts on a bank, a telecom operator and a supermarket chain. Everyone was sharing a lot of information on this in Facebook groups and mailing lists so eventually all students were able to live with quite acceptable budgets but it was not an easy task at all. As the semester went by I established my routines. Post office first Monday of every month to pay the bills and withdraw cash, supermarket every Tuesday afternoon to buy groceries for the whole week, Skype calls Wednesday night, do the laundry every Wednesday evening and cook three times a week enough food for that day and the next. A crash course on being a housewife with real life examinations every day. A bad mark would be eating breakfast food for dinner or wearing stained clothes out. A good mark would make just another day but felt quite good.

## 4 EDUCATION

*"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."* - Sydney J. Harris

Before leaving my father told me to have the time of my life but to always remember that I'm a student and that's my job. I worked hard to put together a master thesis project with collaboration of an EPFL and an IST lab, meeting several times with the three professors involved before reaching a feasible consensus. I also got interesting cool projects, side activities and courses on Intelligent Systems and Computer Supported Cooperation. This type of interational program also requires a study plan, to assure the compatibility of the credits completed abroad with the home university goals. My study plan was not easy to get together because the ECTSs for each course were quite different there. Also, one of my mandatory courses had it's equivalent

changed to the second semester but in the end I managed to sign up for all the credits I needed. I took an optional project for Intelligent Systems that consisted on implementing an ant colony based algorithm to perform information routing on enviroment sensors. To make up for the missing mandatory course I contacted the professor encharge of the Data Retrieval Laboratory at EPFL and got an optional project on a related subject.

### 4.1 Master Project

My master project was a bit of a roller coaster. I had signed up to do it with the Intelligent Agents group of IST hoping for a subject between game theory, intelligent agents and cooperation. I had to adapt my preferences to what the professors were working on so I started to read about emotions and robotics too. By the time I got to EPFL I got something completely different. They wanted me to conduct a study on tangible interfaces and I was not sure this was the right task for me. After some Skype conversations with my coordinator back at Lisbon I decided to go for it. It is not easy to get professors cooperating at a master project level and I couldn't afford simply not doing the course as this would mean not finishing my degree for another year. I got an office at the Rolex center, lots of help from everyone around and a crash course on experiment design and relevant statistics. I would be testing two tangible interfaces, one very expensive using a top-notch projector and camera (TinkerLamp) and the other one with a simple webcam and no projection (TinkerWeb) using a computer screen to show the interaction elements. The camera traces the tangibles (using some tags that I took hours and hours to print, cut and glue thanks to my poor skills in hand crafts) and in this particular application the users move shelves around a table, trying to learn about logistics by building warehouses with different features and getting real time feedback projected on the interactive elements such as the shelves or the in and out docks. The Swiss educational system takes the professional studies path very seriously and this system was designed to fill the gap between theoretical and



Figure 5. Conducting experiments for my master thesis at the lab.

practical components for logistics students. My objective was to compare the performance and learning gains for both interfaces. A satisfactory level of equivalence could mean the adoption of a much cheaper technology, one that could be afforded by schools outside Switzerland, since the more expensive one is already scientifically accredited.

#### 4.2 Kamusi Project

The optional project I took was on data retrieval for a NGO called Kamusi that was founded at Yale University by Dr. Benjamin Martin but now has its headquarters at EPFL. Martin wanted me to integrate their innovative platform of terminology and translation with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) recent systems of content translation. Most of these courses have terminology that is very complicated to clarify by simple translation to other languages and Kamusi's unique process of doing so by the use of complex associations could be the answer for this particular problem. I had some very interesting meetings with the development team of the platform to begin with. They were all in South Africa so I spent a lot of time using skype. These guys were scared about giving their code away because this was their only asset, this being an NGO, so a lot of careful talking and persuasion was necessary. I learned about the platform and afterwards I got in contact with the people from the Center for Digital Education. Soon I was talking with people from EdX, learning how to

use their new API for third-party applications integration and developing the application. Up until today I've been working on small things for Kamusi as I became a great friend of Martin. By the end of a semester he even invited me to have dinner with his family at his place. We shared a bottle of Portuguese wine and chatted about his linguistics research adventures in Tanzania and teenager love stories just to name a few out-of-the-box topics.

#### 4.3 Start Lausanne

The day I got to Lausanne I met a guy I can now call a friend for life. His name is Olivier but don't let the name fool you, he's portuguese all the way through. We both met at the student residences central office, relieved for having a last minute offer of a place to stay. He was there to study accounting, the whole master programe, two years. After we signed the contract for our rooms the tenant himself gave us a car lift to the residence, up the hills, to the middle of the vineyard. From that first day we knew we'd be spending a lot of time together. One night, walking up the hill on our way home, after watching a Benfica football match (we're both big fans), we talked about our entrepreneur vein and decided to take a chance on the 30.000 swiss francs prize contest that was due the following week. We started to discuss a possible application to do crowd-sourced events and that night we didn't even sleep. We called it *Wimpa*. I started to develop a prototype after a couple of hours of discussion and he developed a mint business plan. During that week Olivier would recurrently come knocking on my door saying he had new ideas and we would discuss it for hours. By the due date we were still trying to put together all the fantastic ideas we had come up with. We were thrilled with the possibilities but maybe we failed to keep it clear. A couple of weeks later we dressed up for a presentation in front of a jury but despite our good business plan and a cool prototype we didn't get the 30.000 francs to live a nice comfortable life while in Switzerland.



Figure 6. Me and Olivier after our presentation at Startup Lausanne Contest

#### 4.4 IT Strategy Course

My friend Olivier is a very dynamic and well informed guy so during a job fair at the university he introduced me to an IT Strategy course by the Boston Consulting Group. He had seen their presentation and thought I might be interested. I never really considered strategic consulting as a career possibility but I gave it a look online and it seemed interesting. Nevertheless the days went and just a couple of hours before the application was due he asked me if I had applied. I had not. During the entire dinner time he tried to convince me to do so but I thought it wasn't worth the trouble, I'd never make it. Later that evening he came to my room and made me write a cover letter, update my CV and send the application. I didn't even have time to proof read the materials so I never thought about it anymore. Two weeks later I got a phone call from BCG saying I had been accepted and they would be booking me a flight to Milan the next week. I'd spend 3 days

living in a Italian charm chateau learning about BCG and IT Strategy. That night we went out to celebrate and I bought Olivier as many beers as he could drink, a rare experience in a place where a beer is no less than 6 euros a glass. I asked to be booked a train instead since it was such a short trip and a couple of weeks later I arrived at Milano Stazione Centrale. I also asked for the trip to be booked a couple of days before the course and they attended to my request. I had a cousin living there at the time and I had the chance to hang around with him.

I had been in Milan before but with my parents. This time I was up for a different kind of culture. Besides the Duomo and the Uffizi palace we spent most of the time riding bikes from one party to another, fueled by pizza. It was great! Two days later a taxi picked me up and took me to the suburbs. I bought a suit to attend the event and it was a good decision. The chateau was luxurious and everyone was trying really hard to fit in. Waiters served pates and champagne between chandeliers and a concert piano; outside early arrivers practiced archery. It felt like a movie set for a countryside British royalty event. The people were quite friendly and very bright. I had some of the most interesting conversations of my life. I was staying at a charming room with a private bathroom, a kingsize bed and a big window with a view to the garden. I thought: "Studying is starting to pay off".

The course was very interesting. We had to solve a case on IT innovation at a traditional insurance company. Everyone was very competitive and providing bright insights. I tried hard to contribute and to evidence leadership but this was like the champions league. In the end they appreciated my work and I learned a lot but I'm not sure if I made myself noticeable enough. The days were tough but the nights compensated. Every day we would rest a bit at our rooms and then have a dinner introduced by a chef that described with detail and sense of humor his art pieces. After dinner we had open bar and the senior consultants and managers that were lecturing the course would join us. The drinks went on to karaoke and even some piano performances. I've studied





Figure 7. BCG IT Strategy course whereabouts

classical and jazz piano for some years so after a couple of drinks I felt comfortable enough to play some Queen and Beatles songs; everyone was singing along after a short while. It was memorable! A couple of days later back at my small room in Morges those days already felt like something I could have only dreamed about.

## 5 SOCIAL

*"Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light."* - Hellen Keller

The social life in Lausanne is quite different from what we're used to and it takes a while before you get it right. Everything is expensive and the temperatures outside are really low so it always depends on someone working out a dinner or drinks at their place for a proper gathering. My social life was also much centered on Zenith because we're quite isolated and had no good transportation during the night to go to Lausanne and back. At the beginning I found it quite difficult to trust new people but I soon realized everyone was in a similar position. I made friends from Spain, France, England, Italy, Greece, Azerbaijan, India, China, Morocco and so on. The atmosphere was really friendly and people would help each other out with pretty much everything. Sometimes I forgot to buy stuff or even something to cook for dinner (supermarkets close at 6pm!) but not one day passed by that I didn't have a decent meal. The group soon became really strong and joyful.

Zenith turned out to be one of the most amazing parts of my experience and the one I miss the most. We didn't have to organize parties there because it was far away and no one would make the trip but also because of this it was a party every day. Every night I was working late, someone would come knock on my door offering a beer and good conversation. It could be the artistic crazy French girls, the Spanish molecular scientist, the Indian physics engineer, the Greek manager, the German criminologist among the many incredible characters gathered under Zenith's roof.

When we would go out at night the Portuguese group was my favorite choice. People from all over the world joined the group but the lusitan core was the essence of all the fun. We liked to have dinner at a fast food dinner with delicious (and not very expensive) hamburgers called the Holy Cow, then have some beers at Ricardo's, a friend that lived downtown, and then go to the students' pub called "The Great Escape". This pub was always broadcasting sports games, the drinks were cheaper to students, and the bar maids would sometimes ring a bell and start pouring heavy drinks into every open mouth.

Lausanne's international environment makes every group very open and informal and compensates the weather and the high costs. All you need is time (The Beatles wouldn't agree but it's the truth).

A short movie with some moments of fun in Lausanne is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpyuS\\_M4QAc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpyuS_M4QAc)

### 5.1 Visitors

I was really lucky to be surrounded by great new friends but sometimes I missed the old ones and the private jokes and the epic stories of the past; but I was really lucky for having so many and so special visits.

I was a host with very few conditions. It was hard to fit one more person in my small room besides it was against residence rules but many friends came. Frederico Galão, the IST football team captain, João Anjo, another fellow football team player, My parents, my sister, my grandmother and an old friend from



Figure 8. Family lunch at Montreux food market

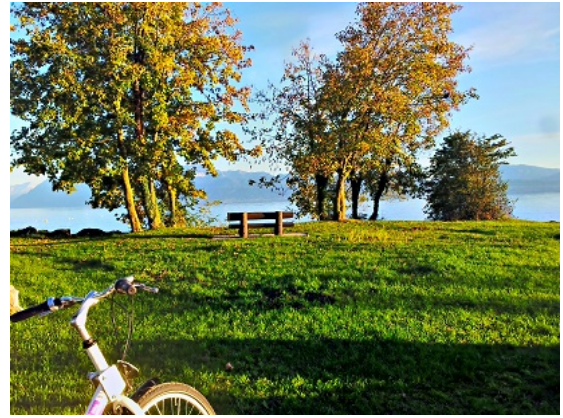


Figure 9. Riding a bike along Lake Léman

high school, Simão Ramos. With them I visited places such as Montreaux, taking the must-have picture besides Freddie Mercury's statue, the vineyards up the mountain, Geneva, Bern and the peaceful wilderness by the margins of the lake. I was also a visitor for one weekend when I stayed at my cousin's Leonor place near Neuchatel for a night. She's there studying music and classical piano. I stayed at her beautiful house in the mountains where we tasted lots of delicious Swiss chocolate and played some music.

I didn't have one single week-end alone, and I wouldn't mind it, but having such friends and family, even when you're so far away, means the world.

## 6 LEISURE

*"What we do during our working hours determines what we have; what we do in our leisure hours determines what we are."* - George Eastman

Switzerland is a fantastic place to enjoy life. You have to take it seriously during the week for it is quite demanding, but when you take some time off chances are you'll have a great time. During the weekends or in a sunny afternoon I'd grab a bike (we had access to free bikes all over Lausanne and Morges) and ride it along the lake. In my backpack I'd bring a book to read at my favorite spot: a wooden bench with a terrific view. I withdraw the book "A new kind of science" by Steven Wolfram from the EPFL library and during the semester digested the 1000 pages on cellular automata.

### 6.1 Interrail

A friend of mine, Frederico Galão, also an engineering student at IST and captain of our university football team, came to visit me in my early days in Lausanne. We visited the city center, the cathedral, the peers in Ouchy and the best night clubs, but we had bigger plans. He brought with him two interrail tickets and for 10 days we'd be travelling all around central Europe, finishing our journey at the famous OktoberFest in Munich. I'd have to miss a couple of days of classes but this the perfect example of a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Our first destination was Milan because we could stay there for one night with my cousin António and enjoy the Italian food and spirit. There we had a great appetite by the canals of Naviglio and a night making new friends at the popular spot of Porta Ticinese. Next day we took the train to Slovakia to visit Ljubliana. We visited downtown, the castle and by night a creepy abandoned amusement park that was converted to an arts center and weird night clubs. Next came Austria with a quick visit to the Arnold Schwarzenegger museum at Graz and an amazing day with rented bikes at Vienna. I took photographs next to most of my favorite classical musicians' statues, from Beethoven to Mozart, and visited all iconic buildings, from the Opera to the palace of the Habsburg. Afterwards we reached Czech Republic, where we stayed at Brno for a night, to visit Frederico's cousin André, and then Prague. We discussed that night's Benfica loss to PSG by Charles Bridge and then went up





Figure 10. Me at the Oktoberfest

for a fantastic sightseeing on the astronomical clock tower. I loved the town with a burlesque disneyish feeling (best worst adjectivation I can provide). After Prague we took a long night train to wake up in Berlin. In front of the train station was the Reichstag with its fantastic new glass dome. We walked from classic to classic, by the Brandenburg gate right until the Berlin wall. We spent hours by the memorials reading war stories and imagining those difficult times.

It had been a fantastic trip so far but the climax was about to come; next stop: Munich. Actually we stayed at a friend's in Augsburg for a first night of warm up where we tasted over 16 types of beer at a small distillery. There we met a remarkable old man that had been president of the German Telecom years before and he told us fascinating stories. Next day at 8am we dressed our improvised *Bundhosen*, the traditional vests for the festival, and headed to Munich for a happy day. We were lucky to have a seat at the notorious Paulaner tent and by noon everyone was singing John Denver's songs from the top of the lungs while still sipping one liter beers. We couldn't afford eating the famous Shweinsaxe so we had to leave quite early (once you stop the drinking you must leave).

The recovery was tough on a train back to Lausanne. When I got home this felt like a dream. I'm glad these days we can easily take pictures because that's my proof on having all these incredible adventures.

## 6.2 Caves ouvert

An important event among the community of life enjoyers in Lausanne is the *textitCaves ouvert*, ie the open caves. The caves are small houses in the vineyards hills where the wine is prepared and stored. Once a year during Fall, everyone can visit and taste the region's wines. I was invited to go with a group by a Czech friend, Tomasz, a PhD student at EPFL also in Computer Science. We spent a fantastic afternoon, riding a small electric train provided by the event organization, and talking about his research in image processing associated with context. He was trying to explain to me how he taught a computer to analyze images giving them apriori knowledge like, the light is supposed to come from the top, not the bottom, if you're looking at a landscape. He taught the computer to evaluate if there was sunlight.

When we got to the mountain we payed a fee and they offered us a special glass for the wine tasting along with a recommended tour that we followed meticulously. Being a Portuguese, the Swiss were very interested to discuss wines with me but I'm not much of a specialist but in the end they were glad to teach me a few things about the process of making and tasting the wine.

## 7 SPORTS

*"Sports do not build character. They reveal it."* - Heywood Broun

I've always been an enthusiast of playing sports. Since very young I practice tennis and I even made it to the 14+ national team. Also very young I started skiing with my parents; this is one of the good things of being raised in the interior of our country, near Serra da Estrela. Every year I have my winter vacation either here in Portugal or sometimes in Spain or France. I also played football representing my school and when I enrolled in college I joined the university team where I became a regional champion and a national vice-champion. I'm a sports man and this wouldn't change abroad.



Figure 11. Me during the caves ouvert trying out some Swiss wines

### 7.1 Lausanne University Club (LUC) Football

The students' reception at EPFL is an enormous event on campus, with every group and association promoting their activities and trying to get collaborators. There's even a sale of used books and used ski and snowboard material. That's where I learned about LUC and their football team. I got the contact of the responsible for the teams. They told me to join the practice of the 3rd league team but adverted that the season was coming to an end. In Switzerland the season starts in March and lasts until November, in a way that they can avoid the snowy period of the year when it's impossible to play. I went to practice and in the end the coach told me step up to the 2nd team. They were in need of a player to play forward, like I usually did back in Lisbon.

I wanted to reach the 1st team but since the season was almost over that would be impossible for me. The 2nd team practices were twice a week and I took it seriously. I was looking to stay in shape for when I got back in IST's team but also because I'm very competitive and



Figure 12. Me playing football at the Dorigny sports center

I needed to take my place in the team. The practices were tough, sometimes with negative temperatures and lots of humidity as the pitch is right next to the lake. The team was not very stable, with problems in the locker room because of a mid season change of coach and some players feeling useless or wronged. I took my spot on front and made some friends but the environment was not very friendly which was good for the competitiveness but not for the spirit and the experience itself. We avoided being demoted from the second league and the group was more united by the end of the season so I was really sad to have to leave the team.

### 7.2 Portuguese football matches

The Portuguese are usually enthusiastic about football and the fellow countryman I met there were no exception. Soon after our first encounters a group which I was a part of started to plan regular football matches at the sport center. We would setup a doodle online to get enough players and Luís booked the football pitch a late afternoon every week; someone would be responsible for finding an opponent team to play against. By the end of the match we would head to one of the student residences to drink some beers and talk about the game.

### 7.3 House of Benfica @ Lausanne

After we got off the train when we first arrived in Lausanne we headed to the student residences central office. I was with Zé, a friend



Figure 13. Portuguese group @ Casa do Benfica de Lausanne

that happened to book the same flight I did. He was also coming from IST but as an Architecture student. We found a bus that would take us exactly where we needed and when it was time to buy the ticket both of us had nothing more than a very rusty French. Before trying the English the man replied: "Olá! O meu nome é Zé. Do que precisam?". Lausanne is filled with Portuguese immigrants so it was no big surprise. During the trip he gave us lots of tips and tricks to the life in Switzerland and in the end he said: "Vocês gostam de bola claro. Vou vos dizer onde é a casa do Benfica!". He told us how to get there and soon this would become a place where we would meet to watch the matches but also to eat some great portuguese food. I introduced everyone to the place and the owner was so grateful that he would usually offer me a beer or a delicious pork sandwich we usually call bifana. The day Portugal defeated Sweden and booked a ticket for the world cup in Brazil the guy offered free drinks and food, in what became a huge party and a memorable night.

## 7.4 Running

My life in the vineyards was very healthy most of the days. I made use of the balcony to do some pushups and abs and my friend Olivier usually asked to go for a run. He used to be a professional athlete representing Portugal and Benfica so it was a fantastic opportunity to practice with him. He would adopt a pace I could keep up with for a while, enough for

us to go until one of the small villages in the mountains, and then he would carry on his training and I would get back exhausted. I particularly liked a course we sometimes took that was first through the vineyards and then up to a village built around an old castle. It had a medieval look that took my mind elsewhere.

## 7.5 Skiing

Skiing is never a cheap activity so you expect it to be, at least, prohibitive, in Switzerland. Thankfully the university has some special programs and discounts for students and I could enjoy a couple of days at the fantastic Swiss Alps.

The first time I went to the Alps was when my girlfriend came by. After visiting an incredible photography exhibition by the renown Sebastião Salgado downtown we went across a Ice Hockey field on our way back home and there were some kids with skis. We asked them about the skiing conditions and they told us they had been up in the mountains for the day. I asked them if the snow was good and they replied: "C'est top!". That moment we decided what we would do the next day. At 6am we were taking the train to Les Diablerets, close to Gstaad, where we rented the equipment and took a long lift that took us up the mountain. The view from the top was stunning, with a lake of clouds below and the famous Matterhorn on the horizon. We spent the day skiing and made lots of friends there.

The second time I went to the mountains the destination was Chambery, a little village with access to Portes du Soleil, a famous skiing destination. I went with three friends by train and we stayed at a small chalet in the middle of the ski slopes. We had two very intensive days of skiing with some fine weather. During on of the nights the slopes were illuminated with powerful lights and we went for a session of night skiing. The snow was perfect and almost nobody was there so we had a ball.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Planning or improvising, with friends or with family, at college or at Zenith or downtown





Figure 14. Friends on the ski slopes of Portes du Soleil at night

Lausanne or somewhere across Europe, working hard or having fun, I had the time of my life. I balanced well the study and the fun, the social activity and the time I need to be just with myself, the sleep hours, the travelling and the budget and the housewife status. I was able to diversify and still keep alive what makes me who I am. I was a Portuguese and a Swiss and a citizen of the world. Everything I spent time on during these 6 months felt special, like a side story of my life where I still get to be the main character; where even the most simple things in life feel great, like you're a child once again and yet more mature than ever before.

In this type of document (technical), the conclusion should start with a SUMMARY of the subject addressed and then should highlight the results.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for the sponsorship, my girlfriend for the patience and attention, my sister for the mail supplies, my grandmother for household precious advice, my Portuguese friends for the visits, my residence friends for saving my life so many times and for the late night talks, my college colleagues for also saving my (academic) life, the portuguese living in Lausanne for the companionship and everyone mention before for their love.

## REFERENCES

- [1] H. Kopka and P. W. Daly, *A Guide to L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X*, 3rd ed. Harlow, England: Addison-Wesley, 1999.

This reference is not cited anywhere in the document!

## APPENDIX

### STATEMENT OF EXECUTION



UNIVERSIDADE TÉCNICA DE LISBOA  
INSTITUTO SUPERIOR TÉCNICO



#### Letter of Confirmation

We hereby confirm that the Erasmus student Craveiro João from  
Universidade de Lisboa has been enrolled at  
Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale from 17/03/13 until 01/02/14.  
Lausanne

Date 06/02/14

ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE FÉDÉRALE DE LAUSANNE  
DAF - Services aux étudiants  
Campus polytechnique BP

**SIGN HERE**

Erasmus Coordinator