

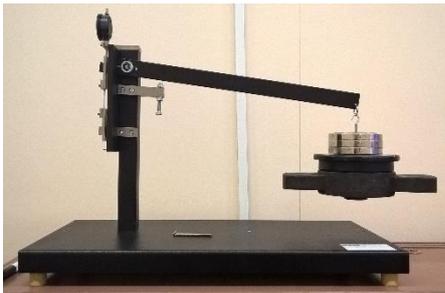
Internship Report Moscow 2017

Support

I was supposed to go to Moscow for six weeks. Unfortunately I needed to shorten the internship to four weeks, but that was no problem for the organizers. The IAESTE volunteers in Moscow and in Halle both supported me very well with all the paperwork which I had to do in advance in order to get my visa and health insurance. The final acceptance arrived two month before the start of the internship, therefore I had enough time to sort out all bureaucracy hassle. Everything went smooth on this side. When I arrived in Moscow on a Monday at around six p.m. I took the Aeroexpress to Kievskaya metro station where Andrey from the university waited for me. He accompanied me to the dormitory where I normally could not check in due to my late arrival, but Yuliya from IAESTE Russia organized everything. The next day she also took care of my registration at the residents' office. After three days I got my registration so I was now an official Muscovite.

Work

The second day, my work at the Moscow Polytechnical University begun. Although Russian was not mandatory in the advertisement of the internship, I quickly realized that only few people at the university could speak English. I was therefore very lucky that my supervisor had at least sufficient English skills to explain everything. Also the professor of the group was very kind, gave me a lab tour and was very interested in my previous work. Unfortunately, the work itself was not very fulfilling. I basically performed creep tests of aluminum components. I knew that it might be problematic for me as a physicist to work at a polytechnic university but the advertisement sounded much more theoretical than it turned out to be. My supervisor was very kind and I took part in all the experiments. Also the trips to Skolkovo were interesting, a big modern research center in Moscow where we took the samples in order to investigate the crystalline structure of the aluminum samples we fractured before. But in the end, I had a lot of doubts about the scientific accuracy of a lot of methods they used during the experiments. Hence, I was not really invested in the work since I could not fundamentally change the way my supervisor had set up his research.



Picture of the creep testing machine used to test the mechanical properties of different Aluminum alloys. On the right, the building of the university with the security entrance in the foreground.

Living

When I arrived at my room in the dormitory I was welcomed by three German speaking guys which somewhat surprised me. Hence, two Germans and a Swiss should be my roommates for the next weeks. Since they arrived a few weeks earlier than me, they were quite familiar with the environment. They explained everything, where I could find cheap places to eat, what to do with the laundry and which dormitory rules I should be aware of (no alcohol, no unannounced visitors). The room was surprisingly clean, the shower was warm and the Wi-Fi worked fine. Compared to German standards it was a little spartan but it had everything you would need. However, I quickly realized that the 2000 RUR you would get for one month would absolutely not cover my costs of living. The prices are on average comparable to Germany,

some things are cheaper (vodka, kebab, metro, Uber, internet and phone), some are more expensive (beer, alcoholic drinks, cheese, vegetables). The metro is the number one choice for getting around the city. A ride costs less than 50 ct and it is fast and convenient and will bring you everywhere you need. I only had to take a bus two or three times. After one a.m. when the metro closes, the numerous taxis (Uber or Yandex) are the proper means of transport. A 30 min ride costs about 5€. In everyday life, English will not get you far. It is more likely to find German speaking Russians. Learning at least the Cyrillic script and some basic words is very helpful. But all Russians were very kind to me. Since they are not drowning in tourists they normally really take care of you if you get lost or need something. Even the security and policemen (of which there are inconceivably many) may seem distrustful or frightening, but as long as you have your papers with you they are also very kind.



The metro is not only fast and cheap, but also one of the most beautiful buildings in Moscow (here one of my favourite stations: Komsomolskaya). Weather in October is often grey and cold, you really learn to appreciate the sun.

Culture

Which brings me to the numerous cultural activities as well as the general vibe of this enormous city. The program organized by the IAESTE volunteers unfortunately was not that rich, we mostly hang out in a bar or took some dinner together. But it is very easy to plan things yourself and with the help of the volunteers you can easily organize trips and activities together. I went to nearly all big art museums in the city, especially the Garage and the Tretjakov Gallery are worth a visit. The parks Moscow has to offer are also very nice, especially the Gorky Park was one of my favorites, also the area around the Lomonosov University. I would also recommend to take two days off work and use the longer weekend to travel to St. Petersburg by night train. It is very cheap (I paid less than 40€ for a roundtrip) and it is an experience of itself. Compared to Moscow, St. Petersburg feels much more “European”, which means less security, less hectic, less crowded. But Moscow was definitely an experience. I would recommend it to everyone who wants to know more about the country you often only hear about in the news as this big bad neighbor of Europe. Some people I met were surprisingly open to discuss politics and this cultural exchange is what makes this IAESTE program so important and useful. I am therefore very thankful I got this opportunity.



Lomonosov State University



Lake in Gorky Park



Garage Art Museum