

Three months in Madrid

IASTE internship report May – August 2024
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Experience of being abroad

Madrid is a vibrant city, so there was always something new to explore. Having lived in Zurich for some years now, I really enjoyed the experience of discovering a new city step by step. For example, I went to the "Feria del Libro de Madrid," a huge book fair in the heart of the city, with a friend. It was fascinating to explore contemporary Spanish literature, and I even managed to get a signed copy of a book. Besides that, I also attended a concert at the Estadio Bernabéu, which was very impressive as it was my first time in such a large stadium.



Work

I worked as an R&D intern at a startup called "Ommatidia" which develops 3D cameras using LiDAR technology. During my internship, I was part of the optics and photonics department, where I gained valuable insights into the testing of photonic chips. Working in such a small startup was a unique experience. The biggest difference I noticed compared to larger companies was that each person was responsible for a broad range of tasks. This gave me a comprehensive overview of what was happening in the company and allowed me to gain experience in different areas as well. I would highly recommend working in a startup to anyone looking for this kind of experience.



Culture

Adapting to the Spanish schedule was a bit of a challenge for me. People tend to arrive at work a bit later than what I was used to in Switzerland, and lunch and dinner are typically 2–3 hours later as well. Over time, I adjusted my daily routine; for example, I started exercising before work, which is actually quite convenient since it's not as hot in the morning. I will definitely miss having that extra time in the mornings when I return to Switzerland.

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Doing the internship through IAESTE was beneficial in many ways. First of all, the application process was well-organized and straightforward, making it easy to navigate. Once I secured my internship placement, IAESTE provided valuable guidance on practical matters, such as finding accommodation, obtaining my residence permit, and navigating public transport. This support made the transition to living and working abroad much smoother.