

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Sophie Lange

Year and semester for exchange

Year 4 – Fall Semester

Exchange university

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH)

Degree programme

M.Sc. Real Estate and Construction Management

Between mountains and the library

Before departure

Going to Switzerland has been my dream since I was a little kid! I must admit that I have lived there during my childhood for some years with my family and therefore knew the country a little bit already. For EU residents there is no Visa or special travel permit required. My mother tongue is German, so I didn't take any language course to prepare for the exchange. Knowledge of German is not required for the courses at the university in Switzerland. In everyday life, however, it is very helpful to understand a little German, as not everyone always speaks English very well.

Upon arrival

The Semester in Switzerland started on the 18th of September, but I have arrived in Zurich already on the 23rd of August to explore the city during the sunny days. Furthermore, I took part in the amazing ETH Week which was conducted one week prior to the start of the Semester. During the week we gathered in different teams to discuss and find solutions in the context of circular realities. We used 3 days to define the problem statement and then ideate for possible solutions. At the end of the week, we had to present our findings and prototypes on front of the jury and all students. It was a fun week and a good kick start into the exchange semester. I got to meet many friends during the week that I met frequently afterwards. There is no such well organized and rich in activities introduction week as here at KTH. Only one day of introduction meetings and information about the university.

Financials

Switzerland is part of the Swiss European Mobility Program (SEMP) which is a scholarship like Erasmus. Upon arrival I received 1800 CHF in cash for the entire period. There are no study fees or any other mandatory fees that need to be paid to the university. Registering with the authorities is mandatory and costs around 140 CHF. Furthermore, costs for health insurance must be considered if your insurance doesn't cover services outside of Sweden. To save money on groceries I usually went shopping at Lidl or Aldi as these stores have been a lot cheaper than the local stores such as Migros and Coop. For public transport in Zurich monthly costs of 60 CHF have been incurred. If you plan on using the train a lot to get around Switzerland, a "Halbtax" card is recommended as you get a 50% discount on train tickets.

Accommodation

Luckily, I could switch my apartment with someone from ETH that was coming to KTH as exchange student. So he came to life in Stockholm in my corridor room and I moved into his room in his shared flat in Zurich. There, I had two flatmates who were super friendly and helpful and took me along during my first weeks and made me explore a lot. Pricewise the apartment rent was almost equal to the rent

here in Sweden, so we agreed to just keep on paying our own rent in our home countries. The apartment was very well located, and it took me 30 min to go either to the Campus Zentrum or Campus Hönggerberg. I can absolutely recommend switching rooms as this made the housing situation a lot easier than searching something myself.



A picture of my apartment building and pizza night with my flat mates.

University and studies

ETH, with around 22,000 students, is the second largest university in Switzerland after the University of Zurich, whose building complexes are located directly next to ETH. I was accepted onto the civil engineering programme at ETH and attended courses in this area as well as the master's in management and technology. All courses were in English except for one course from the architecture department which was held in German. In Switzerland there is no system of periods, so you have your courses for a whole semester and not just for one period. To get my 30 credits in the semester, I took 8 courses in parallel. This means that you have quite a full timetable and you work on many different topics and projects at the same time. However, this also gives you the opportunity to gain an insight into different subject areas. In addition to my subjects, I also attended the language learning centre to learn French. Below you can see the ETH main Building as well as the law library.



Courses

When choosing my course, I primarily paid attention to which subjects I was interested in, and which fit in well with the content I will miss at KTH this semester. The ETH course catalogue can be viewed in advance, and you can look at the description and grading method for each course. Accordingly, I have

tried to find a good mix between courses with an end-of-semester exam and courses with project work, so that you don't have to write 8 exams at the end of the semester. It is also important to pay attention to the times advertised so that the chosen courses do not overlap. I chose the following courses:

363-0711-00 S	Accounting for Managers
101-0577-00 S	An Introduction to Sustainable Development in the Built Environment
063-0911-23 S	Denkmäler der Zukunft
066-0427-00 S	Design and Building Process MIBS
701-0901-02 S	ETH Week 2023: Circular Realities
363-0421-00 S	Management of Digital Transformation
101-0129-00 S	Non Destructive Evaluation & Rehabilitation of Existing Structures
101-0007-00 S	Project Management for Construction Projects
363-0301-00 S	Work Design and Organizational Change

I found the course from the Department of Architecture (Denkmäler der Zukunft) particularly interesting as I am a great fan of old heritage buildings. I also enjoyed the lecture in Management of Digital transformation. The professor of this course was particularly good at lecturing and invited many experts from the industry who also gave exciting presentations. All in All, I enjoy the varied mix of my courses and can recommend them all with a clear conscience. It should be noted that studying at ETH involved more work than the courses I had previously taken at KTH. Shortly after the start of the semester, I spent a lot of time in the library preparing or revising the content so that I didn't fall behind. The high workload was exhausting, but I was rewarded with good grades at the end of the semester, and I can tick off all my chosen courses as passed.

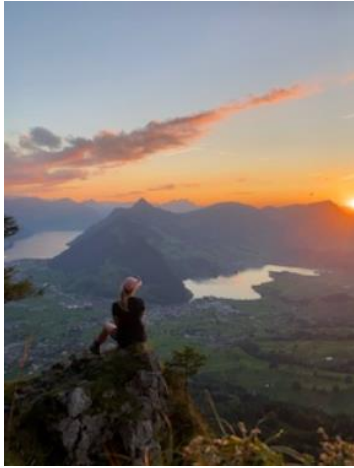
City and country

Switzerland, and Zurich in particular, is a wonderful city that is slightly smaller than Stockholm, so you don't feel lost in the maelstrom of a big city. Everything is easily accessible by bus, train or bike and Switzerland is a very orderly and punctual country. I didn't suffer any culture shock as I was already familiar with the country. Other students I spoke to feel the same way, they quickly found their way and settled in. Zurich location is perfect for all sort of small trips to discover the beautiful nature of Switzerland. I love the mountains and hiking and was able to spend some time in the mountains during my exchange and experience unforgettable moments.



Leisure and social activities

As an ETH student, you are part of the ASVZ, which offers an above-average number of sports and leisure activities. With the membership (which is free) you can use the various gyms of the university and register for sports courses. I enjoyed doing the Body Pump course as well as TRX training and yoga. The ASVZ also organises ski trips or hikes, they offer sailing, golf, rowing, swimming and much more - a great opportunity to try out new things. On Weekends I often did self-organized trips to the mountains to either go hiking or skiing. Additionally, it was warm enough to swim in the lake until the mid of October. The pictures below show some good insights in different destinations that I have had the luck of visiting during my stay.



Sustainability

I travelled by car to Switzerland, so I was not able to get the sustainability grant, but going from Sweden to Switzerland is definitely possible by train as my room switch partner has done it that way. To be a little more sustainable in everyday life I use the TooGoodToGo App to save food from being wasted. Furthermore, I went to a lot of second-hand stores to look for items instead of buying them new. Switzerland has a huge variety of different second-hand stores that are mostly called Brocki, there you can find mostly everything from furniture to clothing.