

From Bangladesh to Sweden to Belgium-Germany: An internship in TOYOTA Europe.

Hello All

Now, when writing this, I am far away from the plot of the story sitting right at my own desk back home in Bangladesh and trying to visualize the incredible time and the memories I left behind. Before I begin, would like to tersely introduce myself. I am Shovon Goutam from Bangladesh, a small country of south Asia where I graduated as a mechanical Engineer. Later I flew to Sweden in autumn 2010 to obtain my Masters Degree from Jönköping University. From March 2012, just after the 3rd semester I attended an internship in Production Engineering department of TOYOTA Motor Europe (TME), Belgium and worked as an intern researcher till December 2012. Though I managed the internship by myself, in the process of arranging this, assistance from IAESTE Sweden and IAESTE Belgium played a vital role to make it happen and thus became an important entity of my career. As a matter of fact, one purpose of my writings is to express my gratitude to IAESTE. At the same time, by sharing my story, I would also like to take the chance to passively encourage those who are thinking of participating in an internship change their career.



Candidly saying, me, being a graduate from Bangladesh, never expected to get a chance to work in a place like TOYOTA. However, it was a long cherished dream that came true. So far, this is the greatest achievement of my whole career. In early 2012, when I got confirmation from TOYOTA, I did not know much about IAESTE. Later, HR section of TOYOTA informed me that IAESTE will guide me through the process of obtaining residence permit of Belgium as a non-EU citizen. After that, I did not have to worry about the dossiers needed to apply for the residence permit. All those were managed by IAESTE within a week or two.

Finally after finalizing all the legislative paperwork I flew for Brussels for the first time. From my experience, Brussels is an amazing city. Everlasting dynamism in the people and the environment with vivacious nights reminded me off my home city Dhaka. Bus, train, tram, subway in move depict the busy traffic of the city. Eventually, I was delighted to taste the warmth of the street crowd after a long time. Being warmer compared to Sweden, in Brussels however one may get drenched before realizing it.

A very warm welcome at the first day of the internship gave me the early feelings of a future drive of learning with pleasure. There, I joined the Advance Technology and Research (ATR) team thus most of work comprised of study, laboratory experiments, short trainings and presentations. In a nutshell, a perfect blend of industrial and research experience at the same pot.

A very significant and memorable part of my time were spent in the student house situated at the Green Medical Campus of Vrije Universiteit Brussels which was arranged by IAESTE. Going out in weekends with new friends from different countries, dinner parties and playing Ping-Pong was always exciting there. Moroccan streets foods and tea from the temporary Saturday markets of Brussels still make my tongue wet.

Soon after 4 months of working in Brussels, the team decided to extend my contract from 5 months to another 5 months. Along with it came a proposal of carrying out some experiments as guest researcher in Surface Science and Corrosion Institute of Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen. New city, new faces, another album of eventful experiences came along with this incredible opportunity. Periodically I had to travel between Brussels and Erlangen. As an employee of TOYOTA I could use airways, instead I choose to travel by Train to enjoy the natural beauty of the countryside of both Belgium and Germany. So often I halted at different stations on the way, strolled around, took a coffee and continued my journey boarding the next train. It was fun every time I did so.

Ten months of work, study, research, traveling, fun came to an end sooner before I comprehended. But what I gathered during the period awarded me with a perfect outset to my career. The career stamps I collected made my profile look a lot better than the previous ordinary one. Soon I will start my PhD work in Vrije Unversiteit Brussels. Another cherished dream which going to come true and I believe this is a chance awarded depending on the knowledge and experience I gathered from this internship.

Finally, I want to finish my story wishing you all a prosperous career and sound health.