

STUDENT: **Conleth McAteer**
FROM: **Belfast**
LC: **Sarajevo, year 2011**

My name is Conleth McAteer. I am student at Queen's University Belfast, studying Electrical & Electronic Engineering BEng.

This summer I had the good fortune of living and working in Sarajevo, the Capital of Bosnia & Herzegovina. After securing an IAESTE placement, I spent 2 months working in **JP Elektroprivreda BiH d.d. Sarajevo**. Elektroprivreda is the largest electricity production company in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



My Experience

Before I went to Sarajevo, the only practical experience I had in Electrical Engineering, was 6 laboratory sessions that I completed at University. This Summer I gained the invaluable experience of working in an efficient team, in an industrial environment. Working with skilled engineers every day was really beneficial to me and I got a glimpse of tasks I will have to do and what will be expected of me when I am a fully qualified engineer.

I was with the company for 8 weeks and each week I moved to a different department. There were times during the summer that there was a language barrier at work, but even when there was, all the employees tried their best to communicate with me and make me feel welcome. Over the 8 week period, the work experience I enjoyed most was fault testing. I got out on site with 2 Engineers, to test ground faults

and line faults. Having studied the theory in class the previous semester, it was really good to see that all the time I'd spent revising the theory wasn't wasted! I also enjoyed my week in the Transmission Control room, and found learning how the High Voltage Grid was operated fascinating!

Social and cultural experience

Another benefit of the IAESTE program was that it gave me a chance to visit a new country and experience a different culture. I tried my best to really throw myself into the Bosnian way of life, and I really reaped the benefits! The Bosnian people are all very friendly, relaxed and have a great lifestyle and approach to life. I made some really good friends and had some amazing experiences.

In fact, this summer was probably the best summer of my life. From Beer Festivals in Belgrade, to Film Festivals in Sarajevo (which Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie *drool* attended), to weekend trips to Croatia where we didn't book accommodation and slept on the beach! Even without blankets it was warm all night and there is absolutely nothing like just waking up and going for a dip in 25 degree water! It was non-stop fun!

For 2 weeks when I was in Sarajevo, there was a heat wave and it was over 40 degrees every day. It was hard to get used to, but being from Ireland I enjoyed the opportunity to be complaining about the heat instead of the rain during the summer! Sarajevo is a very beautiful and historic city and there was always something to do and see. The nightlife was good and the Local IAESTE kept us entertained most nights. My favorite night of the summer was my birthday.



This is a picture from my birthday party in Bosnia. It was the strangest birthday I've ever had but it was totally awesome! I had a great night and the Bosnian version of "Happy birthday" totally kicks our songs ass; it's like a football chant!