



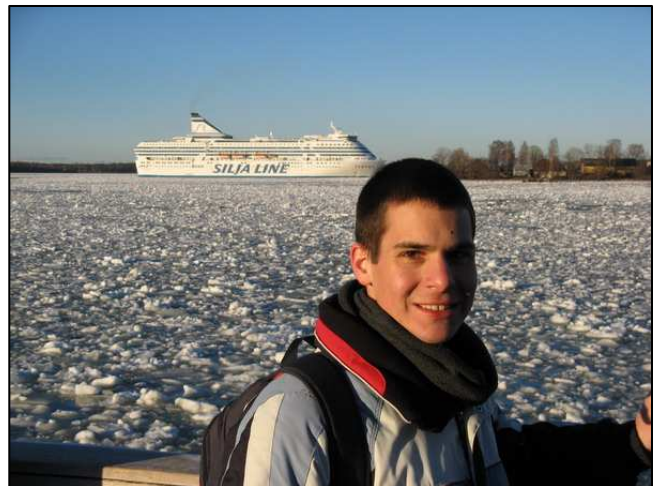
Northern adventures – reloaded

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Two years ago I managed to realize one of my old dreams to visit Tallinn and Petersburg; however I could not fit into the program Helsinki on the other side of the Baltic Bay. Therefore I was happy to apply for the long awaited event of EESTEC LC Helsinki this spring, called Nature Calls.

Due to financial reasons, I took a plane through Amsterdam (later some complications derived from that, as I missed my connection on the way back). I arrived to Vantaa international airport on a Friday night, 9th March. Emmi came on behalf of the organizers to pick me up and Anne from Poland. Zsolt, the other Hungarian participant only arrived a day later. We were staying at the apartments of the organizers, very nice one-roomed flats within the campus of Technical University of Helsinki, app. 20 kms from downtown. The area (a peninsula) is called Otoniemi, and several red-bricked university buildings are hidden there under the trees. Though the weather was nice, the sea around was still frozen from the big colds of previous weeks. The first night we were provided some Chilli con Carne and team building games by Antti, the local chairman. As I slept at Antti's place with a Greek girl, Veronika, we had the advantage of having the breakfasts at place. That meant a valuable 15 minutes of more sleeping every day!

On Saturday we packed into two cars, and drove to the Sorvalampi lake, where they rented a cottage to give us the unique Finish experience of winter holidays. We built a snow shemal, dug a whole on the ice, participated to some team games and cooked fish soup with cream on open fire. The evening could not miss the local beers and the sauna. It was just wonderful to get into the hole on the ice at the lake or directly into the snow with heated body. We woke up late the next day, and after having a nice brunch, we drove back to Helsinki. This day took place the Finish night, where we had to enter a contest about prior Finish Eurovision singers (dating back till the '50s), in respect to 2006 winner Lordi. For some strange reasons, I managed to win this, just based on guessing.



The next day, it was foggy and snowy, but we took a ferry to Suomalinn fortress at the closest entry of the harbor. The entire city was built under the protection of the fortress in the 18th century. It was supposed to be the biggest and most advanced fortification in the world. The island (and later entire Finland) was taken by the Russians in 1808 without fighting. As a side-maneuver of the Krim war, it was heavily bombarded by the British-French fleet in 1855, but never really besieged. Finland won its independence due to the Russian revolution, and afterwards Soumelinna lost its strategic importance. Presently it has 900

habitants, and a couple of hundred thousands of tourists every year. The 15 minute ferry trip was great fun on the frozen sea, though we could not see far because of the fog. In the afternoon, we visited the impressive office and social building of the Student Guild at the Helsinki University, and enjoyed the reduced priced drinks at the local 'Apteekki'. Another round of sauna party was organized later, together with other students.

When we woke up, it was beautiful sunshine and spring weather, ideal for a city rally. We had to discover places and solve IQ puzzles in two groups. It was great fun, especially when we had to test local food (such as trout and reindeer) at the market. We spend a wonderful time at the small ice skating court set up in front of the central train station. It was great fun, especially for those, who had skates on their legs for the first time. Some of the organizers had the idea to offer us a Finish Christmas party as a local attraction, so we were told to bring some small presents. Indeed that night, Santa came upon to us. We listened to Christmas songs, baked biscuits, sat on Santa's lap and so on.

After not having too much of sleep, we visited the Technical museum at the Arabia district of the city. The interactive museum offered a lot of setups, games and lectures on the general development of engineering. In the afternoon, we decided to take the ferry back to Soumelinna in our free time. It was much better weather this time, and we were amazed by the huge (12-14 stored) ferries leaving to Stockholm and Tallinn. We started the party at Emmi's nice new flat with a dinner, and then moved on to the student party at Club Onnela.

Finally the time arrived to go to Tallinn! We took one of the big Viking Liners (Rosella) to cross the bay. The three-hour-long trip is like a floating pub, as the people are able to buy duty free drinks. A lot of students get really drunk by the time they arrive to the other end. A few guys met us from LC Tallinn to show around, but later I also met a lot of old friends at St. Patrick pub. The ferry only left in the morning, but we had to board in the evening already, therefore we did party on it, meeting some nice Finish people. After a week of no sleeping, it took us some effort to get ready for the farewell party. We have been cooking at another place also designated for students, and gave our presents to the organizers for providing us this wonderful week. Later, we moved to one of the elite Student Guild's Pub, to taste a lot of specialties e.g. Jalovinka with coffee.



It was an incredible week, full of amusement and fun. I will ever be grateful to those nice people there, and can only recommend to go to any event of LC Helsinki!

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Pictures: www.challenge24.org/gallery/finland