

MICE Supporting Program – Spring in Zurich **Exploring Zurich With Students From the EESTech Challenge**

“Where is Elsa?” was the title of this year’s final of the EESTech Challenge, a contest organized by the Electrical Engineering Students’ European Association (EESTEC). Students from 12 different countries traveled to Switzerland to put their programming skills to the test in the halls of the ETH. The task: to create a cow recognition program – like a face recognition program, only with cows – within a period of 24 hours. On the day after the Challenge, the Zürich Tourism Convention Bureau invited the participants and organizers to a day packed with adventure and activity to give them the opportunity to see Zurich outside of the ETH.

The day begins with a lavish breakfast at the idyllically located Juckerhof farm in Seegräben. Here the students fortify themselves for the coming day. The extensive buffet comprises fresh bread rolls, tasty Bircher muesli, vibrantly colored fruit and a host of other culinary delights that have been grown, harvested, processed and baked at the Juckerhof. The only wish that is left unfulfilled is to have more room in their stomachs to be able to sample a bit of everything.

But there is anyway no time for that. For as soon as all the participants have drunk their second coffee and are slowly starting to wake up, the Farmyard Olympic Games commence. Here the students have the opportunity to demonstrate what other talents they have away from the computer screen and keyboard. With cheerful earnestness, they compete in the disciplines, “Nail hammering”, “Horseshoe throwing” and “Cow milking” – whereby for the last of these fortunately an artificial cow is used, which is promptly christened “Elsa”.

After the prize-giving ceremony, the students leave the muddy country life behind them and return to the firm ground of the city, where e-bikes and e-scooters are standing ready to take them on a tour of the city. The latter prove particularly popular, for hardly anyone in the group has ever had a ride on one. The procession of electrically powered vehicles follows the knowledgeable and informative tour guides on a route from Mythenquai via car-free cycle paths along the lake, across the Limmat river to Sechseläutenplatz, and from there through the narrow winding streets and large squares of Zurich’s historical Old Town.

Finally, the entourage returns to the lakeshore, where the MS Etzel is waiting for them. This beautiful boat dating from 1934 takes them on a leisurely cruise on the lake, during which they regain their strength with a healthy and varied buffet from the Gärtnerei restaurant. Dessert is provided by the Confiserie Sprüngli, whose famous light and airy Luxemburgerli macarons are savored on the after-deck and are almost blown away by the wind. This sweet treat signals the end of the cruise, and the group returns to dry land with well-filled stomachs.

Social Programs, Zürich, Switzerland.

Awaiting them here is the almost 90-old “Elephant”, a beautiful old-timer tram, whose interior is predominantly made from timber. As soon as everyone is seated, this sprightly pensioner trundles off along the streets of Zurich on an hour-long round trip, taking in some of the city’s main sights along the way – free from the crowds and commuter stress.

After the tram ride, the students stretch their legs by heading up to the Lindenhof on foot, while a tour guide tells them all kinds of interesting facts and figures about Zurich – for example, that Europe’s largest church tower clock, the one on St Peter’s Church, has a diameter of 8.64 meters. At the top, they are rewarded with a magnificent view over the city, accompanied by a taste of Turicum gin and Taucherli chocolate, both products that originate in Zurich and delight everyone’s taste buds.

However, it is advisable not to go over the top with the gin, for the last activity on the program needs a clear mind and some clever thinking! In the course of a scavenger hunt by ZURICHescape, the participants are required to solve tricky puzzles within 90 minutes in order to track down robbers, extraterrestrial aliens and elderly grandmothers. They summon up their last reserves of energy – after all, the existence of the planet is at stake!

After this heroic finale, the students are completely exhausted. They bid their farewells and go off to relax and spend the evening as they wish. They continue discussing the many different things they have experienced during the day, and sample one or two more specialties from the City on the Limmat. This day is guaranteed to remain in their memories for a long time to come.

Contact

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