

# the INSIDER

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Stockholm School of Economics in Riga

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DEAR READERS,

AFTER GRADUATION, YOU CAN CHANGE MANY HOMES BUT ONE WILL ALWAYS BE  
HERE... WELCOME HOME DEAR ALUMNI!

WE KNOW YOU MISSED US,

THE INSIDERS

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE INSIDER CHALLENGE 2011 OPEN!

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND WANT TO  
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COMMUNICATIVE, IF YOU HAVE CRAZY IDEAS AND A LAP-TOP TO  
IMPLEMENT THEM, IF YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF THE MOST OPEN-  
MINDED TEAM AT SSE RIGA...

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- 3) GET ELECTED AND BECOME THE 3RD POWER OF SSE RIGA.

## MORTEN'S COLUMN

### BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

CURRENT STUDENTS ARE OBVIOUSLY VERY IMPORTANT TO ME AND TO THE SCHOOL IN GENERAL. BUT FORMER STUDENTS, I.E. ALUMNI, ARE VERY IMPORTANT, TOO. ALUMNI NEED THE SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PERFORM WELL (WHICH WE HOPE IT DOES...) AND EVEN DEVELOP – THIS INCREASES THE VALUE OF THE SSE RIGA DIPLOMA FOR ALUMNI. LIKEWISE, WE AT THE SCHOOL NEED ALUMNI TO PERFORM WELL – THIS ENHANCES OUR EFFORTS TO MARKET THIS SCHOOL AS A SUCCESSFUL PLACE FOR HIGH-LEVEL EDUCATION IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS. WHAT IS GOOD FOR ALUMNI IS GOOD FOR US, WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE SCHOOL IS GOOD FOR ALUMNI – WE HAVE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP THRIVING ON PARETO IMPROVEMENTS!



ON SOME OCCASIONS I HAVE BEEN TO TALLINN AND VILNIUS TO MEET OUR ALUMNI THERE; IN SEPTEMBER I HAD A GREAT TIME TOGETHER WITH THE NEWLY FORMED SSE RIGA ALUMNI ORGANIZATION FOR THE UK IN LONDON – IT WAS REALLY GREAT TO MEET SO MANY FORMER STUDENTS FROM MANY DIFFERENT YEARS OF GRADUATION AND SEE HOW WELL THEY DID AND HOW SUCCESSFUL THEY WERE. MEETING IN A PUB DIDN'T HURT EITHER...

SO, CONSIDER ME GAME FOR A PRESENTATION WHEN THE SSE RIGA ALUMNI ORGANIZATION FOR, SAY, RIO DE JANEIRO OPENS!

MY BEST GREETINGS TO ALL OUR CURRENT STUDENTS BUT ALSO TO OUR ALUMNI, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT HoCo IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!



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BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Dear all,

The first study months have ended and the first exams have passed - it is now time for a small break. This small break is HomeComing, the event that everybody is looking forward to. The event where our Alumni visit SSER, meet professors and share their experience with us. Students will also be able to meet the graduates and hear their success stories – it is the perfect place to get a glimpse of your future and gain valuable contacts.

HoCo is similar to life – it is always changing, improving, providing new perspectives. This year it will be full of events: starting with guest lectures and forums and ending with a great party in SSE Riga. Four days with various events.

Moreover, on the 5th and the 6th of November the second Junior PeakTime event will be held and the Global Entrepreneurship week will end with one of the best start-up events: Garage48.

The Student Association is now finalizing all the projects that have been started. Moreover, we are developing a clear vision and devising a route for the new SA board, hence the next board will have a well-developed base to continue improving and building up the organization.

The main projects that have been under development and will be concluded soon, are:

1) Alumni database opening; 2) SA Timeline (for more information look for the article “SA Time around”); 3) Leisure room renovation; 4) MIRA database; 5) Key account strategy; 6) Update of the SA articles; 6) Cooperation plan with the SSER mentor club and RGSL SA and 7) long-term SA development strategy.

Moreover, there will be some special surprises from the SA until the end of the year, so be around and follow the latest updates.

“All human power is a compound of time and patience.”

*/Honore De Balzac/*

Yours sincerely,

President of Student Association 2011/2012

Rihards Strenga





Dear all,

We are happy to say that the work of Peak Time organizing team is gaining momentum. A lot has to be done before the winter break, therefore phones are ringing nonstop, e-mails are coming and going, ideas are buzzing around. The first wave of promotion will already start in a week, during which universities around the world will be introduced to this unique business competition. The promo video is getting its final touches and will be ready to see the daylight in just a few days.

Besides, they say that Peak Time is planning to break a record this year! A small sneak peek: start practicing to stand on one leg. Keep updated and follow the news online to be the first one to know what is happening next.

Wishing you all the best, and have a nice Homecoming!

Peak Time 2012 organizers



POKER CLUB

This year the SSE Riga poker club has a new sponsor Trio Bet, which is one of the leading totalizator and poker site in the Baltics. They are sponsoring all the events which are related to poker in school. The first tournament this year was in Summer Symposium and right now we have been organizing tournaments almost every week in the school. This year we are playing only on real poker tables, which is also a brand new experience in SSE Riga. Few weeks back there was the first online freeroll for SSE Riga students. Only 19 people attended the event, but next time we hope for a larger amount of people. Maybe some already know that there will be the Latvian Poker Championship in the beginning of December, Trio Bet has kindly agreed to sponsor some of the SSE Riga students participating in the tournament or to give satellite tickets to the event, but more information will follow as all of you will get the possibility to take part in this event.

SSE Riga Poker Club



Even though autumn has arrived and delights us with its beauty, the Investment Fund is engaged on a massive range of duties, which has resulted in some very fruitful outcomes. Firstly, intense work is being done on the new Investment Game platform which is said to be the most convenient, user-friendly and interactive platform that has ever existed. This excitement cannot be passed over in words so you will have to see it for yourself on March 12 when the game shall open. Secondly, we have almost finalized with our main supporters: this year they will be Linedata, Gild Bankers, American Embassy and Orion Securities, but still the place for the golden partner is vacant, and much work is being done to fill this place. Furthermore, for the first time in the last three years, the current iFund board will have its own portfolio, and hence engage in stock pitching, analysis and trading. Your help will also be of major importance, so stay tuned for the news regarding new positions. Lastly, 3 introductory seminars on financial markets have been held, which now will be followed by several exciting guest lectures held not only by our current students and alumni, but also representatives from well-renowned banks in Latvia, giving presentations on very interesting topics. But these are only our short-term goals and we will keep you updated on many interesting things related to Economics and Finance.

Cheers,  
Investment Fund



DAYS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Dear SSE Riga students,

We are very happy to announce that new, enthusiastic, hardworking and absolutely awesome junior coordinators have joined our team. March 30th is approaching, so we have a lot of work to do. Right now we are in the process of contacting companies, searching for the best guest lecturers and universities. The name of the first guest lecturer is already known, but this secret is going to be revealed a bit later. For now our suggestion is – do not leave for tomorrow what you can do today or start thinking about CV entries right now!

Always caring,  
Days of Opportunities team



PAUSE.MOVIE TIME

Many have heard of Pause.MovieTime, but not everyone has heard about its recent success. "The attendance has been simply superb," says Alexander Koshelev, president of Pause.MovieTime association, Latvia. "It increased tenfold. Indeed, if there was ever a great time for movies, it is now. This is truly the second golden age for cinema". Frequent moviegoers have also noticed an increase in the organization's popularity: "The place is constantly packed", says Dima L., who happens to be doing the assignment, next to me. "They should make this an mandatory course!" "Of course, free flicks and drinks are great, but the reason I do it, is for the fans" Alexander admits.



BEFS 2012 team is in the „Hard work, work, work!“ mode now, thus a lot has been done and now we want to tell you about it. :)

First of all, associates for three main positions have been selected. It is our pleasure to announce that these people will take part in organizing Baltic Economic Forum for Students 2012:

**Organizers team:** Toms Andersons, Edgaras Marcinkus, Žygimantas Naudžiūnas, Rene Botvin, Lauma Vernere.

**Fundraising team:** Alina Morozova, Armands Ikaunieks, Artūrs Dzenis, Diana Mitroškina.

**Media/communication team:** Anastasija Matvejeva, Kevin Kaarma, Juozas Rimgaila.

Congratulations to you all, guys! :)

The second thing worth mentioning is the beginning of the collaboration with SSE Riga EMBA students. Some of the EMBA Y2s have already expressed their willingness to be involved in BEFS 2012. They have wide networks and experience; we have ideas and willingness to make them come true. The event promises to be awesome.

Third, our fundraising and media campaign is about to start. So if you want to see us in some particular magazine, newspaper or TV show, don't be shy and drop us a line! Reminder: the topic of the event is ENERGY. It doesn't mean that we will spend 3 days talking about oil and gas, but also alternative energy and what using it means in an economic context. Thus we would like to ask you to tell us about your special expectations about subjects to be discussed.

Have a nice day!

Yours, BEFS team

Olga, Domas, Aleksandras

## NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS



DEBATE SOCIETY

Hello, Ladies and Gentlemen. The Debate Society has been really busy lately – with the Practice Tournament finished, SSE Riga IV is just around the corner ( 9-10th of December). The CA and the DCA for this tournament will be Hugh Burns and Martin Kūusmaa accordingly. The preparations are going very smoothly and, with the sponsorship deal with LMT secured, participants can expect great quality. Also, the DS is planning to host a public debate the details of which will be published later on. On the session front – beginner debaters are improving steadily and we hope to see good performance in upcoming debates.



Enchantée! JeJoue has started off early this year and the preparations for the main event are well underway – 'the stages of life' has already been chosen as the main topic and the fundraising team is searching for new sponsors. Not only that, but some other activities have started – if you want to sing or play an instrument, the orchestra will surely welcome you. Remember – partying is not the only way to have fun, there is also JeJoue!



CHARITY CLUB

Dear SSE Riga!

The Charity Club has now started working on several ideas, events and projects. We also hope that some other people will join us in some of them. The closest ones will be visiting a dog shelter, blood donation day and Christmas event for orphanage „Zīlūks”. If you have not signed up for the Charity Club but still want to participate, please, do not hesitate and write Laura.Danberga@gmail.com or Liene.Putnina@gmail.com.

See you there!  
Your Charity Club

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## Junior is Growing

Junior Peak Time is a high school student business competition for Baltic states' pupils. Happened just for the second time, Junior Peak Time 2011 has already grown and expanded. The attention to the event was caught even outside the Baltics, having applicants from Azerbaijan and Sweden. Even more exciting is that the final event gathered top 40 high school students in Riga not only for one day, but for the whole weekend! So, November 5-6th was marked in the calendar with more international, expanded, longer and throughout improved Junior Peak Time 2011!

## Best ones of the Best

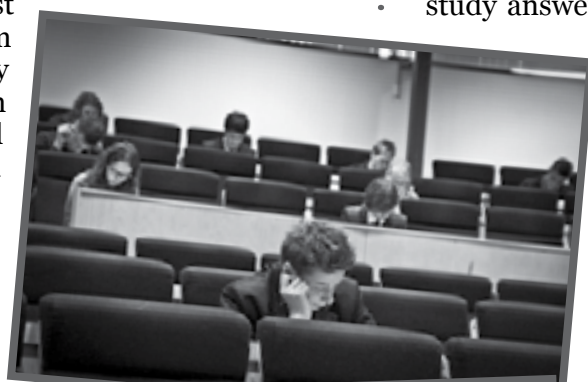
In total, there were almost 500 applicants, of whom 120 solved the preliminary tasks. Thus, the selection procedure for the final event was really tough and intense. So, in the list for the final event there were 22 Latvians, 12 pupils from Lithuania, 3 from Estonia and the remaining 3 were Swedes.

During the finals students were challenged both individually and in a group task. Junior Peak Time's intellectual partner, a consulting company Civitta prepared highly qualified and demanding tasks, which were a good test to find out who is the best of the bests. Finally, after a lot of discussions in the jury room, the decision was made. Congratulations to the winners!

**1st place – Paulius Urbonas**

**2nd place – Toms Niparts**

**3rd place – Rūta Gabaliņa**



## From a Pen to a Golden flashlight

Even though Junior Peak Time is a business competition, during various activities finalists proved that they are not only pure economists, but also creative and bright young minds. In the end of the 1st day pupils were competing in bargaining and photo games. Crazy pictures, big smiles and sparkling eyes revealed that they had tones of fun. Would YOU be able to get a golden flashlight, a pack of cigars or a hot hotdog?

Moreover, students had a possibility to listen and learn from the guest speakers. Morten Hansen slew the audience with his charm whereas Uldis Pavuls introduced the participants with the main team building cornerstones. Zigurds Zakis' lecture about marketing opportunities was a good hint to the case study answers and Pavels Jurjans shared his opinion about board games. So now I ask you, would YOU be bored from that many activities?

## Goodies and Prizes

The event would not have been a joy neither for the organizers nor for the participants should not there have been companies supporting Junior Peak Time in all possible ways. A special thank you goes to SSE Riga for its all-around support in the organizational process, and the Student Association together with their general sponsor Ernst & Young. Talking about the most fascinating thing – prizes: Nordic Training International not only awarded the best performer with 500 euros, but also provided board games for the most creative team during the games. Also, Junior Peak Time say thanks to Fazer, Annele,

Tymbark, Unilever, Microsoft, May-28th, draugiem.lv, Unusual-Projects, Swedbank and E-klase.

*Junior Peak Time 2011 climbed one more step towards the Peak. There is no doubt this journey will continue next year bringing new challenges, new opportunities and new friends. Let all the upcoming events be even more exciting and fascinating than the previous ones!*

Truly yours,

Junior Peak Time 2011 organizing board





# EVERY DAY I'M EBP!

This is a cult phrase widely known among all Y1s this year. Since the famous compendiums were introduced, EBP has become not only one of the most time-consuming courses but also one of the most attractive ones.

## Caution: Advertisement!

For some weeks the facebook news feed had become 10% news from friends and 90% updates from Y1 EBP companies. The nicest memories can still be found on facebook where the promotional pictures of **LightsOff** sleeping masks with earplugs (guys, I got one, they're really cheap and awesome!) show our friend Pushkin from the neighboring park with an amazing hippy-style sleeping mask. Another thing to definitely search for are the promotional animation videos of **Ne(LV)e design**. They got a bottle of delicious Italian red wine for the videos! Even in our lobby we can still observe some leftovers of Y1 E-Challenge promotional campaigns – the flyers made from Belarusian money by Twinkle accessories or the illegally printed trollars promoting **GetABagde.ucoz.lv** were an important part of our school life presented to our prospective students on Open Doors Day on Oct 24., 2011.

## Make use of EBP

How can you make use of something like this? I bet that each true SSE Rigan has visited Shot Café, Mojo, Pussy lounge or Spot at least once. **Party. Upgraded** offers you a discount card for all these places. They also have a facebook page where you can see more detailed benefits and purchase the card.



**Hey, Anders! Wazzup?** a new photo shooting service was offered to foreign visitors by **Riga Tourist**. The idea was to offer tourists to take

photos of them in the middle of art nouveau. To enable this, they were guided to the 3rd floor of SSE and the photographer was taking pictures of them from the outside. While a Swedish couple was walking up the stairs and listening to our Lithuanians telling the history of SSE, Anders Paazlow was passing by and one of the

guides said: "Oh, by the way, this is our rector, Anders Paazlow." The Swedish reacted very unexpectedly: "Who? Where! Get

this guy here!" They turned out to be former classmates of our rector at SSE Stockholm and haven't known anything about each other for some 20 years!



**People, be kind!** Some of our EBP projects were non-profit oriented charity organizations. For example, **BuyADream** was selling printed postcards of orphans' dreams painted by children from foster home "Imanta". All profit was redirected to support this foster home; no revenue was kept for the organizers.

## Who will eat lunch with Diana and Anders?

**Eco lover** - the most ecological and the least Latvian-speaking E-Challenge company led by German exchanges. They produced handmade eco textile bags and, even though the price was obviously too high for the local market and sales were lower than expected because the Latvian suppliers were selling them materials for 'tourist prices', our friends successfully developed an internet network and exported their bags to Germany, Austria, France and even Mexico.



## Who was the Best?

Who was the best? The main prize was obtained by **E-barters.lv** – a company that offered an online platform to assist its users in exchanging large pieces of furniture and household appliances, also offering transportation assistance. The prize was an active team entertainment pack which included carting, paintball and climbing. The team was invited to the business lab and is working hard on completing all the legal formalities to officially open the project webpage.

And finally – we wish all our EBP projects who decided to continue their operations good luck and hope to hear of their further success very soon!

# LILI KIRIKAL'S STORY

After her graduation from SSE Riga in 2006 Lili started her career at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) audit department. After four months of experience in audit she moved to PwC Transaction Advisory department. Afterwards, after 1.5 years spent with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Lili accepted an offer from Ernst & Young (EY) and joined EY Transaction Advisory department as a Manager. Less than two years later, after reorganizations at EY during the financial downturn, Lili became the head of the EY Transaction Advisory team in Estonia. Today, she is a Senior Manager.

## • Why did things change so fast?

The key words are:

**Economic boom** – I started working at the time when young and energetic people were in high demand and were promoted at incredibly fast pace.

**Eagerness to learn and develop** – I was extremely eager to learn everything very quickly and took full responsibility for all tasks, which was warmly welcomed by my employers during the times when there was a lot of work to be done.

**Financial downturn** – during reorganizations my immediate superiors left the company and, as I was the most senior person in our team, I took over the leading role.

**SSE Riga** – no kidding, I really mean it. Without the strong theoretical financial background I believe I could not have learned new things so fast. This factor was really crucial to me.

## • What is it that you like so much about your work?

My work in the EY Transaction Advisory department includes everything that is related to transactions – running sell-side or buy-side M&A processes; performing valuations of companies and preparing financial forecasts; doing the pre-deal due diligence (i.e. financial investigation) of companies; and assisting at the restructurings of companies.

I like that there is no routine in my work. Due to the



small size of the Baltic countries and their markets you need to specialize in all the areas I outlined above and not in one specific industry. Therefore, there is never any threat that new projects will be just like the old ones. The best thing about it is that there is a continuous learning process. I know that I will probably never truly learn all aspects of my work.

That may sound scary from the first glance but after you take into consideration that I work at the global company Ernst & Young, it is more a challenge than a scare. This means that I need to make just one phone call to reach a person who has enormous experience in almost any specific area or industry which I need to analyze and this person is always gladly willing to help our team. Having said this I must say that people I work with are the most important part of my work and it is really important to work in the environment where you feel good about the people around you.

## • That sounds like a lot of work...

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True, but does it mean that work was the only thing in my life? Far from it!

Those who remember me from the SSE Riga choir know that I adore choir singing: I have been singing in choirs since I was five and today I am a member of the Estonian Concert Choir - one of the five professional choirs in Estonia. In addition, I sing in the Estonian Television Girls Choir and the performances and choir trips really demand a lot of my time. But I enjoy every minute of it!

Another big hobby that I have is teaching. I got the first try of teaching when I was a Teaching Assistant at SSE Riga of the Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and the Options part of the Finance courses. I liked it so much that I could not stop teaching after that. I have taught "Basics of Finance" at Tallinn Technical University. I have delivered presentations and trainings on valuation theories and practices at various business conferences and I have also returned to SSE Riga to examine the Finance course term papers.

Recently I also took on studying again. Namely, for two years now I am a student of a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) program. Next year in June I hope to take the third and final exam.

## • What about free time?

Managing all of this is definitely not an easy task and I must thank my husband Ülar for understanding and supporting me all the time. Ülar graduated from SSE Riga a year before I did and he is directly responsible for my joining SSE Riga. We got married after I finished my second year at SSE Riga. Ülar is also fond of choir inging. :)

## • What's next?

Who knows? I recall that I wrote in my SSE Riga 3<sup>rd</sup> year Yearbook page: "(...) it feels like the entire world is open to me". I still feel that way and like the feeling. :)

## • Some words to the current students of SSE Riga?

Whatever you decide to do, do it the best way you can. If you do so, you will find yourself being good at this and others will notice and value it too. The positive emotion you get from this will ensure you like what you are doing and the sparkle in your eyes will never dim. I promise you that!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [lili.kirikal@mail.ee](mailto:lili.kirikal@mail.ee). I will try to respond to you.

## MASTER STUDY PROJECT

# INSEAD FROM THE INSIDE

Walking 800 km on foot is not the only example of what a person dedicated to an individual goal can do. Jonas Lubys, class of 2004, managed to get to INSEAD, an MBA programme ranked top 5 worldwide and top 2 in Europe, according to the 2011 Financial Times Global MBA Rankings. He spent six years at a Lithuanian investment banking & private equity firm Zabolis Partners and is now set for a truly international career.

### • Was a decision to get an MBA planned or did it come to your mind because of a certain reason? Why did you choose INSEAD?

My plan after SSER was to get a few years of work experience in the Baltics and then move to an international career. A graduate degree was to facilitate such a transition.

A large part of success in applications to MBA programmes is luck; therefore I diversified and applied to six business schools. My choices were limited to top schools in the US and Europe as they offer a significant advantage when it comes to recruitment. A note of caution: while the MBA rankings do not accurately reflect the real status of the programmes, there is a rather uniform opinion among recruiters.

With almost a thousand MBA students graduating each year, INSEAD has the strongest alumni network in Europe which I found incredibly helpful in a job search. It is a one-year programme that helps you save both time and money. Although INSEAD is a consulting powerhouse (13% of graduates join McKinsey) and is not as suitable for a transition to investment banking as LBS, I felt I had enough finance experience and education already.



• **What are the differences between MBA and MSc degrees? Does it require some certain previous experience and does it give you any special benefits?**

What are the differences between MBA and MSc degrees? Does it require some certain previous experience and does it give you any special benefits? MBA is a degree designed to prepare students for a career in business, and the programme is very practical and focused on real-life cases and application. Most of the students come from non-business backgrounds and transition to consulting, banking, or industry roles. As other business schools, INSEAD requires prior job experience, e.g. at INSEAD I have not met anyone with less than three years of experience, while the average is six years.

Besides work experience requirements, MBA is a significant investment – total budget for top programs is €70.000-€100.000, and scholarships are limited (although loans are available at most schools). The rationale for such investment is career progression. E.g. in investment banking the entry level for candidates with a MSc is Analyst, while for MBAs it is Associate which allows to skip three most exhausting years in an investment banking career.

• **When did you start to look for information about MBA? What was your main turning point?**

I stayed up-to-date since my graduation from SSER and tried to keep in touch with people who have gone through MBA.

• **What is the admission process at INSEAD like? What was the hardest part you had to get through in order to enter one of the top business schools?**

Admission process includes a GMAT test, an extensive application form with six essays, two recommendations, and two interviews. For me the most difficult part was the essays – both the content and the form. Business schools evaluate applicants by making sure they check all the boxes, so candidates have to demonstrate significant achievements at work, leadership in extracurricular activities, and strong academic performance. Even if you have great

examples illustrating these achievements, it takes a surprisingly large amount of time to convey them convincingly on paper. Some of my classmates at INSEAD have spent months polishing their essays with specialised advisors.

• **Could you tell more about the financial side?**

The fees for the MBA programme are €56.000, while living expenses for 10 months are about €25.000. Some 20% of students receive scholarships, which usually cover a portion of the fees. A loan

program (without a co-signer) is available to cover about €30.000 of expenses. Most of the students rely on their personal savings; however INSEAD goes at great lengths to find need-based scholarships

for admitted students who otherwise could not attend the program. Although the investment is considerable, the average gross annual salary after graduation is €85.000 (plus bonus).

**“EVEN IF YOU HAVE GREAT EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS, IT TAKES A SURPRISINGLY LARGE AMOUNT OF TIME TO CONVEY THEM CONVINCINGLY ON PAPER.”**



• **Could you please tell more about the study process at INSEAD? How does Master degree programme differ from Bachelor? How long are the studies? Where do you study?**

INSEAD MBA is an intense programme that lasts ten months. It has two intakes: one in September, and one in January. The January intake has a two months summer break, which is used for an internship by half of the students.

The first four months are meant to give the basis



of business education to all students (accounting, finance, economics, marketing, strategy). It is similar to SSER curriculum, although more practical and focused on real life cases and class discussion. Learning from other students who come from 80 nationalities and have on average six years of work experience is indeed rewarding, as one can learn first-hand about ethical dilemmas of a Wall Street banker, take an inside look at the strategy of Microsoft, or find out how small businesses in Indonesia navigate corrupt bureaucracy.

The remaining six months of the programme are based on electives. INSEAD is especially strong in strategy and entrepreneurship, though some of the most popular courses include private equity, advanced corporate finance, and marketing.

As in SSER, most of the coursework is done in teams (four to six). Exams constitute maybe a third of the grading, the rest being reports, class participation, and simulation games.

INSEAD MBAs have an opportunity to study in two campuses – one in Fontainebleau (60 km from Paris), another in Singapore. Most of the students switch campuses during the course of the programme, and professors fly in and out – creating the atmosphere of one school. Having spent my first ten months in Europe, I am escaping the coming winter and flying to Singapore until graduation in December.

**• Overall, did you like the atmosphere and people at the school?**

I strongly believe that the culture at INSEAD is different. Social life is considered as important (if not more important) as academics. Alumni say that formulas and frameworks are quickly forgotten, but relationships will last a lifetime. Traveling across Europe and Asia every weekend is the norm,

as are chateau parties, masquerade balls, house dinners, cocktails, and other social events. The level of inclusiveness is surprising – everyone is invited, whatever the occasion. The culture is cooperative and not competitive, and arrogance is quickly noticed and made the target of public ridicule. At the same time, the calibre of people is exceptionally high, as illustrated by placements to top consulting, banking, and private equity firms.

**• Can you remember any funny moment from your studies at INSEAD?**



Probably the funniest experience was a surprise birthday party organized by my team mates. They managed to locate my house in the middle of Fontainebleau forest, climb a two meter wall, escape an angry dog, wake up my neighbours in the middle of the night to find out which room I stay in, and present me with a bottle of champagne and a birthday cake. We stayed up until the wee hours,

despite of the fact that one of my friends was the co-president of the INSEAD Private Equity club and was hosting Steve Schwarzman (CEO of Blackstone) the next day!

**• What are your plans for the future regarding education and career?**

In summer interned at Deutsche Bank in London, in investment banking. Most likely I will be joining Deutsche Bank after graduation.

**• What could you tell SSE Riga students who are now on the stage where you used to stand some time ago?**

Contrary to my feeling just after SSER, life is proving to be not a sprint but a marathon. Direction and persistence appear to be more important than the first 100 meters!

JEKATERINA FJODOROVA





# EXCHANGE „MYTHBUSTERS”

I'm willing to help!" ...with silently implied "unless it gives points"... is up to become the most common phrase among Y2s until the end of the fall semester! What is the reason for such an intensive flow of altruism? Just the same as why so many Y3s are missing now and keep spamming your Facebook accounts with the spiciest updates from abroad. Yes, it's time to talk about the EXCHANGE!

## Vova & Jegors (Sciences Po, France)

Ranking first in my today's "MythBusters" reading-show is a well-known Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (aka Sciences Po, France). Each year SSE Rigans strive to get there, deliberately learning French and doing perfect in their degrees - all to get accepted to the university with the "most difficult programme", studying where is said to be "the most prestigious and posh" out of all universities included in the Erasmus offered list of the partner-universities... This year our Paris-conquerors are Vladimirs Zlotnikovs and Jegors Ivanovs, who kindly agreed to share their fabulous experience.

With no longer due, let's crash the biggest delusion of Science Po - its ultra-high & hard level of studies! For Vladimirs the programme is easy because most of the economic courses are very similar to what we have in Y2, thus not many new things to learn. Nevertheless, the native programme is way tougher and is quite politicized. Jegors still seems to be satisfied with the subjects he took: out of the 5 chosen classes only one seems to be not cool. For the future "Science Po-ers" he highly recommends the class called the World of French Wine (given you like wine, of course :)).

However, you don't quite communicate with French people because they mostly take courses in French and not in English. Still, you definitely won't feel the lack of communication as the exchanges from all over the world (from Brazil to Australia) are coming to Science Po. Plus, there are a lot of extra-curricular clubs and societies (over 100), from a debating club and dozens of sports activities to AIESEC

and JeJoue-style cultural organizations, although the majority of clubs make you practice French no matter whether you were planning to do it or not... :)

As for the financing issues, apart from the Erasmus grant, Jegors revealed a nice opportunity: "2 banks pay me 90 euro each for me being their customer (I call it free lunch in Paris)!"

It's important to mention that although Paris turned out to be not that much expensive, unless what you are paying for is labour-intensive (café, hairdressers, etc), the accommodation in Paris is a real pain, so one should find it quite in advance (feel free to contact Vladimirs and Jegors for help). But once you are there - huge opportunities to travel appear as Paris is a major European transport hub. Germany,

Spain, Italy, UK - you can get to all these countries really cheap if plane/train tickets are booked on time.

How crazy is our fellows' experience there? Jegors got stopped by the police on

the way home from a massive party with a Velib' bike. He was crossing the street next to the Eiffel tower on the red light with a girl sitting in the basket of a bike. Oh boy, this was a good soup! P.S. There really are quite a few attractive mademoiselles in that place! ;)



Note for the potential candidates: If you want to study hard, this place is not for you! If you want to party, explore culture, and travel - Paris is close to ideal (if only the prices were a bit lower..)



## Kamilė & Edvins

(University of Akureyro, Iceland)

Let's meet the reality: even if the most effort-demanding university turned out to be not so tough, the exchange semester must mostly appear like a vacation abroad. Going to a warm country on the seaside or to a mountainous place for skiing and snowboarding, or to a travelling & transportation centre, flying elsewhere all the time - all of these options seem quite attractive. But who would freely choose a volcanic land with a cold climate in the middle of nowhere?! Our second "MythBuster" page today is devoted to ICELAND (University of Akureyri) with the warm greetings from Kamilė Jociūtė and Edvins Elferts.

It might seem that there is nothing to do in Iceland comparing to other countries, but the truth is the opposite. Just in a couple of months Kamilė managed to do an impressive list of crazy things: swimming in a cave with naturally hot water, attempting to catch a sheep (and witnessing Edvins actually catching one!), walking around on a glacier, hiking to the top of a waterfall during heavy rain and wind, river rafting, whale watching, living with a Latvian from debate society and, of course, the good old "climbing a fence to take a shortcut home"! Sounds fun & inspiring, right?



Speaking about the place, Akureyri is a small city even measuring by the Baltic scale, however, it is possible to find neat places to hang out as well as enjoy live music events that take place each weekend. If there's a need for crazy partying, it's always possible to go to Reykjavik, the capital. As eating out and drinks are very expensive, people just tend to have house parties and the neighbours do not seem to care. In general, people there are extremely helpful, plus, everyone speaks English, even the majority of senior citizens. Still, the younger ones are sometimes quite random and have a very different set of values than people back home. But you were seeking for exotics, right?



Turning to the "Study hard" part: courses, many of which are interconnected, are less stressed than in SSE Riga, however, there is still work to do as

most of the lecturers give weekly assignments. The university itself has an almost sterile environment, is very well-equipped and has a lot of places where to hide when one wants to study. (Many dream about this while fighting with noisy crowds in Amica, making futile attempts to learn at least something!) The library holds books in mostly Icelandic; however, the university has access to a number of great databases, from Jstor, to EBSCOhost, the second one being an irreplaceable helper with the BSc Thesis. And you won't believe it, but you literally get the responses to emails and solve the problems lightning-fast - that's what low bureaucracy means!

As for the financing issues - the exchange trip to Iceland is partly covered by the Erasmus grant, but the place is really expensive when it comes to consumer goods. In addition, flights are quite costly to mainland Europe, however, it's relatively cheap to go to the USA, because, well, you're almost halfway there! Of course, there are lots of interesting things to see in Iceland, some very close (an hour drive from Akureyri), others on the opposite side of the island.

Note for the applicants: This is not the place you go for a crazy party all year long (please go to Southern Europe for these things), this is the place you go to have adventures with heavy snowfall in October, geysers, volcanoes (one threatening to erupt any time now) and hot springs all over the place!

More exchange stories are coming in the next issue: Stay tuned and choose your dream destination! ;)

SANTA KRATULE

THE INSIDER 13

# GOSSIP\*

\* WARNING. THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIALS WHICH SOME READERS MAY FIND OFFENSIVE. THE INSIDER TEAM DOES NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTENT APPEARING HERE AND THE ACTIONS THAT MIGHT HAPPEN BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AFTER READING THE GOSSIP PAGE. IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU CAN BE OFFENDED IN ANY WAY, SKIP THIS PAGE. AND REMEMBER, THIS IS JUST FOR FUN :)

THEY SAY THAT IT IS NOT COOL TO SAVE 20 SEATS IN SOROS FOR YOUR 5 RUSSIAN FRIENDS.

THEY SAY PEOPLE TALK ONLY WHEN ALCOHOL CIRCULATES THROUGH THEIR BLOOD.

THEY SAY EVEN POLICE ATTENDED SCHOOL'S DORMITORIES HELLOWEEN PARTY.

THEY SAY 'DORMS' HELLOWEEN PARTY WAS MUCH BETTER THAN RGSL'S.

THEY SAY GERARD IS INVISIBLE MOST OF THE TIME

THEY SAY ZEMGUS AND EGIJA JUST WENT INTO ZEMGUS'S BEDROOM AND ZEMGUS CLOSED THE DOOR.

THEY SAY THAT IRINA FOR THE FIRST TIME HAS BEEN IN A PARTY ONLY WITH ONE GUY.

THEY SAY THAT NERIJUS(Y1) FARTS ALL THE TIME, EVEN WHEN HE'S ASLEEP. POOR ROOMMATES.

THEY SAY THAT YIS NEED A GLOWING SIGN SAYING "APPLAUSE" DURING MORTEN'S LECTURES BECAUSE SOME OF THEM COULD JUST CLAP NON-STOP.

THEY SAY KALVIS (Y1) WILL BE 'MORTEN'S MAN' ONLY WHILE HE IS NOT DRINKING HIS TEA AND EATING HIS TOMATOES.

THEY SAY AFTER GOPNIK PARTY POLICE FROM MASKACHKA HAS MOVED TO SSE.

THEY SAY THERE ARE NO SCHOOLS IN DAUGAVPILS.

IT SEEMS THAT SSER ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IN TIME TRAVEL - IMPORTANT ISSUES ARE TOLD TWO DAYS AFTER THE DEADLINE.

THEY SAY THAT THE "READING ARTICLES" EUPHEMISM IS SO WRONG. ..SO WRONG.

THEY SAY INGA (Y3) IS ACTUALLY A GEEK. CHECK HER FB WALL AND YOU'LL SEE.

THEY SAY THAT EVEN IN PARIS, JEGORS (Y3) MANAGES TO RETAIN HIS FAMOUS "I-EAT-LEMONS-THREE-TIMES-A-DAY" FACE EXPRESSION.

THEY SAY THAT IVAN'S (Y3) RISK PREFERENCES ARE TOO VOLATILE: RISK-AVERSE DURING WINTER, RISK-LOVING DURING SUMMER.

THEY SAY THAT IF KRISTS ONCE AGAIN INSULTS EDU.COM FOR HER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF EDUCATION,

HE WILL HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS!

THEY SAY THAT YEAR 2 SEEMS NOW MORE LIKE A SELF-STUDY YEAR.

THEY SAY THAT ECONOMETRICS THIS YEAR WAS THE MIRROR OF CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN LATVIA.

THEY SAY INGA JERZJUKOVA'S FACEBOOK "DISCUSSIONS" (AKA RANT) ARE EXTREMELY ENTERTAINING.

THEY SAY JULIJA (Y3) HAS SOME REALLY NICE ASSETS

THEY SAY THAT CLUB ESSENTIAL IS THE BEST PLACE FOR Y1 LATVIAN STUDENTS TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER REALLY CLOSELY.

THEY SAY THAT LIENE (Y2) ALWAYS COMES LATE. [...] FOR THE LECTURE.

THEY SAY THAT AFTER ECONOMETRICS COURSE THE SONG "I'M BLUE" HAS A WHOLE NEW MEANING.

THEY SAY RESEARCH METHODS IS A PAIN EVEN FOR Y3S.

THEY SAY MARTA'S (Y1) CODENAME IS "MUSHROOM"

THEY SAY NIKITA (Y2) SHOULD DISCOVER THE PURPOSE OF A SHOWER AGAIN...

THEY SAY HUSEYIN KNOWS WHERE THE ALBERT HOTEL IS...

THEY SAY NILS HAS A CRUSH ON SALIH.

THEY SAY SOME GIRLS IN SSE STILL DON'T KNOW TURKISH COFFEE.

THEY SAY THAT ECONOMETRICS IS BETTER THAN SEX.

THEY SAY EVGENIJ Y1 HAS THE SAME PACE AS DRIMTRIJ MEDVEDEV

THEY SAY VIKTORIA Y1 IN HER BATHROBE IS VERY HOT!

THEY SAY MADIS HASN'T SEEN HIS GIRLFRIEND FOR MORE THAN TWO MONTHS NOW: HE IS SO DESPERATE THAT WHENEVER HE LOOKS AT HIS MAP, HE ALWAYS SEARCHES FOR A BROTHEL IN THE FIRST PLACE :))

MADIS AND PAULIUS HAVE GOT ADDICTED TO ASIAN CHICKS. THEY NOW WANT TO STAY IN HONG KONG FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIFE

THEY SAY THAT MARTYNAS (Y2) CAN HURT PEOPLE BY THROWING MARSHMALLOWS AT THEM.



THEY SAY THAT LITTLE PRIEDITE IS JUST AS WILD AS THE BIGGER ONE WHEN WE TALK ABOUT PARTYING.

THEY SAY THAT FOR SOME OF US EVEN 759 FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK WON'T SAVE FROM THE FATE OF BEING FOREVER ALONE.

ALEKSANDRAS JOCIUS WAS AN AWESOME DJ IN ESSENTIAL ON A FRIDAY NIGHT.

THEY SAY THAT DOMINYKAS (Y2) CAN GIVE LESSONS IN HOW TO "INVEST" INTO A PARTICULAR RISKY "ASSET". THEY SAY HE CAN ALSO WRITE YOU A SWAP CONTRACT FOR THAT "ASSET"

THEY SAY JEKERTRINA FJODOVA IS A CUTE GIRL!

THEY SAY SOME OF Y1 CANDIDATES FOR SA PRESIDENT ARE NOW SAYING "HELLO" TO RANDOM COURSE MATES THEREFORE HOPING TO RECEIVE MORE VOTES

THEY SAY OTT (Y1) KNOWS HOW TO BOIL HIS EGGS

THEY SAY ALEKSANDRS (Y1) HAS GAINED A REPUTATION OF PERVERT PANDA THAT SCARES PEOPLE

THEY SAY MORTEN HAS PICKED UP HIS WIFE, SAYING: "GIRL, DID YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE SAME MARGINAL RATES OF SUBSTITUTION?"

ANITA MURZINA IS SO DAMN MURZINA.

THEY SAY THAT AFTER A TOTAL FAIL WITH THE NEWCOMMERS GUIDE OUR INFO.COM HAS A NEW GOAL: TO PREPARE AN ALUMNI YEARBOOK FOR HOCO. LET'S HOPE IT WILL SHOW UP DURING THE GRADUATION, JUST IN TIME TO REPLACE THE YEARBOOK.

PAULIUS L REMAINS THE TOP SPECIMEN OF PARTY ANIMALS - DURING HIS EXCHANGE HALF OF THE ROOM SPACE IS TAKEN BY ALUS AND VODKAAAA

SSER AWESOME PARTIES MAKE OTHER PARTIES NO LONGER A PARTY SINCE 1994

UKRAINE GIRLS ARE ALWAYS AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD. JUST SEE JELENA C(Y2) AND YAROSLAVA(Y3)

MADIS AND PAULIUS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TURNED THEMSELVES INTO A TOURIST ATTRACTION OBJECTS IN HONG KONG - WHEREVER THEY GO, THERE ARE ALWAYS HOT ASIAN CHICKS FOLLOWING TO ASK THEM FOR A PHOTO

THEY SAY ASIA MAKES PEOPLE CHANGE... REINHOLDS BROUGHT ONLY 1 CRAZY T-SHIRT FROM CHINA.

THEY SAY THAT MR. PRESIDENT WORKS AS A TAXI DRIVER, WHO PICKS UP DRUNK PEOPLE AND TAKES THEM HOME DURING SSE PARTIES.

THEY SAY NIKITA (Y2) HAS SOME SERIOUS ISSUES..

THEY SCREAM БACC БACC, ХАРДБАСС!

THEY SAY RIHARDS (Y2) LIKES GIRLS WITH FUR.

THEY SAY THAT YOU NEED TO READ LESS THAN 5 WORDS IN THE FIRST SENTENCE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE PARTY.COM IS WRITING THE PARTY-EMAILS AGAIN

THEY SAY THAT THE PARTY.COM WENT ON VACATION DURING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES AS WELL...

THEY SAY EXCHANGES BETTER LEARN TO SHUT UP WHEN STUDYING IN THE LIBRARY.

THEY SAY THAT OLGA P (YEAR2) ADHERES TO SCHOOL'S UNOFFICIAL SLOGAN: "STUDY HARD, PARTY HARDER". NO WAIT, ACTUALLY ONLY TO THE SECOND PART.

SOME SAY THAT OLGA P.(Y2) HAS A CRASH FOR BADASS BOYS.

THEY SAY ESTERE IS A 1:1 SCALE BARBIE.)

THEY SAY TATA KNOWS MANDARIN CHINESE WELL, SHE GIVES PERFECT PRONUNCIATION OF 150 IN CHINESE, THAT IS"YEBAT' USHI"!!!!!!)

MADIS AND PAULIUS ALWAYS COMPARE ASIAN GIRLS' BOOB SIZE COMPARE TO THOSE IN BALTICS WHEN THEY ARE ON EXCHANGE, AND THEY KEEP ON SAYING"ASIAN GIRLS' ONES ARE SMALL" :))))))

THEY SAY SSER GIRLS' BOOBS USUALLY BECOME BIGGER DURING THE SCHOOL PARTIES.

THEY SAY SSER GOSSIP PAGE IS THE SUBSIDARY OF THE WIKILEAK!

THEY SAY THAT DIANA(Y1) HAS LOST HER FANS BY ASKING QUESTIONS DURING EBP GUEST LECTURES.

THEY SAY THAT LIENE (Y2) IS ALWAYS 1 HOUR LATE FOR THE LECTURE.

THEY SAY EDGARAS IS THE MEANEST PERSON EVER TO LUNCH LADIES. HE ACTUALLY ALMOST MADE ONE CRY BY SHOUTING AND SWEARING AT HER.

THEY SAY SSER STUDENTS DON'T HAVE FRIDAYS BEFORE EXAMS. BUT AFTERWARDS THEY HAVE TWO OR EVEN THREE OF THEM IN A ROW!

THEY SAY PAULIUS LIKES HIS GIRLS LIKE HIS LEAFLETS. PASSED OUT.

THEY SAY JULIJA'S (Y3) HAIR IS "THE PRECIOUS".

THEY SAY MR. PRESIDENT PROMISED TO FUNDRAISE MICROWAVE FOR LOBBY... EVERYONE'S STILL WAITING

THEY SAY PIU PIU PIU...

THEY SAY THAT BANDERAS (Y3) HAS STRONG HANDS AND MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY SATISFY SIGRID (Y3) ON THE DANCEFLOOR DURING SS.

# TODAY, THE PAST OF THE FUTURE

Many of the SSE Riga graduates remember their time in our cosy little school with a smile or a grin. They met so many interesting, crazy people here, had so much fun and sorrow and shared so many memories. It was one of the things that changed their lives and personalities – for better or worse. Now many of them have left the nest and are working, often in far-away lands, doing jobs that they might not have known existed. As a tribute, which would remind them of these good times, we have asked several graduates questions which might provoke some reminiscence or even make them contact some of their old university friends. Of course, to make it more interesting and provide a different perspective, we have also asked current students about their future plans and ambitions. Maybe some of you will see some resemblance or a spitting image of yourself.

## Milda Tylaitė. Year 2007

**Yearbook entry:** Bohemian person. Artistic soul with a talent of a writer. Fast and furious on one side, sensitive and warm hearted on the other. Well, it's always like that – just laughing, chatting and dreaming in the class, but tramparam – she passes everything like it was for fun. "Everything you can do I can do better, especially speak German!"



### • What did you do during your years in SSER?

The Insider (actually was looking forward to working with it even before I got admitted to SSER), dance classes (romance is not dead!)), random jobs as a phone interviewer (this is what happens when you start thinking too good of yourself and your parents

decide to teach you a lesson and cut you off:)), report writing to dumb UK students.

### • What were you planning to do after graduation?

Didn't have a clue. This was exactly the reason why I decided not to do masters immediately after graduating – I figured that I should try to apply SSER knowledge in practice, realize what I want to do with my life and only then study further, if at all.

### • What did you actually do?/ How did it turn out?

... And that was exactly what I did. I started as a Finance Assistant in one Baltic REIT, but I was too young/the expectations were too high/did not like the team, so I left after a year. The head hunting agency who employed me there probably hates me until now. :) Anyway, I then worked as an Investment Analyst with SEB Private Banking in Lithuania...

### • Did it live up to your expectations?

...And that was good, bad, tough, rewarding, exciting, full of experiences and new connections, laughter and cry... Everything you would expect from a fulfilling relationship! :) However times change and since Lithuanian financial industry was not undergoing the best of the times + I have finally figured out that I do not want to do investment advisory anyway (as I see it, it's like weather forecasting, just less reliable. Or like psychology, just you are the one who is always guilty), I got to SSE Accounting and Financial Management Masters program. Actually I am writing answers to this interview 2 hours after the first exam here... Boy, if you think that SSER is tough, don't even think about coming here (just joking... or am I? :))

### • What was the hardest for you in SSER?

The hardest thing at SSER was to leave it. For about half a year after graduation there was nostalgia all over. Other than that... Nothing. The studies were fine, and so was the social life, though I do regret now that I did not try to get more out of that, and have more challenging internships, and participate in various competitions more actively, and make more friendships with Latvians and Estonians (you only think you are different from each other until you go somewhere further, say Stockholm. And with such a perspective you suddenly start seeing that the only thing that is different in the Baltic countries (and I also mean Poland) is the language. So praise



the opportunity to become friends with as many international people as possible!

• **Do you have any funny memories from SSER that you could share?**

You bet I do. But for some reason most of the ones I remember would compromise my good friends / my ex / people who how are highly positioned in the business world, so I'd rather not.

Though... Whatever. This is the story how I got FAT in 3 months. It was my first year, spring semester. I was dating a guy whom I loved very much and I used to spend most of the nights in his place, whereas my room in the flat I was renting with the other girls was almost always empty – for some reason I did not appreciate the fact that I was the only one there who did not have to share her room with anyone. So one morning I come from my boyfriend's place to get some stuff, I enter my room... And see one of my flatmates screaming and hiding under the sheets, whereas her boyfriend is trying to put some pants on and is screaming 'apologies!!!'. Boy, was I mad. I stormed out, but after a short time I figured that I will not be able change anything about that, so the best I could do is to use this situation for my benefit. I have thus put a note on my room's door: „Feel free to use the room when it's available, but the fee for a night is a bar of chocolate“. So I got chocolate. A lot of it. It translated to +10 kg in three months. But, well, at least everyone was happy :D

• **Did you change any of your habits since graduation?**

1) I have finally learned to cook (as of 2 months ago :)). 2) I have found lindyhop which has coloured my life in many colours. 3) I do not take anything for granted anymore. 4) I am much more responsible about everything I do.

• **What are your future plans?**

Be happy and rich. Exactly in that order. I am already happy, so only one thing is left to do :) The thing is, when I was a student at SSER I was much more thinking about what others expect from me than what I myself want. It made me neither happy nor successful. I know better now (though surely many lessons wait to be learned still), and I have some plans for the time after graduation. Not gonna share the details, but it is going to be finance-related, anyway :).

• **Anything you would want to say to current students?**

I think I've said a lot already. But one thing is never

to be underemphasized – do not dare think that the bare fact that you are SSE Rigan makes you better than anyone else. It takes time and actual experience and a lot of effort to become better than SOMEONE else. So be ready to do some dirty work. You will surely appreciate that later.

## Martin Küüsmäa. Year 2008



**Yearbook entry:**

They say that after Harvard heard about Martin, they have been just unable to sleep. He is a talented dancer and a hell-of-a debater. Almost a walking encyclopedia. A friend in need is a friend indeed- that's what Martin proved.

• **What did you do during your years in SSER?**

Most importantly, I was, of course, studying. I was involved in Debate Club (as it was called then) - quite successfully, I think, since I won a tournament, spoke in the finals of some more and got to travel A LOT. We had regular quiz competitions which I managed to win in 2007 with my flatmates in team Voodoo (for where this name comes from check the lower floor of hotel Latvija). I also played a bit of Frisbee and helped to organise Estonia-related events.

• **What were you planning to do after graduation?**

I applied to McKinsey and I got accepted.

• **What did you actually do?/ How did it turn out?**

I turned the offer from McKinsey down since I had to go to the army - the single reason why some Estonians would desire Latvian citizenship :) Army in Estonia is pointless and I think it deserves no more Insider's ink. After the army I joined Viciunai group (fish fingers and crab sticks producer) and I still work there.

• **Did it live up to your expectations?**

More or less yes. I started as an analyst and now manage Supply Chain department at the factory in Tallinn. There are downsides but it is a rather



interesting first employer.

• **What was the hardest for you in SSER?**

Two particularly hard things would be the first assignment of International Economics on which we spent the whole first weekend of Y2 and two certain hangovers from Y1 :)

• **Do you have any funny memories from SSER that you could share?**

There are many funny memories but only a few of them are suitable for sharing. I remember a good friend of mine (Y1 at the time, I was in Y2) using a sock to throw up in taxi and walking home barefoot on Brīvības iela in late November. We once had fire exercise in the middle of presidential elections presentations - everyone ran out since it looked serious, the current president turned off the smoke machine as he thought something like “There’s a mess anyway, what the hell is this machine doing”. In the end, the couple whose presentation was cut in half won the elections.

Did you change any of your habits since graduation? I have less free time and that’s the biggest problem of working. I am very much looking forward to continuing my studies next year. Attitude - I hope I’m still as easy-going and ready for adventures but this is something that’s easier for others to judge.

• **What are your future plans?**

I want to do a Master’s degree starting from 2012 but I’m not yet entirely sure where.

• **Anything you would want to say to current students?**

I think I once told to the Insider this already but it’s well worth repeating: Spend as much time in school as you can. One of the greatest values of this school is the close community. The more you communicate with your co-students, the cooler memories you’ll have. I believe that I succeeded.

**Ramojus Lukas Gineika. Year 2008**

• **Yearbook entry:** An „artist“ from Memel. He can discuss everything: from the latest fashion to business prospects in Dubai. A very intellectual guy who never misses the newest issue of The Economist. Travelling and languages are his passions. A friend to everyone.

• **What were you planning to do after graduation?**

When I was a toddler I thought I would love to be a musician (singer) or painter (plan A). Neither of that turned out quite right:) I thought of banking sector or

Governmental sector (Foreign affairs) as a plan B if plan A fails, of course, before entering SSE.

• **What did you actually do?/ How did it turn out?**

It turned out that I am not so keen on bureaucracy too many rules and procedures kill the fun of working. Thus, with an internship at a bank and a 1.5 years deviation to BIG 4, I am currently in real estate investment with much more space for creative thinking, and a bit less bureaucratic, yet very intense work.

• **Did it live up to your expectations?**

Yes.

• **What was the hardest for you in SSER?**

Finance! Actually, the hardest thing was to realize that these 3 years are already over with “life” knocking at the door.

• **Do you have any funny memories from SSER that you could share?**

A massive run to Narvessen the minute it opened (at 6 or 7 a.m.) on a thesis submission day. Coffee and dubultas topmaizes rocked that morning! And the printers got broken:) So a massive run to the library - and, of course, a sloooooow single printer there. One of the finest days of my life.

• **Did you change any of your habits since graduation?**

Sleep at night became a secondary option. No, really, I guess the worst habit I’ve got from SSE is the love of quick (but not necessarily junk) food and Coca Cola.

• **What are your future plans?**

Sell some properties. Getting my master’s degree. Keeping up with non-profit activities and photography/writing.

• **Anything you would want to say to current students?**

Try yourselves out as many times as you can in as many fields as possible during the studies - you most probably won’t get another 3-year long trial-and-error period to develop yourselves!





Here, our dear readers, you shall find the perspectives of our current students. Most of the interviewed students are Y1, because they are still fresh, and their young ambitions still have not been spoiled by SSE Riga education (even though it has already been a few months).

#### The questions:

1. What are your future expectations for work after graduating SSE Riga?
2. Which sphere or even company do you want to work in?
3. What would you expect will be the hardest thing to learn in SSE Riga?
4. Have you changed your preferences since coming SSER?
5. What's your motto for the achieving work success?
6. Could you tell us one thing about you that is never going to change even if you become a big boss?
7. What do you want to know about SSER graduates?
8. Anything you want to say to SSER graduates?

### Anu Kalmurand (Y1)

1. I can't mention any certain expectations. I just hope that I can develop myself further and find a job that would really give something in return. I strongly believe that after graduating SSE Riga the whole world will be open for me and I can choose the best solution.

2. I would love to work for a luxury fashion company like Chanel or Hermes. That would really be something I would enjoy. They say that a person is truly happy when she wants to go to work in the morning and also come home in the evening.

3. Finance.

4. Yes, I used to be a shy vegetarian, now I'm just a kebab-addicted party-animal.

5. Go hard or go home.



6. My friends, I will always have time for them!
7. Mistakes that they have made and from which I could learn.
8. Never become a stranger! Let's all stay a family :)

### Andrius Čiapas (Y1)

1. Well, now I have bright expectations about the future. All I have to do is keep thinking I'll succeed, and try to make this happen.

2. Don't know actually, maybe something related to marketing, consulting or something like that.

3. Probably the learning process. Sometimes it seems kind of hard to concentrate on studying something for a long time. Not quite used to that.

4. Well, well, well... Maybe the biggest change is in attitude. I became more diligent, my motivation to do something has increased. Or at least I think it did.

5. I don't have such a thing (yet). But there's a good old Lithuanian saying „Kiekvienas yra savo laimės kalvis“, which would roughly translate to „Everyone can create their own success“.

6. Nothing will change. I already feel like a BOSS.

7. Hmm, I would like to know an answer to only one question: “Now, when you have graduated, can you say that SSE Riga changed your life?”

8. Go get 'em tigers! You are the future of the nation.



### Oskars Gauks (Y1)

1. Will see, it is difficult to say even what will happen tomorrow.

2. During these 3 years I will decide in which sphere I want to work. No way for knowing this now :).

3. The hardest thing for me is a starting point, so I suppose I already passed my hard time.

4. Habits? Yes, my life has totally changed!

5. Oh there are a lot of things. I call it WAHD



(Willingness, Ambitious, Hardworking, and Dreams), that is concentrated on things I like.

6. I will never become presumptuous, only a good person! :)

7. It's always interesting to read the stories about how did studies in SSE Riga change their life and what experience from SSE Riga helped them after graduation.

8. It's more private to me. I want to say thank you for scholarship which I have got this year.



## Susanna Paeväli (Y1)

1. I will have many different options about where to work and that my wages would meet my needs. Also, having my own company might be possible.

2. Company? Don't know yet. But when it comes to spheres then I have thought about hotel management/tourism or finances.

3. In academic part, finances are heard to be the most difficult thing in this school. :) (Everything is only coming). Adjusting to the local social life is complicated because now we are becoming a real family for the next 3 years!

4. Of course I have! I would like to think that I am better now at time management. It's interesting to mix and match my wants and needs with a tight time schedule and a limited budget. Leisure time in SSE Riga is excellent to try out new things: paintball, hockey matches etc. It's never boring!

5. Tee tööd ja näe vaeva, siis tuleb ka armastus (sorry, no translation :))

6. The habit to smile very often. Why? - Smiling is good for the health and it makes people also smile around you. Happy people are what make a day. It's a win-win!



7. What is the best thing one gets from SSER?

8. I hope to join the club in few years.

## Dāvis Suneps (Y2)

1. Future expectations? Hmm, I can't say anything for sure. I want to just enjoy this time getting a stable opportunity for building my future.

2. The banking sector, probably Swedbank?

3. As I am Y2, I can definitely share my experience. FE is the hardest thing!

4. Studying takes more time than before - that is for sure!

5. One learns from mistakes not successes.

6. I am (and will be) a man because I enjoy it.

7. From grads I want to know what are they doing in the spare time and whether they are satisfied with life.

8. I like the way you roll.



Have any of the answers made you think something among the lines 'I was there too, I also thought that'? If yes, maybe you could provide some valuable advice to current students. If not, maybe you had it right already from the start?. At any rate, we hope that these interviews helped you look at yourself and at others from a different perspective. To take this even further, we are planning to find and interview these people in the future – 5 or maybe even more years later and then compare their answers with the current ones. Wouldn't it be interesting to see how people change?

KĘSTUTIS TYLA &  
ANASTASIJA MURAVJOVA



# DISCOVER AN OPPORTUNITY!

If you sometimes catch yourself thinking that you are wasting your life at some dull social media page or simply by playing computer games, and you would like to do something about it, then this article might be particularly interesting for you.



Euromonitor International is one of the largest research companies in the world, which offers a part time job for students in the Baltics. In general it is mostly related to collecting, analysing and forecasting statistical information within the given templates. Many students from SSE Riga have already used this opportunity as it gives a nice record in your CV, and at the same time provides with a possibility to earn some money while studying at SSE Riga. Therefore, in this article I would like to give you some insights before you decide whether this job actually fulfils your expectations.

## The Bright Side

First of all, Euromonitor International usually hires so-called freelanced data analysts, who receive some sort of data and have to transfer it into Excel templates, or have to make some search via Internet in order to find requested information. Despite the fact that it might look a bit challenging and to some extent boring, this job is really beneficial. You are actually learning how to use Excel in the most efficient way, as in this case time really means money. Moreover, your employers from time to time provide you with useful links for data sources; so it is extremely useful for some courses at SSE Riga, when a lack of reliable data is the biggest headache when writing the reports. Last but not least is your salary: 3.5 euro/hour, which means that if you are able to spend i.e. 10 hours per week for some data related stuff, you can earn 35 euro, which might be a quite considerable amount for students.



## The Dark Side

As everything else in the real life, there is never only one side of a medallion. The most obvious disadvantage about this job is that you usually have pretty harsh schedule in SSE Riga and it becomes quite difficult to find free time during a week. However, Euromonitor International offers reasonably flexible working hours; so you do not have to worry about their deadlines, when you have some challenging courses, such as Econometrics, Macro or Financial Economics. Also, the project managers, who provide you with the new tasks, are quite demanding and, therefore, everything must be done with excellence. However this also creates an understanding what are the requirements in a real workplace and helps to gain valuable experience. Another a bit annoying thing is a way how you receive the salary: as you will be working according to the individual business certificate, which however is not difficult, it still takes much time to receive your honestly earned money (about 40 days).

## Overall Details

If this article increased your interest in Euromonitor International, and you started to consider such an opportunity, then you should try to search for their job offers on the Internet, or ask SSE Riga students who are already working there. This company is looking for new freelancers all the time, so at least you should be able to go through their selection process. There you will have a practice task and also an interview, which are not too difficult; and after a few more days you will receive a letter which will tell whether you are accepted or not. Good luck for those you try!

ANDRIUS PETRONIS

# DISCOVERING CHINA

So there we were, dozing through much less intensive and therefore pretty boring days of Y3 (SSE Riga paradox, eh?). As far as I know, Reinholds was completely deadened; I wasn't much happier, either, even despite my exchange in Paris (which by that time has become a bit routine). Then, suddenly, on September 6 we received an e-mail from Jens Fischer, a prominent debater, our good friend and one of the main judges at last year's SSE Riga IV, which read as follows: "You are all invited to a debating competition in Beijing, China on Sep 23 - 28, with all expenses paid for. No, not a joke."

It turned out that the EU and China have declared the year 2011 "a year of youth friendship". Many events, conferences, etc. were organized both in China and the EU; surprisingly, the Chinese government was liberal enough to provide funding for a debate tournament – and by funding

I mean a lot of funding!

A separate tournament was hosted in China to select the 16 best Chinese teams, while the European Championship was used to determine the 16 best European teams. Frankly, Reinholds and I didn't finish in the top-16; however, the teams were also chosen on grounds of diversity, i.e. from different European countries, and in this sense we did well enough to be selected!

Needless to say, we accepted the offer almost right away. It's not too often when one gets a chance to go to Beijing (!) to debate with the brightest Chinese students (!!) with all your expenses – visa, flight tickets, one-week hotel stay, welcoming program, food, etc. – covered (!!!). Praise the Chinese taxpayers!

## First days

A couple of weeks to pack our stuff and obtain visas – and we were ready to go. In fact, Reinholds arrived several days before the tournament's official start and began exploring Beijing by himself with an adventurous French couple that went to China via Trans-Siberian Railway. He managed to check out most of the main sightseeings:



The Tiananmen Square (the largest square in the world), The Forbidden City (the former residence of Chinese Emperor), The Temple of Heaven (the

former personal temple of the Emperor), and the Lama Temple (one of China's most important Buddhist temples), as well as the Badaling section (renovated) of the Great Wall of China. I had a similar

tour on the day after my arrival; without going deep

into history, everything was amazing. The culture, architecture, the very atmosphere – everything was extremely different from Europe (even despite the globalization) and a breath of fresh air after all these standard European cities with their churches and parks. If you ever get a chance – go to China without a second thought (be prepared, though, that most of people speak only Chinese).

## The tournament

As already mentioned, 16 Chinese teams and 16 European teams were brought together; what was unexpected – and cool – was that they were merged into 32 new teams, with one Chinese and one European debater in each. This allowed us to get acquainted with the Chinese really quickly; also, this made the competition much more unpredictable (and thus exciting) because not-so-good European speakers could have been accompanied by outstanding Chinese debaters and vice versa.





As expected, topics were about the EU, China, or both: should geography be a criteria for accession to the European Union? should one-size-fits-all Chinese university exam called “Gao Kao” be replaced by customized university-designed exams?, etc. Personally my favorite was that “China should launch an analogue of Marshall Plan to save the eurozone”. It was funny to see what stereotypes Europeans had about Chinese (and the reverse) and how they get crumbled in a debate.

Eventually both SSE Riga teams broke to the quarterfinals – hooray! – but due to a mix-up in schedule our tickets back home were booked at the very same time the finals were to be hosted. Thus, Reinholds and I were excluded from the break, our partners were coupled in a new team, and the team that finished 17th was promoted to the quarterfinals. On the one hand, it was regretful; on the other hand, we got a free day in Beijing – awesome!

## People & perks

Everything was organized very smoothly (well, one shouldn't wonder about the delays during debate tournaments, right?), and it was obvious that the organizers made a great effort to satisfy every single need of each European debater. We were fed extremely well – abundant and delicious Chinese food was provided three times a day. Moreover, we had a lot of free time, which we were able to spend in many ways. For example, we visited the Beijing Temple of Confucius and several Chinese markets (...made in China all over the place...) where Estonian debaters managed to buy fake Rolex watches and Reinholds acquired a tie and some other stuff (using strong economic reasoning that the price-quality relation is much better here than in Latvia). Personally I went crazy about tea shops – I think I bought some €400 worth of tea and tea-related stuff.... everyone was mocking me :) Aside from that, Estonians found a bar where during the happy hour the beer was absolutely free – I mean, absolutely! - so we frequented this place as well.

Our new Chinese friends proved to be extremely bright yet easy-going people, and it was a great pleasure learning about each other's culture, opinions, and beliefs. The language barrier was almost absent, and the atmosphere was very friendly and supportive. Hopefully, we'll keep in touch with them via e-mail

(since Facebook is banned in China... ;) ) The Chinese were so nice to us that they even gave us gifts on the day of our departure... luckily, I was able to present a copy of “Le Petit Prince” to my debating partner who was also learning French!

## The Great Wall

Finally, on our last day in Beijing we paired up with Estonians and Russians and went to Jinshanling – a non-renovated part of the Great Wall, so hiking and 70° climbings were expected. Again, words can't express what we felt on top of the Great Wall – it is truly one of the Wonders of the World. Furthermore, the trip to the Wall and back was unforgettable – our crazy driver stopped only once on the red light, broke as many rules as possible, and was constantly honking along the way, as if eager to inform everyone on the road about his presence. I was laughing out loud during most of the ride, which was probably a mix of amusement and fear.



**I CAN OFFICIALLY  
DECLARE THAT MY DEBATING  
ROI HAS EXCEEDED THE  
INITIAL INVESTMENT.**

Overall, it was an epic adventure which we will never forget. Exploring another part of the world that has so much to share – but also doing that in a secure environment, with friendly locals ready to help and fellow debaters ready to support your crazy ideas – is simply priceless. Besides, comparing what I spent on other tournaments with what I would have spent on a trip to China without 3rd party funding, I can officially declare that my debating ROI has exceeded the initial investment :) As you can see, Debate Society provides you with unique opportunities – so don't hesitate to join us!

VLADIMIRS ZLOTNIKOV



# Top-10 Biases of Human Mind

Research shows that 90% of people consider themselves to be less biased and less subjective than an average person. In fact, quite many of us see ourselves as being to a large extent bias-free. Yet even though most of us would like to think of ourselves as fully rational human beings, there are certain irrationality traps in which our minds get caught over and over again. Below you can find some of the most common ones – the biases that are present in our daily lives.

The aim of this article is not to free you from any bias that a typical human being might have (as in some cases it might actually harm you). Instead, the article provides you with a piece of information that allows you to become aware of the systematic drawbacks that your mind has and to recognize the situations in which it does not operate fully rationally. And, of course, by providing the information, the article aims to make this world a better place and to improve the precision of economical and finance models, most of which rest on the somewhat naive assumption of human rationality.

Before you go on with the article, ask yourself a question – how biased do you think are you? And, after you have finished reading it, ask it again.

## 10. Self-serving bias

People tend to attribute success to internal factors and avoid responsibility of failures by writing them off to external factors. For instance, doing particularly well on an exam will be seen as a confirmation to one's superior intelligence, while failing one will be ascribed to factors outside one's control, e.g. noisy roommates, lack of time for studying, etc. This is mostly done unconsciously in order to protect one's fragile self esteem.

## 9. Fundamental attribution error

Oddly enough, the opposite of the previous bias is

true when observing the behaviour of others – we attribute their success to external factors, while failures are a clear indication of their internal features, e.g. they failed an exam because they are stupid or they tripped over a rock because they are clumsy.

The upper two biases are also among the main reasons why the majority of population view themselves to be considerably more intelligent than an average person.

## 8. Halo Effect / Reverse halo effect

In another attempt to simplify others we tend to attribute positive traits to people who have firstly exhibited desirable qualities and vice-versa. To give a vogue example - we often expect good-looking people to be also intelligent and talented. Conversely, if you would hear someone chatting about serial-killers first associations that would come into your mind would most probably be negative (even though it is highly likely that they are great fathers, loving husbands and eager animal rights activists).

Self-fulfilling expectations will also ensure that our initial impression will influence the interpretation and perception of the person's subsequent behaviour, thus repeatedly confirming our initial perception of the individual.

## 7. In-group bias

Tendency to give better treatment to members of your group. The term group here is a rather loose expression as it may refer to anyone starting from your classmates, colleagues or compatriots to other blondes, working mothers or bookworms, depending on your individual sense of belonging to a particular cluster.

## 6. Self-fulfilling prophecy

To instinctively act in a way that results in the

THE MAJORITY OF  
POPULATION VIEW THEMSELVES  
TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE  
INTELLIGENT THAN AN AVERAGE  
PERSON.



expected outcome, confirming our faith that initial expectations were correct, even though they were in fact false and a different outcome might have been achieved. In other words, if you believe that you will fail a certain test you may stop studying, write the exam in a sloppy manner and eventually fail it not because you couldn't have passed but because you strongly believed in failing and thus missed the opportunities to engage in behaviour that would have helped you to succeed.

Morale of this bias? Writing an exam and believing that you have a chance, even the tiniest one, of passing will get you a higher grade than writing one with a solid belief of failing.

## 5. Confirmation bias

This bias refers to selective thinking, when people look for information that confirms their existing attitudes or beliefs, while neglecting opposing facts. Extremely often seen in discussions – when a person engages in an argument with others he will typically look for information confirming his point of view. This bias is also often present in various studies, where a researcher has chosen to overlook the data contrasting his point of view in a naive attempt to increase the credibility of his study.

## 4. Negativity bias

People tend to give more weight to negative rather than positive information. Various researches show that if a person is exposed to an equal amount of positive and negative information regarding a certain topic his attitude will be negative, rather than neutral. Also, if a person experiences a good and a bad event in a short period of time, he will most likely feel worse as to compared with a situation in which nothing noteworthy has happened.

Curiously, this bias tends to diminish as people grow older and eventually may even disappear.

## 3. Stereotyping

As funny as it may sound, this is also among the main cognitive biases of our mind. To give a precise definition – stereotyping means holding a popular, standardized and simplified opinion regarding certain social group and making further inferences

based on these beliefs.

As harmful as it might seem to some people, there are quite a few great ways to benefit from this.

For instance, if you wish to be perceived in a specific way, join a group which is known for having the characteristics you desire!

## 2. Restraint bias / Self-control bias

You cannot predict your behaviour in situations dominated by feelings, e.g. arousal, hunger, anger etc. In a rational state one will always overestimate his capability to resist a temptation.

In a wonderfully immoral experiment one of the world's best known behaviour economists, Dan Ariely, tested the effects of sexual arousal on decision making. The findings confirmed that in high-emotion situations people are far more likely to get involved in immoral actions than they normally think they would. In situations like these rationality steps back to give place to emotions.

## 1. Bias blind spot

A strong confidence that you have no biases or that you are, on average, substantially less biased than an average person. Are you?

LIENE GRIZĀNE



# THE VOICE OF SSE RIGA

Seaside, bright moon, African music, drums, sauna, party... Right, all of these are related to a marvelous weekend that hosted the Choir Camp, which took place 60 km from here, in Apšuciems.

The tradition of organizing the camp is as old as the school. Apšuciems has been hosting the Choir Camp for 17 years already. This experience really has something special apart from isolating us in a hostel which is located 40-50 m from the beach where we enjoy singing a repertoire of African spiritual songs. The building used to be a school and it is really old (built in 1922), thus this detail added a bit of magic to the whole story. Some of us arrived on Friday evening, (a real challenge to find the way in the darkness), and were sheltered from the stormy night in our warm rooms. The agenda of the rest of the night included dinner, by the taste and generosity of which we were truly surprised, and some games to break the ice as there were some newcomers among the 'choir's veterans'. The next morning welcomed us to join the early rehearsal with the rest of the choir which came on Saturday.

As an African repertoire requires an African style of singing, we were helped by Sasha Lurje, our vocal coach, to adjust our 'opera-singing' voices to a completely new style. At some point they sounded funny (or weird, which are, in this case, synonyms) until we started to sing properly like Africans... hopefully close enough. We were very happy to be accompanied by the drum band "Afro pulss", which helped us create that

African atmosphere and give that tribal touch to our songs. After long hours of rehearsal with little breaks plus a bigger one at the lunch-time we already began to contemplate about the plans for the night. Later in the evening, tired and powerless (but

definitely not enough to give up the fun) we went to the sauna party, held in a wooden house right on the beach. This combination completed the process of us falling in love with Apšuciems.

The camp was a wonderful intercultural experience and due to that it was even more entertaining and joyful. After discovering (at the party) that we were still not tired enough to stop singing, some of us

walked on the beach, the beauty of which deeply impressed us. Clear sky, lots of stars, a cloud of beige light upon Riga at the skyline and the sound of waves that pulled us in the arms of a trance. And after that – back to the party!



Sunday morning was followed by one more rehearsal before leaving the camp. Well, all that can be said (considering the Saturday night) is that it required a significant effort from the choir members. Coming back home to our routine life wasn't an option anymore, because the energy and impressions the camp gave us filled us with enthusiasm for a long long time. For those members who are SSER students the camp was a rescue (literally) as it put us on some kind of a hypnosis for 3 days in a row or, in some cases, for a whole week after the camp. Still, some of us found the time to finish the assignments or revise the notes for Monday's lectures between the rehearsals.

**"... THE ENERGY AND IMPRESSIONS THE CAMP GAVE US, FILLED US WITH ENTHUSIASM FOR A LONG LONG TIME."**

Our final performance after so many interactive and gleeful rehearsals will happen at the concert, directed by Zane Kreicberga, during the Homecoming event on November 12 at the Concert Hall AVE SOL.

Now, the choir's activity is closely monitored by Elina and Lauris, two absolutely amazing conductors. Among other short-term performances we can list a concert in Valmiera on November 26 (together with the "Konsonase" youth choir) with the same African repertoire, a Christmas morning concert in St. John's Church on December 11, and a very small Christmas concert in school (soon to be announced).



# THE STORY OF CHEBURASHKA

During the past couple of years many people have asked me what's the story behind Cheburashka. Some of them have heard more detailed answers, some not so detailed, but I guess that there are still people left with questions, because the Insider team asked me to write an article covering the missing parts. So for others: sorry for "spam"! :)

Actually there is not much to write about and the story is not so complicated: When I had my 18th birthday two of my classmates gave him to me as a gift. During that night for some reason I was not able to bring him home and just left the present in the school's locker. The next day we were still having fun with him in the school during pauses, everybody loved him, thus, I kind of kept bringing him with me to school during the whole 12th grade. When I left for my exchange year in Germany, he was one of the few things that I brought with me.

In the beginning of my studies at SSE Riga I did not bring him with me to the university, but one day when leaving, he was just sitting there at the chair and I grabbed him with me. As many other useful characteristics have been revealed, I am still bringing him with me:

**1** The dip between his head and torso perfectly fits my head. :) And as I have been nominated for the yearbook's nomination of "the one who always sleeps in lectures" two years in a row, then one might guess why I love this quality;

**2** Everybody who has been sitting in the Soros or Wallenberg knows how difficult it is to see over the seats in front when leaning forwards on your forearms. With Cheburashka under the arms the sight is fabulous;

**3** As I have some medical problems with my back and it hurts sometimes, then it is really perfect pillow to put behind it between the seat;

**4** He always gives hugs when needed;

**5** Surprisingly he works as a really good heating device when it is cold outside. Maybe not as good as some heater, but still.



**6** When the autumn and winter hits in then it is really hard to find some seats in the public transportation stops because the metal gets cold. If one has Cheburashka to put under ones bottom the problem is always solved. You just need to wash and clean it once or twice in a couple of weeks.

So you see, Cheburashka has many useful attributes and one can always come up with the new ones, but I guess the main reason for me why I am carrying him around (as some people might think) is really because I do not want to grow up. I admire the fearlessness, innocence and creativeness of little children. In my opinion, when grownups lose it, they lose some part of themselves. With a part of little child inside one can do so much better job when creating new concepts and turning the world around. It is sad that people not only lose it, but even run from it. In serious everyday life between SSE Riga, my personal company/business and various projects, I sometimes lose or forget it, too. Cheburashka is there to remind me about that!

LAURA DANBERGA

