

International Report

My trip in Finland.

From the 20/08/2008 to the 30/12/2008

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When we arrived at Advancia, we have been warned “You have to validate your international constituent before the end of your three years of studies if you want to obtain your diploma.” At that time, it means at the first day of first year students, I said to myself that I would confirm it without any problems with an internship during my first year in Malta where I had a contact. Now, my networking system of that period did not work as I wished, and I was not able to have the post. Nevertheless nothing was lost, indeed one distant contact which I did not have call, because of his estrangement and of a near certainty of a negative answer, showed himself. He proposed me an internship in Australia, in the service sector. Certainly it was a small structure and a mission which was not directly connected to my programme, but the school would certainly have validated it for an internship of a first year student. Regrettably, in spite of all the encouragements of my family and my friends, I did not feel ready to leave far from everything and from everybody during 3 months. Thus I refused this offer, a little against heart while knowing that I would not have supported it. During my second year, I met myself with an even more delicate situation, this time I had no contact capable of obtaining me an internship abroad which would correspond to the formation that I was following at Advancia: management and especially marketing. And I said to myself that it would certainly be worse to find an internship abroad for my last year of studies. Then why do not to tempt a semester abroad. My choice was already stopped on a semester and not a year. It was completely out of question, I had already refused Australia for three months only then I did not even dare to imagine one year far away from everything. Thus I proceed by elimination, I look at the destination where it was for only one semester: Germany (I don't talk German), United States (Too far away), Spain (I wanted to improve my English not my Spanish because English is more important), Africa (Also too far away)... Then the only two that were staying were: Finland and Ireland, so I apply for each of them. My first choice was Finland because I thought it would looks like Sweden, and that was my dream destination. Some friends already went there for holidays and also as part of the Erasmus programme, and everything they have said on this country motivate me to go there, but unfortunately Advancia was proposing Sweden only for one year with a double-diploma. So I supposed that Finland would look like it, I mean the people, the atmosphere, some landscapes, some part of their culture... And Ireland for the second choice because... well, it was the only which was staying. After the entire selection step, I was finally chosen to go to Finland. Then my adventure begins.

In order to do the motivation interview at Advancia to go to Finland, I did some research about the country. Here are the things that I found out:

- Firstly, Finns are eating lots of fish, even during breakfast time; indeed they can eat smoked herrings at 8 o'clock in the morning!
- Secondly, it is cold in this country! I first thought it was only in the north part of the country that it can be that cold, but I was wrong. Even in the little town where I will be for the next 4 months, it can be -15°C during winter.

- Thirdly, it is dark! I also thought this only happens in the North but I was also wrong. It can be dark until 9 o'clock in the morning, and it can become dark around 5 o'clock in the afternoon.
- The last thing I learned with my research is a cultural fact: the Moomins. There are little characters from children books written by Tove Janssons. It exists in cartoons, novels, picture books, baby books, toys... And it has won a lot of awards since their creations. I was surprised that it was Finnish because I already knew them. I used to have some toys of them.

After I knew that I will go to Finland for one semester, I began to think of what kind of trip I could do. The first place where I wanted to go was Lapland. Not just for skiing but also to go to the city Rovaniemi where the Santa Claus Village is settled. In view of the fact that I am still a child in my head, it was very important for me to go there, even if I knew that it will be very cold and freezing since it is in Lapland in the very north part of Finland. The last reason, for which I wanted to go over there, was the possibility to see auroras borealis because I think it is kind of magical elements. The second place I wanted to visit, of course, was Sweden. As I said before I would have preferred to go there instead of Finland, but it was impossible for one semester, however I still wanted to visit it.

After I settled all my dreams in my head, the preparation for the big trip could begin. First the clothes: what do I have to take because I know it can be freezing but during summer it can also be the same weather as in France. Thus do I take only big sweats, gloves, scarf, ski-suit, big socks, hidden ears? Or do I also take caps, Dockers, capri pants, skirts, opened shoes, light pullovers? So I decide to take both. But how to make all of that enter in one single luggage? That was a big problem. I was even more stressed by this trip. First because it was the first time I was leaving my family for such a long time and such distance, second I was also leaving my boyfriend for a long-time, and third I will be completely alone during those 4 months and a half, even for the departure date my parents will leave me at the gate of the plane. I was frustrating, but I tried to hide it from my family in order not to frighten them. But after I month discussing what to take and what not to take, which luggage I must take, which one I can't take, my family made me an announcement: mom will come with me! Just for 5 days. She will take the plane with me try to fix little problems that can happen during the beginning of the trip; she will stay at the hotel 5 days and then leave. I was so relieved, someone will come with me AND I can take twice things more than before.

My mum was thinking of all the little details while I certainly wasn't. Instead of worrying now, I was benefiting from every moment that I could pass with my friends and my boyfriend...



End of August

20th August I am flying to Finland, in Helsinki Vantaa Airport, from France, Paris. First thing that surprised my mum and I was the size of the airport. It was so little compared to the French one, Charles de Gaulle. During this day, we also made our first meeting with Finnish language: first word we learned was **ULOS** (means **EXIT**). But since it is an airport we didn't have any difficulties to ask for the car rental service in English. Second thing that surprised us, during this day, was also for the car rental service **EUROPCAR**: we went to the office, the employee gave us the keys, my mum signed the papers but the strange thing was that nobody was there to check on us at the parking. So we just took the car and then leave. In France it is different, the employee comes with you in order to check the car with you and explain some details.

Then it was direction **RAUMA** where I will be living on my own during 4 months and studying also of course. On the road, we had our first piece of Finnish culture with the radio in the car. At the beginning, I thought I was listening to Japanese songs because some pronunciation really sound like Japanese language, but no, it was Finnish of course. The 2nd word that we learned was **HYVÄÄ** (good) and also **HYVÄÄ PÄIVÄÄT** because the animators on the radio were often saying those words, so I checked in my dictionary, and it was meaning **HELLO**. So we continued our road with this "strange" Finnish music (it takes time to get used to

another language). So we took the **E18** till Turku and then the **E8** till **RAUMA**. As we entered the town, we didn't see any road sign that indicate us that we actually entered the town ➔ this is strange. In France, we have some red road sign with the name of the city on it like: RAUMA. Then we arrived at our Hotel, the **CUMULUS**, but it took us a lot of time to get there because we were not used to read such long names of street **Vähämaanpuisto** and also, the name of the streets were written in very little policy and on so little with signs also. After all those little trouble, we went to my flat in **PYYSUMPPU**. Two things

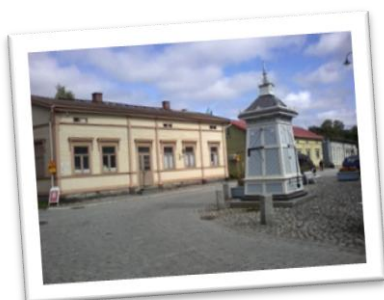
seemed strange for us in the flat: first there were 2 doors of entry (perhaps it was for the cold I still don't know) and then the doubled windows. I also believed that I couldn't open the big window in my room because there was not any handle just 3 holes on the border of the window. It's only after some times that I saw this little metallic thing that looked like a handle, so I tried to put it in the holes and guess what? It worked. I was impressed. Then we go to **Prisma** just nearby my flat, it is one of the supermarkets of Rauma. We found some **strange cakes**: it was like a long donut with berry jam and whipped cream inside and covered with black chocolate. We also tried some Fazer's bakeries and it was so good (Fazer is really well known in Finland it's also making chocolate, very good one). We also found a strange **Banana Cake**. There were also some strange others cakes: pink, green, orange... they have really bright colorful cakes here in Finland. Another thing that surprised us was the size of the **Candy Department** everywhere, especially in **Citymarket** (another supermarket). They were so huge with so many different types of **Candies** and **Chocolates**.



Other surprising thing: in both supermarkets you could buy cigarettes. In France, there are laws that forbid such company to sold tobacco inside. After having discovered all these "strange" things we went to the Old Rauma in order to visit it and take some pictures. We were very surprised because it looked like the real life of Rauma was only inside old Rauma. It was a really pretty place, and it was also true that when you get outside it was not that pretty. There was a big gap between this part of the town and the rest of the town. Here are some pictures of **VANHA (old) RAUMA**. I think

all the houses really looked pretty in old Rauma. Inside this part of the town, we found a lot of shops (clothes, shoes, decoration, coffee shop...) and also some

restaurants. Life is inside Vanha Rauma. Then we installed everything in my flat and during this day I realized that one thing was true for all the Finns: they are **SHY** and I had the proof with my roommates. I only saw them when they were doing their cooking in the shared kitchen. And they only said Hello when we saw each other, no question, no chatting; they just get back to their rooms and closed their doors. But I wasn't really surprised by that, because people warned me before I came. After knowing where the school **SAMK** was located, we went to the bus station to know if there were some buses to go from my flat to the university. The lady in the office didn't speak a word of English. I was really surprised because I



had read some books and articles saying that basically all Finns can speak very well English. But it was false for "old" people. It was hard to make us understandable by the lady, but we finally managed to understand each other and she told us that there weren't any **buses**. I asked myself: **how am I going to go to school without any buses???** So we went to the school and ask Saija, from the international office, about the transport. She just answered: "**by bike of course!!!**" Me? On a bike? The last time I was on a bike I must have had about 10 years old. But I watched at the parking outside the university and there I saw a great number of bikes parked. So ok! Let's go buy a bike and change my habits of the Parisian subway. After we had settled all this practical things my mum left and drove



back to Vantaa Airport on her way back to France.

September

In September, first time for the washing machine that works only with mobile phone (in order to pay) with the special prepaid card KOLUMBUS. This was a quite strange system but I thought it was quite common here because I also saw some drinks machines that were also working with phone. At the

beginning of September it was also my first days of school at the university **SAMK (Satakunta)**. First class: a Finnish student just stood up, left the room without saying anything and came back with his cup of coffee still without saying anything. **I was so CHOCKED**. But here it was normal: if you have something to do, well, do it but don't disturb anybody in the class. I actually think it is a great system. I told the Finns that I will make a request to my French business school when I will come back. This is also done! At the beginning of the month, during the first week-end we went to **Turku** (a city located at the south of Rauma). Here are some photos: the photos on the left were taken in an open air museum where the oldest houses of this region were saved from the big fire. It was very interesting because we were able to see in what conditions they were living and working a long time ago. And the photos on the right were taken in the church of Turku. I thought it was really funny to find a boat in one of the room of the church. There was also one fastened to the roof, a little one.

During the same day, we also went to **NAANTALI** which is located in the south of Turku in the archipelago. It has a sea border and it is beautiful. Here are some photos of the town. On the first photo you can see the map of Naantali with the sea all around the town. After, there are just some pictures of this wonderful town, with some shops and restaurants.

On the 19th of September I went to see my first ice hockey match. It was Rauma Lukko against HPK. With all the Erasmus students we went to the **DNA Areena** of Rauma by bikes to see the match. It was really a great moment. **Rauma Lukko** won 4 to 0. One thing that surprised me was the cheerleaders because they were dancing during 30 seconds when there was some stop in the game. And when the game started again, they suddenly stopped dancing and the music also (even if it was in the middle of it).



During the night from the 19th to the 20th of September, exchange student made me a surprise, they organized a “surprise party” for my birthday around the fire behind our flats at Pyysumpu.

During the first month, I had big difficulties to adapt myself to the life of Rauma.

Firstly, I have to take the bike every day compared to the subway that I used to take in Paris.

Secondly, I have to get used to the food. Because French food was really expensive in the supermarket, I have to get used to Finnish food. I was very surprised also that I couldn't find steaks (or if I can find

it, it was TOO expensive) and any canned food! The rare vegetables that I used to eat when I was in France were canned, so I was a little disorientated. But I tried Finnish food, one of them was “Fish in Tube”, I don't know the name in Finnish, but it was kind of good.

Thirdly, I have to get used to do my shopping several days a week because of the date of consumption (past its sell-by-date). For example bread (sandwich loaf): you can only save it for 4/5 days whereas in France it is 10/12 days.

NEW CULTURE = NEW HABBITS.

October

At the beginning of the month, I had my first Finnish course. I learned how to introduce myself → **Minä olen Laureen** or **Minä nimeni on Laureen**. It was really exciting to begin to learn Finnish. After this first course, I was really proud of myself in front of workgroup (composed of 2 Finns in another course). I was so happy to show them I can “speak” Finnish. After the course I found some websites about Finnish, one of them was really interesting I think: <http://www.uuno.tamk.fi/>. When you arrived at the home page, you can choose either to look at some grammar rules or to read some stories (cartoons). The text is written in Finnish for each case but when you put your mouse on it, it turns into English (and when you click you can hear the Finnish version). There are several stories, but my favorite is the one on the bus because I also learned something on Finnish culture again. Here is the story: **at the beginning, we can see an exchange student waiting at a bus station. Then the bus arrived but didn't stop at all. So she asked a Finnish student why. He explained her that you have to wave your arm. It is the signal in Finland. See on jelpoaa, kun sen osaa...** (It is easy once you know how...). So I learned some practical things in the website that helped me during my very day life in Rauma. For example: the grocery shopping. On this website, there is a game where you have the **ostolista** with number and names of items in Finnish, after you have to choose the right product and the right amount of it. It was really useful to train myself before going to the supermarket for fruits and vegetables. In the middle of October, there was the fall break. During this, I went to Tallin, **Estonia**, and to Uppsala, Stockholm, **Sweden**. I will start with Tallin.





Tallin

In order to go to Tallin, we first took the bus from Rauma to Helsinki. And we took a **Viking line** ferry to go to Tallin. Then

we arrived. The weather was sunny on the day we arrived. To enter the city, in order to go to our hostel, we walked under the gates of Tallin.

All around the old center of the town, there were big medieval walls with several gates. Then we visited the center of the city.

After we put all our things in the hostel, we went to the tourist

information, there I found some fun guides for the city. I also found this funny guide for

gay tourist. It was strange to find this for free in the tourist point of information because in France you can only find those guides in bookshops and not for free! The day after, we continued to visit the old town composed of a lot of shops, restaurants, pubs that are decorated in a medieval way. We also went to visit the Orthodox Church of Tallin. When we entered it, there actually was a ceremony. It was the first time I saw that: people who were in the church were so

silent and respectful of the church. In France, you can't anymore find a lot of young believers in the church nowadays. But in this church, there were a lot of young people alone and in peace. It

was really surprising for me. Another thing that surprised me in Tallin concerned the sale of alcohol. Because of the law, people are able to buy some alcohol at the age of 18 years old, but most of the night clubs didn't accept people under 21 years old. I still don't understand why. The last thing that surprised us was the price of clothes. Before we went to Estonia, everybody told us: "**You can buy anything**

there, it is so cheap". Well, I don't have the same definition of "cheap". In the new center of Tallin, the only shop we found

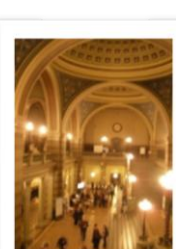
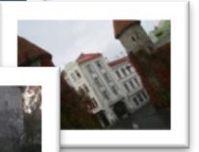
was luxury brand shops, that most of the time we couldn't afford. Because Tallin is growing more and more bigger than before. People, at least some of them, have money to spend in those kinds of products. The next day we went to the sea boarder, in order to visit an **ice-breaker**, there were also some other ships of war in the hydroplane harbor.

After 4 days in Tallin, we went to the airport and took a plane to **Sweden**. We

arrived at Arlanda airport in Stockholm, and then we took a bus to go to **Uppsala**. It was about one hour away from Stockholm and 30minutes from Arlanda. **I definitely fall in**

love with this city. Even if it is not a big city (and I am used to it), I like the atmosphere there. People talk easily with you, they have really good English and they are happy to see you. Every people in shops have great smiles and answer your question with great pleasure. We went to visit the church and it was really

nice. Then we went to "visit" the University of Uppsala. It is the **oldest University** of Nordic countries, and it is beautiful as you can see.





Then we stopped in a coffee, and I found these famous Finnish pastries **Dammsugare**. It is a small pastry with a green cover of marzipan, with the end dipped in chocolate and inside there is a mix of crushed cookies, punsch, butter and cacao. I already knew this food because it is sold in the great shop of **IKEA**, in France. And I love it (the pastry and the shop)! We also found these strange cakes: Groda

which means frogs in Swedish, I suppose, because of the shape of the cake! I didn't want to leave Uppsala, it was so great here, people, shops, parks, the architecture, the beauty of the city... I really didn't really want to go back to Finland or even to France. But... our train to Stockholm was about to

leave... so see you soon Uppsala (because I will definitely come back one day during the Christmas time) and welcome Stockholm!!!

The train took about half an hour to go from Uppsala to Stockholm. We put everything in the hostel and we went to visit the old town. I really liked Stockholm also, I was so happy to live (even just for few days) in a big city again. The streets in the old parts of the town were so nice; people were so open-minded and courteous also. The day after, we stayed in the "modern"

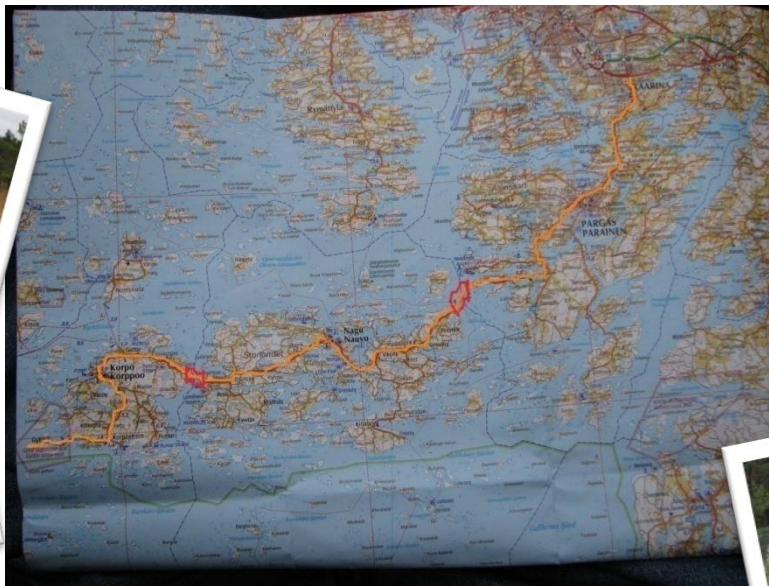
city, and we took the metro. I was so happy to take the subway again (we can see it on the picture)! On this place are located several shops and shopping malls. Lots of these shops are orientated in an Emo design. "Emo" is a fashion trend that we can out between punk and gothic movements. And on this place, during night time, there is a grouping of young Emo teenagers, with black, white, red...hair, piercing... They laugh, speak, sing, and scream. They just act young!!! I really like the atmosphere of this grouping. The day after, we went to a small island of Stockholm, where was a little port with some boats on which people were living.

On this island was also some art work of 2 French artists: Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely. The first one is well known thanks to her "Grosse Nana" = fat girls' statues and the second is famous thanks to his work with metal. On the last day I saw this car, it's a bug of Volkswagen. I **am crazy** of this car, and this is strange I have seen plenty of them in Finland and in Sweden. I was so happy when I saw it, that I have to take a picture of it. And then, the fall break was over, we took the ferry back to Turku, and then the bus from Turku to Rauma. But my trips were not over yet because my parents were already in Rauma since 2 days, and they will stay 1 week during which we planned some visits. We went a second time to **Naantali** because I told them how beautiful it was. And they agreed with me. We found this strange sign road which says no car, no house, no people walking, and no child playing.

And on the other side, it is exactly the same but without the strait. We also found this cute sign for a hotel in Naantal: **Hotelli**.



Then we did this trip on the archipelago (show in the map).



We travel with the rental car from **Kaarina** to **Gyltö** at the end of the last island. We took those ships 4 times (2 for 1 way, since we came back it makes 4)! So we put the car on the ship and wait to arrive on the other side to continue our tour in those islands. When we arrived at Gyltö, we realized it was a military base, so we turned back quickly (just in case) to the other city of the island **Korpo**. In this town we stopped to

drink a coffee in a little pub. During this trip I was able to see and to show my parents 3 aspects of Finland and Finnish culture:

- The sea, the lakes, peaceful atmosphere → Silent Finns
- The wood present everywhere
- And of course the alcohol → the beer !!!

The day after, we made a walk in old Rauma. In the picture on the left you can see the narrowest street of Finland; well this is what is said in the guide. After this tour, it was so cold (my parents were not used to it) that we stopped in a café to drink coffee and hot chocolate. And guess what? The tray was in French: it is written “I **love** milk coffee...on the **morning**. And **You**, Do you **love me**?” then we ate those Halloween’s pastries. The one on the right was called “**Sammakko**”

which means frog in Finish. It was the second cake I found named after a frog. I don’t know perhaps there is something special with this animal, in Nordic countries.



I forgot to tell that in Old Rauma, I also found a bug (the car). I think it is kind of “famous” because I saw some picture of her on internet, and it is also on some postcards of Rauma.

November

At the beginning of November, it was my last days with my parents.

We went to [Sammallahdenmäki](#), it is a prehistoric monument (part of UNESCO). It is a site of excavations, burial cairns, ruins of a church...

It was very freezey this day; I am walking on ice!

We also made some road trip around a big lake in the east of Tampere. Then we also went to Tampere and I was finally able to see a real city in Finland. Moreover, the city was already decorated for Christmas, it was amazing. It was also beautiful and so lively there.

It was really nice with all those **Christmas** lights.

Talking about **Christmas**, I think it is celebrated very soon in Finland. For example, on the first weekend of November, there was the opening of Christmas in the

supermarket Prisma, with Santa Claus. He was sitting in his chair and children could come to see him. In France, this kind of event only happened during **December** at the beginning of it.

On the 17th of November, I had my first snow of the year, but it was just a little one. On the 19th we had a Christmas dinner, near Pori, organized by the university. During this dinner, we had to bring a present (less than 2 euros), every gifts had been put into a big huge red bag and then Santa Claus gave us one present by student. I think it is a very custom that really shows us the exchange spirit of Christmas.

Then on the second week of November, we had a **GREAT SNOW**.

In old Rauma, it looked strange with the snow. It looked like if the ground war warmed in order to make the snow melt.

On the 29th of November, we went to the Christmas Market in Turku. I was a little disappointed because I was expecting more little shops with more different products than what there were. But it was fun.

I have been able to see Santa Claus with his wife and his elf's!!! And we drank some hot Glöki. It tasted so good. It is

like our red hot wine but in better!



December

During the beginning of December I just passed the exam of the University and decorated my flat for Christmas since I was staying until the 30th of December.

On the table you can see presents because my boyfriend was coming for one week and my parents for 3 days. So it was Christmas presents for him and them.

After our reunion at the airport when he arrived at the airport I made him visit Rauma and show him those strange Ice creams (vanilla or chocolate covered with a sauce that becomes hard with the contact of the ice cream). It is so good!!!

After this afternoon passed, we organized our little Christmas. We tried to cook something French, but there were nothing in the supermarkets, instead their specialties food for Christmas that I already tried during Christmas Dinner (and I must admit that I didn't fall in love with it)! In our way, when we were doing the grocery shopping, we stopped by in the café Sali: the "new place to be" in Rauma. It was new, and fashionable with a lot of choice for cakes and also drinks. We ordered to Caramel macchiato and Glöky cheesecakes. So we tried

to cook something and celebrated our Christmas in my flat. On the 26th we took the bus to Helsinki to pass a week end there. But we forgot one thing: in Finland the 26th is also a free day. So everything was closed, there nearly weren't anything to visit. We were able to see that the city was multi-lingual: here is an example with 3 signs dealing with property of the city: the first is in English, the second is in Swedish, and the last one in Finnish.

We also went to the Ice Bar, the famous thing to do when you are in Helsinki. It is sponsored by Absolut, the Sweden brand of Vodka (well now it is French but anyway...). And all the room is at minus 5°C. It is a really good experience to live. Then on the 27th of December my parents arrived at Helsinki, they rented a car and they picked us at the hotel and we returned back to Rauma just for three days. After that we just had the time to pack our things, well, my things into the four luggages. It was nearly not enough since I bought so much stuff during my stay. But at the end of the 29th everything was packed, the flat was clean, and we could finally go to the airport to return to France. It is a strange feeling to leave your flat (of 4 months) behind you and just took the car on your way back home. At the beginning of my stay, I really thought I will be happy to leave and not feel sad to go, whereas it was kind of the opposite feeling that happened to me on this morning of the 30th of December. But it was a good souvenir, so I must keep going. Then we arrived at Vantaa airport. And we waited for the plane and just say goodbye to Finland but not "Farewell" because I will come back of course!



Conclusion

Since I came here, at the end of August, my vision of Finland has changed a lot. When I arrived at Rauma I was expecting a city with a lot of things to do for exchanges students, but then I realized it was just a little town without activities to do, I really felt depressed. Because that meant I really have to change all my habits since I come from Paris. But at the middle of the semester, I was used to it, I saw it differently, even now I can say that it was great to stay in a calm and silent town for a time. In octobre, I can't say that I was feeling stressed or angry anymore, like I usually am in Paris. I was relaxed. At the beginning, I was also afraid of some Finns on the street because of the way they looked, stared at me or were dressed. But at the end of my stay I finally understood that people of Rauma really act like that because it is their lifestyles, they are living in a rural area not urban, that's all!

The language was also a big problem but when you begin to understand the logic of it, it becomes easier. I am not saying I can speak Finnish; it is just that it was less frightened than before to do the shopping after having some bases of the language. So even the negative points that I found before I managed to turn them into good points. And of course the things that I already liked before, I still do. For example going to school by bike or by feet instead of the subway was a good break. I also learned to live alone, by myself that was a great change and one of the most important for me. I also begin to learn another language, so now I can say: *Puhun englantia, ranskia, espanjia, vähän japania ja vähän suomea* (I can speak English, French, Spanish, a little Japanese and a little Finnish). And I love to learn new languages. I also loved the Christmas atmosphere there, with the snow, the lights, and the songs in the shops... I also liked the fact that it started so early, even if I have to get used to hear "Santa Claus is coming to town" in shops in November. I also discovered a new sport: **ICE HOCKEY** that I really enjoyed to watch. I learned a new way to make friends because Finnish culture and ours are very different. And thanks to *Annikke* (a Finnish girl in my workgroup that really helped me) I learned the Finnish friendship! And I am glad of that. But of course, there is one thing I didn't like about Finland, it is the habits of Finns with Alcohol. I know now it is in their culture to drink so much to get drunk as soon as they can, I respect that but don't really like it.

I forgot two wonderful things about Finland:

First, the *Muumi*, I love those characters. I have bought plenty of them: toys, advent calendar, towels... I already knew it in France but we don't have all those products! I also discovered a Finnish artist *Kaj Stenvall*, all of his work is based on Disney's characters, especially Donald Duck (and I am a huge fan of Disney). I discovered his works in some postcards that were sold in Rauma. Here is one of his artwork



His website: <http://www.kajstenvall.com>

And the second think I forgot to talk about is the Finnis SAUNA. This is a really great experience.



In order to conclude I will say that if it was to be done again, I will definitely do it, but I will check more carefully the city where I am staying than this time. Like that I will be prepared not like this year. I learned to adapt myself to another culture and other people (several nationalities at a time). I also learned to become independent, to be less close to my parents. By the way, this have been a problem when I came back, because my parents wanted to control everything on my life as before, but I couldn't accept it anymore, I was as frustrated as when I arrived in Rauma. So told them my problem, and they tried to understand that their little girl have finally grow. They realized with this trip that I wasn't their little baby anymore. I prove them that I can be responsible, manage a flat, my school, the shopping, my account (the most difficult for me), and keep in touch with them at the same time. They were really proud of me after this semester. I also improved my English even if it was not supposed to be the purpose of this semester. And the most important thing that I have changed on myself is my shyness. I am less shy than before, it is impressive. All my family and friends were surprised by that change. Even I get surprised sometimes by thinking that before this trip I will never have spoke with a stranger in a music shop about new albums. For me it is a big victory that will change my life from now on. It has certainly changed a little my way of thinking about the future. It is amazing what one semester abroad can change in the life of little shy girl... And the most impressive is that before I would have never thought of leaving my parents, but now I am talking of leaving France to leave abroad as soon as I would get my master degree, not in Finland but well how knows what will happen next?

TO BE CONTINUED...