



Fourth edition: Fresh winter news from the alumni community

Czech us out!

By Nikolina Čukelj, LBG Zagreb

Being part of the Alumni group from Zagreb, means being part of an Always-For-Action-Travel-And-Fun crew. So this summer, led by few ones from us with Czech roots, the group of alumni decided to have a five-day trip to the Czech Republic - a country which didn't have any LBG in the times when most of us were still active BESTies.

5 fully packed cars with 13 people and enough chicken to feed 30, headed towards hezký Česká Republika and hezký Praha. The long wait at the border was soon forgotten after meeting our lovely hosts and tasting the delicious knedlički. Although the original plan was to stay just for one day in Prague, the smell of sausages on the streets and our competition spirit when it comes to "Who is going to drink more different kinds of beers?" made us break all the plans and just go with the flow...

On the way home we managed to see a cartoon-like castle in Hluboka and we spent one night in the small, but really dreamy city called Český Krumlov! The city and the cool hostel left us speechless and delighted and the feeling increased after 2 small glasses of beer, which we had that night in Krumlov. :) To try to share with you some of the fun and laughter we had during those too short 5 days, here are some thoughts from the participants:

"To see girls in their best age going childish, when seeing some Czech sights, is an unforgettable feeling! I wonder what would've happened if we had taken that other trip..." (P.C)

"It's a fabulous experience, even for those who don't drink beer! :)" (I.L.)

"Let's go to Krumlov for New Year!" (V.K.)



Local alumni network, LBG Timisoara

By Silvia Mezin, LBG Timisoara

The Local Alumni Meeting of LBG Timisoara is blooming also in winter time! After a hot summer in which we officially turned our dear Cristian Bodgan aka Father (and Guru) of Makumba into an LBG Timisoara alumnus, we updated our blog and invited even more alumni to join. After a party where members and alumni welcomed the new babies of LBG Timisoara, we were all ready to "face" a national Alumni Meeting at RoJam 2007!

"Christmas is here/The geese are getting fat" and we know that! that's why we celebrated it the BEST way with a Christmas Party in the middle of December. We also visited our dear alumni to sing them carols near Christmas Eve. In this visit we'll be inviting all of them to our national New Years' event, which can prepare them for the long waited Timisoara's Alumni Meeting in the beginning of 2008.



BAiB New Year dinner coming up: join our next monthly dinner!

By BAiB, LBG Brussels

After all the heavy Xmas and New Year festivities, discover with us the not so greasy Vietnamese cuisine, taste the exotic spices and enjoy the wonderful presentations of the Asian food. The "Little Asia" restaurant (www.littleasia.be) is not only a treat for the taste, but also for the eye. The modern interior with the party bar at the entrance, the special colour of the walls and the trendy lighting make this restaurant quite different from the usually quite "kitschy" (to our European standards at least) Asian restaurant interiors. To the male audience of this invitation there is one final and most compelling argument to join. All waitresses are dressed in very sexy traditional dresses and serve you in such a gracious way, that you will have to be careful that your girlfriend doesn't catch you staring too much.

If you want to join our dinner on Tuesday 15th January 2008, from 19:30h at Little Asia, Rue Sainte-Catherine 8, Brussels, let us know by sending a confirmation email to Joris at baib@deblauwe.be **before 10.01.2008, 23:59h at latest.**

As always every ex-BESTie is welcome. All this information can also be found at www.best.eu.org/baib.

See you soon in Brussels!
BEST Alumni in Brussels (BAiB)



Apply before 10.01.2008, 23:59h
Email to: baib@deblauwe.be

The biggest alumni meeting ever!

By Tamara Forza, LBG Zagreb

From the 8th till the 11th November 50 BEST alumni (maybe you?) from all over Europe met in Carrión de los Condes (Spain) during PM. It was the first time so many alumni participated in this kind of event. We can happily say that we, alumni, are every day more interested in joining events organised for us and we hope to have more opportunities to meet in the near future...



We had a really nice time during PM, we enjoyed organising the "Dinosaur's Party" and are proud to announce that we drunk a record quantity of Sangria that night! On Saturday we went for a trip so we had the opportunity to visit some nice places in the region. In the afternoon we tasted some famous Spanish food (especially the "lechazo" was delicious!) and a very good wine, from which we could each take a bottle. It was really great; we couldn't even remember when the last time we had so much fun!

Some of us were meeting again after a long time and it was nice to notice that our BEST friends hadn't changed at all; they still are the great and crazy people from before. At the same time we met new alumni that we didn't meet while being active members, but does it matter? Of course not, we become friends in the first five minutes and we'll be friends forever.

We talked a lot, we remembered past events (especially the parties and funny happenings) and we showed the delegates the famous "pervert-meter" of Valladolid!

In the end we had to say goodbye again... but we aren't sad because we know that we are going to meet again soon!

One year of great experience

By Tzveta Dimitrova, LBG Sofia

1 year of great experience, 12 unforgettable months, 52 weeks of adventures, 365 sleepless days, 8760 challenging hours, 525600 exciting minutes, 31536000 seconds of sailing - one mandate in BEST, time which we - Katy, Bram, Bartek, Luka, Manu and Tzvety - got used to call "the time of our lives".

But what does it mean to be in the board of BEST?

Travelling most of the time, a life mostly spent in front of the computer, meetings, proposals, regulations ... ideas turning into reality?! Yes, all of this is part of it; everyday during a mandate is hectic, dynamic, special and different than any other before. That is why the responsibility of each board in BEST is huge a great challenge which changes one's personality forever.



The amount of the work in the organisation is set by young and ambitious people. Each moment something is happening in BEST, something is changing: the organisation is going forward. And this tempo is faster than in any other well organised company or institution. The initial force, this power and unknown energy of inspiration of all the members of BEST seems only possible at this age (20 and something), when one has the spirit and craziness to be creative without seeing or admitting any kind of boundaries and restrictions, when money is not the source for motivation.

BEST is an organisation of the young engineering students in Europe those who are different, those who know what they want and how to get it. BEST can also be seen as a stage for achievements and failures, for successes and mistakes... everyone is free to choose and dare.

Each moment is precious, even the hardest ones. "We are simply the BEST" are words which gain even more special meaning when you are part of the Board. A phrase from Tina Turner's song, which always gives a power when one needs it and makes him go on.

Now, after a year in the Board which is a mixture of challenges and adventures, big relief follows. Everyone is internally delighted when looking at his own progress and at the achievements of the team. It draws a huge smile of the face, a smile which expresses contentment, happiness when remembering the special moments, and fulfilment of numerous dreams which led us on the way. At the same time this smile expresses optimism for our own future and also for the bright future of BEST. Everyone who had a similar experience should not be afraid of upcoming challenges in future projects, aims and career. That is why last year was and will stay "The time of our life". AHOY!

BEST and the professional life

By Vesselin Genadiev, LBG Sofia

My name is Vesselin Genadiev and I'm going to share with you my story. I discovered BEST when I was in my second year of studies. There wasn't a BEST group at my university at that time so I took the great opportunity to found the local group. I looked for interested students, and together we applied for membership. We created our local structure, we divided tasks among ourselves, we started recruiting new people and grew slowly. We started promoting BEST to all the students, we organized promotion events and company nights, we had fundraising events and also parties! Everything went very well, we made a lot of mistakes, but we also learnt many new things.

Now, when I sit back in my office, tired at the end of the day and I think over the things I've done today, I realize that I am doing exactly the same tasks I did in BEST but now I don't make the same mistakes. Because now I have my BEST experience behind and this doesn't only bring me thousands of lovely memories but also the confidence to carry on with my professional career and to promote as much as possible the benefits BEST gives to all students who are not afraid to follow their wildest and craziest dreams.



Column - Travelling after having been in BEST

By Nico Deblauwe, LBG Brussels

That BEST changes one's life does not need any proof, but what does it really mean? As it is impossible to come up with an exhaustive list, I will just limit myself to some of the consequences. We got used to live in a technocracy & direct meritocracy (and it's so damn hard not to find this combination back in the professional life), where the only thing that separated goals from dreams was the enthusiasm of hundreds of Europeans. That's probably why so much is achieved. We learned how to communicate direct and efficient, no matter whether it were virtual or "real" meetings. We learned to party harder than we imagined before, on the vibes of international songs, while drinking the local specialities. We probably know to position more cities on the European map than the average geography teacher. And more importantly, we learned how to discover them: with the locals!

Simply visiting the tourist landmarks, taking a picture and hopping back on the double-decker with live voice commentary is no longer as attractive once you've experienced a city tour with a peer who actually lives there. Of course the main monuments are still frequented, but it's combined with places where you probably would go to if you were living there. Instead of having to pick a restaurant at random, or feeling trapped in a tourists' book recommendation, you were taken to a cosy place that hopefully will never make it into the travel guides.

Even more than visiting a city, I got addicted to visiting people. This change of mindset probably started of during my time in BEST, but really strengthened in the years shortly after my active period. I remember going to Riga and ending up talking for hours in a warm bohemian coffee shop. Going to Athens, but only seeing the suburbs, because it's there that my friends live. And yet, through eating, drinking, talking and partying, I have the feeling that I got to know the real city life better than any guided tour would have been able to show me.

But what to do with the cities you frequent (travelling or business) where no BESTies live, or where you don't feel comfortable to contact any? Well, luckily there exist lots of people with the same open attitude towards travelling/travellers. They are grouping in other "virtual associations", like Couchsurfing.org or Hospitalityclub.com. After having created a profile, you can start looking for a host using as few as a city name and the dates you are there. Quite some hosts offer a place to sleep (often a couch); others make time to show you around or simply have a coffee or beer with you. Always it is a friendly way of getting a personal contact with the city you are at. If you are fond of "my way of travelling", give them a try, or maybe even become a host yourself.

You have a comment? I'll gladly read it at
nico@deblauwe.be



As well, I miss the excellent survival guides. It is only when you don't have them any more that you start noticing how practical they actually were. All you had to do is pack & print, no further preparations were needed before you got into the plane. (As a side note on packing: how many of you still remember "Paulo Cravero's Packing List"? Google still knows how to find it...) But here as well, there exists an acceptable alternatives: the PDFs that quite some airline companies started putting on their websites.

Myself, I'm fond of the Fastcheck series (<http://www.arrivalguides.com>): a handy booklet that has some information on how to get from the airport to the city, some general information on the place you're visiting a map with street index of the centre. Ok, it doesn't contain a telephone number for your mother to call to, but for all the rest it is coming close to what the survival guide was for us, I believe. So after all, travelling in the alumni era isn't too bad at all? Luckily!

A typical BEST alumnus

By Ana Nahod, LBG Zagreb

Some time ago AlumniNET made a small questionnaire to find out more about you and your work, friendships and relationships. We won't bore you with statistics (we don't have enough data for that anyway), but we'll try to make a picture of a typical BEST alumnus.



Our typical BEST alumnus still lives in his country, but spends approximately 30% of his time working abroad, although it can vary from 5% to even 80% of the time, depending on his job. He tries to keep in touch with his friends, also former BEST members, as much as possible. This is often quite hard, because almost one third of his friends is working and living abroad from other European countries like Switzerland and Spain, to the remote ones, like Japan, China and USA, or even some far-away Russian islands. Even though, they all try to meet at least 2 or 3 times per year, in their home countries or visiting each other while travelling. There are also special occasions to meet, such as having a Christmas dinner or celebrating New Year's Eve together.

Their daily life is also full of alumni they work together, live together or at least meet once a week for a beer or two. He keeps in contact with his LBG, by joining their activities from time to time. At the moment he's not in a relationship with another former BESTie, but knows lots of BEST couples some of them even have BEST babies!! If asked does he have children, he quickly replies: "Not that I know of. :)"



To conclude, our lives as BEST alumni are not that different from the times we were active members. We work a lot, but we keep the spirit and still travel a lot (although maybe for other reasons nowadays), have a lot of friends all over Europe (but including also the rest of the world now) and get into relationships with other BESTies (and getting serious this time). It looks like we try to get out of BEST, but BEST never gets out of us... :)

Experience of a BEST alumnus



Christoph Lanz
Schlumberger

I got my job as a field engineer in Schlumberger thanks to BEST. I first learnt of Schlumberger's existence on GA2005 (oh, Greece, the pool, the pool, IE at the pool!) and then organised a company presentation for them in Vienna, where I also made my own application. I worked ten months in Saudi Arabia and now I moved to China, to drill for hydrocarbons in and

around Shekou. The job also brought me to Malaysia, Oman, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (and Hong Kong, but that's part of China now). So I pretty much live and work abroad, outside of mighty, mighty Europe...

We are proud to welcome in our BEST family:



Maja Hoyer Weyns,
daughter of Kerstin
Hoyer, Lund and Kim
Weyns, Leuven



André Marques,
Son of Carla Carvalho,
Lisbon and João
Marques, Lisbon



Sam,
Son of Wim Farasyn and
Sara Asselberghs,
Leuven

Any suggestion or comment ? Contact AlumniNet@BEST.eu.org
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