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The cruise ferry "SILJA SERENADE" leaving the port of Stockholm for Helsinki.

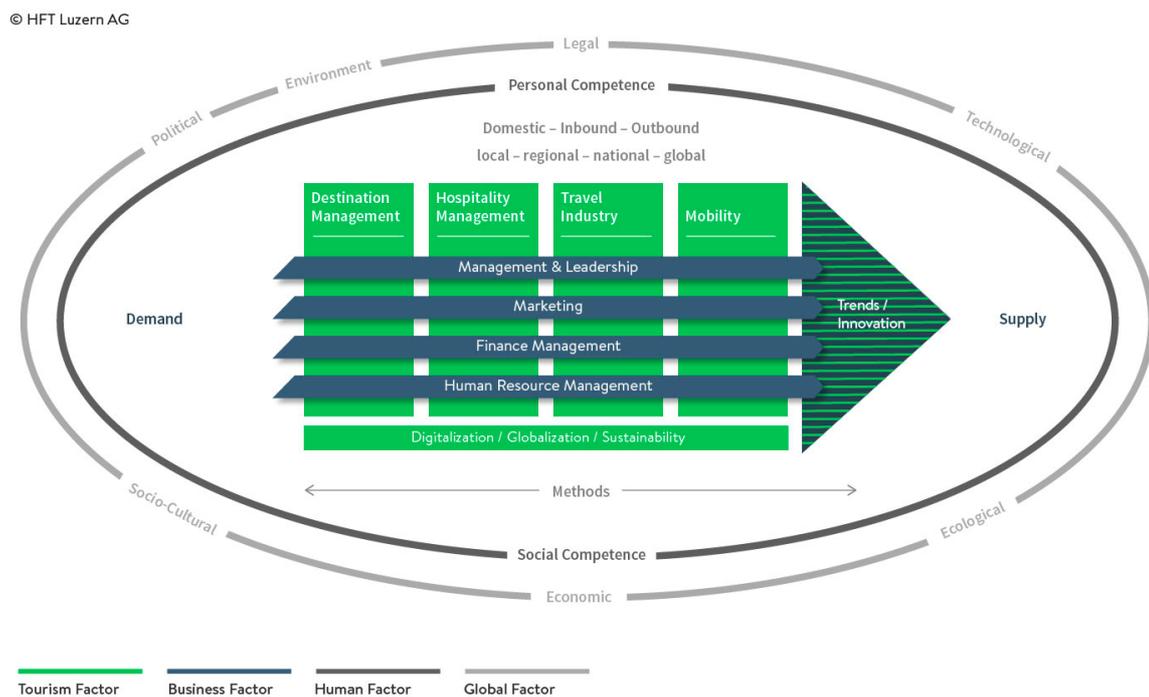
STUDYTRIP@SEA 2022: A VOYAGE THROUGH SWEDEN, FINLAND AND ESTONIA

The College of Higher Education in Tourism Management HFT Luzern visits the Baltic region focusing on understanding the tourism and business aspects of the Tallink Grupp and its partners.

The Swiss College of Higher Education in Tourism Management [HFT Luzern](#) at [BZLU Bildungszentrum Luzern](#) in partnership with the Estonian [Tallink Grupp](#) provided 52 HFT Luzern students practical insights into a multinational shipping, tourism, and trading company. The company has 14 vessels operating in- and outside the Baltic region. On average each ship carries 2,500 passengers. In addition, the group operates three quality hotels in Tallinn city centre and one in Riga (suspended in 2021), and, as the Burger King franchise owner in the Baltics, 14 restaurants of the fast-food chain in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The group's subsidiary Tallink Duty Free is a successful international retail business with a number of shops on board and on shore, and a growing e-commerce presence in the group's home markets.

To understand the multifaceted offering of the [Tallink Grupp](#) the students had the privilege of experiencing firsthand a variety of vessels routing to Helsinki, Tallinn, and Stockholm. Furthermore, they had the opportunity to stay 2 nights in the [Tallink Spa & Conference Hotel ****](#) in Tallinn. The first ship they joined, during the 5-day journey, was the cruise ferry [“SILJA SERENADE”](#) travelling overnight from Stockholm to Helsinki. Afterwards they boarded the fast shuttle ferries [“MEGASTAR”](#) and [“STAR”](#) which transported students between Helsinki, Tallinn and back. The last vessel on the journey was again the [“SILJA SERENADE”](#), which brought the students back from Helsinki to Stockholm.

To realise the goal of evaluating the Tallink Grupp the students received a “Tourism Management Canvas*” based on the HFT Luzern tourism management model called [“Luzerner Tourismusmanagement-Modell \(LTMM\)”](#). The canvas enabled students to identify and analyze the various functional areas within a large passenger vessel, including the technical, operating, safety, hotel, catering, and shopping divisions as well as the various business divisions in the company and its political, legal, and environmental influences.



HFT Luzern Tourism Management Model (LTMM)

An important source of information was the seminar leader and internationally renowned business/communications consultant and shipping analyst [Thomas P. Illes](#). He was instrumental in providing general information about the business and market mechanisms of the shipping and maritime industry as well as the pioneering role of [Tallink Silja Line](#) in various areas of the development of modern ocean tourism. Assisting him was [Patrick Rüedi](#), owner and director of BZLU Lucerne and [Sergio Roth](#), Leiter HFT Luzern, who were available to answer questions about topics relating to leadership, management, and tourism.

Specifically, Thomas introduced the principles of BRM/CRM Bridge/Crew Resource Management to the students and how they can transfer or apply elements of this concept to their own team situations and business areas.

The concept, adopted from aviation, aims to train teamwork, trust, situational awareness, leadership, and a communication culture among the bridge crew of ocean-going vessels. This holistic system of “ship management”, involves all the ship's crew, to ensure effective cooperation and to prevent accidents. Due to the effectiveness and positive track record of this leadership and collaboration principle, it is increasingly being applied in other shore-based industries, such as healthcare and hospitals.

An important sub-area of BRM/CRM is the promotion of a team-oriented error culture, the division of tasks and an agreement on the roles and tasks. Thomas P. Illes explained the principle in more detail.

“While the captain should continue to have the final say, the other crew members should be much more involved in decisions and responsibilities and encouraged to speak up should the situation require it, regardless of the hierarchical position.”

Thomas P. Illes, Lecturer and Seminar Leader



Seminar Leader Thomas P. Illes introduces the students to the principle of BRM/CRM Bridge/Crew Resource Management on board the cruise ferry “SILJA SERENADE”.

To experience more about this approach students were given the unique privilege of visiting the bridge and discussing directly with Captain **Stefan Ölander** about his management style and how his team works together.



Captain Stefan Ölander, on the bridge explaining the tasks assigned to the navigation crew.

Top Tallink Grupp guest speakers

To gain more knowledge about the Tallink Grupp several guest speakers were invited to present their function and responsibilities to the students.

[Marina Selikowitsch](#), Business Development Director and Interim Head of Sales DACH, [Tallink Silja GmbH Hamburg](#), discussed her role as marketing and sales director for the German speaking region. She described some of the challenges and opportunities affecting her region. She went on to explain that the change in consumer behaviour in conjunction with the company's marketing goals had impacted the online and offline marketing activities.



Marina Selikowitsch, Business Development Director and Interim Head of Sales DACH, Tallink Silja GmbH Hamburg, presenting marketing information.

Katri Link, Communications Director, [Tallink Grupp](#) gave the students valuable insights into some of the latest strategic decisions made by the group. Of particular interest was the discussion and actions taken by the Tallink Grupp to deal with reduced passenger figures and unprofitable routes during and in the aftermath of COVID. The group demonstrated its entrepreneurial flexibility by chartering out some of its vessels to other operators and geographical regions. In two instances, in cooperation with government authorities, it was decided to house persons on board their ships for longer periods of time, remaining stationary in a designated port. For example, recently the Estonian government arranged with the group that one of the Tallink ships remain in the port of Tallin and be converted into [housing accommodation for Ukrainian refugees](#).

Also of interest to the students were the managers on the [“SILJA SERENADE”](#), who oversaw the restaurants, catering, shopping and the hotel responsibilities. [Sara Sell](#) (Intendant), [Juja Tamminen](#) (Chef de Cuisine), [Kalle Pakonen](#) (Restaurant Manager), [Niklas Lehtola](#) (Shop Manager), [Klaide Roschier](#) (Hotel Manager) informed the students about topics varying from logistics or food waste to managing personnel, for example when someone called in absent to work at late notice.



“SILJA SERENADE” managers Sara Sell, Juja Tamminen, Kalle Pakonen, Niklas Lehtola, Klaide Roschier answering questions.

Top tourism speakers – Helsinki and Tallinn

The students also had an opportunity to understand more about tourism in the region attending lectures by tourism representatives in the cities of Helsinki, Finland and Tallinn in Estonia.

Within the auditorium of the Helsinki city hall [Mari Somero](#), Team Manager, [Tourist Info & Content Management at City of Helsinki](#) introduced the students to the goal and activities of the organization. Additionally, representatives of [Helsinki Partners](#) - [Sanna Salonen](#), Senior Advisor, Travel Trade and [Birgit Liukkonen](#), Senior Sustainability Advisor - explained the contribution their company made to Helsinki tourism as well as the international image of the city as a sustainable travel destination. Indeed, Helsinki has set itself the goal of being the world's most sustainable tourism destination as early as 2026.

In Tallinn, [Silja Hurskaninen](#), Marketing Project Manager Travel trade & media from the [Tallinn Tourist Information Center/VisitTallinn](#) and [Sirle Arro](#), Head of Marketing and Communication Department at [Port of Tallinn](#) and [Cruise Europe council member](#) presented the impressive new state-of-the-art cruise terminal to the students. According to Sirle it is the most modern and multifunctional terminal in the region, built to reduce its negative impact on the environment. Furthermore, Silja outlined the activities to promote domestic and international guests to visit Tallinn and the many attractions of the city with

its numerous up-and-coming modern urban districts. The students were curious and wanted to know more about tourism in Estonia and the city of Tallinn.

To close the seminar Thomas not only presented some principles of crisis communication and reputation management, but also looked at the topic, of particular interest to the students and the cruise and tourism industry: sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels required to power the ship. He elaborated on the current and future use of more environmentally friendly fuels such as LNG, methanol, ammonia or hybrid-powered ships within the maritime, cruise and ferry industry, the current status on the challenging path to zero emissions and decarbonization, and the need for stricter and uniform international legislation to achieve the industry's climate goals.

To sum up, the StudyTrip@Sea was a resounding success, with students gaining valuable insights into the tourism and business aspects involved in running an international tourism related company. However, the most memorable time for the students was the chance to experience and enjoy the facilities and services on the vessels, [“SILJA SERENADE”](#), [“MEGASTAR”](#), [“STAR”](#) and in the [Tallink Spa & Conference Hotel ****](#) in Tallinn and explore and discover the exciting diversity of the cities of Stockholm, Helsinki and Tallinn. For the opportunity and the experiences, we are most grateful to the [Tallink Grupp](#) and the many staff members and external guests who supported us to make the trip unforgettable.



Students experiencing the shipping traffic at the Åland Islands on board the cruise ferry “SILJA SERENADE” entering the port of Mariehamn.

“The StudyTrip@Sea was a huge enrichment in the ongoing process of educating and preparing our students as future tourism and business professionals. In addition to the Tallink Grupp and our valued destination partners I would like to thank BZLU Owner and CEO/Director Patrick Rüedi and Co-owner and Brand Manager Sarah Rüedi – without their visionary and innovative commitment and support, such seminars would not be possible!”
Thomas P. Illes, Lecturer and Seminar Leader

StudyTrip@Sea – we can’t wait till 2023.



After 5 exciting days en route, the students arrive in Stockholm.