

## STUDY TRIP@SEA ASHORE 2021

### The College of Higher Education in Tourism Management and Business Administration Lucerne focuses on broadening horizons

The College of Higher Education in Tourism Management and Business Administration Lucerne, Switzerland BZLU Bildungszentrum Luzern proved once again to be a trendsetter. Using the highly topical and widely discussed challenges of ocean shipping and the cruise industry as examples, students were trained over two days to understand and reflect on current complex economic and tourism challenges and to develop fitting solutions.

The StudyTrip@Sea seminar, under normal circumstances, is held onboard the comfortable and innovative cruise ferries of Estonian shipping company Tallink Silja Line on the Baltic Sea between Stockholm, Helsinki and Tallinn. Due to the effects of the Corona situation, BZLU Lucerne moved the 2-day seminar to the Hans Erni Auditorium at the famous Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne, Switzerland. Fortunately, Tallink Silja Line, a long-term partner of BZLU Lucerne, was still able to participate in the seminar – if not at sea, at least ashore.

Patrick Rüedi, owner and director of BZLU Lucerne, opened the seminar to approximately 100 students studying at the School of Tourism Management HFT Luzern as well as the School of Business Administration HFW Luzern. He emphasized the importance of facing challenges critically, yet optimistically, and developing innovative solutions.

Thomas P. Illes, the head of the seminar, went on to present the main goals of the program and to describe the breadth, complexity and relevance of ocean shipping as well as its elementary importance as the backbone of world trade. With his many years of expertise in shipping as well as his experience as an international moderator Thomas managed to skillfully lead the students through a concentrated and diverse program and at the same time inspire students to regularly engage in lively discussions and discourses.



Thomas P. Illes discussing with the students at the StudyTrip@Sea 2021 seminar

Besides being a lecturer at BZLU Lucerne, Thomas is the owner of the business consulting and coaching company thilles consulting GmbH. He has a reputation as an internationally renowned shipping/cruise analyst and business and communications expert. In this role he successfully advises companies and executives in various industries on topics such as leadership, teamwork, HR, corporate strategy, or corporate communication. He is a regular presenter at international conferences and conventions and has a media career spanning almost thirty years.

### **Top guest speakers:**

Also, in attendance at the Study Trip@Sea seminar were 3 top class guest speakers, who played a significant role in the success of the seminar. Each speaker presented various topics related to general economic aspects, shipping and cruise. The regions they covered were Scandinavia, the Baltic region, Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey.

**Marina Selikowitsch**, Business Development Director of Tallink Silja GmbH Hamburg, discussed possible improvements in sustainability and presented current and future measures taken by her sustainability-focused company within the areas of Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea.

**Dimitra Vlachou**, a proven marketing, communications and PR expert with experience in various executive positions in Greek and Cypriot tourism and cruise companies, showed best practice examples and the learnings in the area of crisis communication/management in a real case shipping accident. Furthermore, she shared her experiences with her start-up Hospitality Stories, where she aims to promote more sustainable, authentic, and personalized tourism in Greece and Turkey.

**Pythagoras Nagos**, former Swiss country manager of MSC Cruises and international business and strategy consultant for shipping and tourism companies, presented exciting facts, theses and learnings on the successful restart in Greek and the Eastern Mediterranean tourism. Since the region was considered a hot spot for a possible post-Corona phase the successful tourism launch was even more remarkable.



Guest speakers (from left to right): Marina Selikowitsch, Pythagoras Nagos and Dimitra Vlachou

During the seminar students had many opportunities to discuss controversial topics and present their results to their colleagues. In one activity groups of students were asked to research cruise and environmental issues in various media. Statements were brought to the discussion and examined to decide if the ideas were based on facts, interpretations or rather prejudice.

Delving further into the topic of quality reporting Thomas presented his own statements made in various television programs on current topics being discussed in the industry. His perspectives were compared to prominent thinkers, such as philosopher Richard David Precht, sociologist Harald Welzer, futurologist and trend researcher Matthias Horx, and satirist Dieter Nuhr. Thomas explained statements from different scholars and experts can often appear contradictory. In addition, some of the facts listed may well be questionable. Students were encouraged to form their own opinions to the divergent viewpoints presented in the areas of economic growth, faith in technology, mobility, lifestyle, sustainability, and climate change.



Students listening to the presenters during the seminar

In reaction to the proposal from Thomas many students stated they were unfamiliar with this way of obtaining information and forming opinions. They commented that the discussion will inspire them to recognize and deal with these conflicting viewpoints more actively in the future; to question many things more critically but nonetheless in a more well-founded way, and to strive for greater thoughtfulness in discussions.

"If you know what makes your target groups tick when it comes to media use," advised Thomas, "you have an advantage. Above all, you can play a decisive role in the concrete implementation of future sustainable business concepts. The key to good decision making, among other things, is good and sound information gathering and processing."

BZLU Lucerne Director Patrick Rüedi added: "Inform yourself, deal critically with the situation and proactively help shape the future".





Pythagoras Nagos in conversation with students

## **Bridge Resource Management (BRM) - Leading in a Team**

Another key item in the program was BRM/CRM Bridge/Crew Resource Management. This concept, adopted from aviation, aims to train teamwork, trust, cooperation, methodology, situational awareness, leadership, decision-making and the 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.

An important sub-area of BRM is the promotion of a team-oriented error culture, the division of tasks and agreement on who takes on which roles and tasks. 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.

In response to this discussion several students pointed out that some companies and industries they work for are already applying this principle of team-oriented leadership in part or in its entirety. Other companies still have much room for improvement.

## **Mini cruise on Lake Lucerne**

After two days of concentrated input and discussion, the seminar came to a close. Students, guest speakers, the head of the seminar and the BZLU Lucerne management team joined together for a sunset Apéro on the beautiful MS Diamant on the lake of Lucerne.

While the inland vessel couldn't of course compete with and replace the experience of travelling with the big cruise ferries of Tallink Silja Line from Stockholm via Helsinki to Tallinn and back, the cheerful and relaxed faces of the students showed that the mini cruise "on the lake", was a welcome alternative.



Students enjoying the mini cruise on Lake Lucerne

In the end the lively exchange between the students, guest speakers, the head of the seminar and the BZLU Lucerne management indicated that the seminar was once again a resounding success. All participants saw the seminar as a valuable experience, which resulted in numerous new learnings. It had opened some people's eyes and literally broadened their horizons.

The best compliment came from a student, "Now that we recognize the complex interconnection between topics, we are more aware of the holistic picture. It would have been exciting and interesting to open a discussion round again ...". For BZLU Lucerne and its partners this can only mean one thing:

Ship ahoy and see you next year - then hopefully again on the high seas!

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## ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT LUCERNE

### **We develop tomorrow's tourism professionals.**

The College of Higher Education in Tourism Management Lucerne, Switzerland was founded in 1987. In 1990 the college was the first tourism institution of its kind to be recognised by the national authorities. This inspirational college educates and trains specialists and managers for the tourism industry, in the areas of travel industry, hotel and destination management and mobility. Through consistent practical instruction from lecturers, who are tourism leaders and practitioners, students are guided from knowledge to skill development. For this reason, the college is highly regarded by Swiss tourism organizations. The campus is situated in the centre of Lucerne overlooking the mountains, lake and city.

For more information: [www.hft.bzlu.ch](http://www.hft.bzlu.ch)

## ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LUCERNE

### **Personal. Practical. Visionary.**

The College of Higher Education in Tourism Management and Business Administration Lucerne, Switzerland is a centre of excellence for higher vocational education in the fields of tourism and business. The college offers up-to-date and practical higher education with a personal touch. In addition to the theoretical input, emphasis is placed on application and training.

For more information: [www.bzlu.ch](http://www.bzlu.ch)

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