

Press Release

Study Trip@Sea: Tallink Silja Line and HFT Luzern paving way for providing hands-on cruise industry insights to future tourism professionals

The ‘Study Trip@Sea’, a 3-day cruise ship seminar, initiated by the HFT Swiss College of Higher Education in Tourism Management, Lucerne (HFT Luzern AG) was held for the second time on board the Silja Serenade in collaboration with Tallink Silja.

Hamburg/Lucerne, 31 October 2018. The cruise industry is one of the fastest growing tourism segments to emerge in the last few years. Yet, this boom has given rise to a series of challenges - namely in areas such as environment/sustainability, safety, logistics or overtourism.

According to its aim to stay on top of new developments and to offer an advanced and broadly supported education programme with high practical relevance and quality standards, HFT Luzern considered it to be an important step to expand the learning field of cruise travel. Under the aegis of internationally renowned cruise analyst and HFT lecturer Thomas P. Illes, innovative new ways to offer the students current and practice-oriented insights and a hands-on understanding of the market mechanisms of this multi-faceted and complex industry were considered paramount.

After looking for a suitable partner, Tallink Silja was chosen.

Patrick Rüedi, Director of HFT Luzern AG, describes the initial situation as follows: “As an educational institution claiming to be always one step ahead, it was clear we wanted to collaborate also in the maritime field with a progressive, open-minded and

modern company of international renown, which actively supports our vision of providing students the best opportunity to learn through experience.”

Therefore, as part of the ‘Study Trip@Sea’ programme, which is currently unique in the industry, the classrooms were transferred recently for the second time to the Silja Serenade cruise ferry over the course of three days.

Marina Selikowitsch, Business Development Director at Tallink Silja, is extremely pleased with the success of the collaboration: “We are delighted about the productive and innovative collaboration with HFT Luzern and are proud to host the ‘Study Trip@Sea’. On board the Silja Serenade we provide the students an exclusive insight into the workings of a passenger cruise ferry and are able to highlight the numerous facets and procedures during a mini cruise. The seminar programme includes interviews with the captain, the chief engineer, the head chef, the cruise manager and other members of the crew. We are proud that HFT Luzern has chosen to collaborate with Tallink Silja for two years in a row and we look forward to welcoming the school, with its ground breaking educational and Study Trip@Sea concept, onboard in the coming years”.

During the three-part seminar programme with over 70 students, seminar leader Thomas P. Illes gave an overview of the evolution of the modern cruise industry and the pioneering role highly innovative ferry lines in the northern Baltic Sea like Tallink Silja Line played for decades in areas such as ship design and operational and navigational safety. Exciting aspects such as BRM - Bridge Resource management (introduced by the line’s former captain Kari Larjo already in the eighties) and how the principals of BRM and optimal teamwork on the bridge of a deep-sea vessel can be applied and transferred to leadership tasks ashore were explored. Additionally, experiences and technical innovation in light of the stricter environmental regulations in the North and Baltic Sea and their influence/impact on global shipping and the cruise & ferry industry were also examined in detail. There were also discussions on the medial handling of the so-called “dark sides” of the cruise industry boom.

The programme was rounded off with rare looks behind the scenes and personal conversations with the head crew members. Students also had the opportunity to

exchange with Tallink Silja's environmental officer, Andrus Vaher, and to get first hand insights and outlooks into the current optimisation processes of the company and shipping in general with regard to environment and ecology.

One of the special guests attending the seminar was Prof. Dr. Roland Conrady, Professor in the Department of Tourism and Travel Management at Worms University of Applied Sciences and Scientific Director of the ITB Berlin Convention. It was his first time on a cruise ferry, and he was highly impressed by the Silja Serenade's infrastructure and extensive amenities, as well as the seminar 'Study Trip@Sea':

"I was amazed by the quality and variety of the onboard products on the Silja Serenade. At the same time, I would like to congratulate both companies, Tallink Silja and HFT Luzern AG, on their collaborative approach to make the groundbreaking concept of the 'Study Trip@Sea' become reality. What has been achieved truly represents best practice in the field of education which rarely, or even never, existed in this form so far. I have learnt and experienced a great deal of new things and believe that this event can send a powerful and international signal to other universities."

About Tallink Silja

AS Tallink Grupp is the leading passenger and cargo transportation service provider in the Northern region of the Baltic Sea. The company owns 14 vessels and operates under the brands of Tallink and Silja Line on six different routes. AS Tallink Grupp employs more than 7,400 people in the region and transported over 9.8 million passengers on its ferries in 2017. AS Tallink Grupp is listed on the Tallinn Stock Exchange.

About HFT Luzern AG

HFT Luzern AG was founded in 1987 and gained state-recognition as Switzerland's first advanced vocational school for tourism in 1990. Specialists and executives are trained at the established and forward-looking school, located in both Lucerne and Thun, to work in the tourism industry. With consistent practical relevance and inspiring didactics, the students are led from knowledge to practical expertise, which is reflected in the prioritisation of the course in practice. The school currently has approximately 60 employees and over 200 students.

www.hft.ch

About Thomas P. Illes

Thomas P. Illes has been associated with the cruise line industry for over 30 years and is one of the most internationally sought-after shipping analysts, cruise experts and maritime trade journalists. Alongside his work as a journalist for German, English-speaking and Scandinavian media as well as for TV and radio stations, he also advises companies within and outside the shipping industry in the fields of strategy, leadership, process optimisation, HR, branding, design, benchmarking and corporate communications. Furthermore, he lectures at a variety of universities and regularly moderates and presents at trade fairs and conferences.

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