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Co-operation with the neighbours - teacher exchange in Luleå from February to July 2022

Visiting Luleå University of Technology (LTU) had been one of my long term plans for several years - always to be postponed by some more urgent tasks at the University of Oulu (UO), in which I work as a docent and a university teacher at the Faculty of Technology. Last year I finally decided that I just have to let go my daily academic routines for a while and arrange some time for a longer visit in Norrbotten. My original plan was to visit Luleå for the autumn semester of 2022, but in the end the visit took place already during the spring semester as I managed to get a grant to cover the accomodation costs for the spring from the NORDTEK.

As we - me and my wife - stayed in Luleå for six months, we managed to experience Luleå's different seasons from the dark and cold February to rather warm summer months full of light. We were also lucky to find an accomodation with an excellent location approximately 4 km from the university, approximately 6 km from the city center and with an easy access to many excellent routes to go jogging, hiking and to have a walk with our two dogs. We also enjoyed the numerous coastal areas (sometimes it seemed virtually impossible not to see water when travelling in the city) and participating a traditional Swedish midsummer festival in Hägnan open air museum area was definitely one of our highlights of the summer.

At the university, I was teaching in the course of Högtemperaturprocesser (High temperature processes) in which I had a chance to meet local students and also to visit SSAB Luleå steel plant with them. Participation in the lectures also gave me many useful ideas on how to improve our corresponding course at the University of Oulu. In addition to this course, I participated in the supervision of students' theses and together with the educational staff at the LTU we made plans for more detailed collaboration in organizing courses related to utilisation of hydrogen in metallurgical processes. The use of hydrogen in metal production is also an important research topic in both Oulu and Luleå.

Although my six months visit to Luleå is now over, I am very glad to realise that this is definitely not the end of our co-operation. Despite being in a different country, LTU is still our closest neighbour of engineering education and academic technological research. Research units of process metallurgy in both universities share similar educational interests and goals and hence it has been - and will be - beneficial for both units to deepen our co-operation with each other in both education and research. Already we have agreed on joint seminars and more exchanges for the next academic year and I am already looking forward to meeting my friends from Luleå again.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge NORDTEK for making my exchange in Luleå financially possible as well as professors Timo Fabritius and Caisa Samuelsson for giving me this possibility to visit LTU for six months.