

Mobility Story: Giovanni Garberoglio #4

Coming back home

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The final part of an intense knowledge-trip with many lessons learnt, between trial and error.

Like any nice adventure, also my Mobility is coming to an end. In the following days I take care of the last things, I agree with Karl and his student to continue working together, we put in the pipeline some necessary calculations to take another small step in our plan and back in the apartment... I find that my eye is trying to determine whether all the stuff I bought in the meantime can fit in the nearly full "mini-bag" I had brought from Italy. Fortunately, in the end I don't have to give up much, even if it seems to me that weight has definitely gone up (not mine, that of the stuff I'm taking home!). The return trip is uneventful. Back in Denver, I sleep there one night, taking the opportunity for a last American burger with an IPA. The next day I get on the plane, with connection in Germany, that will take me home.

Upon landing at the airport of Munich, I immediately feel at home... It takes me a while to grasp exactly from what I can tell that this airport is not in the US, but in the end I get it: for the first time in the last four months, I am the only one wearing a baseball cap! I'm a little thirsty so, while I wait for the connection, I go get myself a bottle of water. And even doing this simple action I feel back in dear old Europe: the price written on the bottle stand is actually the one I pay at the checkout! For some reason unknown to me, the price in the US is never the final one: to the one showing on the shelf, local taxes, and federal taxes are added to it and – in the case of restaurants – you have to add a tip of about 15% for waiters.

Another short, one-hour flight and I land in Verona, where a colleague of mine and her partner kindly pick me up and give me a ride home.

In the end, I am happy I have spent some time in the US but I am also happy to be back in Italy. I can't believe I can address someone in my native language.

A lot has happened during my Mobility program stay, both from the research and from the personal experience standpoint, and I tell some stories during the ride. One scene is particularly entertaining. During the Mobility period, I was still required to clock in as if I was in Italy, and as I couldn't do it in person, a system had been activated that allowed me to do it online. After a couple of times in which I had forgotten about it, I had decided to start a regular habit that would help me not to forget it again. On the way to work I often found myself thinking about work, organizing what to do during the day, so as to start with energy as soon as I stepped into the office.

If I wanted to remember to clock-in, it would have been better to do it before the job occupied my mind once I left home. I was born in Sanremo, and there have recently been reports on the news of absentees that – for reasons that elude me – clocked-in in their underwear. I realized that I could do the same, legally though.

You can ask Oscar Wilde if I managed to resist the temptation.

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AUTHORS

- Giovanni Garberoglio