

## Switzerland

As arthroplasty fellows from four different countries, we met at our first stop, Winterthur, Switzerland. In Winterthur, we had a delightful dinner with Dr. Peter Koch, who provided several details about our travel plans. We made our first hospital visit to OR Gelenkzentrum Winterthur, where we started the European Knee Society (EKS) fellowship and had a chance to experience the kinematic alignment (KA) technique with patient-specific instruments in total knee arthroplasty (TKA) cases. We then moved to Bern and had the opportunity to chat about the Swiss fellowship and arthroplasty experiences with Dr. Tilman Calliess and Dr. Bernhard Christen in the course of an excellent dinner. Next morning, we went to the Articon Clinic, which amazed us with its magnificent location in Bern. There, we attended several TKAs performed with MAKO-assisted and restrictive KA technique. They showed us the importance of preoperative planning to perform robotic TKA as well as to how to iterate the planning during surgery. One of the highlights of our fellowship from the social aspect took place that same day after surgery when we travelled to the Alps. We stayed at a magnificent hotel in “Jungfrau” Top of Europe and enjoyed of an excellent dinner. This pleasant program impressed all of us and we were thrilled to start the fellowship that way. The next day we had a fondue farewell party and a scientific meeting before our departure trip to Zurich and on our way back on the train, everyone on the team agreed that the Swiss fellowship was an impressive kick off start of the fellowship.



## France

From Zurich we flew on a Sunday to Lyon where we stayed at a charming boutique hotel located in the city center. That day we had a scientific meeting and a very nice welcoming dinner with Michele Bonin, Cecille Batailler and Sebastien Lustig at his house. Monday started strong with Lustig’s team at Hospital de la Croix-Rousse where they performed fourteen cases in three rooms including some MAKO robotic TKAs as well as some UKAs with NAVIO. In the afternoon we had some time to explore the city and to conclude the day with a delicious dinner at a local Lyonnais tavern. On Tuesday morning we spent time at the OR with Dr. Bonin at Hospital Jean Mermoz where he showed us his technique to perform customized TKAs with

PSI. In the afternoon we travelled to Marseille. There we had a scientific meeting and an osteotomy sawbone course at Hospitaus Universitaires de Marseille with Jean-Noel Argenson and Matthew Olivier followed by a welcoming dinner at a rooftop with fantastic city views. The following day we were at the OR watching manual TKAs, UNIs and some interesting osteotomy cases. Our visit in Marseille concluded with a fantastic reception dinner at Dr. Argenson's house with all his team. The next day we took an early flight to Bordeaux, our last destination in France with Charles Riviere at Centre de l'Arthrose. Charles showed us how to perform a pure manual kinematic TKA with a caliper measured technique. We also enjoyed of a wonderful dinner with him at a fantastic restaurant with wonderful city views and we enjoyed of some free time to explore the city before heading to Italy.



## Italy

We arrived at Brescia and started off the weekend social program with Dr. Stefano Rossi riding some pretty scary rollercoasters at the theme park Gardaland. That was followed by a wine tasting at Franciacorta the next day. After this perfect launch we visited Prof. Francesco Benazzo on Monday at the L'istituto Poliambulanza performing several cases with the Rosa robotic system. That afternoon we had the scientific session and later that evening we visited Museo Delle Mille Miglia where we also had a wonderful dinner with all the team. The next day we just had a morning session at the OR and took off to Modena. After a quick lunch we started with the scientific session organized by Prof. Fabio Catani and Francesco Zambianchi in front of a surprisingly large audience. We were taught the insights of the MAKO by one of the early users and ended the day with a nice diner. The next day we observed the functional alignment technique in practice. In the afternoon we moved to Firenze and had a sparse free evening. The next morning, we had a very warm welcome with Prof. Andrea Baldini at a Pasticceria. The two-day program was very well organized and included many case discussions and preoperative planning. At the OR we observed many revision knee surgery cases with the use of trabecular metal cones, Hofmann spacers and patellar rebar augmentation technique. This performance together with a dinner at Baldini's house, a dinner at the restaurant Buca Lapi, famous for its Bistecca Fiorentina, and a quad tour in the Chianti area of Firenze, made it a brilliant experience.



## Belgium

We arrived at Ghent, our first stop after Florence, via Brussels on a bright Sunday morning. We spent the day travelling around the city and getting ready for our program starting the next day early in the morning. We met with Dr. Thomas Luyckx and Dr. Philip Winnock de Grave at the AZ Delta Hospital on Monday morning. After the case meeting, we attended robotic knee arthroplasties performed with the inverse KA technique and subvastus approach with this highly organized team. We were particularly impressed by their discipline in performing the procedure and their team spirit. We ended our first day with a delicious meal accompanied by Dr. Jan Victor. The next day, we went to Ghent University Hospital, which was within walking distance to our hotel. There, we observed CORI and OMNIBotics systems in TKA cases with Dr. Jan Victor, who has been conducting highly valued studies in robotic and navigation-assisted arthroplasty for a long time. We had productive case discussions with this team that has several articles published in the literature and ended our day with a delightful dinner. Our last day in Belgium was very exciting. Throughout the day, we practiced robotic surgery with 2 cadavers especially prepared for us by Dr. Thomas Luyckx and his team at the ORSI Academy, the most important cadaveric and robotic surgery training center in Europe. They answered all our questions without hesitation. As fellows, we performed robotic surgery ourselves from beginning to end and had the opportunity to see our mistakes clearly. On our way to Nijmegen, we shared the common idea that we had the most efficient robotic training program in Belgium within our fellowship and we were already excited for the next program.



## The Netherlands

The astonishing experience we had in ORSI took us so much that we felt broken the first evening in Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and the only thing we were capable of doing was

falling asleep as peacefully as children in a true elegant and cosy hotel. The morning after, Dr. Defoort picked us up and drove us to the brand-new entrance of the Radboud University Hospital where prof. S. van de Groes was waiting for our arrival. That day we truly felt like being in the field of science as we started with a robotic assisted CORI TKA with a personalized alignment technique based on patient morphotype (the CPAK classification), and then moving to the biomechanical lab, and finally discussing about the present and future of orthopaedic surgery and related fields with some fresh PhD minds and professors. After this tough scientific session where we could have never won, we fought again at the gym where Gijs Van Hellemond destroyed us on a padel battle. The day finished at Gijs's house where he and his lovely wife made us feel like being home: delicious food, authentic laughs...The day after, this "dutch dream" kept on going at the beauty of the new operation theatres of SintMaartensKliniek. The menu was all about complex revision TKAs, but Gijs made it all look very easy just teaching tons of tips and tricks to deal with this heavy surgery. The days after we had some free time to rest but also to reunite and have a funny pleasant dinner with the family of our Dutch EKS fellow.



## Germany

On Sunday we changed our plan a little bit and we took a train instead of a flight to cross Germany. It was a long trip, but a great adventure that gave us also the time to discuss and prepare the final presentation for the coming EKS meeting. The train stopped in Munich and from there we grabbed a car to drive to this small, lovely Bavarian city, Straubing. There, Prof. C. Tibesku welcomed us with a touristic trip of the city followed by a scientific meeting in his well-organized studio to round off by tasting beers in a typical Bavarian restaurant. With the right dose of enthusiasm (and alcohol) the next day in surgery Prof. Tibesku amazed us with his art of organization, precision, punctuality. We're not sure if it was the speed or the thoroughness of the surgery but it felt like we were living in a robot fairy tale. Immediately after this barrage of surgeries we drove to an idyllic 5stars hotel-spa-hospital where we continued to do some science, and the prof explained his concept of origin (native) alignment, taking us back into the world of customization. The next morning, he showed us

his technique and experience with custom-made TKA through PSI cuts. Having reached this point, after having gone through many centres and endless TKA alignment ideas, we have finished our journey by heading enthusiastically to meet everyone again at the splendid open meeting EKS 2022.

