The RETECA Foundation asked Prof. Dr. Diego Barrettino, Head of the Laboratory of Microelectronics, Bioelectronics and Sensors (LMBS) at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI), to visit the 7 RETECA’s partner universities located in 4 countries Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador and Colombia as shown in Figure 1.

The visit took place from May 18th to May 31st, 2014 and was very successful since Dr. Barrettino could meet all the present and future RETECA’s contact people in each partner university, which is of paramount importance for the success of the RETECA scholarships because the contact people are responsible to find the best local candidates for these scholarships.

The main subjects discussed during all visits of the 7 institutions were some details of the RETECA scholarships in connection with the Swiss educational system. The following sections will describe additional subjects and activities held in each university in a chronological order.
Universidad Mayor de San Andres (La Paz, Bolivia)

Dr. Barrettino visited on Monday, May 19th Prof. Javier Sanabria García, Director of Electronic Engineering at UMSA and the new RETECA’s contact person and the Dean of Engineering, Prof. Miguel Calla Carrasco.

After a meeting of 2 hours, Prof. Sanabria organized a complete tour to visit the university facilities and the new laboratories, which are still under construction.

Fig.2: Photograph taken in the Dean’s office of the Universidad Mayor de San Andres with Prof. Sanabria, Dr. Barrettino and Prof. Calla Carrasco (from left to right)

Universidad Catolica Boliviana (La Paz, Bolivia)

On Tuesday, May 20th Dr. Barrettino visited the Dean of Engineering, Prof. Ronanth Zavaleta Mercado, who is the RETECA’s contact person, Prof. Eloy Espozo, Head of Telecommunications Engineering, and Prof. Carlos Lazo de la Vega, Head of Mechatronics Engineering, Fig. 3.

The meeting lasted 2 hours and an interesting subject treated was whether or not the RETECA scholarships indeed provide a benefit to Bolivia. Dr. Barrettino explained that the students are encouraged to return and apply what they learnt in their countries because that is the spirit of the RETECA scholarships.

Fig.3: Photograph taken in the Dean’s office of the Universidad Catolica Boliviana with Prof. Espozo, Dr. Barrettino, Prof. Zavaleta Mercado and Prof. Lazo de la Vega (from left to right)
Universidad de Piura (Piura, Perú)

On Thursday, May 22\textsuperscript{nd} Dr. Barrettino met Prof. William Ipanaqué, Director of the Master in Electronic Engineering at the Universidad de Piura and the RETECA’s contact person.

During the meeting the selection procedure of the candidate was discussed, since the Universidad de Piura had not received any RETECA scholarship since 2012. Dr. Barrettino explained that the main reason was that the Universidad de Piura only sent candidates in one electronic research field instead of sending candidates in all the electronic research fields covered by SUPSI like other RETECA’s partner universities did.

After an interesting visit to the huge University campus, Dr. Barrettino was asked to give a presentation in the “Aula Magna” about the RETECA scholarships and the Swiss educational system in front of about 20 students, 10 recently graduated electronic engineers and some professors as shown in Figure 4.

After the presentation and follow-up questions that lasted almost 2 hours, Prof. Ipanaqué showed Dr. Barrettino the Rectorate’s building (Figure 5) before going for lunch.

\textbf{Fig.4: Dr. Barrettino presentation in the Universidad de Piura, Perú.}

\textbf{Fig.5: Photograph taken in the Rectorate’s building of the Universidad de Piura with Prof. Ipanaqué and Dr. Barrettino}

During lunch Prof. Ipanaqué explained that he would like to expand the collaboration between the Universidad de Piura and SUPSI. In particular, he is interested not only in the exchange of students, but also in the exchange of professors as already happened with Prof. Rodolfo Rodriguez Arisméndiz, who was a RETECA fellow in 2010-2011.
In addition, Prof. Ipanaqué would like to analyze the possibility of a double Master degree between the Universidad de Piura and SUPSI. Dr. Barrettino provided Prof. Ipanaqué with the draft of the double Master degree agreement that is now under negotiation with the RETECA’s partner universities in Colombia, which already have experience in double degrees with the Politecnico di Torino, Italy.

**Escuela Politécnica Nacional (Quito, Ecuador)**

On Friday, May 23rd Dr. Barrettino met the Dean of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Prof. Jesús Játiva, who is the RETECA’s contact person. After a meeting of 1 hour where Dr. Barrettino explained the details of the RETECA scholarships, Prof. Jesús Játiva walked Dr. Barrettino to the Rectorate’s building where they met the Rector Prof. Jaime Calderón Segovia and the Vicerector de Docencia Prof. Tarquino Sánchez Almeida as shown in Figure 6.

*Fig.6: Photograph taken in the Rector's office of the Escuela Politécnica Nacional with Prof. Sánchez Almeida, Prof. Calderón Segovia, Prof. Játiva and Dr. Barrettino (from left to right)*

The meeting in the Rector’s office lasted 2 hours and it mainly included the description of the RETECA scholarships, the Swiss educational system and the success of the Swiss industry.

**Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (Guayaquil, Ecuador)**

On Monday, May 26th Dr. Barrettino met Prof. Miguel Yapur Auad, the Dean of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at ESPOL and the RETECA’s contact person. After a campus tour they met the Rector Prof. Sergio Flores Macías and the Asesor de Rectorado Prof. Daniel Tapia Falconí.

After a meeting of 1 hour where Dr. Barrettino explained the details of the RETECA scholarships, Prof. Yapur walked Dr. Barrettino to the Engineering’s building. Once there, Dr. Barrettino was asked to give a presentation in the “Aula Magna” about the RETECA scholarships and the Swiss educational system in front of about 40 students, 20 recently graduated electronic engineers and some professors.
After his presentation, tens of students and recently graduated electronic engineers came to talk to Dr. Barrettino. The most interesting request was if Dr. Barrettino could recommend a career path to obtain the RETECA scholarship and his answer was quite simple: “Study electronic engineering and English very hard, and actively participate in the IEEE activities like he did when he was student in Argentina.”

Then, Dr. Barrettino met Ing. David Alejandro Vaca Benavides and Ing. Miriam Elizabeth Lucero Tenorio, who recently won the RETECA scholarships 2014-2015 as shown in Figure 8.

After lunch, Dr. Barrettino met the Dean Prof. Yapur and the Vice-Dean Prof. Vintimilla Burgos in the Dean’s office (Figure 9) to talk about the possibility of a double Master degree between the ESPOL and SUPSI as well as the possibilities to teach intensive summer courses in Microelectronics and Biomedical Devices because they do not have professors in these fields.

On Tuesday, May 27th Dr. Barrettino met in Bogotá (Colombia) Ing. Alberto David Ávila, who received the RETECA scholarship 2012-2013. They went for a late lunch together where the Ing. Ávila told Dr. Barrettino how the European work experience, which he acquired at SUPSI thanks to the
RETECA scholarship, is helping him now as a doctorate student in the Pontifica Universidad Javeriana (PUJ).

On Wednesday, May 28th Dr. Barrettino was led to the Department of Electronics where he met the Chair Prof. Fredy Ruiz, who is the RETECA’s contact person. A few minutes later, the Dean of Engineering Prof. Jorge Luis Sánchez Téllez and the Director of the Master program Prof. Cesar Leonardo Niño joined the meeting to know more about the RETECA scholarships and to discuss the possibilities of the double Master degree between the PUJ and SUPSI (Figure 10). The main conclusion of the meeting was that, apart from the framework agreement, the PUJ and SUPSI will need an additional agreement that describes the Master courses that could be taken by the students and recognized by both universities in addition to the adaptation to the Swiss Master system consisting of 2 semester projects and the Master thesis because the PUJ only has the Master thesis.

Fig. 10: Photograph taken in the Pontifica Universidad Javeriana with Prof. Sánchez Téllez, Prof. Ruiz, Dr. Barrettino and Prof. Niño (from left to right)

Universidad de Antioquia (Medellin, Colombia)

On Thursday, May 29th Dr. Barrettino met Ing. Juan Jaiber Yepes Zapata, who received the RETECA scholarship 2013-2014, and Prof. José Edinson Aedo Cobo, who is the RETECA’s contact person. In the afternoon, Prof. Aedo organized a visit to the laboratories and then Dr. Barrettino met some recently graduated engineers interested in the RETECA scholarships.

After the meeting with the engineers, Prof. Aedo walked Dr. Barrettino to the Dean’s office where they met the Dean of Engineering Prof. Carlos Alberto Palacio Tobón and the Director of the Graduate Programs Prof. Natalia Gaviria Gómez as shown in Fig. 11.

Fig. 11: Dean’s office of the Universidad de Antioquia with Dr. Barrettino, Prof. Gaviria Gómez, Prof. Palacio Tobón and Prof. Aedo (from left to right)

The meeting lasted 2 hours and also included the discussion
about the possibilities of the double Master degree between the Universidad de Antioquia (UDEA) and SUPSI. UDEA would have to do some adaptation to the Swiss Master system consisting of 2 semester projects and the Master thesis and UDEA showed some flexibility and adaptability.

In fact, the day after the meeting, that is, on Friday, May 30th Dr. Barrettino met again the Director of the Graduate Programs Prof. Natalia Gaviria Gómez in order to check one by one the Master courses that could be taken by the students and recognized by both universities. Prof. Gaviria Gómez will provide a draft with a possible list of Master courses at the end of June 2014.

On Friday, May 30th Prof. Aedo also organized an university campus tour for Dr. Barrettino led by the Ing. Juan Jaiber Yepes Zapata (RETECA scholarship 2013-2014), Ing. Andrés Benavides Arévalo (RETECA scholarship 2010-2011) and Ing. John Byron Buitrago (RETECA scholarship 2008-2009) as shown in Figure 12.

Fig.12: Photograph taken in university campus of the Universidad de Antioquia with the Ing. Benavides Arévalo, Dr. Barrettino, Ing. Yepes Zapata and Ing. Byron Buitrago (from left to right)

Concluding Remark
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