



“Sliced bread with cheese in a little plastic bag, I wouldn’t call that lunch”

Bernardo Marques, Data Scientist ICT Group

During his master thesis at Philips in Eindhoven, Bernardo Marques got acquainted with the Netherlands for the first time. After he graduated, he found a position as a Data Scientist at ICT Group in Barendrecht. This is his story about working and living in the Netherlands.

A NEW CAREER, A NEW FUTURE

Almost 30 nationalities at ict group

Choosing the more innovative company

I came to work for ICT Group through a friend of mine, who I knew from the University in Lisbon. We both did our master thesis in the Netherlands. He was already working for ICT Group and his stories made me very

enthusiastic. So when a position opened up for a Data Scientist, I went to an interview and the rest is history. I already had offers from other parties but for me ICT Group was the most innovative company.

On par with the research world

At ICT Group I work at the Digital Transformation Unit and I work with technology that is pretty much on par

with what the research world is doing. I implement algorithms and use algorithms that are published in papers this year. That's incredible! One of the projects I've been working on was developing Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) solutions for BAM Infra. Thanks to A.I. a machine automatically recognises damage to road asphalt. The more the machine learns, the better it can predict weak spots in the asphalt and therefore fulfil a preventive role.

Great guidance helped getting started

I have been working here for a couple of months now and I feel very much at home. The only struggle was finding a nice house, which took me a month, but I got great guidance from ICT Group. They assigned a person to me that helps with the integration of expats. I could easily reach out to her and she helped me with practically everything: housing, opening a bank account, getting registered, and those kinds of things. And on top of that she gave me lots of practical tips.

Working apart together

Teamwork is important at ICT Group. I feel accepted in my team, we talk a lot, so we really know what everyone else is doing. Once a week, we work together in the same office. Discuss progress made, exchange ideas, and make plans for the next steps. The rest of the week we work individually on the same project. Working here also means learning new things. Sometimes you get a surprise and you have to find your own way to solve it. For example: you get some new software you've never worked with before, together with the message: learn how to deal with it!

A very positive thing about the Netherlands: everyone's English is perfect. I never had a single problem not speaking Dutch. I'm going to do a Dutch course though and ICT Group is helping me with that. I do have a tip for other employees from abroad: learn the names for food in the supermarket. It's handy to know that when it says 'kip' on the package, there's no beef inside.

Get on your bike and go

The weather in Holland is definitely far from the best. But there are plenty of other things about the Netherlands that are great. For instance, the fact that I can pretty much cycle everywhere. I absolutely love

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that whole bicycle culture in Holland. It's easy and relaxed.



Another thing I like is the central location in Western Europe. Everything seems nearby. If I want to go to Antwerp or Brussels this weekend, I just hop on a bus

and go. Or I can grab my car and I'm in Paris in 5 hours. I also enjoy visiting other cities in the Netherlands. They are alive and there's a lot going on. And again, close by.

A thing called lunch

The food culture in Holland is different than ours, to put it mildly. In my country we take a long break for lunch and have a big full meal. Here at ICT in Barendrecht, everybody brings his own lunch. Most of the time that is sliced bread with cheese in a little plastic bag. For me, it would be unthinkable. But there are great supermarkets here which sell amazing salads. So I bring those or something I made at home.

Another thing is your mashed food. Since us Portuguese eat with our eyes as much as with our mouths, the look of it is not very encouraging. But I'm willing to try everything at least once. We do have things in common though. You like cheese, I like cheese. And your famous stropwafels, I just love them.

