

Short report on the HCGES study trip 2016

08.-15. May 2016, Frankfurt, Brussels, Berlin

Participants:

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The main topics of this years study trip were federalism, representation, democracy and socioeconomic policies. The delegation of the Haifa Center for German and European studies (HCGES) traveled to Frankfurt, Brussels and Berlin and encountered these interesting topics from different angles and perspectives. The students learned about the roles of the different political institutions and how the German federal system works. They discovered the relationship between the European unions and its member states.

The delegation met with many representatives on different federal levels in Germany, talked to politicians working in Brussels in different European and German institutions and explored the history and present of federalism and representation in various cities. For more information see the attached overview of our program.

Some of the students presented individually chosen topics, connected to the trip's topics and places of interest. These presentations were very well prepared and gave the participants a deeper insight. They intensified the students' involvement during the trip.

Besides the presentations, the students especially enjoyed program parts, which were hosted by somebody local and which did not present only the official version of topics, but made politics and political decision making comprehensible (especially in the Hessen Landtag, the representation of NRW in Berlin and during the Frankfurt city tours). The visit and guided tours in the Bundesrat and Bundestag were experiences, which the students valued very much. Wiesbaden as a smaller city in Germany (compared to Berlin and Frankfurt) and the attendance of a classical music concert in the Philharmonie Berlin were two more highlights of this trip. Although never enough, the students enjoyed their free-time to explore the cities by themselves.

Program overview:

| Date | Program |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Sunday, May 8 Frankfurt | - Flight to Frankfurt - Guided tour Frankfurt: federalism, representation and democratization in Germany in historical perspective (including visit the Dom and Paulskirche) - Dinner in Frankfurt traditional restaurant |
| Monday, May 09 Frankfurt | - Guided tour Frankfurt: Jewish history and present in Frankfurt - Visit to the university, meeting with students' unions |

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| | <p>representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dinner and guest speaker: reception of refugees in Germany |
| <p>Tuesday, May 10 Frankfurt/ Wiesbaden</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free time in Wiesbaden/Frankfurt - Visit to Landtag Hessen (meeting with Landtagsabgeordneter) - Train to Brussels |
| <p>Wednesday, May 11 Brussels</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided tour: European Parliament - Visit and discussion with Christoph Heider at representation of Hessen in Brussels - Visit and discussion at the embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union - Free time |
| <p>Thursday, May 12 Berlin</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flight to Berlin - Visit and discussion at Landesvertretung Nordrhein-Westfalen - Berlin city tour (Video-bus tour "places of democracy") |
| <p>Friday, May 13 Berlin</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided tour: Bundesrat (including a visit to Bundesrat session) - View of Berlin from Potsdamer Platz „Panoramapunkt“ - Presentation and discussion at Bundeszentrale fuer politische Bildung: federalism - Free time |
| <p>Saturday, May 14 Berlin</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided tour: Bundestag - Free time - Concert of the deutsches Symphonie-Orchester at Philharmony |
| <p>Sunday, May 15 Berlin</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flight to Tel Aviv |