

Visit to Europe's second capital – an excursion to Strasbourg

In the framework of the seminar “Security Policy of the German Federal Republic Confronted to New Challenges” students of the *Master of Peace and Security Studies Programme* of the IFSH and students of the *European Masters in Human Right and Democratisation* travelled to Strasbourg from 20th to the 25th of April 2008. The excursion was supervised by Dr. Patricia Schneider und Dr. Armin Wagner in cooperation with the office of the armed forces of the German Federal Armed Forces. Beside Strasbourg the German cities Kolbenz, Geilenkirchen, and Bonn were further stations during the field trip.



At the outset the students visited the Eurocorps headquarters in Strasbourg. There the group learned about the European armed forces which was specially established for EU and NATO missions. Eurocorps tries to meet the increasing exigence for military cooperation and the Europeanisation of defence policy. At issue were especially the difficulties that such a cooperation includes. On the next day was the visit to both of the central European institutions the Council of Europe and the EU parliament. Following the participants of the seminar had the opportunity to attend a debate on the Galileo-Programme in the European Parliament. Hereby the students go an impression on how and on which formal regulations inner-European Cooperation are beeing conducted. Further the group met for a discussion round with the vice president of the European Parliament Mechtlind Rothe. She informed the students about the latest developments in the European integration process and the increasing weight of the EU institutions. Energetic discussions were held on the question of the involvement of the European people and possible referenda on the Lisbon contract. Next station of the excursion was the Center for “Innere Führung” in Koblenz. There the very German concept of a soldier



as a citizen in uniform was presented to the participants of the seminar. For those students from abroad this definition of the duty of a soldier was a rather innovative approach. During the debate within the group the difficulties in the concrete realisation of the concept within the international cooperation found a critical reflection. A special station was the visit to the NATO Association in Geilenkirchen. There the group inspected the aircraft-based radarsystem AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System). Inside the aircraft the

technical functions were explicated and in the following the application modalities were discussed. At the last station of the seminar in Bonn the students got a guided tour through the

museum “House of history”. There the history of post-war Germany is being illustrated. Final station was the Federal Ministry of Defence in Bonn. There the German deployments abroad and the necessity for international military cooperations were explained. Summarizing, one can say that the field trip enabled the students to get a valuable insight and knowledge about the institutions and strategies on the national and European level currently operating on the challenges in the security sector.



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