

International Student Symposium in Erlangen

BAYERISCHES HOCHSCHULZENTRUM
FÜR MITTEL-, OST- UND SÜDOSTEUROPA

The International Student Symposium was organized by the Board of European Students of Technology (BEST) Erlangen, with the support of BAYHOST. STEM students from Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, and Türkiye gathered to discuss the future of education. The symposium lasted 5 days and consisted of workshops, discussions, and practical exercises, as well as social and networking events.

The symposium, which took place from 25 to 29 August and was hosted by the Local BEST Group Erlangen, was dedicated to exploring the role technology, industry partnerships, innovative learning approaches, and cross-disciplinary collaborations have in shaping student learning. The aim was to find productive learning approaches and facilitate skill development and intercultural exchange among participants.

One of the key topics brought up at the symposium was AI and its use in learning process. Students discussed their own experiences with programmes like ChatGPT and debated meaningful and responsible ways to engage with AI, producing ideas and developing guidelines for its ethical and productive use. The emphasis was placed on the interdisciplinary skills – how AI can link different fields of study and how students' own experiences with non-science courses helped them expand their perspectives and positively affected their STEM education.

Foto: BEST Erlangen

Another important discussion focused on reimagining learning approaches. Participants got a chance to share how their experiences in different classes and with different professors affected their motivation and attitude towards the education. One of the main debate points was the pressure of the grading system and how students can move past it, placing emphasis on learning outcomes, creativity and growth instead. To find possible solutions for that problem, students did case studies on experimental learning methods, identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

A special focus was given to the importance of collaboration between different fields. Multi-disciplinary groups of students worked together to design new ideas for improving the learning experience in class and develop solutions to the key challenges in student engagement. Over the course of the symposium, organizers and participants greatly contributed to creating space for open and reflective discussions, encouraging the exchange of experiences and active engagement with different perspectives. All discussions were marked by intensive intercultural exchange between students.

The symposium concluded with a section where teams presented their final projects and a ceremony acknowledging the best contributors. As a result, new concrete proposals regarding responsible use of AI in education, interdisciplinary collaboration, development of new non-traditional learning methods, and student engagement have been developed.

