

ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT SOMMERSPRACHKURSE IN BAYERN 2015

Herkunftsland:	Republik Mazedonien
Heimathochschule:	„Hll. Kyrill und Method“, Skopje
Studiengang:	Medizinische Fakultät
Sprachkurs in Bayern:	von 20.07. bis 14.08.2015
Bezeichnung des Sprachkurses:	Internationaler Sommerkurs 2015 (Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)
Kursort in Bayern:	Eichstätt
Sprachkursniveau des besuchten Kurses:	C1

I come from the Republic of Macedonia and I'm a medical school graduate. In the summer of 2015 I was privileged to receive the scholarship from BAYHOST (for which I remain very grateful) and visited the 32nd International Summer School at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt; an experience that was truly wonderful, educational and life-changing! I could write volumes about it, but this is my attempt of a (relatively) brief report of my impressions and on what awaits you if you happen to choose Eichstätt. I visited the C1 German course with the literature subcourse, so writing this report in German would have been logical. However, seeing that there were lots of students coming from the United States (perhaps one third of all participants), as well as the fact that many fellow students, regardless of place of origin, knew only basic German, I'm inclined to write this report in English in the hope that it would help the majority of the people reading it.

My plan of doing a specialty training in Germany is the reason why I'm studying the language. I applied for the BAYHOST scholarship as soon as I had it recommended from a satisfied fellow learner who was in Bavaria through it the previous year. After that joyous day when I found out that I received it and that I'm going to Eichstätt, the organization was pretty straightforward and the communication with the organizers – both BAYHOST and the host university - was exemplary: I received emails from them with plenty of information about the dates and times (about 2 months in advance, which I highly appreciate), the course itself, travel and accommodation details, even as far as culture tips and useful links.

Nothing was left unanswered, yet they were quick to give a friendly reply when I had questions, so don't hesitate to ask. The University has a detailed course and activities overview

and a day-to-day timetable available [on their site](#) in advance, which I found excellent, because it eliminated any uncertainties and allows you to plan ahead. You also receive two confirmation letters by conventional mail from both organizers, which were very useful as guarantee papers when crossing the border or when applying for visa, if needed.

Getting to Eichstätt from another country is not complicated: first you can arrive to one of the major transport hubs in Bavaria, i.e. the big cities – Munich or Nuremberg, by your preferred mode of transport (airplane, train, bus; I personally took the plain from Skopje to Nuremberg). After arriving in Munich or Nuremberg you can use the well-developed German railway system to your advantage and just take the train to your end destination. The location of Eichstätt in the heart of Bavaria means that the trip lasts only 1.5-2.5 hours from the aforementioned starting points.

To plan this train ride I recommend the website "[Bayern Fahrplan](#)" or the website of [Deutsche Bahn](#). With the second site you can buy and then print your ticket, which is very convenient. An important note when planning your trip: your end destination should be "Eichstätt Stadt". That is the train station in the city (I marked it on Google Maps [here](#)). Eichstätt also has the station "Eichstätt Bahnhof" (marked [here](#) on GM), a few kilometers outside the city, however, all regional trains (e.g. from Munich, Nuremberg) get to this destination, not the one in the city. Luckily there is one local train (available every hour) which connects the two stations. This means your trip may look something like this: Nuremberg/Munich > Eichstätt Bahnhof > Eichstätt Stadt.

When I arrived, one of the tutors was there to pick me up at the train station (which was a great gesture) and accompany me to the **accommodation**, the Kolping-Tagungshotel, only 5 minutes away from the station. The hotel was good, only 15 minutes away from the campus, and it offered simple, but well-furnished one and two bedroom apartments with separate bathrooms and breakfast in the mornings. There are two public fridges in which you can store perishable food, but you can't use any cooking appliances (you can, on the other hand, eat a good cooked meal at low student prices in the university cafeteria with regular vegetarian and sometimes vegan options). Free WiFi is available at the hotel, it was however at moments over capacity and slow, something that can be improved, but that's compensated by the access to the computer rooms at the university.

The bedclothes are periodically changed, but you have to provide your own towels and keep the room tidy by yourself. If you want to wash your clothes, look for the public laundry room at the university campus. There are supermarkets just 5-10 minutes away which offer variety and shopping at very affordable prices for anyone's standard. At the hotel and very soon at the university I found myself in the company of more than 60 students from 22 countries around the world. This truly made my stay a multicultural one; our experiences together and the lasting friendships that we formed over the course of time is something that I'll cherish forever.

Don't get fooled by its size; although **Eichstätt** is a small university city (around 13k inhabitants) I found out that it has indeed lots to offer. First of all, I was blown away by the century rich history and the wonderful architecture (e.g. you can't miss the baroque Sommerresidenz, the Dom, the Schutzengelkirche, Willibaldsburg with its beautiful garden, the Jura-Museum etc.). Second, the nature park Altmühltal is simply divine to hike or bike through; one can even rent a canoe and go down the river! Third, the central location of the city in Bavaria allowed us to make easy excursions to Munich and Nuremberg, some people even went to Salzburg or visited the famed castle Neuschwanstein. Travel is very easy to do by the way

with the [Bayern ticket](#), which up to 5 people can share for the cost of €8.60 per person and allows unlimited travel around Bavaria for a day. Last but not least, the people of Eichstätt are courteous, friendly and hospitable, and very eager to help you immerse yourself in the rich and unique culture that Bavaria has to offer.

My **experience with the academic part** of my stay was excellent. After a placement test I ended up in the C1 class with one of the coolest teachers I've ever had. Through reading and writing texts, watching movies and having discussions on thought-provoking topics such as stereotypes, taboos, intercultural differences/misunderstandings and many others we expanded our vocabulary, learned alternative ways to express ourselves and practiced some of the finer points of grammar and style. One of the highlights of the class were the oral presentations of our countries, through which we learned a great deal about our similarities and differences.

I am so glad I chose the **literature course** – from reading excerpts of literature in German and having discussions and presentations we explored the theme of art and the artist. It was a bit challenging to read literary texts, e.g. short stories from Kafka, but it was also very interesting, rewarding and educational. We even got to write our own poems that got featured in the school newspaper! The optional, but very fun **dance and theater course** with the two teachers, which took place in the afternoons and in which everyone could participate, regardless of language level, culminated in an amazing and memorable show of dance and performance during our farewell dinner party.

Certainly unforgettable were the many **excursions and events**, such as the reception in the town hall (covered by the local newspaper), the visit of the car factory of Audi in Ingolstadt, the trip to the beautiful and old monastery Weltenburg (be sure to try the famous local beer) followed by a boat trip down the Danube, the excursion to the historical city of Regensburg and the romantic medieval town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, movie nights, parties and much more. The real superstars from the organizational team were our three tutors, who are students themselves. They were available around the clock with help, info and advice; they did tours around campus and 'alternative' city tours, giving us inside tips on some hidden points of interest, and organized and joined us on many 'unofficial' excursions and events, such as nights out in beer gardens, a board game night, a barbeque party, a local Bavarian beer fest, a trip to Nurnberg and much more.

In conclusion, I left Eichstätt with a better knowledge of German and the German culture, with a deeper understanding of the rich German history, and with many exciting experiences with new friends from around the world. Being non-stop surrounded with the language coupled with the participation in carefully crafted courses with great mentors jump-started my learning at a C1-level and accelerated my efforts in acquiring the C1-certificate in the near future; moreover I am certain that the grades from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt are a point in my CV that would ease my quest for specialty training in Germany, in one of Europe's best healthcare systems. So thank you BAYHOST, thank you Eichstätt, thank you Bavaria, and thank you Germany!