

ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT SOMMERSPRACHKURSE IN BAYERN 2017

[Report on summer course in Bavaria in 2017]

Herkunftsland [county of origin]:	Serbia
Heimathochschule [home university]:	University of Belgrade
Studiengang [course of study]:	MA Studies in Economy
Sprachkurs in Bayern [course in Bavaria]:	von [from] 3.8.2017 bis [until] 25.9.2017
Bezeichnung des Sprachkurses [name of the course]:	German Courses Passau
Kursort in Bayern [place of the course]:	Passau
Sprachkursniveau des besuchten Kurses [course level]:	B2

The adventure started the day I received the confirmation letter. As it usually happens in life, I was quite surprised to have been chosen as a participant at the German Courses in Passau! Although I've prepared the application quite meticulously, to spread the word around is that the recruiting process is quite competitive, both in numbers and quality of the applications. My principal advice in that sense would be to **take your time in preparation** and think through it well, particularly in terms of the motivation for applying.

When the **course information** from the facilitators of the course started marching in, I was immediately assured in the commitment of the team and high level of preparedness and management of the programme. All of the documentation was sent through in understandable language; reading through it, I soon realized that every potential question that would come to my mind had already been covered in the brochures – accommodation, food, insurance, schedule, course info, venue, logistics in travel and free-time planning. A genuine demonstration of German manner in business, as my father would say!

Getting there was altogether simple and straightforward. I flew from Belgrade to Munich (early booking is a money-saver) and took the cheap and reliable Flixbus (for 6 €) from the Airport to the Passau Bus station, where the wonderful tutors awaited for the participants and helped us settle down and find ways to our dormitories. I would say – pack a sandwich, if arriving late. Although there is always some fast food to grab, Passau's shops tend to close down at 6/7pm.

I was staying at one of the most beautiful **dormitories** in offer – at the Dreiflüssecke – just two minutes away from the astonishing point where the Danube, Inn and Ilz meet. Our balcony view stretched across the glassy Danube quickly rushing under the Veste Oberhaus – a middle-age fortress used by the Bishops as a getaway place from dissatisfied masses!

The room I stayed in was clean, peaceful and comfy. The only issue we faced in the first couple of days was poor access to WiFi – it is not a service the Passauers would gladly share! However,

having read the reports from previous participants, I brought my laptop. The cable-internet was a good enough replacement – I could turn it into a hotspot so my friends could use the internet as well (quite a beneficial currency in bargain – internet for chocolate, homework help or late-night chitchats!)

The most enjoyable part of the experience, apart from meeting friends for lifetime, were the **German lessons**. Upon the beginning of the programme, we took the placement test and I was placed in the B2 group. Although I feared I would have difficulties with the speaking and hearing, I found later that those were entirely unsubstantiated. The carefully designed and applied teaching methodology helped us practice and improve our weak spots – all in a fun and interactive manner. We talked endlessly, and our teachers guided us with patience and teaching passion through our errors. We worked hard on improving our vocabulary and were tricked even to struggle with the boring grammar through exercises designed to ease up the process. Finally, a few of the participants, who felt the language group they were placed in was too difficult/too easy to follow through, had to opportunity to swap the group, as they found appropriate.

The group really bonded through classes – apart from my fellow Balkaneers I met friends from Iran, Russia, Cuba, USA, Brazil, Syria and many more. The teachers have put all of their effort to create an environment in which everyone would engage – the shy ones were louder in smaller talking groups and the more confident ones helped along the way – we used them as live-dictionaries and got them busy by making them explaining us how they've gotten so good in German!

I really feel I have reached the necessary confidence to express myself in German. The greatest outcome of the course is that my **motivation for learning the language** had ever since only grown – I keep reading books and news in German, a thing a couldn't have imagined to do before I applied for the course. This doesn't mean to say it's easy – sometimes I dwell in thoughts of how can anyone believe that German has underlying logic and beauty behind it! However, the experience has taught me that daily, constant exposure to the language is the best way forward.

The accompanying **free-time programme** was well-planned and designed. One could plan alone his free time and could always use the great organized tours. I won't say much on this, as a lot of surprises will await you at the spot. We went on beautiful nature strolls in the neighborhood, visited quite a number of German pubs, listened to an organ concert, and went to excursions in Munich, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Straubing (some with the group and others by ourselves). We felt energized, constantly in company, so we slept a little less than usual to make the best use of our four weeks in Passau.

Lastly, I would say that the experience is one I would cherish in memory for a very long time – I truly believe I had great luck to meet amazing people who I am still in close contact with. I owe a great **thank you** to BAYHOST, to the organizers, the very helpful and fun group of tutors. I hope to say hi to all of them soon in Passau, as I am determined to come back and enjoy this baroque and friendly town soon again.