

International University Week in St. Pölten

The International University Week (IUW) is a one week international seminar (with a variety of workshops, excursions, social events, etc.) which is organized by a network of European University and Schools of Social Work and Social Sciences (SocNet98). It takes place every summer semester in at least three locations of the network. The IUW 2019 has been held from 1st – 5th April 2019. Our group visited the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten, Austria. The main topic of the IUW 2019 there has been “diversity matters” and has included an interesting mix of presentations, workshops and excursions.

On the first day, we were divided into two groups and explored St. Pölten by foot. After a break, we assembled at the university for the Welcome Event. This was a good opportunity to get to know each other, because every student group from all the participating universities held a presentation to introduce themselves and their university and/or hometown to the rest.



For example we presented our



University of Applied Sciences in Emden-Leer by playing the game “1, 2 or 3” with the 57 students from 12 European partner universities from 8 different nations. For that, we prepared 10 questions about East Frisia, Emden and our university with 10 answers, which included some illustrated pictures.

University of Applied Sciences in Emden-Leer by playing the game

In the afternoon we all met in the “Sonnenpark” for a welcome evening with dinner in form of a barbecue. The “Sonnenpark” is called “Park of Diversity”, which is created by citizens for being a welcoming place of nature and culture.



On the second day, the workshops started. We got the opportunity to attend various workshops. Some of us visited for example the workshop “Diversity in child protection” held by James Hill, one of the 15 lecturers, who comes from the US. In the evening the students met for a nice game of bowling, while the lecturers came together for a dinner.

The third day started with a lecture about “diversity and society” for all students by a lecturer from the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten. After lunch, we had again the opportunity to attend different workshops. For example some



students took part in a workshop, which took a close look at the diversity of gender. This workshop was similar to our gender seminars at university in Emden. That’s why we were able to compare our way of studying social work with the way of other universities. In addition to this workshop theme we were positively surprised by the handling of gender aware language when we saw the road signs in St. Pölten.

In the evening there were no planned events, so we took the opportunity and went downtown with some of the other international students and had dinner in a nice Austrian restaurant. After that most of the students met in the hostel that was rented for us and near to the train station for a nice evening together.

The fourth day, we started again with a variety of different workshops to choose from. Some of us attended a very interesting workshop about “Youth work in a culturally diverse context” held by the students from PXL University College, Hasselt, Belgium. After a short break at lunchtime, we went by train to Krems, a nice town at the Danube. There we had the chance to get to know different field visits like “men’s counselling”, “Addiction Counselling” or the “Activating Individual Employment of the Psychosocial Service Schiltern”. Additionally, we were also given the opportunity for a bit of sightseeing in Krems after we finished the informative field visits. In the evening however, we all came together for the farewell evening in a typical Austrian Restaurant of a wine-grower, where we got our certificates and had a fantastic dinner and a great evening together while listening to accordion music.



All in all, it was a very exciting trip. We learned a lot about how others deal with the topic of diversity. We also made new friends and had a great time in St. Pölten. Attending the IUW 2019 is a decision definitely none of us regrets!

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