

1st Summer School for Young People from Belarus

Berlin, 12-26. August 2009

Participants' Diaries of the Day

Foreword

This collection of essays is a personal touch to the First Summer School for Young People from Belarus. Throughout the two-week period of their stay in Berlin, participants kept the Diary of the Day where they documented their observations related to a particular area of their interest. This area was explored during their short-term internship place in public institutions or NGOs, discussed with experts and within the group, and reflected upon individually. Below you can find the results of young people's work.

The diversity of participants translated into variety of their interests: along with the issues of ecological awareness and sustainable development which seem to be inherent to the programs of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, one can find an account of disadvantaged groups and minorities in Germany and their situation, as well as to learn about each other's perception in Belarusian and German societies, follow up on history represented through the architecture in Berlin, and reflect upon what constitutes cooperation and tolerance in the modern world.

Despite diversity of the topics, all the essays have something in common: They are funny, creative, informative and very sincere. They represent an intersection of old and new, collective and individual, German and Belarusian. At the same time, they give us not only the impressions of Germany and Berlin through young people's eyes, but also provide a clear picture of what Belarus lives with and hopes for today. In their essays, young authors address concerns of common life in a dialogue with colleagues, friends, and to a large extent, with themselves. By doing this, they attempt to improve the situation, and call for our attention.

We hope that you will enjoy the reading!

Tetiana Katsbert

Editor and Co-organizer of the Summer School 2009

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1. Freaky or not freaky? Germany and Belarus. *Hanna Chyhir*



Hi! I am delighted to greet you in our **Café “FREAKY GERMAN”!**

Today in Menu:

- **Starter:** Presentation of my topic
- **First dish:** “Mosaic of meanings” that I’ve managed to collect
- **Second dish:**
 - 1) Germany and Belarus: short eco comparison;
 - 2) Climate Alliance: acquaintance
- **Dessert:** Some humorous placates powered by Climate Alliance
- **Drinks:** Conclusions

Bon appétit!

STARTER

*All charming people, I fancy, are spoiled.
It is the secret of their attraction.
Oscar Wilde*

My name is Hanna Chyhir and I decided to raise the issue which I could call like “Freaky or not freaky”. That is very interesting for me to explore during this summer school expectations and impressions concerning the society in Germany and Belarus, in particular, what is unusual for Belarusian people in Germany and what is their attitude towards all that. For that reason, every day I try to communicate with different people so that I could get something new for my issue. Beside I would point out my attention to ecological questions and what is surprising and not common for Belarus.

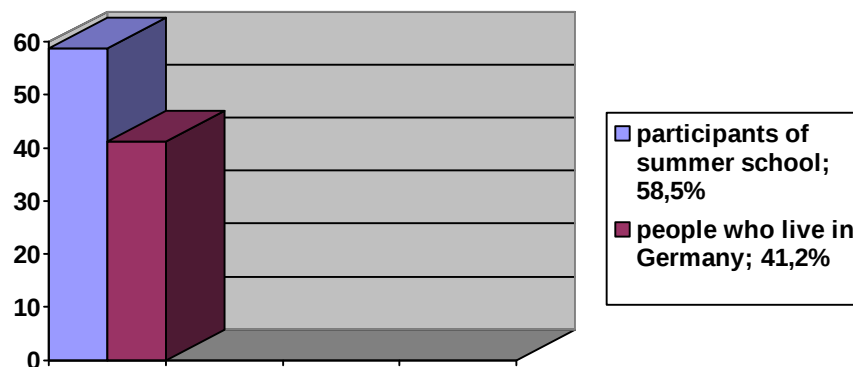
FIRST DISH

Within several days I managed to formulate the most frequent and discussed issues. They are:

- Opportunities
- Habits
- Lively mind

- Creativity
- System of education
- The problem of different generations
- Stereotypes
- Public transport
- Climate friendliness
- Working conditions
- Service and politeness
- Readiness to cooperate

I asked not only the participants of our summer school but some people who live in Germany. According to their number I could create a little diagram:



Now I would like to calculate all the opinions concerning the living in Germany and provide you with some results which I would like to call “Mosaic of meanings”:

1) Opportunities.

Any taste can be satisfied!

2) Habits.

Germans like to sit on the grass.

3) Lively mind.

People are open-minded

4) Creativity.

All people are ready to create something; they are not lazy to find innovative ways.

5) System of education.

On the one hand that is not so brilliant that the studying at universities lasts so long, on the other all the students are free to make there own decisions.

6) The problem of different generations.

In comparison with Belarus that seems to be a little bit easier to solve constructively some questions. Children in Germany are allowed more and have more possibilities.

7) Stereotypes.

People who know something about Belarus have a negative attitude towards our country.

8) Public transport.

Comes on time!

9) Climate friendliness.

There are very many organisations that deal with ecology, energy; people prefer to ride a bicycle as much as possible.

10) Working conditions.

People at summer time walk through the offices barefoot; they can go out through the window; it is possible to eat apples in Bundestag. And all that is really great.

11) Service and politeness.

Patience to foreigners.

12) Readiness to cooperate.

People are open to organise something together, in Germany or in Belarus.

SECOND DISH

And now I would like to express and share my own opinion and what I gained during the participation in our summer school and to make some parallels between German and Belarus. In order to make it easier to understand I would like to organise it:

Belarus	Germany
• Ecological flash mobs are not popular and common ☹ • People would like to have more roads and more cars • “Dienstwagen” is a great idea according to public opinion, moreover, people stand for huge expensive cars • Public transport - ☹ • Climate protection is not so popular among common people • Expensive / fancy flash-animations for web sites	• Ecological flash mobs are popular and common ☺ • Some organisations try to make some steps not to build new roads and autobahns • “Dienstwagen” are big and that is the result of air pollution due to CO₂. The idea is to reduce their quantity • Public transport - ☺ • Climate-friendly politics • Basic web site for different projects; more commonly to support blogs
What is common: Bio and ecological products for eating	

Beside all the above mentioned I would like to point out that the strong side of German society is networking and cooperation. For instance, Klima-Allianz, where I have had my internship, coordinates and cooperates with approximately 100 different organisations. Among them are WWF, Oxfam, NABU, Weed, Grüne Liga, E3G, Germanwatch and many others. According to Christina Hering, there are some difficulties in such kind of work but it is very important to create a really working network. And every member of such circle is responsible for its own part of the whole process of projects. And it works successfully. On the 17th of August I was lucky to be present at one of the meetings “Informelle Kohlerunde” (casual meeting on coal issues). I was surprised and impressed at the same time. It lasted only 1 hour and 45 minutes but all the representatives managed to discuss the main issues and to set up new agendas and goals and dates of next meetings.

All the organisations have united to form The Climate Alliance, under the motto: "Together, we can achieve more". Working together, members of the Climate Alliance will now harness the fact that in Germany, the basic political framework for climate protection policies has already brought about a drastic lowering of greenhouse gas levels. As a big industrial nation, Germany has emitted an above-average per-capita output of CO₂, decisively contributing to global warming. And all that is just the future for our own country.

The circle of members of the Climate Alliance includes:

- Churches
- Development organisations
- Environmental organisations
- Trade unions
- Consumer protection organisations
- Youth associations
- Anti-globalisation organisations
- Other groups

The Climate Alliance calls on other organisations and initiatives to become a member. What is also unusual that members are highlighted with their logo on publications and on the website of the Climate Alliance. Members of the Climate Alliance can help develop strategies and help decide on what actions should be taken. They are invited to participate in the member plenary sittings which take place every two months. Besides, members have a right to vote.

On the 3rd day of my internship I got to know some really interesting activities organised by Climate Alliance:

Promoting the Global Day of Action

The first aim is to promote the idea that the Global Climate Day of Action is one of the most important opportunities for the public in Germany to take action towards climate protection and together with tens of thousands worldwide exert pressure for consequent climate protection action. On 6 December 2009, the Global Climate Action Day demonstrations will once more be lead by the Climate Alliance.

Preventing the construction of new coal-fired power plants

The second aim of the Climate Alliance is to take action towards preventing the construction of new coal-fired power plants in Germany. Contemporary witnesses from countries particularly affected by climate change will be invited to the demonstration. These guests will then report back home on the origin of greenhouse gases and their effect on their home country.

Monitoring and Influencing climate policies

In addition to joint action-taking, the Climate Alliance monitors and tries to influence climate policies on national, European and international level. It encourages member organisations to present their concerns and perspectives. The Climate Alliance believes in participation!

DESSERT

Really freaky seems to me also the opportunity to print large posters and enormous amount of cards, flyers, brooches. Moreover, all of them are not only bright, but also funny, with lots of humour. [See <http://www.die-klima-allianz.de/download> for more details].

DRINKS

So, to make some conclusions I would like to say that German strategies and strong network cooperation, charming people, excellent service, possibilities and freedom seem to be very impressive, attractive, unusual and just a little bit freaky.

I reckon that our summer school is some kind of cooperation as well. Probably, it is not so wide but nevertheless, every day we discuss some issues and it is really helpful and useful for each of us to gain information we are interested in. I am sure we will cooperate even after our summer school as well.

Hope it was tasty! ☺

2. Picture of Belarus in Berlin. *Katia Stratskevich*



Before I start contemplating on the topic I need to make a remark – all of the written below reflects only a part of the picture that exists in the minds of people. But what is even more important – all in all it will be the words that I choose when putting down people's opinions. These are the questions that I chose to ask, so in a way this little note reflects my own thoughts as an author of this little composition.

So what do people of Berlin know about Belarus?

Before addressing potential speakers with this question, one should try to draw his/her own picture of Belarus based on what one sees in Berlin. This seems to be a rather difficult task as there's not much to be found, and the material that can be traced down comes in bits and pieces. Here's what I personally was able to spot while being in Berlin for the last two weeks: the Memorial dedicated to the Jews killed in the World War II near the Brandenburger Tor. As one wanders through the halls in the basement, sees faces and hears voices of people who fell victims to the war one can't help but often notice the name of our country in the inscriptions on the walls. That may mean we live in the country that severely suffered from the horrors of

the war over sixty year ago. Banks of the Spree river, Haus der Kulturen der Welt exhibition dedicated to the fall of Berlin Wall twenty years ago. Pictures of the models on the walls, shooting for GDR fashion magazine of that time. Two of the models are posing in front of the setting familiar to me, I read the name of the place – Minsk city, 1980. So we are the country that belonged to the soviet block back in the 1980-s, where the shooting of such pictures would be possible. These were the only two times when I was reminded of the existence of such country, no news flashes or reports devoted to Belarus in news papers or major TV channels for the last two weeks. Not much, isn't it?

However, let's get back to the question posted above. What does the name "Belarus" stand for in the opinions of the Berliners? Being asked this question fair share of the people I spoke did know (or guessed) it is a name of the country. After all, this question usually followed a little introduction of myself – "Hi! My name is Katja, and I come from Belarus..." Nevertheless, there were also quite a few of those who confused the name of Belarus with something else. Moreover, I got a feeling that if such a research would have been held on a larger scale (not just my modest investigation of the issue), the majority of interlocutors here wouldn't be aware of the fact such country exists.

However, for majority of those who do know that Belarus is a country, the biggest challenge was to point out on a map its' location. Their closest guess was – "it is a part of Ukraine/Russia, isn't it?" Based on this assumption they correctly locate the country in the region of Eastern Europe, but not as a sovereign state, but as a part of some other country. Could this be reasoned by our soviet heritage and the fact that the country used to belong to the Soviet Union? Quite possibly. After all, in historical terms, current day Belarus and its name are both extremely young. But that is only one of the possible reasons. The other one seems to be even more obvious and is right there in the German translation of the name of the country. Weissrussland. Weiss Russland. White Russia. No wonder people associate us with the part of Russia. Today we have to face the fact that such is the name of our country that has been introduced (for reasons yet unknown to me, but definitely worthy of investigating) and used for at least several decades in this country.

Over the past two weeks in Berlin we came across this issue, discussed and argued about it so many times already, that there is no need to raise it one more time. I think by now each one of us made up his/her mind in this regard. It would be more than silly if we refused to face the fact that if people in Berlin do know anything about Belarus, they store it in their memory under the name Weissrussland, not Belarus. Personally I think it would be correct to use the name "Belarus" as it is put down in the main law, the constitution of our country, and as it is noted by such reputable organizations as the United Nations, for example. But one has to keep in mind that collective consciousness of people is a very slowly changing matter, and it will take years if not decades for this relatively new name "Belarus" to replace the old one of "Weissrussland". From this perspective the question still remains open: is it better to stick with new "Belarus" unknown to the majority of people in Germany? Or to allow old "Weissrussland" that is more commonly known and that does contain at least some knowledge about the country? Seems like even with all those discussions that we shared the question somehow still remains open...

But let us not get too far off the topic. Here are most frequent answers to my question about what people in Berlin know about the country where I come from, whichever name you call it:

- *Lukashenko is the name of the president of the country.* There were cases when people did not know the name of the guy, but made a general remark of the country as the “last dictatorship of Europe”. And this is in a way thanks to him – we have to admit that because of Lukashenko more people are aware of the existence of our country, and this fact proves there is always the other side of the coin in any matter.
- *Chernobyl catastrophe.* The tragedy of Chernobyl affected and is still affecting the lives of Belarusians, the scale of it is so big that it simply can not be forgotten.
- *The capital of the country is Minsk.* And that seems to be the only Belarusian city known to the Germans.
- *There are such sportsmen as ice-hockey player Salei and football player Gleb who are originally from Belarus.*

That was what people *know* about Belarus, which is only one side of the topic. While talking to those who didn't know much about the country I also came across some of the stereotypes that live in their minds. So when being asked “what do you *think* of Belarus?” here's what they replied:

- “this must be a place a bit less safe (if not dangerous) because it is further to the East of Poland”. Seems that in their minds they draw a fine line along the eastern border of Poland that not only separates the EU from non-EU countries, but also divides the world into two parts leaving Belarus behind together with other unknown and thus less safe countries.
- as in all east-european countries, “vodka must be good there” which also leads to “people drink lots of it (vodka) there”.
- “women are beautiful, often wear high heels and in some cases show “promiscuous behaviour”. I think no comments are necessary on the last two points above.

But my review wouldn't be complete if I didn't mention some of the Germans that we met in the course of our school in the last two weeks. These were the people who devoted a certain share of their life to Belarus, who are constantly actively involved in activities related to our country. These are the people who are dedicated to what they do and are deeply interested in what is happening in our country. These are people who not only speak Belarusian language with almost no accent, or who travelled to Belarus over a hundred times, these are the people whose knowledge of the country very often exceeds our own. And I think such people deserve deep respect in what they are and what they do.

So, if I now try to make a conclusion of what Germans know about our country today, all in all the picture won't be as optimistic as one would hope for. But I think in many ways it depends on us whether people in Berlin and in all Germany in the future will think of our country as White Russia with president Lukashenko, Chernobyl and vodka, or some other place called Republic of Belarus with bright perspectives for its citizens.

3. Representation of history in Berlin: History through architecture.

Ihar Lameka



Berlin is well-known around the world as the capital of Germany and a city of rich history and culture. Every year millions of tourists from different countries and even continents make a trip to this city. Personal interests in Berlin could be of a wide range – someone likes its intensive night life in clubs, another prefers long and thoughtful voyage through the exposition of numerous museums. Anyway, it is completely impossible to visit Berlin and not to do some sightseeing and not to see its famous architecture.

Berlin as a city was badly damaged by the Second World War and even until nowadays has not reached the pre-war number of its inhabitants. Not everything but most buildings were destroyed by the Allied bombardments and heavy fighting in the urban circumstances that took place in April-May 1945. That's the reason why Berlin is so modern in relation to its architecture. Perhaps it wouldn't be a big exaggeration to say that this city is a world capital of modern architecture.

Nevertheless some historical sights were repaired or reconstructed in the recent time. After the war the city was divided into Western and Eastern parts and this also finds representation in the planning of the city and its architecture. The Berlin Wall became a symbol of divided Germany and divided world into two camps.

So the main goal of my work was the attempt to collect the impressions of different people¹ about the history of Berlin through the prism of its architecture (historical sights and memorial places first of all).

The results of my little survey were not so obvious to imagine or in comparison to expected findings. Because of historical background I see Berlin from unique vantage point so do my colleagues. So all the reflections were divided into two parts: traditional and unexpected ones.

Traditional/usual/expected results

Most of them were my own impressions that were partially or in full amount shared by my colleagues.

¹ the group of Belarusians that spent two weeks in Berlin

- **Potsdam** – palaces and gardens of kingdom of Prussia and in what follows Imperial Germany. Extremely significant was the fact that there are no evident links with the Nazi regime in the complex of Potsdam.
- **Brandenburg Gate** is a landmark of Berlin from the end of the 18th century. This gate in the form of the triumphal arch always reminds about the glorious past of this state. That's why it could be found on German euro coins (10 cent, 20 cent, and 50 cent).
- **Siegessäule (Victory Column)** – was built to honour German victories and the new-established by the means of “blood and iron” German empire.
- **Berliner Dom** – was built for the pleasure of German emperor with the task to be bigger than the Cologne cathedral².
- **Denkmal** – the memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe - makes very strong impressions to visitors because of its shape. It looks like the graveyard with no names on the gravestones.
- **The Berlin wall, East Side gallery, Checkpoint Charlie** – there are plenty of evidences and representations of German people's drama. One nation was divided into two parts and it was the tragedy of the world.
- **Fernsehturm (TV tower)** at Alexanderplatz – is the symbol of Eastern Berlin, the evidence of the communistic power and to some extent a monument to the Soviet space program.

Unexpected opinions

- **The axis** Reichstag-Lafayette gallery-Sony Centre – three buildings new or rebuilt (in the case of Reichstag) with one general element – the reversed pyramid or even spiral. They are situated not far away from each other and their projects were made by non-German architects (British, French and American – as three zones of Western Berlin occupation). The form of whirlwind consciously or unconsciously represents the sign of destruction that formed Berlin of these days in the middle of the 20th century.
- **Cobbled streets** – the special trait of old cities. And Berlin is not the exception.
- **Library of Humboldt's university** with a memorial to books that were burned by the Nazi regime. Numerous memorials not only to people but even to the books that suffered during the history is the trademark of Berlin sights.
- **Bear statues** – the present and future of Germany is closely linked with the European Union and multicoloured bears that are presented to Berlin by other countries of EU should show these symbolic bonds.
- **Subway and the bridges** of Imperial Berlin were illustrations of industrial power of the country in the end of 19th - beginning of the 20th century.

Through the architecture of Berlin we could see the past, present and even future of this city and the whole country. Numerous layers represent difficult and ambiguous history of Berlin – German Empire, the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, East Germany and finally, unified Democratic Germany.

² The biggest Catholic church in Germany

4. Ecological Consciousness in Germany and Belarus. *Alena Rybik*



Though ecological issues tend to be the most burning ones nowadays, for some reason they remain rather abstract. That means that even in most ecologically conscious countries, with plenty of information available, people still seem unaware of real ways to solve global ecological problems. We've all got used to the thought that we should do something in order to save our planet, but very often we shift the responsibility to the government or just people from above, i.e. we adhere to the rules existing in the community we live in, no matter if they support ecological issues or not. And we forget that the whole is always composed by its smallest counterparts. In other words, ecological problems of the Earth are to be solved simply by implementing ecological consciousness of every person on that Earth. But the word "simply" doesn't reflect real simpleness, as we'll see on the examples of Germans and Belarusians, two nations which are rather different in their sense of ecological consciousness.

At first glance it is difficult to find a nation more ecologically concerned than Germans. The very fact that every year the Bundesministerium fuer Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit carries out a special survey of people's ecological consciousness which is called "Umweltbewusstsein in Deutschland" ("Ecological consciousness in Germany"), and issue a brochure afterwards which is printed on the recycled paper (100% old paper), shows that the government and people are concerned about these issues. And the results of the survey display as well that 90% of respondents consider the environmental protection to be an important political task. And in fact most German people prove themselves to be ecologically conscious in their everyday life, which is even more important than just answering the questions of a survey. That means, for them it's normal to gather empty bottles to hand them in at shops in order they'll be recycled; to use a plug for a kitchen sink for washing up rather than do this under the flowing water; to distinguish garbage accurately and be very careful while choosing the right litter-bin on the street to drop an empty pack. These are just few examples of everyday life expressions of ecological consciousness of Germans. And what is even more important, they even don't think while performing those simple actions, it's just like to brush teeth in the morning. In my view, that's a crucial point – such things should be just useful habits but in order to acquire them a lot of work – both inside and outside – has to be done.

On the other hand, as some Germans involved in the ecological movement on the large scale (e.g. people from Deutscher Naturschutzring) confess, there's much more to be done. The very important example is that many elderly people and even ecological movements try to deal with the problems mentioned only on the national level. They say that it's only important to solve ecological problems in Germany, and they don't care about the rest of the world. It is obviously nonsense, for it is possible to create a single clean and healthy area on the Earth if only you put it into the vacuum. The younger generation of ecological movement of Germany, especially NGOs, understands this and tries to deal with the ecological problems on the international

level, persuading other less developed in terms of ecology countries to think about what is going on with the Earth.

One of such countries is unfortunately Belarus. It is not known for its care for ecology and as far as ecological consciousness is concerned, we can speak about very low level of it. Though Belarusian cities and towns are very clean in comparison to many ones of some European countries, at their homes the Belarusians don't create their own ecologically clean environment. The very fact that in terms of energy consuming Belarus, the country with not so many powerful factories and plants, has the energy intensity of 2 – 2.3 times bigger than in the developed countries, e.g. Ireland or even the USA, proves that the Belarusians are careless about issues of energy saving and the whole ecology as well.

In order to make a little survey on the personal ecological consciousness of Berlin Summer School participants from Belarus I've proposed them to answer some very simple questions (the text of the survey is attached). The results were not surprising for me, for we are talking about (let us hope) the representatives of the most intelligent and intellectual part of Belarusian society. Most people have given the affirmative answer to the question "Do you consider yourself as ecologically conscious?" Whereas most people asked would prefer bicycle as a means of transport if there's no difference in time consuming, more than a half agreed not to buy food products with genetically modified organisms even if the state supports producing and selling these. There were some contradictory points, however, for example the link between energy saving and lowering people's standard of living and some others. But in general, I would say it would be really beneficiary if at least half of people in Belarus react to the ecological problems like my colleagues.

But in the end I've come to the conclusion that really high ecological consciousness is the result of long-term work made by the government, by society, by people around you and with you. It should become a useful habit. For most Germans it is, for majority of the Belarusians it is not. Hopefully we'll make some progress in future, but for now it's a sore subject.

5. LGBT (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender) Situation in Berlin.

Sergey Yenin



1. Foreword

I have never idealized Paris, but between me and this conglomerate of bourgeois estates will always be something similar to love
James Baldwyn, "Giovanni's room"

Sergey Gavrilin said: “I’m feeling culturally shocked. Look at everyone here: they are lying on the grass as if it’s an ordinary thing for everyone. I can only imagine what I would say to a confused policeman if I was lying on the grass in Gomel”.

Schöneberg. The center of gay and lesbian life of Europe. On Motzstasse there is no need in finding out whether there are any gay-friendly establishments. I would rather ask if there are any hetero-friendly ones. Bars, pubs, cafes, clubs, shops – here and there you can find rainbow symbolic, so no wonder the first time I visited Schöneberg I felt as if I had come to my home planet.

2. In the beginning

Berlin wasn’t always as tolerant as nowadays. In medieval times attitude to homosexuals depended on sexual orientation of a monarch, so rules and moral standards have been changing all the time. In 1869 the term “homosexuality” was invented by Napoleon to help homosexual people oppose church’s pressure. This French legal line in Germany existed till fascist times. Then paragraph 175, according to which men who had sexual relationship with men were prosecuted by the law, was introduced, but actually there was no law against lesbian women. It’s probably the reason of arguments between older gay and lesbian people about the monument to homosexuals, victims of holocaust (a video of two kissing men is permanently shown inside the monument, and lesbians want a video of two kissing women to be shown there as well, although no lesbians used to fall victims).

The LGBT movement started with sexual research of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (by the way I was pleasantly surprised when I was told about a new foundation named after Magnus Hirschfeld which deals with LGBT projects) and a gay movie “It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives” by Rosa von Praunheim. Some people, especially those, who are closely acquainted to Rosa von Praunheim, claim that she/he was only a cameraman, but not the screenwriter. The original screenwriter is supposed to be Dr. Martin Dannecker, the philosopher, sociologist and psychologist of Institut für Sexualwissenschaft. Nowadays Aunt Magnolia (Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld) and Rosa von Praunheim are the most fabulous LGBT-stars of Berlin, as their contribution to the movement was efficiently great. In former SchwuZ the lounge room was called “aunt Magnolia lounge” to commemorate the gay-icon. Now the lounge room has another name: “Popsi Boston lounge” after a famous drag queen of 20th century, but old visitors of SchwuZ remember the old good “aunt Magnolia lounge”. Unity, national identity and primary issues of democracy in the country helped “lesbischwulen” win this difficult battle. Paragraph 175 has been constantly changing (60s, 80s), there was even restriction for gay people under 16 (East) and under 18 (West) to have sex, until finally in 1994 paragraph 175 was totally abolished.

3. Long hard road out of hell

Years of repressions and hundreds of victims made people care about further happy existence of LGBT community. More and more people became obsessed with the idea of equal rights for everyone.

In 1973 in East Berlin a group of gay and lesbian people HIB (Homosexual Interest Group Berlin) began gathering in a basement of Charlotte, who lived in Mahlsdorf, outside Berlin, where they

were organizing talks and parties. More and more people were joining them, so later on they created a room of their own. The group grew bigger and bigger until they were forced to leave. In the 1980s the tradition of the Sunday's meeting in different public rooms under the code name "Sonntags-Club" started because it was only possible to rent rooms on Sundays without revealing the true intention and identity of the participants of the meetings. After meetings people were leaving special "Sonntags-Club" notifications as secret tokens on small pieces of paper, so that other people from the LGBT community could find them. Nowadays Sonntags-Club has an official status and provides groups of people with rooms, cheap food'n'drinks and with psychological support.

"Everything started with Rosa von Praunheim's movie", says Fray Fritz, psychosociologist from Sonntags-Club. "Gay and lesbian people were excited and encouraged to take position in such an open and provocative way. First the meetings consisted only of gay men, but a little bit later a lot of lesbian women joined them. Now Sonntags-Club consists mainly of transsexuals."

During my 3-day internship in Sonntags-Club I've seen different groups with different interests: "Jugendgruppe" for gay and lesbian people under 28, "40plus gruppe" for people over 40, "lesben 45+ gruppe" for lesbian people over 45 etc. But the group that captured my attention at once was "Deti Radugi" for Russian-speaking immigrants. The leader of the group, Kay, says: "We gather to speak Russian. Russian is a very passionate language and living in Berlin you feel lack of Russian communication. Long ago, after I came to Berlin from Kiev after graduation, I started giving advertisements to local newspapers to find out Russian-speaking gays. It was really extraordinary then, but more and more people began writing me letters. Later on, I have organized a group of Russian-speaking gays and now we have about 50 participants per meeting. There are 200.000 of Russian immigrants living here in Berlin, so you see, my work is important." These guys were chatting about politics, weather, Russian art and culture, and I didn't hear a word about discrimination. Dima, a guy from Kiev, says: "We don't feel isolated either as Slavic people or as gays. We always feel united, no matter what nationality we belong to." Really, the unity of LGBT community is worth appreciating.

Now we are going back to Schöneberg. At the very exit of U-bahn station Nollendorfplatz one can see a rainbow bear, a symbol of Berlin, well known in the whole world, that cheers up many tourists from everywhere. Everyone is trying to take picture of it, but the owners of Bruno's sex-shop situated nearby are often obliged to wash windows from spits and floors of the shop from broken chicken eggs... 5 meters from the bear an "Ebab" tourist agency for gay people is situated. Just in the same building there is an informational and supporting center "Mann-O-Meter". Mann-O-Meter is an umbrella organization, generally dealing with HIV problems, but in one of the rooms a "Maneo" project has an office. "We have a hotline for gay people. Every case of violence and hassgewalt is being put down in our archives", said Bastian Finke, sociologist, MANEO-projectmanager and the chairperson of MANEO-werkstatt 3. "The problem is that only about 10% of the cases were reported to the police. Trust in the police is less than poor." Indeed, in Belarus the basic problem of homosexuals is the lack of trust in the police, so I couldn't help asking how they solved this problem. "The political pressure on the police started in 1990s. We were just pointing them at their obligatory work and proclaiming to do this work properly. The smartest way is cooperation, because sustainable prevention work also saves costs. Strategic partnerships ultimately made work of the police easier as well in face of tight budgets is a convincing argument." Maneo project educates policemen in academies. In each police department there are so-called lions, special detectives working with hate crimes.

Another place of internship was “Gladt”. This is an organization of double-discriminated people. They are mostly Turkish, so they feel isolated and more vulnerable for homophobes due to both their sexual orientation and nationality. “Gladt” is a young organization, but they are constantly growing up in quantity of members and quality of held actions. “It’s not a secret that our main offenders are neo-Nazi. We try to help every victim and prevent every occasion of hassgewalt. We are also organizers of alternative gay-pride in Berlin, and every time the pride takes place we have more and more participants.”

The most colorful participants of prides all over the world are extremely queer-looking nuns with bras on their heads and numerous kilograms of makeup on their faces. I was really lucky to meet one of those cheerful nuns on Friedrichshain festival in Berlin. Sister Catherine, totally fabulous drag nun, told me such a story...

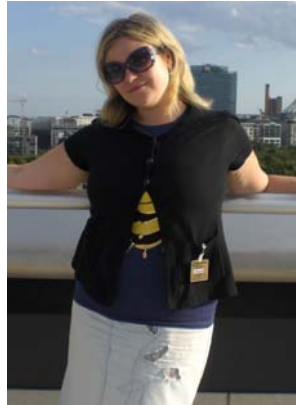
“In 1979 in San Francisco, California, one guy decided to chase away heterosexual people from a gay beach using non-loaded machine gun. Needless to say, he succeeded. This was the beginning of something new to San Francisco people. But it didn’t lead to violence, no one took guns to chase away heterosexual people from other gay beaches. It was the start of fabulous movement of SPI (Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence).”

SPI or OPI (Order of Perpetual Indulgence) has its own mission statements and vows, as well as structure of membership and even saints. The Sisters’ mission statement describes the organization and its aims thus: “The Sisters devote ourselves to commune service, ministry and outreach to those on the edges, and to promoting human rights, respect for diversity and spiritual enlightenment. The Sisters believe all people have rights to express their unique joy and beauty and use humor and irrelevant wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain in the human spirit.”

“When people see us, the first thing that crosses their mind is that they can receive assistance. We are dressed like nuns to show people that we can help, that we are not dangerous, but even benevolent and caring”, says Catherine.

During my stay in Berlin I’ve talked to politicians and many activists of different NGOs: AHA, LSVD, Begine. I’ve also heard lots of advises on how to achieve gay rights in Belarus, but the only conclusion I came to is that it’s too late for sustainable decreasing of homophobia level in Belarus. We have nothing to do with the police, as police is the weapon of our authorities via which they control people. We can’t also succeed via networking since streets but not Internet is the battlefield. Visiting Bundestag with Marc Berthold today I found a good way of solving the problem of inequality in Belarus. Inviting many European politicians and also representatives of LGBT commission of European Parliament and European media-workers to Belarusian prides will make a great international resonance in the society and maybe will prevent mass violence. There is still a lot to discuss, and there is no time for that, but we should give it a try.

6. Minority Rights in Faces. Roma People. *Volha Aleinikava*



*Whoever sets up a hierarchy between languages is setting up a
hierarchy between people*

Miklós Kontra, linguist

The Roma are a unique minority in Europe. Unlike other groups, the Roma have no historical homeland and are found in nearly all countries in Europe and Central Asia. Historical documents and legends trace Roma origins to northern India, and records indicate that they came to Europe in waves of migration between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. Increasing evidence suggests that Roma in Central and Eastern Europe have disproportionately suffered the adverse affects of transition from socialism. Roma workers were frequently among the first to lose their jobs at the outset of restructuring and, for various reasons including a low educational status, have faced significant barriers.

These findings have raised attention within countries and among the international community. A key issue which is emphasized repeatedly is that of education among the Roma. Evidence of low and declining levels of education among Roma children is a serious development with clear future implications. Lack of access to education lessens future labor market opportunities and the ability of individuals to move, and remain out of poverty.

While one of the most important aims of education is to obtain a good working position, another educational benefit is literacy. Literacy is imagined to be vital in today's society where even the most basic needs such as obtaining a driving license, filling in a social security form, or requesting a residence permit require literacy. That's why the very first thing we should start from is education. And to start from education we need lots of instruments. The most important and not easy-to-get instrument is knowledge about children. Roma children are the representatives of Roma nation. What do you know about Roma? Till the very first day of my internship I believed that I knew much about them. All my knowledge turned out to be the smallest drop in the huge ocean called Roma.

I

The first day of my internship began with getting acquainted with my supervisor Antje Hofert, a guide to the world of the Roma, to Berlin, Germany and to life on the whole. We had an introductory talk and started our way to Antje's friend Willi Büsing. Willi was Antje's colleague during the work at RAA Berlin (The Regional Centre for Education, Integration and Democracy).

Now he deals with different projects on Roma people, and he is a very talented artist (the pictures I've seen at his house impressed me very much), having his own exhibitions.

Willi's father was killed by the Nazis in 1944 at the age of 40. He was a soldier himself, that's why it's a double grief for him to know that his father was killed by the people he trusted.

Willi told us that during the 2nd World War the Roma people were taken to the concentration camps. But to talk about their past was forbidden until the 1980s. And there were not (and still are not) any subsidies for them. When the war began Roma communities were out of the society, that's why they didn't have any subsidies.

It's really hard for Willi to speak about his past mainly because of lots of prejudices and intolerance towards the Roma people. To his mind the only way to overcome these prejudices is to ask oneself a question "What do we know about the Roma people?"

The next place to visit this day was a monument to the Roma people killed during WW II which is still being built now. I'm always respectful to the people who commemorate the past no matter whether it reveals good or evil traits and features. The only question which remains open for me is why the authorities needed so much time to build such a memorial...

II

The second day began with a small over thought of the previous one, we had a talk with Antje but I'll talk about this a little bit later.

Then we went to Kreuzberg to one of the places where representatives of different nations live. There we met Miman – a 28-years-old young man, the son of a woman-"hustarbeiter" who had 2 jobs and no time to spend with her child and to help him to cope with different problems, especially with the facts of discrimination and intolerance.

Miman is originally from Macedonia but he was born in Germany. He told us a little bit about the history of Roman community. First Roma people came to Germany about 150 years ago after being slaves. The second wave took place in the 1960s. With the third wave came refugees from Yugoslavia who had and still have lots of problems with adaptation and acceptance. The main reason of low acceptance level is to Miman's mind that German people do not know anything about Roma. Miman advises to get acquainted with Roma culture from the school age. And he names 5 things which should be given to any child at school: attention, security, love, protection and personal contact.

Miman himself was involved in different projects with Roma people, especially children. Together with his friends he organized 3-month free courses on music for Roma children (12-15 persons). At the end of these courses the children presented their achievements in the form of concert provided with food and drinks.

Now Miman tries to stop German authorities to deport some Roma to their homeland. Actually it's not the case when people do not want return to their motherland. But these people have children who are under 20 y.o. and who were born in Germany. It will be a great difficulty for these children and youngsters to survive in their homeland mainly because of the language differences. And to prevent people from deportation you need to have about 300 signatures,

only then you'll have an opportunity to have a talk with the authorities but it doesn't mean that the case will be solved in favor of the Roma.

We have discussed many other topics but it's impossible to cover all of them. I admired Miman very much because of his eagerness to help people not to survive but to live a full life, beginning with the very first steps of a child.

III

During the third day my internship didn't take much time but what concerns information and experience it wasn't the least.

I visited organization called RAA Berlin (The Regional Centre for Education, Integration and Democracy) and had a talk with Christoph Leucht – a promoter for democratic school development and intercultural projects. There are about 60 people involved in the organization and 10-11 from them are Roma people with education. The main aim of RAA Berlin is to raise the chances of children of different nations to receive good education.

Christoph showed me 2 films – projects made by a group of 4 Roma youngsters – about what prejudices about Roma people the Germans have, and what Roma themselves think about these prejudices. There were people who said that they didn't have any prejudices about Roma. Such an answer is similar to "It's not my business and I don't care". Here you can see the most popular answers:

- 1) Prejudice about stealing – they don't have much money, they are always travelling, other people can steal too
- 2) They are always dancing and singing – Roma people have talents in their blood
- 3) They lead an easy life – it's not true, they have lots of difficulties, they always have to move somewhere because of the problems with the surroundings
(common people answered these questions)

IV

On the fourth day we visited Marzahn – a former concentration camp for Roma and Sinti during the WW II. The atmosphere of the place is equal to the atmosphere of any other place, commemorating people killed during the war times. Roma and Sinti people were kept there from 1935 till 1944, lots of families have suffered.

Then we went to SOS Kinderdorf e.V. – an organization which supports children from different families: Roma, Arabian, Turkish, German, and Yugoslavian. We had a lively and useful discussion on different topics, but mainly on how to work with Roma children and children on the whole. The women told me about 2 very interesting projects which are taking place at the moment:

- 1) "Mother for mothers" – a project for young low-educated women in order to help them to practice in dealing with children in informal way.
- 2) "Strong girls" – this project involves young girls which are kept at home, don't attend any schools, because of a strong forbid to communicate with boys. There are no elder boys involved in the project, that's why parents usually allow their daughters to come together and do some practice on music, dances and different other things.

I appreciated this visit very much. These women with lots of their own problems, with their own children are so strong in their activity, in their enormous eagerness to help other people. They are so optimistic and satisfied with their work. One can always admire such persons and wish all the best for their future work.

V

The last day of internship was a bit of relaxation and pleasant talks with Antje. From the very first day of our acquaintance I understood how lucky I was to have such a competent, broad-minded and open-hearted woman as a supervisor. She told me the story of how she began to work with Roma people.

Her former husband studied Sanskrit and one day he heard some familiar words in the street. He turned towards the people who were talking, they were from Romania and spoke Romanian language, similar to Sanskrit. From 1991-1994 Antje's family went home to Romanian refugees every weekend. One day they returned from Poland and found out that the family of their friends was deported to Romania. It was very hard for those people to change their way of life, to find new jobs (actually there were no jobs for them). Antje tried to make all possible things for her friends. Many of them were really worth doing and had progress. But you know, it's always difficult to be a black sheep. But the problems can be lessened if you are a kind of optimistic black sheep.

So lots of thanks to the people from the Heinrich Boll Foundation for organization of such a thorough internship for me. And huge and best regards to Antje being tolerant to all my questions, and being so frank with the answers.

Conclusion

Once I was a child and I thought that all people were equal. Growing up I came through terrible intolerance and hate among people. I was lucky to be born and brought up in my original society. I've never experienced racial intolerance. Till my 13's I even didn't know what racism was. Then slowly I began getting acquainted with people of different nations. The more I was talking about new acquaintances the more prejudices I heard among my surroundings. "Never deal with the Americans – they always behave like that and talk like this. Why are you talking about the Germans? Don't you remember the past?...The French? Oh! They're always flying in the clouds. The Ukrainians are too greedy for money" and bla-bla-bla. People with dark skin were always out of the question, a so-called "closed" topic. And of course a special view my surroundings had on Roma people. The only word suitable for describing the situation was "fear". Fear of everything: to talk with Roma, sit or stay nearby them, give them your hand and etc. "When you see a Roma cross the street immediately. Never stop" – the majority told.

During my childhood I had Roma friends. And I couldn't realize what was wrong with them. Why there were so many prejudices about them in our society. Some years later I got the idea. Nothing was wrong with the Roma; the problem was with the Belarusians. You know, people who had prejudices and dirty talks about the Roma had them about other people and about the Belarusians as well.

After graduation from the university with a master's degree on pedagogics I was sent as a young specialist to one of the schools at my hometown. There I met some Roma children, in my

classes as well. Of course I was curious about how to work with them, were there any difficulties and so on. From 7 headmistresses of the primary school only one woman told me that I should treat those children in a way similar to other pupils. All the other teachers advised simply not to pay any attention towards Roma. I was acting in my own way, and I realized and got to know more about Roma people, but not enough to convince others to accept them. And now I'm here, in Berlin, with a huge amount of information inside my mind, with a different view on what's happening here and in my country, with a great desire to improve my work at school, especially work with Roma children, who are not different from the others, may be the only thing is that they have more problems with adaptation and socialization and with a process of education as a result.

7. Life of homeless people in Berlin. *Volha Martynenka*



The text is dedicated to my Polish friend Sylwia who works with homeless women in Wrocław, a Western Polish city where I have lived for 9 months in 2008-2009. She told me a lot about her work, the people she works with, and inspired me greatly as a compassionate and open-minded woman. Sylwia told me that the abuse is often the reason why the women appear in the streets.

In Minsk I have friends who are active in the Food not Bombs movement, sometimes I also come to their actions. The purpose of the participants of the movement is to feed homeless people, they make regular spots in the districts of the city where the homeless people meet, spreading vegetarian food and clothes. The activists of the movement often have conflicts with the Belarusian police which tries to interfere in their activities. Food not Bombs action is not only a charitable action in my country, it is also the action which makes the homeless people visible, which carries this problem on to the surface, and it is very uncomfortable for the authorities which would rather prefer to pretend that this problem doesn't exist and hide or oppress these people. The idea of Food not Bombs is not charity but just distribution of social wealth. The movement challenges the existing status quo by asking the question: why, in the capitalist society, so much money is being spent on the arms instead on feeding people?

The problem of homeless people really concerned me when I lived in London in 2007. I was so impressed by the quantity of people living on the streets there. Women and men, young and old, black and white, they were sleeping in their sleeping bags in the parks, in the corridors of the tube, on the church porches, and searched for food in the refuse bins.

We invited two homeless persons in the squat where I lived, Rosa from Latvia and David from Mozambique. Both of them were quite old and didn't speak proper English. I also volunteered in London for a while for the charity organization "CRISIS" and participated in the Food not Bombs actions. Each Saturday we prepared delicious food, using fruit and vegetables which we skipped from the Covent Garden market.

I can't say that there are no homeless people in Belarus, or that they are in a better situation than in Great Britain or Germany. Their life is hard everywhere. But I only know, that one cannot starve to death in Berlin or London where such a huge amount of food is wasted. It is possible to live there from the refuse bin.

What inspired me is that in Berlin there is a possibility for the homeless people to earn money without begging: they sell charitable newspapers in the trains and at the streets. It is a kind of employment for them while they earn money – ca. 10 % from selling the newspaper. I think, such activities are not so humiliating as begging. There are two different newspapers: "Motz" and "Strassenfeger", both cost 1,20 Euro. There are about 10 persons in Berlin who spread these newspapers. It's their regular job, they do it from the early morning time till midnight. I have seen one girl several times and bought the "Strassenfeger" newspaper from her. She looked very poorly, actually, I think, she has a kind of disability. She almost cried telling us about the new edition of the newspaper, almost begging. I felt sorry for her. She made me feel uncomfortable through displaying her disability and poverty in the U-bahn. And I didn't trust her completely. Probably, my heart became too uncompassionate.

There are several organizations for the homeless people in Berlin. People in crisis situations could get professional help, including psychological consultation, the possibility to stay overnight, free of charge clothes and toiletry.

There are tremendous differences between the homeless people who are honestly speaking have rather parasitic lifestyle and don't want to change their situation and quite often are broken physically and mentally by the various kinds of oppression/exploitation. They associate themselves with the existing system and try to live out of it, in contrast to the self-organized movement of the people without houses – the squatters' movement.

Squatters are the people who settle themselves in the abandoned houses, they use the space which either doesn't belong to anyone or is left by the owners. While homeless people without houses are treated by the government of any country rather as consumers who only can obtain the goods, the squatters' movement is treated as the movement which contraposes itself to the government. That is why the laws on terrorism are often used against squatters. At the same time, the squatters, in contrast to the homeless people living on the streets, don't give up and try to change their situation through the struggle for a distinct living.

There are dozens of squats in Berlin which present the alternative to the miserable life of the homeless people. Squats are an example of the alternative culture created by the self-organized people who have the same interests and who fight against the privilege of private ownership which often contradicts with the right for life.

Several homeless people in Berlin especially attracted my attention– a skinny teenager girl selling the street newspaper, she wore glasses and twisted her mouth begging, a drunken women of New Age style without teeth, who was rather cheerful and imaginative when I took

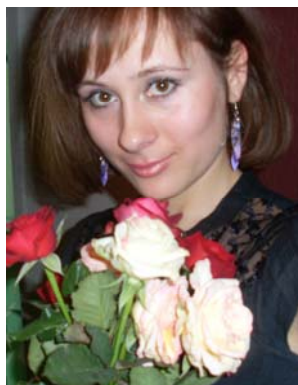
pictures of her, two guys from Hungary fighting at the S-bahn station, a punk with a T-shirt with crossed swastika at Alexanderplatz, and disabled woman in the wheelchair at Schoeneberg who was stunning angry and noisy with her mop of uncombed hair, and a helping man selling newspaper at the corner of the street. They are not people without faces, they have their personal stories, and their stories are the story of Berlin, its hopes and its dramas.

Each of them, when I asked where he or she lives, answered that he or she lives somewhere. And each of them has his or her own story, or even several stories, fictional and true ones, - the choice depends on the listener. It is always a question why do they lose their houses and why some of them prefer to live on the streets.

Homeless people are the most stigmatized people within the society, they are treated as rubbish almost everywhere and almost by everyone – from the police to the officials of the nongovernmental organizations who work with them. They are dirty, they are ill, they are the others to blame or to be scared of. This scape-goating happens in spite of the fact that they were once the part of the society, but, because of different reasons (swindle, disease, discrimination, violence, crime, drug and alcohol addiction, unhappy love affair), they were thrown away. They just were not strong enough in order to confront with the injustices of the system or went broke as a result. But I think that their situation is the result of both internal and external factors. They are not only the victims of the inequality existing within the society, they also have chosen to live like that, while there is free will and each person is responsible for his or her choices.

The existence of the homeless people, as well as their quantity, displays the disparity of the capitalist system, which creates unequal chances and such big amounts of risks that not everyone is strong enough to cope with them. These people need respect and equal attitude; they need protection, safety, self-realization and education. In order to obtain this it is necessary to work out a new attitude towards these people, which will treat them not as victims and parasites, but as persons first of all. They have their own stories to tell.

8. Sustainable development in Germany and Belarus: energetic aspect. *Natalia Sirotko*



In my topic I want to describe the problem of renewable energy in comparison with Germany and Belarus. I want to give emphasis on ecology because today it is one of the most actual and important global problems.

I. Renewable energy in Germany

Renewable energy accounted for 5.8 percent of primary energy consumption in Germany in 2006 and the share of renewable energy in total gross electricity consumption rose to 12 percent. In relation to total road traffic, the contribution of biofuels to fuel supply reached 6.6 percent and, in the heat market, renewables' share in total heat provision was 6 percent. The Federal government has provided the impetus for this development, particularly by regulating the payment for electricity from renewable energy fed into the grid through the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG), and through other support programmes such as the market incentive programme for renewable energy (MAP). As a result, renewable energy technologies in Germany have become an important industrial sector with high annual growth rates in the last few years. Many innovative German companies have advanced to become international technological leaders, providing key components for the wind energy, hydropower, solar energy, geothermic and biomass sectors. "Renewables made in Germany" are considered among the world leaders and are therefore being used all over the world. The Federal Ministry of Economics is supporting this dynamic industry with a multitude of instruments and wishes to use these pages to provide information on innovative technologies and successful "made in Germany" projects, as well as events and ways in which companies can participate in the foreign trade fairs of the Renewable Energy Export Initiative. (Source: the working group on renewable energy statistics AGEE-Stat).

A. Solar power

The sun is an enormous power plant. Every day it supplies us with eighty times more energy than is needed in Germany. The solar industry is a new industrial sector in Germany which has seen enormous growth over the last number of years thanks to state support through the EEG. German solar technology turnover has risen within the last six years from around 450 million euros to some 4.9 billion euros. The companies in the industry have been investing 500 million euros annually in the construction, expansion and modernisation of their solar factories in order to increase their production capacities with solar modules, solar cells and inverters. Although Germany's geographical position on the world map does not make it the ideal location for solar energy due to it only receiving moderate levels of solar radiation, it has become the largest solar thermal market in Europe, helped by the MAP. Germany takes second place only to Japan in the world in photovoltaic power generation. The export services and deliveries of the German solar industry include planning, construction, equipment, systems engineering, operation, monitoring, finance packages and training. In addition to this, they are providers of cross-sectoral consulting services, such as technical consultation, feasibility studies, environmental impact studies, audits and measurement instrumentation.

B. Hydropower

Hydropower has been used since the inception of electricity generation at the end of the 19th century as, for example, a form of propulsion in mills and sawmills. For a long time it was the only significant regenerative energy source for power generation. Nowadays, hydropower is a fully-developed technology and the most used source of renewable energy in the world after traditional biomass. According to figures from various sources, about 16 to 19 percent of the world's entire net power consumption comes from this energy source. In Germany, hydropower was the most important regenerative energy source for a long time, but more power has been generated from wind than hydropower since 2004.

The opportunities for the economically viable use of hydropower depend to a large extent on the naturally-occurring conditions within a particular country. More than 20 countries in the world, such as Norway and Paraguay, cover up to 90 percent of their energy needs by means of hydropower and many others, such as Austria, Brazil, Venezuela and Canada, do so to a large extent. The amount of hydropower generated in Germany has generally been stable for a number of years.

C. Wind power

Since the first wind turbines were built at the beginning of the 90s, power generation from wind energy has seen dynamic growth thanks to state-supported programmes. With more than a third of the world's installed capacity, no other country has more wind turbines than Germany, the German Wind Energy Association (BWE) believes.

According to the IKEE (Information Campaign for Renewable Energy), the wind energy industry has developed into an enormous economic factor, with a 5.64 billion euro turnover in Germany in 2006 and more than 73,800 people employed in the sector. Services provided by German manufacturers of wind turbines include planning, construction, equipment, systems engineering, plant supervision, finance packages and training. Exports are already playing a very important and ever-increasing role in the German wind industry.

D. Biomass

Bioenergy is mankind's oldest source of energy. Humans have been using biomass as an energy source for many thousands of years. Wood, for instance, was the most important material for heating and cooking for a long time until it was superseded by coal, crude oil and natural gas. Biomass is the most important renewable energy source worldwide. Even today, on average, seven percent of Asia's primary energy consumption is supplied by firewood, ten percent in Latin America and an estimated 40 percent in Africa, which can, however, lead in part to disastrous consequences for the forests and soils of the countries affected. Although wood and charcoal are principally considered renewable energy sources, even extensive re-forestation measures often cannot compensate for unusually excessive exploitation. Such serious problems are the opposite side of the coin to the various advantages of bioenergy vis-à-vis other regenerative energy sources - energy from biomass can be stored and used as required and it has a high degree of efficiency. When combusted, it releases exactly the same amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) as has been previously absorbed by growing plants during photosynthesis. Thanks to this closed CO₂ cycle, biomass is a climate-friendly energy source which doesn't generate any additional greenhouse gases.

There are diverse methods for the relatively new practice of using biomass to generate electricity, such as producing steam by burning solid biomass and driving steam turbines or steam engines, or biomass gasification to generate power in the gas turbines of biogas plants. The various technologies that can be used to generate electricity can basically also be used for combined heat and power so that electricity, heat and, if necessary, cooling can be produced at the same time and to very high degrees of efficiency. Block-type thermal power stations, gas turbines, fuel cells and Stirling engines are some of the innovative technologies in the combined heat and power sector. The most important biofuels for powering vehicles at the moment are alcohol fuels, for use in petrol engines and high-powered fuel cells, vegetable oils (mainly rapeseed and sunflower oil in Germany) and biodiesel for use in diesel engines. New processes for generating synthetic biofuels are being developed, such as BTL (biomass to liquid).

E. Geothermics

Geothermal energy is the energy stored in the form of heat underneath the solid surface of the Earth. Enormous temperatures of up to 6,000 degrees Celsius reign in the Earth's interior, visible in volcanoes, hot springs and geysers. This warmth heats up layers of rock and soil as well as underground water reservoirs and can be used for providing heat, cooling, for generating electricity and for desalinating seawater. The constant warming of the Earth's surface by the sun can be used for heating purposes by means of heat pumps. Geothermal heat is particularly interesting when it comes to generating electricity as it is available at all times, irrespective of the season, weather or climatic conditions. Geothermal heat is one of the world's richest sources of renewable energy.

I want to say that for me Germany is a good example of achieving sustainability and a reference for other countries. It's very important that both government and NGO advocate the politics of sustainable development in Germany.

II. Sustainable development in Belarus

Nowadays the economical situation in Belarus may be characterized as not a quick crisis. But it makes the Sustainable development more possible than in the West. Because we have three ways to solve the crisis:

- 1) go back to the "socialism" (people want it because many of them lived better in that times);
- 2) go forward to the market, trying to follow world's markets and western standards of consumption (it's a question, because if ever citizen of the world will consume as much as an average citizen of USA, all the resources of the planet would end in 10 days);
- 3) the way of Sustainable development, it means development of alternative energy, realizing of building technologies from the natural recycled materials etc.

There were some documents about the conception of Sustainable development in

Belarus (both from governmental and nongovernmental structures). The main peculiarity of the official strategy of Sustainable development in Belarus is the ministerial approach. It means documents about development of ministries and ---, but not about the society.

It is important to say that the potential of Belarus for the Sustainable development is rather high. There is good geographical situation and existing biocenoses and natural complexes. In Belarus, some projects that were mentioned as examples at the European conference of ministers about the saving of environment (Orchus, 1998) are being implemented.

It's the initiative of NGO but not of the government to provide renewable energy in Belarus. Due to the global crisis government can't give much money to solve this problem, although the energy saving system gets a much better payoff than the old system of energy in our country.

Despite the fact that modern Belarusian society is not aware of the importance of Sustainable Development in our country, I think that Belarus has to go to Sustainable Development because then we might set up the beginning for our sustainable future. It is our country among other post soviet countries where NGOs produce photoelectrical sun commutators which are bought by western companies. It is our country where the technology straw-bale is realized as a result of common activity of the government and NGOs (almost completely without foreign

emissions). In 2000 this project was awarded the World's price for sustainable energy. We have some wind stations. But solar energy is a problem in our country – it's very expensive. It is our country among post soviet countries that uses gas generators for producing energy from waste and energy saving lamps are produced, and so on. It is our country where the eco villages for people who suffered from Chernobyl are built. They are built from natural energy effective and recreated materials. And the organizers of all this are NGOs, the people who are concerned about the future of Belarus.

People say that suffer is given to consciousness. Maybe Chernobyl makes us strong and modest, and we'll have co evolution with nature as a result.

And now we have global changes in the minds of all the planet's residents. We have increasing of the role of NGO, their cooperation with governments, the beginning of cooperation between religion and science, creation of open informational communication around the whole planet, also 5000 eco towns on all continents where people live in harmony with the principles of SD. And we all are participants of this process, because the stake is not only our life and life of our children, our country, but the **our common future in the sustainable world**.

I want to say that it is the current visit to Germany gave me confidence in the concept of Sustainable development. Now I really think that it is possible and it is necessary to provide the realization of this in Belarus. And we are on the way to it. It is the question of the time. I believe in this.

9. Guidelines to Fruitful Cooperation. *Mila Pestun*



Cooperation is the word which is used in various senses to describe different concepts. Hardly anybody dare to give the complete definition of this term. As a result of joint efforts, we managed to highlight the main aspects of this notion:

- 1) more than one participant
- 2) common matter
- 3) common interests
- 4) common contribution
- 5) mutual dependence
- 6) bilateral development of parties
- 7) common benefit

There is a temptation to define the word “cooperation” by the word “partnership”. But cooperation is much wider in its sense and covers wider range of concepts. We can apply this word in various situations but the word common (or mutual, or bilateral) will be always implied.

When we talk about the cooperation between states, on international level, the term gets even more complicated but still the “common” part remains invariable. When we speak about such a huge state as the European Union it goes even deeper in complications. But the EU also seeks common in any cooperation. And that is absolutely natural. Providing developing or transition countries with their support, not only financial but also technical, educational and social, the EU looks forward long-term benefits.

But when we speak about small “one-event” projects subsidised by EU side, in my opinion, not only long-term but also short-term profit can be expected, something useful not for supported side but also for donor side. That is the main means, from my point of view, to organise equal cooperation, when mutual benefits are obvious for all the sides involved.

I’ve participated in various events with European funding, mostly of educational character. Judging by my personal experience, in case when there is no any visible or material output, there is a felling that time and money was wasted. And, mostly, in the end it turns out that the expectations are not lived up.

A good example is an internship. On one hand an intern gets practical knowledge in a given sphere, on other hand he or she contributes to the development of the organisation. Fair deal. Summer School in Berlin is a combination of “oral” informative part and practical one. Being given quite a lot of information the participants are eager to apply it in the real life. They also want to make a substantial contribution to the projects they are interested in. And that works. I’m, for example, was given a task to compile the list of Belarusian NGOs which are active in the field of democratization. That is not an easy task for a person who is not actively involved in the social life of Belarus at the moment. It’s hard to find the information and the contacts of the NGOs which are not registered. Moreover the most part of the information is in the Belarusian language what makes it even more difficult for a foreigner to find the information about the organisations in Belarus. That’s why I do felt quite useful and I hope the list I’ve compiled will be helpful for Heinrich Böll Stiftung. The same job but with the focus on green movement I made for the MP from the Green Party Manuel Sarrazin and his office.

To crown all these I’d like to say that during the time of my internship, very fruitful one (no matter that it lasted only two days), couple of ideas came to my mind which I will deliver to one of my supervisors, Bastian Hermisson, in form of project proposal. I do think that the other participants of the School have the same courage and inspiration for the future cooperation!

10. Рассуждения о толерантности. Любовь Журомская



То, что отличительной чертой белорусов является толерантность, известно многим. По сути, «терпеливый», «гостеприимный» и «тихий» - это самые популярные эпитеты, применяемые иностранцами по отношению к нашему народу. Нашей студией были проведены десятки интервью с гражданами европейских и азиатских стран, и все они отмечали в первую очередь «какую-то сверхестественную способность терпеть» и уверенность в том, что «так, как есть, так и должно быть». И в вопросе толерантности, т.е. терпимости к «непохожим», это действительно замечательные качества, которым могут позавидовать многие страны Европы, Азии и Америки. Но действительно ли здесь речь идет о «толерантности»? Не будет ли здесь более уместным любимое слово белорусов – «абыякавасць»?

Те, кто знает о существовании Беларуси, наверняка знают и о том, какой режим установлен сейчас в нашей стране. Я иногда называю это «музеем СССР». И одним из самых страшных, на мой взгляд, проявлений этого режима, является информационная монополия государства. Действительно, единственным, пока что независимым источником информации сейчас остается интернет. И очень многие люди могут видеть реальную картину происходящего, особенно это касается молодежи. Но очень часто такая «авангардная» молодежь оказывается «по ту сторону толерантности» - ведь чтобы как-то себя реализовать, многие предпочитают выезжать за границу, а в этом случае, надо говорить о толерантном отношении к ним в других государствах. Но я говорю о той прослойке населения, которая наиболее подвержена информационному влиянию со стороны государства – о жителях белорусских деревень, о работниках госорганизаций, в общем, о людях со средним достатком и невысоким уровнем образования. И, если в Европе и Америке применяются меры для того, чтобы *скрыть* проявления, скажем, национальной нетерпимости, или *наказать* за ее последствия, то в Беларуси все направлено на то, чтобы подобные мысли *вообще не возникали*.

Наша политика стимулирует *отсутствие критической мысли у населения*. Это и есть та «абыякавасць», о которой я говорила. У людей просто-напросто нет своего мнения. Точнее есть – то мнение, которое тиражируется на бигбордах, телевидении и в прессе. А если ты не хочешь иметь эту официальную информацию, то тебе в любом случае помогут – ведь каждую государственную организацию (включая школы и университеты) *обязывают* выписывать гос. издания. (Опять-таки, я не говорю о «продвинутой» молодежи и интеллигенции). Так что же удивительного в том, что наш народ такой «толерантный»? Он просто «приученный», эта мысль действительно культивируется властями, превращаясь в своеобразную мантру

(<http://www.euramost.org/index.php?artc=12520>). Скорее стоит спросить, почему он такой послушный? Но это уже другой вопрос.

Итак, о толерантности. У нас действительно редко можно услышать на улице оскорбление в адрес представителя национальных меньшинств, или прочитать о факт о нападении или дискриминации таких людей. Ксенофобия у нас действительно не развита. А вот, например, проблемы гомосексуалистов у нас нет. У нас вообще гомосексуалистов нет. Как и не было секса в Советском Союзе. Хотя в действительности они, конечно, есть, и подвергаются большой дискриминации, причем со стороны «демократической» оппозиции тоже (<http://volunteers.blogseo.ru/>) .

Так стоит ли радоваться тому, что нам не приходится нести ответственность в суде за оскорбление евреев или афроамериканцев, если одной из причин этого является отсутствие аналитической функции головного мозга? Я не говорю о том, то дискриминация – это признак наличия ума, это скорее признак отсутствия морали. Но то, что белорусам не хватает информации и способности ее анализировать – это факт. Бабушки в деревнях действительно до сих пор говорят «Все хорошо, только бы не было войны»! А бесправные люди действительно говорят о том, что они довольны своей жизнью! А почему существует такое гонение активной молодежи, особенно тех, кто часто выезжает за границу? Даже если это никак не связано с политикой! Потому что тот, кто умеет рассуждать про экологию, умеет рассуждать и про многое другое. А этого, видимо, кто-то очень боится.

11. Почему белорусы толерантные? *Наталья Сиротко*

Почему белорусы толерантные? В чем сущность и значение терпимости? Где грань между терпением, терпимостью и безразличием? Представляется, что в поиске ответа на эти вопросы не следует ограничиваться лишь официальными заявлениями и отрывками из школьных учебников о том, что таков менталитет белорусов. И не решен этот вопрос не столько по причине нежелания власти, сколько по той причине, что данная проблема (как это ни странно) до сих пор научно, философски не поставлена и фундаментально не изучена. Поднимаемый вопрос относится и к проблеме национальных, сексуальных и других меньшинств в Беларуси. Стоит начать с определения самой толерантности. Российские исследователи отмечают, что поскольку в русском языке существует два аналога «толерантности» – «терпение» и «терпимость», имеющие разную смысловую нагрузку, это способствует некоторой расплывчатости данной дефиниции. Вероятно, первым концептуально такое различие в белорусском языке сделал И. Бортник. «Терпение», которое мы назовем негативным аспектом толерантности, подразумевает отсутствие гонений, нетерпимости, вражды. «Терпимость», которую мы назовем позитивным аспектом толерантности, предполагает стремление понять (гносеологический компонент, включающий знание и понимание) и доверие (деятельностный компонент, включающий доверительность и солидарность).

Для того, чтобы сделать определить действительное место толерантности, необходимо совершить краткий экскурс в историю. Территория современной Беларуси, как правило, входила в состав многонациональных государств – Великого Княжества Литовского, Речи Посполитой, Российской Империи, СССР. Часто это был «передний край», граница земель

определенных государств, как это было при Речи Посполитой и Российской империи. Великие князья Литовские значительно расширяли территорию государства за счет присоединения новых земель, поэтому им приходилось сознательно проводить политику толерантности по отношению к многочисленным этносам. Это утверждение наглядно иллюстрирует пример правления князя Витовта, при котором на территории Великого Княжества Литовского массово начали селиться татары. Однако конфликтов на этнической почве в данный период не наблюдалось. Именно на территории Беларуси встречаются две цивилизации – восточная и западная, которые, несомненно, оказали влияние на формирование белорусской ментальности. Следует отметить, что влияние западной и восточной культуры происходило в условиях взаимодействия с более сильными соседними державами. Наиболее яркие примеры – западное влияние, когда Беларусь находилась в составе Речи Посполитой (1569-1772), восточное – в составе Российской империи. Данные влияния были достаточно агрессивными и требовали от жителей Беларуси определенной терпимости к насаждению западных или восточных ценностей. Терпимость или пресловутая «толерантность» в данных обстоятельствах – своеобразный механизм самосохранения нации в экстремальных ситуациях. В составе Речи Посполитой Беларусь находилась в условиях, благоприятных для развития западной культуры (письменность на латинице, поощрение католического вероисповедания). Особенности белорусской самобытности в те времена сохранялись среди наиболее «отсталых» слоев населения – крестьянства. В период правления Российской Империи (1772-1917) на землях Беларуси активно создавались условия для насаждения восточной культуры православия, письменности на кириллице, самодержавия. Все эти действия со стороны более сильных соседей вели к тому, что коренные жители Беларуси постепенно ассимилировали элементы данных культур в свою ментальность. Можно отметить, что для белорусов толерантность является ментальной привычкой, реакцией на агрессивность соседей, способом выживания.

Как обстоит ситуация с современной толерантностью?

В декабре 2007 г. независимыми социологами проведен опрос общественного мнения (методом face-to-face interview опрошено 1.521 респондент в возрасте 18 лет и старше, ошибка репрезентативности не превышает 0.03), посвященный важнейшим проблемам жизни белорусов. В опросе в третий раз за два последние года задавался вопрос об отношении к различным этническим группам, о том, какую степень близости с ними респонденты считают для себя приемлемой – от готовности породниться (выдать замуж дочь или женить сына на представителе(-льнице) этого этноса) до готовности всего лишь жить в одной стране. В список включены как традиционные для Беларуси этнические меньшинства, так и иные этносы, с представителями которых белорусским гражданам приходится встречаться не слишком часто.

Из результатов видно, что за два года иерархия близких и далеких этносов по существу не изменилась: самые близкие – русские, за ними – два других соседних славянских народа, несколько дальше – народы стран Западной Европы, за ними – остальные этнические меньшинства Беларуси (литовцы, латыши, евреи), а далее, с огромным отрывом, – выходцы из Азии и Африки. С другой стороны, за два года некоторые изменения все же произошли, они затронули как конкретные показатели социальной дистанции, так отчасти и иерархию.

В лидирующей славянской тройке за это время заметно увеличились социальные дистанции с русскими и поляками, и уменьшилась – с украинцами. Возможно, на социальную дистанцию с русскими повлиял острый энергетический конфликт января 2007 г. Тут, разумеется, нет прямой связи: для белорусов отношение к русским, что живут рядом с ними, не определяется их отношением к политике российского "Газпрома" или Кремля, но определенное влияние тут можно допустить. Впрочем, и после некоторого охлаждения русские все равно остаются самым близким белорусам этносом.

Совершенно неожиданным образом за два года улучшилось отношение к американцам, дистанция по отношению к которым сократилась так сильно, что повлияла на иерархию – граждане далекой заокеанской страны встали почти вровень с восточными европейцами, опередив автохтонных для Беларуси литовцев, латышей и евреев.

Можно, конечно, умиляться тому, как белорусы четко демонстрируют свою европейскую идентификацию, отвечая на вопрос об отношении к различным этносам. Но с точки зрения перспектив глобализации, показатели в нижней части табл. 1 свидетельствуют о скрытых опасностях. Рано или поздно мир, и азиатский мир в том числе, придет в Беларусь, и не только в виде коммуникаций и контактов, но и, так сказать, в личном качестве. Причем, можно не без оснований предположить, что этот процесс ускорится в случае любого определенного геополитического выбора Беларуси, достаточно посмотреть на состав населения крупных городов как Европы, так и России. А белорусы, по крайней мере – пока, не готовы к этому "визиту мира" к ним домой.

Рост антииммигрантских настроений в Западной Европе, ксенофобское насилие в России свидетельствуют об актуальности этой проблемы. В Беларуси пока проблема эта стоит не слишком остро, но можно предположить, что тенденции, которые, похоже, становятся общеевропейскими и даже общемировыми, не обойдут и нашу страну. Поэтому представляется необходимым фундаментальное изучение данной проблемы.

По материалам НИСЕПИ – Независимого Института Социально-Экономических и Политических Исследований, www.iiseps.org

Questionnaire “My ecological consciousness”. Alena Rybik

Dear friend! Please answer the following questions. It won't take much time. Just tick the suitable answer or write some words where it's asked.

1. Do you consider yourself to be ecologically conscious?
Yes _____ No _____

2. You are at Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market) in Berlin, buying hand-made souvenirs for your friends. The seller proposes you either to wrap your presents into a piece of an old newspaper or to pack it into a plastic bag. What will your answer be?

3. While in Germany, you've bought a bottle of mineral water. What will you do with an empty bottle?
Just throw it to any litter-bin in the street _____
Throw it to some special litter-bin marked “plastic” _____
Bring it to the supermarket to hand it in and get 25 cent for it _____
Other _____
Do you do some thinking before performing some of above mentioned actions? _____
4. What transport would you prefer if there's no difference in time consuming?
Car _____
Motorbike _____
Bicycle _____
Public transport _____
Other _____
Why? _____

5. Do you agree that in order to save energy they have to deteriorate the standard of people's living?
Yes _____
No, because _____

6. If the state supports producing and selling food products with genetically modified organisms, will you buy it?
Yes _____
No _____

7. What of the following do you feel to influence your health badly? To what extent?

	Very strong	So-so	Not at all
Ultraviolet solar radiation (ozone holes)			
Harmful substances in food products			
Fine dust			
Food products from genetically modified plants or animals			
Engine exhaust fumes			
Nuclear power plants and radioactive waste products			
Mobile phones, wireless telephones etc. radiation			
Harmful substances in things of daily consumption, eg. children toys and textile			
Magnetic field of electrical appliances			
Water contamination			
Noise			
Tobacco smoke			

8. And the last question: Where are you from? _____

Thank you very much!