

1.1 Friedrich-Ebert-Gymnasium, Bonn

# MICC Project Documentation

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## CertiLingua

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## 1. Introduction

From Sunday November 19th to Friday the 24th 2017 I was a part of the MICC School in Krzyzowa/Kreisau Poland. The Model International Criminal Court - MICC School is a program that is hosted every year in Kreisau Poland, that students from the USA, Israel, Germany and Poland take part of. During the program students take control of certain roles, like judge, prosecutor, defense or member of the press team and then simulate a historic cases that were held in front of actual international tribunals. The goal of the program is to raise awareness for human rights and to teach students about international law. Kreisau/Krzyzowa is a small village in Poland, with only about 200 inhabitants, however the village has a strong historical meaning for the relationship between Poland and Germany.

First of all during the second world war, it was home to the resistance group "Kreisauer Kreis" that was planning a new democratic Germany without Hitler. They focused on the questions on how Europe could find a lasting peace and how Germany could be part of this peace. They met in Krzyzowa on various occasions discussing the future of Germany. In 1944 the leader of the "Kreisauer Kreis" Helmut James von Moltke was arrested by the Gestapo and in 1945 executed in Berlin. Besides its past as a home to Nazi resistance, the village also counts as an important site for Polish-German reconciliation. After the second world war, Kreisau fell into Polish control and became Krzyzowa. The story of this historic place was forgotten and not rediscovered until 1990. During that year in the courtyard of the manor in Krzyzowa, that is now a youth center where MICC took place, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki met to take part in a friendship mass. This was a massive step to improve the tense relationship between the two states that had dominated politics between the since the second world war. For the first time since 1945 Krzyzowa received an important political purpose that was increased with the Kreisau-Initiative.

The Kreisau Initiative is responsible for building and creating the youth center that has been established in the newly renovated manor house. The KI aims to keep the goals of the Kreisauer Circle in mind and create a peaceful society of nations in Europe. They have been organizing many international exchanges with the goal to help younger people become engaged citizens. They KI is also responsible for organizing the various MICC projects like MICC-School, MICC-World and MICC-University.

I came to know the MICC program due to my brother, who also did the project in 2014 and because of my history teacher, Mr. Sikora, who told us about the project during class. He also holds the responsibility of organizing and preparing students at our school for the MICC-Project. The project was also offered in connection with the CertiLingua program.

## **2. Preparations for MICC**

### **2.1 Before the project**

After all the participants were chosen, the first step to prepare for the project was a big meeting with all the participants from our school. We were tasked with preparing a presentation about Germany and Bonn for an intercultural evening in Poland. Every delegation from the countries participating was tasked with creating one. Also it was recommended that we bring traditional sweets or food from our country to offer a authentic taste of German sweets to the others. To structure our presentation we decided to first create a short movie in shape of a news show. Our idea was to have 2 hosts that would introduce a topic related to Bonn or its culture and then have reporters standing in front of monuments or other city icons giving more information. The topics we chose were: Carnival, Post Tower, Beethoven and Haribo. As sweets we bought a lot of Haribo candy as it is a famous sweet that originates from Bonn.

The second step was the preparation of our roles. All the participants were randomly given roles that they had to prepare for, the instructions were sent to us per e-mail by one of the organizers of the program. I was given the role of defense in the case of Friedrich Flick. The Flick-Trials were an historical set of trials in the year 1946, Flick was a German industrialist during and before the Nazi-Regime. During the second world war, prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates were forced to work in his factories as they were important for the war effort. After the war he was accused of the war crime enslavement and during the Nürnberg Tribunals sentenced to 7 years in prison. I was not the only one given this role, in total every role was distributed to a group of 3 people, all from different countries. When my role was given to me per e-mail, I was linked up to my group, an American and a Polish student. We were tasked by the instructor to get in touch and prepare a series of questions about Flick. The main goal of this task was for the groups to get in touch before the project

starts. We also were meant to work on the historical background of our case together, to ensure that we are all up to date on the important facts when the project starts. My group decided to split the material we got about Flick up, along with the questions. This way we all could work on our tasks separately and not have to worry about time zone difference and other issues that rise up due to us living in different countries. At the end we combined all our results and sent it to the supervisor.

## **2.2 Personal Motivation**

When I first found about the project, I was immediately motivated to sign up. I saw it as a perfect opportunity to develop new skills and learn something new. Beforehand I had little experience in the field of law and none in international law. The topic interested me and I was keen to find out, if law was something for me in the future. I have often asked myself how the international court works, questions like: Who makes sure that a criminal is put taken to an international trial? Who enforces that the punishment is carried out? Where do the accused go to jail? The general issue on how an international court can even work with so many countries participating really interested me and I hoped to find an answer with MICC. Second of all I had never taken part in a project, that lasts for a week in a different country. I was very curious to see what I would experience. Most importantly though, the international aspect of the project really provoked me to sign up. I love talking and meeting different people from around the world. Intercultural exchanges are the perfect way to question your own view of the world and gain new insights on various topics.

Before the project I definitely expected that it would be a lot of work to prepare for the trial. We not only have to think about what the prosecution will throw at us, but also have strong arguments ourselves to convince the jury. I was worried that it might be too much and that getting to know the others would suffer from it. In a short time we had to get an overview over the international court, basic legal terms, prepare for our own trial and get to know the procedure of a trial. In general I asked myself how they would fit all of this into one week of work as we didn't get the schedule until we arrived in Krzyzowa. I still expected the whole project to be fun and enjoyable. From what I heard from the people that went last year, they had enough time to get to know the others. Of course I was also a little nervous about everything, since the whole trip was away from home and something completely new.

### **2.3 Connection to the school curriculum**

The MICC project cannot be connected to only one school subject or topic. In general, since we do not have the subject "Law" or something close to it at our school, the subject that is the closest to MICC is History. For me, since I had the topic Friedrich Flick, it fit perfectly with the topic that we were discussing in class at the time: Germany 1933-1945. I was able to connect a lot of my knowledge from class into our discussions. This made a lot of things easier for me as I already possessed the background knowledge needed. MICC is also closely related to social studies and politics. We talked about a lot of recent issues during the discussions, where everyone took part, people shared their own stories and we talked about the current political status of the various countries we were from. Especially discussions about Israeli politics were strongly connected to our current topic in social studies. Beforehand we revised the background information about the formation of Israel and the current situation of the society.

As an international and intercultural project MICC definitely fits into the school profile. Our school does a lot of intercultural exchanges worldwide, for example in France or England. An exchange in one of these countries is even mandatory for all students in 7th or 8th grade. A lot of different programs are also offered that are connected with different clubs or programs like MICC. Trips to countries like China or Israel are offered yearly, in addition the school has made it possible for students to spend half a year or a full year abroad during 10th grade. This way students can already gain experiences in different countries during their school time and perfect their language skills. The school is also the only one in Germany that allows students to have 3 different degrees (IB, AbiBac, CertiLingua) along with the standard graduation degree. The large focus on languages that the school has is also represented with the MICC project. The standard language that everyone uses at MICC is English, all presentations and workshops are done in English to make sure everyone understands them. Also the trainers came from all around the world (Germany, Lithuania, Bosnia, Serbia or Netherlands).

Furthermore MICC also fits to the school profile due to its focus on politics and allowing students to gain experiences in new fields. Every year 9th grade students at our school take part in the MEP (Model European Parliament) project. Students have to take the role of a delegation from a country in the EU and then try to create a resolution aimed at a recent

problem (ex. Climate Change, Immigration or Terrorism). At the end of the project and after various workshops, everyone meets inside the city hall of Bonn and every resolution is put to a vote to see if it passes. Engaged students can continue inside the MEP-Club afterwards and can go to trips to Berlin or to other international meetings. A similar program is SPUN (Schüler-Planspiel United Nations), in this program students model a United Nations meeting. In conclusion the school offers three amazing projects with MEP, SPUN and MICC that students can take part of, all fitting in the political profile of our school.

### **3. MICC**

#### **3.1 Course**

Even though officially MICC started on Sunday November 19th 2017, we departed for Berlin in the early morning of November 18th. The plan was to rendezvous with the Americans and the Israelis, that arrived in Berlin per airplane, and have dinner with them before leaving collectively the next morning per bus to Krzyzowa. This allowed me to get to know some of the others and the American in my defense group before MICC started. The next morning after a quick tour through Berlin, we departed to Krzyzowa per bus with the participants from Israel and the USA. We arrived at around 18:00 o'clock. The first step was then to be paired into rooms and get settled in before going to dinner. The next step was a welcome meeting, the goal was that everyone gets to know each other, as the Polish delegation came separately. The trainers were introduced and we played a few games so people got to know each other's names and a little bit about each other. Since this was already very late in the evening, the first day was concluded after the meeting. The second day and the real MICC project started after breakfast in the morning with the first workshop based on human rights. We were tasked first with naming human rights and then brainstorm how we can ensure that these rights are valid for everyone. Furthermore we received hypothetical examples of violations of human rights, that we can have an influence on. One of them for example was a homosexual student that was being discriminated and bullied at school. Our task was to brainstorm ideas in groups, what we can do to stop these situations from happening and ensuring that the basic human rights are upheld. The final part of the workshop was based around the topic of clichés and prejudices. Every single student got a

sticker on his/her head that had a job, religion or ethnicity on it. We did not know what our own role was and had to find two other people that "we would want share a tent with". At the end of the short game, we were allowed to look at our own roles and then decide, if we were born this role or chose to become it. Afterwards we had a lunch break, that was followed by a tour of Krzyzowa. A tour guide gave us a detailed tour of the historical town of Krzyzowa with information about its past as a home to Nazi-resistance and as a place of Polish-German reconciliation. Succeeding the tour was another workshop, but this time it was based on the historical background of each of the cases. Everyone who had the case of Friedrich Flick was put into a room and we discussed the historical information and the material we were given beforehand. The final event of the day was the intercultural evening, all the delegations from each country presented what they prepared beforehand. Everyone loved the Haribo sweets we passed around and the video we made everyone laugh due to us pretending to be real news reporters. The others also prepared some sweets for us to try, that were all different and that I had never tasted before. The Polish and American delegation also prepared a dance that we all had repeat with them afterwards.

The third day was entirely focused on preparing our argumentation for the trials. The day started with a lecture on the International Criminal Court, that we would be modeling our trials after, to give us some basic background information. Afterwards we immediately went into our groups of 3 to prepare for our case. Since there were 3 cases alongside the Flick case, all the defense teams were inside one room with a trainer that answered questions and helped us with the structure of our argumentation. We had three training sessions throughout the day, each lasting around 2 hours. In between the first and the second session, we had a short lecture about legal argumentation to make sure we do not make any mistakes, in the structural approach. During the rest of the training sessions we prepared our paper and our defense. We had a strict structure that we had to follow to make sure everyone is on the same page. First we had to present the case and its historical background, then our argumentation and lastly our final statement, that is aimed at convincing the judges. To conclude the day, we had a discussing about modern day politics with all the participants (contemporary witness discussion). Three of the trainers came from the former Yugoslavia and told us their stories as refugees and what it was like living in a war zone and as refugees afterwards.

The following day, was the day of the trial simulation. We had one more lecture about punishment and why it is necessary and a training session that gave us one final hour to prepare our argumentation. We also decided who will present what to the jury. Afterwards the first trial began, which was Friedrich Flick. First the prosecution was allowed to present their case and then the defense, later the judges were allowed to ask both teams questions. I answered the questions of the judges and also read my part of our combined defense. After the finishing statements the trial was over and we moved on with the next two trials. The case of Drazen Erdemovic and Simon Bikindi were the other two trials that we simulated. After the trials were finished, the defense and prosecution teams were done for the day, only the judges had to continue working to prepare their verdicts, that they would present the following morning.

The fifth and final day of the MICC project contained the three verdicts that the judges prepared the night before. The first verdict was my case, Friedrich Flick, in a split decision of 2-1 the judges decided that Flick was innocent of the crime against humanity of enslavement. The judges of the other case declared Erdemovic innocent as well, while the judges of the Bikindi case declared him guilty. Following the verdicts was discussion with the topic of justice, we had to decide if we thought justice was served or if these verdicts were unjust. The case of Flick was deemed the most controversial, many believed that he should have been pronounced guilty and that the judges made a mistake with naming him innocent. To conclude the official part of the MICC project, we were giving our participation awards and had a farewell ceremony. Afterwards the students were allowed to have a farewell party in the clubhouse of the manor, it included a ping pong table alongside other games that we could play.

The next day was our departure from Krzyzowa, we took the bus to Wroclaw where the Polish students gave us a quick tour and afterwards we took the bus back to Berlin, where we took the train home the next day.

### **3.2 Personal experiences during MICC**

My first impressions of the project were very positive, I was surprised how open everyone was and how easy it was making new friends. When the project started I was also astonished how fun workshops were, the trainers were very motivated and found the best way to

explore different topics. The small games we played in between always had a purpose and kept us interested.

I had some worries about the intercultural evening beforehand, of course we did not know what the others had planned so I wasn't sure if we had prepared too little or too much. It turned out to be really funny and enjoyable, we even had to do traditional dances from Poland and the USA. Furthermore I was really surprised how fun the trial preparation was, we had to think of everything that could be thrown at us and it was really challenging in a good way. Especially during the final training session we did feel the time pressure though and it got really hectic to have everything prepared in time. Our trainer told us that the Flick trial always has a difficult time getting ready on time, due to it being the first of the three mock trials. Most importantly I was very moved by the contemporary witness discussion and found it to be very interesting. The stories that they told about their childhood and experiences they made as refugees granted me an insight into situations that I didn't know much about. The emotions with which they told their stories really made a lasting impression on me.

#### **4. Reflection**

Overall MICC was an amazing experience that I would recommend to anyone, no matter if you think you are interested in law or not. What MICC offered me was a direct way to gain experiences in international law that I would not have gained anywhere else. Beforehand I had little to no knowledge about the topic but now I would say that I have a good understanding what it is about. It really helped me comprehend the difficulties and challenges that international law faces and allowed me to get to know new people from around the globe.

Even though the actual main program offered me a great insight into the world of human rights and international law, I think the intercultural experiences during and around the project were the best part of it. People from many countries around the world gathered in this little village in Poland to work together to achieve a goal and share their own experiences. The various workshops we had also gave everyone the chance to voice their opinion and give an input to the many topics we discussed about. Especially while talking

about nationalism and racism it was astonishing to hear the different stories from around the world and allowed me to understand many issues that countries are facing today. This seemingly basic ability to understand and discuss issues while talking with people that actually experience these issues daily, was for me a core experience of the MICC Project and one of the main things I took back home with me.

I also think that the people I talked and made friends with got a different picture from Germany than they might have had before. Along with all the others from the German delegation, I got a lot of questions about how things work in Germany especially when we were in Berlin with the Americans and Israelis. While we were showing them Berlin, we were often told things like: "Wow, I did not know they did this in Germany". We heard this when they saw all the different types of food you are able to eat in Berlin. I also came across a lot of differences between the many cultures during MICC, especially little things like variations of popular card games or the taste of music were very different in some cases. One example is the popular card game "Lügen", in which you have to lie about the card you have was played very differently in Poland than in Germany. These differences also highlight the cultural diversity around the world and it is especially amazing to experience this first hand in form of a face to face project than just reading about it for example.

Personally the project allowed to me to be a part of something that to such an extend I had not been able to experience before. Even being able to communicate in the same language with people from all over the world that are not native speakers in English, is an amazing thing and lets you understand how connected the world is today. MICC definitely developed my communication skills, especially when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. One of the goals of MICC, is also to allow its participants to overcome cultural boundaries and stereotypes. I think this goal was not only achieved in my personal case, but also for all the other participants. Everyone was able to gain something and build up friendships that last beyond borders. At the end of MICC, we were all sad to see each other go, but hopeful that we would see each other again someday.

## **5.Outlook**

Before MICC, I had little knowledge about international law and did not really consider studying it after I finished school. The project really did change my mind, as I really enjoyed the work attitude and the challenges that we had to face to prepare for our trials. Of course the mock trials were far from reality, but combined with the workshops and the lectures we got a good insight into the topic. The whole concept of international law also really interested me and has definitely changed my view about studying it in the future. Another thing that MICC effected in my plans for the future is the fact that I want to work in an international field and in a team. That the most enjoyable part of MICC, working in a team that originates from many different places around the world and working together to achieve the same goal.

## **Selbständigkeitserklärung**

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