

Discussing TTIP and ISIS at the American Embassy

On the 26th of September Oguzhan and me as representatives of our politics department were invited to the American embassy to meet Thomas Miller, Minister Counselor of Public Affairs. After we had passed the very tight security checks and the staff were sure that we were not carrying any bombs, we were greeted by Fiona S. Evans, deputy cultural attaché, and then met the other students. Thomas Miller himself arrived in a slight hurry, introduced himself, and the stage was set to give air to all our questions. We were a small group of only 20 students from all across Berlin (and even Frankfurt Oder), but nevertheless all topics imaginable were mentioned:

Starting with a rather daring question about the difference between American and German patriotism, we learned a great deal about the American culture itself. Very quickly we moved on to TTIP, as it was the specialty of our host. For example, did you know that TTIP is negotiated in secret to prevent press interference?

Of course, the issue of the IS could not go unnamed, and thus became the major part of our discussion: Why is it that every nation seems to be so unprepared and surprised? Didn't military intelligence know about it? How come the IS is so well organized? Our questions were met with knowledge and patience. The IS uses traditional ways, like couriers, to deliver information, we were told, which enabled them to prepare their state for probably 10 years.

Other side topics were the Ukraine conflict, the American school system and – the classic – death penalty. Of the latter we got an insight into both sides of the argument and how events, especially terrible crimes, can influence people to favour death penalty. After two hours most questions were answered and we finished the meeting with a group picture.

All in all a very educational and – most of all – inspiring discussion!

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