

Building bridges across the Atlantic

In a bid to strengthen German-American relations, the Fellowship Program organized by the Robert Bosch Stiftung has been putting its faith in "brains" for 25 years now. The aim of the initiative is to recruit young Americans for transatlantic coopera-

tion – and over 400 American management trainees have signed up since 1984. One such trainee is Denis McDonough, now director of Strategic Communications on the staff of US President Barack Obama. McDonough shared his experiences as a Bosch Fellow at the anniversary celebrations held in Washington DC in June.



Economics minister on responsibility

At the foundation's invitation, German Economics Minister zu Guttenberg gave a talk on "Responsibility in the Social Market Economy." The 37-year-old lawyer's speech opened the new series of lectures titled "Responsibility for the Future."

School Meets Science award

The Heidelberg Life Science Lab at the German Cancer Research Center has won first prize of €50,000 in the School Meets Science awards. For the first time in May, under the patronage of German Education Minister Annette Schavan, the foundation awarded prizes to partnerships between researchers and teachers aimed at bringing science and technology alive for students. Nobel Prize winner and jury chairman Erwin Neher described the Life Science Lab as a model to be emulated.

Travel wherever you want to go, stay as long as you like

The Travel to Europe project – Students from the Balkan countries break down borders

Berlin | bre | "This is a unique opportunity to travel freely through Europe and visit the cities you've always dreamed of seeing," says Amila Karacic from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The student is fulfilling a lifelong dream of being able to travel wherever she wants and to stay as long as she likes. And she is not the only one – more than 200 other students traveled from southeastern Europe for the kick-off event in Berlin in July as part of the Travel to Europe initiative. Brimming with enthusiasm, one Serbian student adds, "I never thought I would experience this. I've now been able to call my mum

"We're here in Berlin with people from Albania and Kosovo. I would never have believed this to be possible."

Student from Serbia

from Berlin!" Although some of the students had a 40-hour train journey to Berlin, the trials of that experience have been quickly forgotten.

Opportunity to travel

Many young people from countries in the European Union (EU) cannot even imagine what it means not to be able to cross national borders, yet over 70 percent of students in the western Balkan states have never had the opportunity to leave their own country. For them, the much lauded integration of the Balkan countries into European and international structures comes to an end when they reach their own state border, and sometimes even at the border with a different ethnic group. Young people can rarely afford the cost of a student visa for the Schengen countries, and complicated allocation procedures



First time abroad: Students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia begin their four-week trip around Europe in Berlin. Photo: Dirk Enters

Travel to Europe

Counteracting the isolation of an entire generation

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the European Union has operated a restrictive entry policy towards southeastern Europe. For citizens of the western Balkan states, this means an expensive procedure with long waiting times. An entire generation has therefore grown up having largely never been abroad. The aim of the Travel to Europe project, which has been funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung

since 2007 and is run in conjunction with the Balkan Trust for Democracy in Belgrade, is to counteract the isolation of the young generation of southeastern Europe. In cooperation with the German Foreign Office, the students are given free Schengen visas and InterRail tickets.

► For more information, visit: www.bosch-stiftung.de/europaerfahren

with long waiting times only compound the difficulties. This leads not only to spatial isolation but also to mental isolation – and the humiliating feeling of exclusion.

First time abroad

This makes it all the more meaningful for the students to have been welcomed in Germany's capital by former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker. "When I was your age, I was at war," were the 89-year-old's opening words. He then told the guests not to despair of the difficult social, political, and economic situation in their countries, encouraging the young audience instead to take responsibility in their societies.

The goal of the Travel to Europe project is to counteract the sense of isolation felt by the young generation of southeastern Europe.

Every year, up to 400 of the best students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia – all in the final year of their studies – travel to the countries of the European Union as part of the initiative, which is mainly targeted at young people who have never before been able to venture abroad.

In conjunction with the German Foreign Office, the students are given free visas for the Schengen countries, InterRail tickets to get around the continent, and a daily allowance for a four-week trip through western Europe. People who have benefited from such funding in the past describe their travels as a formative experience that has changed their relationship with the European Union, with Germany, and even with their own country.

Consequences of war

Around 200 students kicked off their trip around Europe in Berlin, where a scavenger hunt not only gave them the opportunity to get to know the capital, but also to work together in groups of mixed nationality, solving various tasks requiring historical knowledge, creativity, and team spirit. Prizes were then awarded to the best groups. The ethnic and national differences that still remain after the wars and crises of the 1990s may not simply disappear on entering the European Union or by working on tasks together; however, getting to know each other does give the young people a chance to discover some common ground. "We are here in Berlin with people from Albania and Kosovo," says a student from Serbia. "I would never have believed this to be possible."



Accessible: Poster with a poem by Hang Dong. Photo: formdusche

Chinese poetry on the subway

Berlin | pfm | In the summer, poetic news from the Far East reached us, as a major poster campaign saw poems from modern-day China springing up in 11 cities throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The huge posters hanging in pedestrian zones, underground stations, and at bus stops displayed poems in Chinese and German, getting passers-by in the mood for the Frankfurt Book Fair in October, at which China is to be the guest of honor. The poster campaign is a joint project between the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the network of German-speaking literature houses.

The Chinese lyric poet Xi Chuan, who lives in Beijing, compiled a selection of contemporary lyrical voices from China for the German public. According to the translator, Marc Hermann, "These poems are strikingly colloquial, prosaic, and relate to the real world. Xi Chuan's selection has allowed us to make a surprising discovery: this poetry is often more accessible than our own poetry." An audio book directed by Torsten Feuerstein is being brought out in the fall, with actors including Hanns Zischler and Corinna Harfouch reading the German translations of the poems.

► www.bosch-stiftung.de/poesie

The power of small social networks

Report from the Family and Demographic Change think tank focuses on the principle of subsidiarity

Berlin | scm | The family needs to reinvent itself and "small social networks" need to be strengthened. These are the principal findings from the Family and Demographic Change think tank as detailed in its report titled *A Strong Family - Solidarity, Subsidiarity and Small Social Networks*. To come up with these findings, Kurt Biedenkopf, the former leader of the German state of Saxony, together with family expert Hans Bertram and journalist Elisabeth Niejahr, took a close look at the principles of civil society and, in particular, the position of the family in Germany.

Under pressure

Families form the basis of our society, yet economic developments, new ways of living, and demographic change are placing the

traditional family under enormous pressure to the point where many families can barely perform their unique "caring" function any more. The commission therefore believes that politicians have an essential part to play in both relieving the strain on families and in strengthening them.

The most important thing, however, is to support what the commission refers to as "small social networks" – private networks, neighborhood initiatives, and residential communities that span generations – that is, all those people who want to take responsibility for one another and enter into commitments that go beyond marriage and immediate family relations.

The authors of the report – who talked to a great many experts in the course of their work – sug-

gested a number of political measures aimed at achieving this end. These include tax relief or a basic income for services for and within the small social networks; more options for local authorities plus their own sources of income; legal security for new long-term cohabitations – particularly among older people and those spanning multiple generations; and urban development that is geared towards matters of family policy.

Against the grain

The commission is fully aware that by doing this, it is going against current discussions regarding the strong state and putting family affairs firmly on the agenda for the coming legislation period.

► www.bosch-stiftung.de/subsidiaritaet



Experts in family policy (from left): Hans Bertram, Elisabeth Niejahr, and Kurt Biedenkopf. Photo: Max Lautenschläger

Courage to think laterally

Stuttgart | set | The economy, art, and society all rely on change and innovation. Some 107 beneficiaries of the "Talent im Land" initiative took part in a summer academy at Lake Constance, where they learned that innovations are the result of a creative process. "Art and creation – The key to change" was the theme of the academy hosted by the Robert Bosch Stiftung and its partners (a regional foundation in Baden-Württemberg and the Bavarian Educational Pact Foundation) for talented young people with a migration background. In courses on music, creative writing, theater, art, product design, and architecture, the pupils in grades 8 to 11 were given the opportunity to expand their specialist knowledge as well as develop their creative potential and social skills. The academy generated ideas for planning the future, showed the pupils how to think laterally, and highlighted what can be achieved through creativity.