



EXCURSION TO BERGEN
BELSEN MEMORIAL

Study Trip to Bergen-Belsen Memorial on 27 May 2019 as part of the HARK+ elective "Germany Today: Lessons from the Past - Perspectives for the Future" "A graphic experience by Juan Montoya"



Our experience begins at the university. Juan was the first person to arrive and a few minutes later Dr. Schiller arrived in her car.



Dr. Schiller was very kind to offer her car for our trip. In the car were Ebru, Paul and Juan. All the way we talked about interesting facts about Bergen Belsen.



Ebru and Juan were in the last seat and Paul was next to Dr. Schiller. We were very comfortable in the car.



We took the Autobahn and it was very interesting for Juan, because he comes from Colombia and he is doing an exchange program.



Then we took another street and everything here looked more rural and without many cars. On our way, we saw quite a number of houses from the first half of the twentieth century or older.



When we arrived at the parking area, there were some buses and to my surprise, there were many high school students, even from other countries like Belgium.



We first entered the documentation centre and here the lobby was very minimalist, only concrete with large windows.



Suddenly we entered a deep corridor where everything was very dark and quiet. After that, to the right, there were many pictures of Soviet prisoners of war.



But maybe one of the cruellest things was this video. It's a film that shows the testimonies of survivors and also some guards of Bergen Belsen after the liberation.



After these videos, everyone took different paths. Walking while you look at the photos is very sad, you can feel how difficult this time was.



Through the large glass windows at the camp grounds, Juan was probably contemplating how surreal this forest looked and tried to imagine what happened there.



After the museum, we took a break in the cafeteria and we talked about everything. It was very interesting to discuss the videos.



The first thing that we saw was the memorial stone at the entrance to the cemetery. Some people put pebbles on it and also some flowers.



All the barracks had to be destroyed by the British army when they liberated the camp, so the fact of being here was a very unreal.



We took a picture there. Out of respect for the victims, we didn't smile, our attitude was more like not forgetting the history and learning about it.



All along the way, we found mass graves and commemorative tombstones. It was very sad. The families of the people who died there only want to make a small monument to remember their ancestors.



Perhaps one of the most melancholic moments was when we found the memorial stone for Anne Frank. Probably the most visited person here.



Before coming here, some people may think that the atmosphere would be very cold or peculiar. To our surprise, you feel great peace. And we were lucky that the weather was sunny and warm.



At the end of our tour, we took a picture of a stone that has many colors and with the sign of peace. We must understand the mistakes of the past and not make them again.