



RĪGAS STRADIŅA
UNIVERSITĀTE

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT
UNIVERSITÄT GREIFSWALD



Wissen
lockt.
Seit 1456



*Ernst Moritz Arndt Universität
Greifswald
meets
Rīga Stradiņš University*



05/26/2015
to
05/31/2015

Excursion to Riga:
A Special Experience!



Flight

The flight with Air Baltic was definitely an experience. The plane (Bombardier Dash8Q-400) was equipped with a propeller drive system most of us did not encounter before. At 3:25 pm we took off to a 1.5 hours long flight to Riga.

Geography

Territory: 64,589 km²
Population: 1,989,500 (2014)

Latvia is located at the Baltic Sea. Its capital Riga is located at the river Daugava and has about 700,000 (2015) people equaling a third of the country's population.

Excursion Diary

During this year's project week at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University Greifswald (EMAU) taking place from 05/26/2015 to 05/31/2015 we, two lecturers and ten students of the department of general business administration and health care management, made the trip to the beautiful city of Riga, Latvia's capital.

05/26/2015: The 1.5 hour long flight to Riga was an experience in itself. We arrived at 6:15 pm (UTC + 02:00) and taxis took us to the Tallink Hotel Riga. In the evening there was a chance to get a first impression of Riga's city center. At dinner we were able to explore the Latvian cuisine at a local restaurant (Lido Alus Seta) serving typical Latvian dishes.

05/27/2015: Our first visit to the main building of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) started at 10 am that day. After a warm welcome to the group by Mrs. Daiga Behmane (Vice Dean, Faculty of Medicine and director of the Master's program in Health Management) and meeting the Latvian participants of the excursion, a short introduction to the upcoming week was provided by Dr. Götz, Prof. Dr. Fleßa and Mrs. Behmane.

The following hours were characterized by a cultural exchange. Both universities were introduced. In order to share some of our research in the area of health economics with fellow Latvian colleagues and students, three presentations of PhD students from Greifswald followed. Topics like "Health Care in Rural Areas" or "Simulation in Hospitals" are of relevance to both countries and show potential for future cooperation. On the same note, Toms Baumanis, the Vice Rector of RSU joined the group to discuss possibilities for further collaboration.



Riga

Founded in 1201 and as a former Hanseatic League member, Riga nowadays is the political, economic and cultural centre of Latvia. Riga is famous for its Art Nouveau/Jugendstil architecture and since 1997 the historical centre of Riga (Vecrīga) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Universities

LU:

Founded in 1919
19,100 Students

RTU:

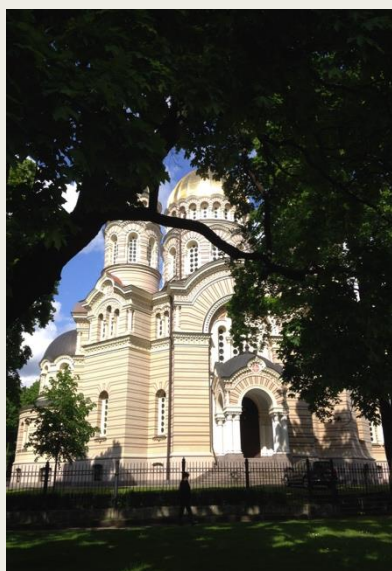
Founded in 1862
14,500 Students

RSU:

Founded in 1919
6,513 Students

EMAU:

Founded in 1456
12,000 Students



After a lunch break the charm of the Latvian capital was revealed to us in a tour of the Old City of Riga. The following sights were of special relevance:

1. Latvian National Opera
2. Freedom Monument
3. House of the Blackheads
4. Art Nouveau District
5. St. Peter's Church
6. St. Mary's Cathedral
7. Russian Orthodox Cathedral

05/28/2015: The second day started with a presentation on the German Health Care System given by Prof. Dr. Fleßa. This was part of promoting the cultural exchange in terms of the organization of health care provision and education. The second round of presentations by German students followed up on the previous day providing the Latvian participants with further insight in topics covered in the health care management program. In the following, open questions were discussed and further ideas were exchanged.

In the afternoon we visited the Museum for History of Medicine, a private collection of Professor Pauls Stradiņš. Former medical procedures and equipment were presented. Particularly impressive was the display of an old fashioned dialysis machine and the iron lung.

05/29/2015: Visiting the Medical Education Technology Center of RSU (MITC) showed us how the university is structured and equipped. By means of a tour of the facility, including the fully equipped clinical skill training rooms, we were provided with information on the training, medical students receive at RSU. With the help of dummies for medical training cases of emergency can be simulated and students are trained in a variety of sub-specialties. Compared to other countries and/or educational institutions the facility is equipped with highly advanced technology. This firsthand experience of medical training methods was quite impressive especially compared to the general technical standard in Latvia. The same can be said for the training of future nurses and physiotherapists at the MITC.

Subsequently, Mrs. Daiga Behmane gave a presentation on the Latvian health care system. In combination with Prof. Fleßa's presentation of the previous day on the German system the participants of the excursion could draw a comparison between those countries. Given the differences in population as well as in the sources of funding one can observe varying challenges. Still, there are areas that are of importance to both countries especially with regard to demographic transition and the supply of health care in rural areas. Afterwards, there was time to discuss the presentations, the excursion and exchange further ideas on a possible collaboration.

Health Care

The health care system of Latvia is organized as a statutory, tax-funded provision of health care. It is characterized by a purchaser – provider partition with regard to funding. There is a mix of public as well as private providers of health care.

Almost all Latvians are registered with a General Practitioner who acts as main point of entry into the health care system and as a gatekeeper to secondary ambulatory and hospital care. With a referral from the GP patients can freely choose any outpatient or inpatient care provider that has a contract with the National Health Services.

By Numbers:

Total Health Expenditure (THE): 5.7 % (of GDP)
1,310 \$ per capita
Government Expenditure on Health: 61.9 % of THE
Private Expenditure on Health: 37.8 % Out of Pocket
0.8 % Private Insurance
Birth Rate (2012): 10.9 per 1,000
Death Rate (2012): 14.1 per 1,000
Life Expectancy: 69 (m) / 79 (f)
Hospitals (NHS): 39
Acute Care Beds per 1,000: 3.4



In the afternoon we visited the Riga Municipality Hospital, one of the most modern health care facilities in the country. This provided us with the opportunity to get an idea on how health care provision is organized in Latvia.

After visiting the hospital site, the Pharmacy Museum was the next item on the agenda. As part of a highly entertaining and interactive guided tour the development of pharmacy was introduced to us.

In the evening there was time to further explore Riga and the Latvian culture independently.

05/30/2015: We started the day with a visit to Riga Central Market. On a partly covered area of more than 5.7 ha a variety of fruits and vegetables as well as fish, meat and dairy products were offered. Local specialties could be tasted and bought there.

After this visit we took the train to Jurmala, a tiny seaside town close to Riga. This city offers numerous opportunities for dining and shopping along the promenade as well as a dreamlike white beach. This sight convinced some of us to take a dive into the pretty cold Baltic Sea.

05/31/2015: Early in the morning we had to say goodbye to Riga and be on our way to the airport. At 06:30 am we took the flight back to Berlin.

Over all, the excursion to Riga provided us with the opportunity to discover a country of the Baltic States to different aspects: a cultural exchange with regard to the country and its people, the organization of health care in another country, educational aspects of health economics programs, the possibility of cooperation and many more.

On a final note we would like to thank Mrs. Daiga Behmane, Prof. Dr. Fleßa and especially Dr. Olav Götze for organizing this excursion and thereby providing us with the opportunity to gain great impressions.

