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### A month in Germany – a month of joy and great challenge

I guess we, today's students, are really lucky. We are blessed with lots of opportunities – all the world is open for us: no limits, no borders. Today it is no wonder to see students from, for example, Russia, taking clerkship in Europe or somewhere else around the world. It is not only a great opportunity for students to study medicine, improve skills and meet new people – it is actually the IFMSA's and other international students organizations' participation in building the model of the new world – the world of equal medical standards, the world with no racial and social prejudice.

This year I was among the luckies to participate in the IFMSA exchange program. My clerkship took place in Germany, Marburg – a small picturesque university town in the very heart of Germany. With no exaggeration I can call this month in Marburg my life-time experience. It was both – a month of a great joy and a hard challenge. I was hosted in a students' flat. Cozy room and friendly neighbors made my staying really joyful. Though I was the only foreign student in the flat, not even once I felt a stranger there! “Herzlichen willkommen” – this is how they call it in Germany. My true challenge was the high German standard, standard in everything – work in the clinic and everyday life. Punctuality, devotion to work, strict and perfect organization of treatment – these are the things clinic's everyday life is based on. No surprise to satisfy these high demands and become a part of the system you should do your best and work hard.

I was placed in the Gynecological Department. And what a department it was! New, well equipped, with a breathtaking operating room, supplied with all the latest equipment, such as IORT and Da Vinci surgical system!!!

My working day started at 7 o'clock (“German time”, as we called it among the exchange students, which means “not a minute later”, “punctuality up to a second”). My duty was to take blood and change postoperative bandages. Unfortunately my poor knowledge of German did not allow me to participate in taking anamnesis and fulfilling the history cases that much. However I honestly did my best and really improved my language skills by the end of the exchange. The main and the most delightful part of my working day was assisting in the operating room. Uterus extirpations, different kinds of laparoscopic operations, mammary

gland plastic surgeries – I was always welcome to assist! And that was a great step forward for my surgical skills.

Another important part of my exchange was travelling and exploring Germany. I went to Koln, Frankfurt, Dortmund, Essen, Munich. I have never expected Germany to be so different and so charming at the same time. If you once find yourself in Germany, visiting at least Neuschwanstein Castle and Zollverein Mine are the must-to-do things for you!

To sum up, I would like to thank the IFMSA organization for their work. I believe that this kind of international work and cooperation leads to unification of the medical service around the world. Being an association of medical students the IFMSA plays a far more important “non-medical” role – it helps us, young people from all over the world, to see each other, to know each other in reality and not to be blinded by the mass media, phobias and prejudice of the society. Study medicine, explore the world, widen scope and learn to be tolerant - these are the goals we gain participating in the IFMSA work.