

Adult education in social democracy – A Finish and German exchange

The social democratic party (SPD) in Hannover had some special guests during the last week

A group of finish principals who are active in union facilities in adult education has discussed about adult education in social democracy and trade unions with German colleagues. They stayed from Wednesday till Friday and were guests of the HVHS Springe which has practiced the exchange for some years with Finland

After their arrival on Wednesday they first met the secretary general of the SPD in Lower Saxony Detlef Tanke, who told them about the political situation in the federal state and in Germany in general. After the discussion the guests were shown the buildings of the “Bildungs- und Tagungszentrum HVHS” in Springe, where they slept as well.

The Thursday started with a visit of the industrial labour union of mining, chemistry and energy (IG BCE) and with a presentation of Thomas Bulang, who is in charge of the department of education in this labour union. He talked about his work and the system of workers councils (“Betriebsräte”) which is quite special for Germany. After lunch they visited the “Kurt-Schumacher-Building” in Hanover. The consultant for political education in the SPD Isa Grossmann showed them the building. “The intercultural exchange is really important to me” she said about the visitation. Then she presented the formal organization and the political adult education of the party. After that, the fins did a trip around the city and in the evening they relaxed at a Spanish bar.

The Friday took place at the HVHS Springe again. Under the headline “Theory and practice of social democracy” Jochen Dahm gave a presentation about the work of the academy for social democracy of the “Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation”. “It has been a very interesting exchange. Working in political education means being confronted with many different conditions in every country but there are still a lot of similar trends and problems. We can learn very much from each other.” he summarized. Afterwards the fins prepared some own presentations in small groups about the status of social democracy in different countries. After lunch they ended their visit in Germany and traveled back to Finland.

The visit was a nice opportunity to get in touch with another culture and to discuss politics and other topics.