

Activity Week Oktoberfest, September 26th – October 2nd 2011

The delegation from Lappeenranta for Activity Week Oktoberfest included Aku Rantala, Tea Suuronen and Eero Lahtinen. Our trip started on Sunday 25th September with taking a couple of Spanish guys from Lappeenranta to Helsinki to get them to their accommodation (the previous week was ESTIEM LG Exchange Lappeenranta – Madrid). In Monday morning an early wake up was guaranteed since our plane's departure was at 06.55, but it also made sure we were nearly the first ones in the beautiful capital of Bavaria, Munich. After getting there we decided to take a little walk to the English Garden with a Columbian and a Belgian guy (we also got the first sips of German beer!) while other people were still about to arrive. This turned out to be a wise decision since two Dutch people went straight to the Oktoberfest – and that could be seen. Basically the first night was all about getting to know each other with barbecue and the world famous Bavarian Weißbier.

In Tuesday morning we met at the HBF track 11 which became pretty familiar during the week. From HBF we went straight down to business – OKTOBERFEST! There was a table reserved for us at the balcony in a beer tent called “Himmel Der Bayern”, Bavarian heaven. The slogan was worth every word since everyone discovered the magic of German Pilsener and Maß (read: 1 liter pint). When the reservation was over we continued to a local garden pub to grab some snack, and finally to a bar. Memories from the bar were quite, how to put it, fuzzy, but luckily (or not) there were a couple of cameras around. And this was only the first night...

In the next morning most of the people felt surprisingly fresh with the exception of few late-arriving people. From track 11 we headed straight to Leggries, a beautiful mountain village 80 km south from Munich to start the Alp Hike to the second highest mountain in Germany, and there we had to wait for the sleepy guys to catch up before we could start the hike. Having hiked about 500 meters were everyone dead-scared about if



they would survive, maybe someone could feel yesterday in their feet. After few doubts if the hike was a good idea, numerous ruminating cows and liters of sweat lost, we were FINALLY on top of the world (not quite but who cares). There Tea had a great idea to open a piece of refreshing Finnish winter, Minttu, which speeded up the recovery from the climb. From the top we walked half way back to a wonderful Alp cottage Kotalm, where we spent the night eating delicious traditional Bavarian food, drinking little more beer, Stroh and Palinka, playing group games and singing songs from our home countries. Then somebody realized the day was turned to Aku's birthday, which resulted in Aku getting somewhat confused during the birthday songs.

Another wonderful morning again, and three whole days still to go! Clacking cow-bells and sweet mountain climate woke us up around 7 to enjoy a luxurious Bavarian breakfast, which got us energy to hike back to Leggries train station. During the hike we learned a huge amount of “hilarious” jokes and looked back to yesterday’s highlights. Back in Munich we headed to the BMW Munich office and factories after having a quick refreshing break. The company visit and the tour offered a great deal of new perspective about car industry and introduced us to basics of the subject. Unfortunately they were renovating the assembly lines so they weren’t open to public. After the tour we had time to look around and dream about once owning a car like the ones in exhibition. In the evening we were divided into four teams in which we competed in various games simultaneously gaining some energy for tomorrow’s challenges. The team of The Real Boombalicious Boombastics turned out to be a huge favorite, but the results were about to be announced at the Gala Dinner.

Friday was D-day! We woke up early to be the first ones in line when queuing to the Paulaner beer tent at the Oktoberfest. Result turned out to be the best possible, we got perfect couple of tables from the middle of the tent and the challenge could begin: 13 whole hours in a beer tent. Most of us tried to begin peacefully with not falling to the trick of delicious Pilsener. Nonetheless, after a few hours the beer had done its job, but wisely e.g. one of us decided to take a small 4-hour-long nap in the toilet. Latest by now we had learned the lyrics of at least 80 % of all German drinking songs (Fliegerlied turned out to be the best one), danced on the table and doubled the amount of beer we had drunk so far in our lives, but the atmosphere was just rising. Beer kept on flowing, community songs playing and everyone’s memories of the last few hours in the tent are probably a little blurry. Suddenly around 23 o’clock the music went down and the tent began to empty, so most of the people went to get some rest after quite a rough day. That didn’t mean the party was over; a group of around 10 of us went downtown Munich looking for an after party. Finally they ended up wandering around the city for two hours without any party, after which some of them took a wrong tram and had to walk for a couple of hours to find themselves to their hosts’ places. Who knows if not finding an afterparty was a good conclusion after all...

Saturday morning started slowly, which is quite understandable. We met at the university “office” (Finns call it a guild room) around noon and as a disappointment we heard about one camera and one cell phone were stolen last night. Not so surprisingly most of us were “a little” late, but luckily there were no hurry. The already woken and arrived ones could already start their brunch: tasty Weißwurst with some soothing Weißbier. After the brunch we took a little city tour by foot. It was nice to finally get properly introduced with the lovely, history exhaling city. The evening was all about the Gala Dinner in a wonderful Italian restaurant. The food was tasty, but even more delicious was the atmosphere and spirit of solidarity of a group of new friends. We ate, discussed about the wonderful week spent together and as a grand finale every LG handed their gifts to the organising team to thank for the week. Most of the presents were some booze from home countries, but the most memorable was the one from Dutch people: a board full of pictures of past week. The evening ended in a fancy club downtown, where it was time for always-so-hated goodbyes.

In Sunday morning Deutsche Bahn got stuck and we nearly missed the plane back home. In the afternoon we were back in Lappeenranta after one of the most wonderful weeks in our entire lives.

