

Zagreb Report by Timothy Meyer (Jg.2)

From Dec 18 to Dec 21 2015 I had the pleasure to be able to attend the Winter Holidays Open international debate tournament in Zagreb as a member of the German national debate squad. Throughout the 6 challenging preliminary rounds my team, which consisted of me along with three other students from Frankfurt and Stuttgart, was able to garner 5 victories along with one defeat. In the preliminary rounds, we managed to beat teams from many different countries, including Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Croatia, before we suffered our first defeat at the hands of one of the two strong American national teams in attendance in round 5. However, we were able to redeem ourselves when we got a victory over the other American team in the last round. The debate topics focused on many diverse areas, including evaluating the rise of China, supporting the use of artificial intelligence, discussing the extent to which the media should be involved in elections and lastly concerning a moral duty of parents with a wish to have children to adopt these children rather than having their own. The latter two topics were given to the teams only an hour before the inception of the debate and had to be argued relying solely on the background knowledge of the debaters and without any help from the internet, while the first two were made public months before the tournament to give the teams time to prepare for them accordingly.

Our record of five wins and one loss was enough for us to rank as the 10th best of 96 teams and progress to the elimination rounds. In the octo-final we beat one of the three Romanian national teams in attendance so we once again had to face the American team that had already defeated us in round 5 in the quarterfinal. In a very close debate on the motion of whether governments should shut down the social media accounts of people who repeatedly use hate speech, we were lost by a close 3-2 decision, when 2 judges favored us and 3 judges favored the American team which was speaking in support of the motion. The only other German national team left in contention was also defeated in that round so we had some spare time in which we explored the old town of Zagreb.

In summary, the tournament was a very interesting and intellectually challenging experience and I met a slew of nice people and good friends.



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