

## **Living and experiencing democracy: Three inspiring days in Bad Urach**

From 4 to 6 April 2025, I had a special opportunity to take part in a three-day seminar entitled 'Demokratie (er)leben' in the picturesque town of Bad Urach. It was an exciting journey from theory to practice that helped each of us to better understand how to build a democratic society and actively participate in its development.

### **People and organisation**

The participants of the seminar were women and men of different ages - from young people to senior citizens - from Germany and Ukraine.

The event was organised by Monika Selmeci (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg) and Carmen Stadelhofer (Head of ILEU e.V.).

We were accompanied by speakers Ibolya Alberth and Linda Dudzinska, who moderated interactive games and discussions together with Monika Selmeci.

Each exercise was creative, well thought-out and thought-provoking. We were not just listeners - we experienced democracy and put it into practice.

### **Learning through experience**

On the first day, we imagined ourselves living on a desert island and analysed the mistakes of the social model there by asking ourselves the question 'What was wrong with the island?'. This helped us to understand which values and rules are important for a just coexistence.

Later, we founded our own political parties, presented their programmes and held fair democratic elections. This taught us how important our contribution and our activities are in a democracy.

One of the most impressive moments was a game in which we fought for the preservation of certain values. My team campaigned for the preservation of a city park and looked for the most effective ways to convince and win over other people.

We also discussed how and where each of us can actively participate in social life in order to promote and develop democracy.

In addition, we built our own model of a city with infrastructure and considered which city model would be best and why.

### **The biggest eureka moment**

What I remember most was the 'bank' exercise, in which four teams deposited their money in a bank and tried to earn as much interest as possible.

At first, each team only played for itself - but we soon realised:

**Only by working together and supporting each other can we achieve the best result and the greatest success. Only together are we strong!**

I have the impression that at that moment, a real understanding of the importance of democracy emerged among all participants - the realisation that you have to think not only about yourself, but also about others. That it is important to act responsibly and always look for opportunities to work together for the good of the community - for the good of society as a whole and for the good of all countries in Europe and the world.

### **Why such projects are important:**

These three days in Bad Urach were very intense and gave me many new insights, interesting acquaintances, pleasant conversations and real experiences of living democracy. I sincerely thank the organisers Carmen Stadelhofer and Monika Selmeci for this opportunity and very much hope that such events will continue to take place - on other, no less important topics for our society.