

## ERFAHRUNGSBERICHT ÜBER STUDIENERFAHRUNGEN IN BAYERN [Report on study experiences in Bavaria]

Herkunftsland [county of origin]:	Serbia/Croatia
Studium in Bayern [program in Bavaria]:	von [from] 10. 2018 bis [until] 06. 2022
Hochschule in Bayern [university in Bavaria]:	University of Regensburg
Studienfach [subject of study]:	History
Abschluss [degree]:	PhD Bayern

### I. Praktische Erfahrungen und Tipps [Practical experiences and tips]

I was a BAYHOST scholarship holder from October 2018 until October 2021, studying at the University of Regensburg and the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies. The entire process of applying and exercising my right to a scholarship was very simple and quick. Contrary to stereotypes of German bureaucracy that some students have complained about, BAYHOST was very fast and efficient. The only (comparatively minor) setbacks I had were with the university paperwork during my first month in Regensburg. My partner and I managed to find a room through some of my fellow Yugoslavs, so we paid relatively little for accommodation. Coupled with the fact of her non-academic job, we were able to live quite well from my scholarship and her salary. I also know that my single colleagues who were receiving their scholarship through BAYHOST didn't have many problems in making ends meet, by living in a dormitory, and making their own food or eating in cafeterias. As the public transit is included for all enrolled students, getting around town was easy, although I mostly preferred to walk or cycle, given that Regensburg is small enough and that the city is just generally gorgeous.

### II. Akademische Erfahrungen und Weiterqualifikation [Academic experiences and further qualifications]

Rather than on campus, I spent most of my time at the Graduate School in the city center, as I had an office there, and a specialized library for Southeast European studies. Of course, the University Library itself was extremely helpful nonetheless, as it has a lot of holdings related to my area of research (history of communism and the national question), including plenty of old and rare books. Additionally, I was able to loan books easily and quickly from elsewhere through the ILL system, and scan whatever I need with state-of-the-art scanners that made the whole process quick and easy. While my individual PhD program did not entail taking classes, I was able to attend plenty of colloquia, study groups, and guest lectures. They were relevant not exclusively for my area of study, but for historiography more broadly, and they enabled me to apply a variety of new methodological perspectives on my research. It goes without saying that I was only able to attend these in person for the first year and a half or so, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we got used to the online system fast enough, and I can say it did not adversely affect the quality of my studies. Granted, it was hard in terms of socializing and generally staying in touch with friends during the lockdowns, but the schooling itself went on feeling (almost) normal.

Throughout the studies, I was able to travel for purposes of research and attending conferences. I spent the fall of 2019 in Moscow, also funded by BAYHOST. This was my archival research trip, and it was the

most significant part of my work. Therefore, I can honestly say it was thanks to BAYHOST that I managed to complete the most important aspect of my PhD. Moreover, it conveniently happened just before the pandemic, so I was later able to spend lockdowns and self-isolation working on the material from Moscow. Most of my remaining crucial sources were online, so I was able to complete the dissertation relatively quickly, only surpassing the three-year deadline of the BAYHOST scholarship by a couple of months. I just finished in January 2022 and should be defending it soon. I was also professionally involved with the University of Rijeka, in Croatia, that the Graduate School works with. We had our summer school there in 2018, when I just enrolled, and in 2021, I organized a conference there, on the topic of Yugoslav communism in the interwar period. Unfortunately, despite our plans of having a series of events by the sea, the conference was also fully online, as Croatia had a renewed lockdown in the spring of 2021.

### **III. Pläne bzw. Tätigkeit nach Ende der Förderung durch BAYHOST [Your plans or activities after the BAYHOST-funding]**

Overall, the BAYHOST experience was virtually the main reason that I was able to study and write in Bavaria over the previous three years. It helped fund both my stay in Regensburg and my most important research trip abroad. The experience of studying in Bavaria has been indispensable for my academic development, and I am sure that a future doctoral degree from one of the best European schools in the field of East and Southeast European studies will be of great help for my future career. Once I defend my dissertation, I am planning to enroll in a postdoctoral program, and am considering several really good universities throughout Europe and North America. The only one I am currently applying for is the Higher School of Economics in Saint-Petersburg, because they are among the rare institutions that accept postdoctoral students who have yet to defend their dissertations. If I do not get accepted for that in the fall, I will take a leap year, and begin my postdoc in the fall of 2023. In any case, I am also already looking into major academic book publishers for my thesis, hoping to continue my international research career and keep building a name for myself, with the plans to find permanent employment at a major international research university.