

GSSE Excursion to Potsdam & Berlin

Good things always come in small packages, so it was one. 8-10 June 2006 were set for national and international students taking part in the courses Experimental Structural Dynamics and Earthquake Engineering / Natural Hazards Risks, which are parts of the Master programs NHMSE and AMMS, to have a trip around the German industry and science as well as some leisure time out of Weimar in Potsdam and Berlin.

It was a high time in Germany when the whole country was being adorned like a bride to welcome, as host nation, the football fans from all over the world. The festivities were therefore at their pinnacle wherever we went.



The complete house rests on springs designed by GERB

June 8 was reserved to visit GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam (GFZ), the largest research centre in Europe conducting auspicious research in a variety of fields. There, we were introduced to numerous undergoing global projects like Early Tsunami Warning Systems etc. In the afternoon the students of the NHMSE we could attend a special lecture on earthquake hazard assessment using the modern facilities of GFZ. The evening of the day was spent in exploring Sansouci garden.

Next day took us to the Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung (BAM), Berlin, where we saw a number of

ongoing testing projects and the results of few of them. It was impressive to see the laboratories and outstanding test devices which are used for conducting very special structural tests and experimental research. The day ended with the visit to headquarter GERB, the famous vibration control system providers. How the structures be made virtually stand in the air was realized by actually seeing the ever first project by GERB in Berlin, a multi-storey building completely supported by springs.

The last day was reserved for visits of the most recently constructed architectural and structural highlights in Berlin. Early in the morning we started at Reichstag where we had the opportunity

building in just 20 seconds. From the visitor's platform we could enjoy the marvelous view over a new centre which was developed at an area that was destroyed in the second world war and later crossed by the Berlin wall and therefore not accessible for the public over decades

Later in the day, we as small groups took the chance to explore different sights like the TV Tower, Alexander Platz, etc.

It was lovely to be for quite some days in and around Berlin, the bridal capital of Germany. Thanks to the organisers, Dr. Volkmar Zabel (Institute of Structural Mechanics), Dr. Jochen Schwarz and Holger Maiwald (Earthquake Centre), of this trip. Special thanks go to our hosts at



Group in the structural laboratories of BAM in Berlin. Fotos: NHMSE

to visit the new glass dome structure covering the plenary hall and to have a spectacular glimpse of the city while standing at some height. Thereafter, visit to the new central railway station, which was the most recent architectural and structural attraction in Berlin, was made. This complex, reaching from a huge tunnel system over several levels to a spectacular roof of steel and glass is definitely one of the most impressive pieces of civil engineering arts in the world.

Noon was spent around Potsdamer Platz where Europe's fastest elevator took us 100 meters up to the roof of a

GFZ, Dr. Gottfried Grünthal and Andreas Küppers, at BAM, Prof. Werner Rücker and his group, and at GERB, Carsten Chantrain and his colleagues. This tour would not have been possible without the financial aid of the faculty of civil engineering and the logistical support by the university's transportation services, which is appreciated very much by the whole group.

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