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Together is better

***Friends want to overcome division* - by PHILIPP SCHAPER**

Germany finished its 40 years of division with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since that time it has become an important power in the European Union. But 21 years later there are still divided states and separated communities in Europe. In Hanover as well, people try to find a solution for the conflicts. Youth- and University-Projects are contributing to the process of overcoming the division of Cyprus as well as the division of the communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

HANOVER. People are discussing, an audience is following the discussion. The topic: the so called Bologna Process. Klaus, a liberal-conservative, has the opinion that everyone who's working hard, would have success. „The tattle about equal opportunities is only the cant of lazy students.“ Education expert professor Heinrich Klitt is fulminating: „I totally oppose the Bologna Process. It is an aberration, which destroys the signification of German education standards in the world.“

At first sight, it seems as if a real political talkshow on television is taking place. But the participants are neither prominent TV executives nor famous politicians. They are young people from Germany and from both communities of separated Cyprus. The TV studio is just a ordinary seminar room. The retired professor is performed by Orestis Tringides. FDP- party member Klaus is in real life his best friend Dogukan Muezzinler (26). And that is the distinctive characteristic: Cyprus is a divided country. Tringides is a Greek-Cypriot, Muezzinler lives in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is not recognized as sovereign state internationally. Both are co-coordinators of the exchange project. The friends' aim is to overcome the division of the isle, especially in people's minds. „The history of Cyprus is frozen, we are stuck in the age of the conflict“, reports Dogukan. Because of that, they have been committed and dedicated right from the beginning.

The discussion about the Bologna Process is part of a two weeks taking workshop. The participants are analysing the historic-political development of both countries, searching for comparabilities and differences. An important part in the process is the visitation of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.

But there are not just serious topics on the programme. The group also visited circus Roncalli – for most of the Cyprus youth it is a premiere. Orestis is glowing: „so many different arts on such small area – it was just fantastic.“

The Cyprus-Problem

The situation in Cyprus is deadlocked. In 1960th the republic of Cyprus

declared itself a sovereign state and became independent for Great Britain.

Between 1963 and 1974 Cyprus faced a civil war like situation. As a reaction of a coup d'état, which was conducted by Athens, Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 and occupied the North of the island. The division of the island into the northern Turkish-Cypriot part (TRNC), which is only diplomatically acknowledged by Turkey and the southern Greek-Cypriot part (Republic of Cyprus), which is recognised by international law, still exists today. The so called Green Line even divides Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus.

The nationalist of both communities hindered the creation of a comprehensive solution up to today. Whereas the Turkish-Cypriots voted in favour for an accession of a united Republic of Cyprus to the EU in a referendum, the Greek-Cypriots rejected this referendum. Nowadays negotiations are taking place again.