

#FromThailandtoTrierLand: My Experience in Germany

Hallo!

My name is Peerawat Payakkamas, or you can call me Boost. I am from Thailand and now pursuing Master's degree in Energy Technology and Management at The Joint Graduate School of Energy and Environment (JGSEE), King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). My research deals with electricity cost studies and price determination.

With the cooperation between my home university and Trier University of Applied Sciences, I had an opportunity to spend a voluntary five weeks (from March 20 to April 22, to be exact) in Germany to learn about its electricity pricing and supply systems. This is not only a fulfillment to my research, but also to formulate possible suggestions for Thailand's electricity market.



My first week in Trier, a city in the southwest of "Deutschland", was largely spent on logistics and sorting things out. Big thanks go to one of Professor Menke's students and advisees who helped me so much on how to "do as the Germans do". Though not officially registered as an "exchange students", I still got in touch with international students at "Hochschule Trier" by joining the arranged city tour (in which I got mistaken for one of their Korean classmates), attending lectures and having lunch at the school's canteen. Thanks to the university's highly active international office that made my stay went smoothly.



With the help of a colleague (who was willing to come to Thailand for an internship), I was able to attend a class on Decentralised Power Generation by Professor Brechtken from Institute for Energy Efficient Systems (IES) to learn about the basics and implementation of photovoltaics (PV) systems. In addition to the lecture, the class also offered on-field learning for the students to have a look at the measurement and instrumentation of PV systems.

I also got to visit Professor Menke's Solar Competence Centre. The centre was currently working on a large-scale water and indoor heating system. I find it interesting that the centre's facility was actually in use for heating of the school's building and students' experiments as well. Furthermore, the centre also provides training for people who are interested.

I also went to the other campus in Birkenfeld to attend lectures on Sustainable Resource Management and Industrial Ecology by Professor Hartard from Institute of Applied Material Flow Management (IfaS) and have an exciting discussion about electricity policies with Professor Heesen. These did not only help answer my inquiries but also gave ideas for my future studies and research in the field of renewable and sustainable energy.

With the assistance from Professor Menke and his advisee, I was able to visit local utility in Trier and the system regulator headquartered in Bonn for further discussion and exchange of ideas. Together, we went out to Stadtwerke Trier, a municipal utility that takes care of public transportation, water, gas and electricity in Trier, and the Renewable Energy Office at Bundesnetzagentur, the central regulating and consulting agency for the whole state. I learned that local authorities are given more distinctive role and consumers feel more ownership of their utilities than in my country, and the central government is there to ensure fairness and avoidance of monopoly in the market.

Being my first time going abroad on my own and in a completely different world, this trip to Germany is surely memorable and inspiring. I was impressed by the country's high-standard infrastructure, well-preserved historical remains that are integrated with modern urbanisation, and most importantly all the people that helped me along the way. Five weeks were definitely short, so I really hope that I am going to be there (or at least somewhere around) again one day.

Danke schön!