

Final report

Internship abroad

Personal data and general information on the internship

Subject of studies: Scandinavian Studies (“Skandinavistik”)

Bachelor/Master/State exam: Master

Time of internship: 27.01.2025 – 28.03.2025

Place of internship: Stockholm, Sweden

Internship institution: *Goethe-Institut Schweden*

Nine weeks internship at *Goethe-Institut* in Stockholm

Having studied Scandinavian Studies for both my Bachelor's and now my Master's, I was eager to find a workplace where I could apply my knowledge of culture, literature, and language. As the largest international institution promoting German literature and culture, the *Goethe-Institut* in Stockholm, Sweden, was my natural choice for a two-month internship during the 2025 winter break.

My internship abroad journey began already in spring 2024, even though it would take nearly a whole year before I boarded my flight to Sweden. In March, I sent my application, and in April, I had one interview for the position as an intern at the *Goethe-Institut* in Stockholm.

I was lucky enough to have my employer provide a list of contacts in the city who regularly sublet their places to interns. Thus, the process of finding a flat was quite easy for me. After writing some emails back and forth with the first person on the list, I got myself accommodation in central Stockholm for a reasonable price. The size of the fully furnished and equipped studio apartment was around 20 m², which included a balcony, a kitchenette, and a private bathroom. In addition, the landlady was living close by and was very attentive and helpful with life in Stockholm, both in and outside of the apartment. In general, I was surprised by how accessible the city's housing market was. My fellow interns at *Goethe-Institut*, for example, found their places to stay through online platforms like *blocket.se* or even *Airbnb*—though with the latter, they had to compromise on location. Even other people I

met during my time in Sweden who permanently live there couldn't report negative experiences.

Furthermore, the planning and preparation phase ahead of my internship consisted of a more administrative matter—checking up on my insurance status. As the European Health Insurance Card comes with German health insurance, I had to make no changes since it covers medical treatment in Sweden. For my accident and personal liability insurance, I went with the DAAD's (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*) affordable options for interns abroad. The application process for the latter was easy, didn't require a lot of steps, and with the completed "Learning Agreement" as proof of my planned internship, I could already sign the insurance contract.

Since I had already spent an Erasmus year in Umeå during my bachelor's and have been studying Scandinavian Studies for years, I felt culturally and mentally well-prepared for living in Stockholm for two months. I also knew the city quite well, having visited five times before. Otherwise, I would recommend the Intercultural Communication introductory course offered by LMU for exchange students and interns abroad—I took it myself as preparation for my Erasmus year a few years ago.

Finally, the last step that stood between me and my travels to Sweden was booking and boarding the flight...After two hours by plane from Munich to Stockholm and one short train ride to the center of the city, I arrived at my apartment. Everything was in place, in old but good condition, and overall, everything was ready for me to start my first day at the *Goethe-Institut* the next day.

As an international German institution that promotes knowledge of the German language abroad, fosters international cultural cooperation, and conveys a comprehensive, up-to-date image of Germany, the *Goethe-Institut* has 151 branches in 98 countries worldwide. In Sweden, the institute is divided into three main sections: the language department, the administrative department, and the department of literature, library, culture, and events. For nine weeks, from the end of January till the end of March, I was part of the latter. In total, there are currently 14 people employed at the *Goethe-Institut* in Stockholm—including three interns—which makes it the biggest branch in the Nordic countries. Unique to the Swedish site is the local library, which is home to hundreds of different books by German-speaking authors or their respective Swedish translations. Adjacent to the library rooms, there is even a larger conference space, which is usually used for events or German language exams. All

these mentioned facilities in the center of Stockholm are shared by the *Goethe-Institut* with its Spanish equivalent, the *Instituto Cervantes*. The Spanish office is located on the third floor of the same building, while the German office is on the fourth floor, where I spent most of my time during our assigned working hours—between 8:30 am and 5 pm.

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Goethe-Institut Schweden

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Instagram Marketing in Goethe's library

My usual tasks consisted of research on future event topics, social media marketing, as well as textual production, corrections, and translations. Once a week, every intern was additionally assigned three hours of library duty, which included assisting visitors with requests such as finding a book, lending books, creating new user accounts, or answering any questions that arose. Furthermore, every other week, the *Goethe-Institut* organizes different events on-site, accessible to the public. The topics during my internship varied from panel debates on cultural politics and lectures on German authors and their reception in Sweden to a talk about rave culture and the dying clubbing scene.

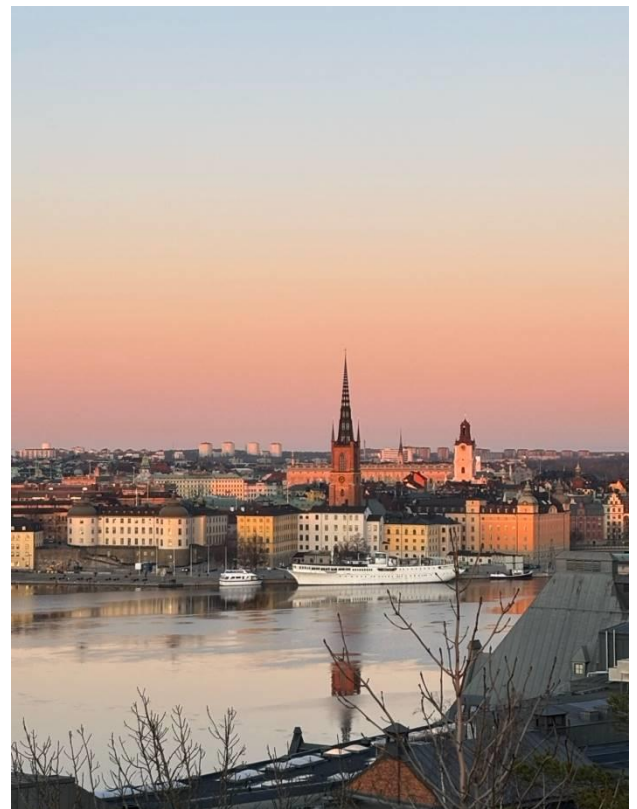
These events usually took place in the early evenings, and as interns, we were responsible for organizing logistics beforehand and catering during the event. In general, the working atmosphere at the *Goethe-Institut* in Stockholm was very enjoyable, and every single colleague or superior was communicative, open, and friendly. Even though it was a German cultural institution, we followed the Swedish principle of flat hierarchies, where everyone communicated openly and on an equal level. As interns, we were encouraged to attend all meetings, and our colleagues and superiors were always eager to answer any questions about the institution or provide insights into their current projects. The head of the institute even organized the opportunity for us to shadow at the German Embassy in Sweden for a day, where we could learn about the embassy's work and gain valuable insights into the diplomatic process.

Overall, the workload at my internship was perfectly “lagom,” as they say in Swedish—“not too much and not too little.” Hence, I had enough free time to explore the city. At the center of everyday life and leisure in Sweden stands the concept of “fika,” which means “coffee break”

but can also be used as a verb. Swedish people love to “fika” several times a day, so it’s no wonder that Stockholm isn’t short on cute cafés and pastry dishes around the clock. As I had already been to Stockholm before, I knew my way around and was happy to visit museums like the *Vasa Museet*, *Skansen*, *Nordiska Museet*, or *Nationalmuseum* again. Furthermore, there are a lot of gyms and sports classes to choose from, especially when the weather is not great—which I must admit is often the case in the first months of the year. Even the (lower) mountains are reachable within a day trip. Other destinations include Uppsala, Örebro, or Linköping. However, my highlight was leaving Stockholm for a weekend and heading to Helsinki, where I hadn’t been before.

For most of my exploration tours in and around Stockholm, I was lucky enough to be accompanied by my friends and boyfriend, who came to visit me during my time in Sweden. I also made some new friends via *Bumble Friends* or grabbed drinks a couple of times with my fellow interns. Additionally, the Instagram account *Girls in Stockholm* was helpful, as it organizes events for women in Stockholm who have newly moved there and want to make friends. The city is very international, and the real challenge is stepping outside of this bubble and getting to know Swedish people. Personally, I find there is some truth to that it is hard to make Swedish friends. Especially as someone who wants to immerse themselves in Swedish or Scandinavian culture for academic purposes or to improve their language skills, two months in the country was too short. Even though I made maximum effort to find opportunities to speak Swedish, my language practice did not exceed basic daily conversations at supermarkets, shops, cafés, and restaurants.

Overall, I didn’t find Stockholm to be much more expensive than Munich. While items like pharmacy products and going out can be a bit pricier, the exchange rate between the Swedish *krona* and the euro made the overall costs more manageable than I



View over Stockholm's rooftops

expected. In the end, it wasn’t as expensive as I initially thought it would be. With a stipend of €450 and an Erasmus+ scholarship of €750, I found myself in a comfortable financial situation during my time abroad.

Coming from a background in literary studies, I was able to connect my academic experience with my internship quite well. Most of the events I participated in had a literary focus, often revolving around new publications or the translation of German books into Swedish. In addition, I had the opportunity to apply my language skills by working on text production in Swedish and translating between Swedish and German (and vice versa). The weekly library duties were a welcome change of pace and gave me valuable insights into the practical side of the literary world. Furthermore, my participation in the LMU certificate program in Intercultural Communication was highly applicable when planning events for the Swedish public.

In conclusion, interning at the *Goethe-Institut* in Sweden for two months was a positive experience. The team was super friendly, respectful, and supportive. However, I would have wished for more opportunities to step outside my comfort zone. The work processes were quite static, and financial cutbacks in recent years limited new projects and initiatives. Nonetheless, I would recommend an internship at the *Goethe-Institut* in Sweden to those specifically interested in the institution and cultural event planning.