KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT

Master International Relations
Faculty of History and Social Sciences

Newsletter winter semester 2026/2027



Dear MIB students,

Dear alumni of our Master's program,

A warm welcome to the 2026/2027 academic year!

Once again this year, we are delighted to welcome a MIB cohort to the KU that is as large as it is international, comprising 26 students. I wish you all a great start to your studies. I hope you have a smooth transition and settle down well in Eichstätt!

As always, the newsletter on the following pages covers various topics related to the MIB. Ms. Leonie Atzler – an MIB alumna – will be joining the department's team in the coming semesters and will enrich the course offering, notably with courses on Asia. There are also, once again, testimonials from MIB students, for example on studying and undertaking internships abroad. In addition, there is information on the Chair's lecture series for the winter semester 26/27, as well as details of a new exchange format in the form of "Coffee Chats".

Finally, here are the tried-and-tested tips for all new MIB students: you should initiate the process of having your academic credits recognized as soon as possible, ideally after consulting the MIB program coordinator, Mr. Fouquet. You should also start planning your mandatory internship as soon as possible, as it has become increasingly challenging in recent years to find exciting internships that are relevant to the degree program. If, on the other hand, you are considering a semester or even a year abroad – which is optional within the MIB program but also extremely beneficial – you must also start planning as soon as possible, as applications for a period abroad in the 2027/28 academic year must be submitted during this winter term.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Fouquet, Dr. Ludwig (Deputy Chair of the Examination Board) or myself at any time, as always.

Wishing you a good start to the semester and best regards on behalf of the entire MIB team!

Klaus Brummer
Chair of the Examination Board and Program Coordinator for MIB

New Research Assistant at the Chair of International Relations

Dear MIB students and alumni,



(photo: private)

My name is Leonie Atzler and from the 2026/27 winter semester, I will be supporting the Chair of International Relations as a Research Assistant. I studied the MIB program myself from 2023 to 2025 and completed my degree with a Master's thesis titled "Germany's Feminist Foreign Policy – A Genuine Transformation or Just a Drop in the Ocean?" I thoroughly enjoyed my time at KU and in Eichstätt, so I am delighted to be back here. After completing my degree, I first undertook a six-month internship in the Cooperation with Central Africa department at KfW Development Bank in Frankfurt. During this time, I gained insights into the practical aspects of development cooperation in the fields of biodiversity, health and peace, as well as engaged intensively with global interconnections.

Even during my studies, I was fortunate enough to spend a semester abroad at Sogang University in Seoul, South Korea. The country has long fascinated me, not least because of its rich history, the tension between traditional society and modernity and its interesting geopolitical situation. Even after my return to Germany, my experiences in South Korea continued to hold my interest. Therefore, I applied to the DAAD for a scholarship to study Asian languages, specializing in Korean and I was successful. This allowed me to spend a year learning Korean at the Language Institute of Sogang University. It was an intensive, sometimes frustrating, but also incredibly enriching time, during which I learned not only Korean but also a great deal about the country and its culture.

During my year at the language school, my interest in South Korea and the East Asian region grew even stronger. I would now like to pursue this interest academically at the KU. Furthermore, I remain very interested in development cooperation – particularly post-colonial and neo-colonial perspectives – as well as feminist foreign policy. I look forward to exploring these topics in my future research and teaching.

Best regards,

Leonie Atzler

Osiem miesięcy w Polsce – A perspective on eight months in Poland

by Maximilian Kiesewetter

The following observations are based primarily on my personal experiences during my time abroad in Poland, where I studied for half a year and subsequently undertook an internship as a political analyst. They therefore do not claim to represent Polish society or political culture in its entirety. Rather, they should be understood as personal impressions, shaped by my respective study and work experiences, as well as by the places and people I came into contact with during my stay.



One could cross the Oder without initially feeling as though one were crossing a border. Much of it seems familiar. Eating habits and customs are at times so similar as to be indistinguishable. Small towns are reminiscent of German settlements, not least because of Poland's reconstruction efforts. It is thanks to these that the overwhelming majority of historic buildings destroyed during the Second World War in the former German territories have been restored. In the High Tatras, it is hard not to think of idyllic Alpine villages. It is only border controls, road signs and, finally, the language that remind you that you have left the country. Despite these many similarities, Poland remains surprisingly vague in the German consciousness, apart from the obvious historical points of reference. The situation is quite different on the other side of the Oder. Many Poles, particularly in the west, learn German at school; some speak it better than English. Some have connections with Germany, have family here or have even spent a few years in Germany themselves. People in Poland also follow Germany's day-to-day domestic and foreign affairs more closely than the reverse: older people reflect on the past. Hardly any Polish family was spared the crimes of Nazism. Resentment toward "the Germans" is still palpable. Sometimes it is expressed with a great deal of black humor, sometimes subliminally, and sometimes less subtly. Even the younger generations are, to some extent, skeptical and divided in their attitudes. Since my departure, I have remained in contact with many Polish friends. Even the most conservative among them have expressed concern about the election results in Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. These are those rare occasions when they do not hide the Polish generational trauma behind humor.

All these issues were also reflected in the Polish research landscape. For two months, I had the opportunity to accompany, among others, Dr. Mateusz Wiliński at the Instytut Zachodni in Poznań as he conducted his research into the increasingly radical AfD election campaign rhetoric. Three of the four departments at the Polish Western Institute, which advises the political leadership in Warsaw on "Western affairs", devote their research partly or entirely to the Federal Republic

of Germany. Alongside domestic politics and Germany's role within the EU, the focus is primarily on the military "turning point" and its implications for Polish security interests. Beyond the political debates, the war in Ukraine and the associated refugee flows are a constant presence across all sections of society. I realized just how directly this can affect everyday life in Poland shortly after my arrival. On September 10, 2025, the morning began with a text message from the Polish Alert RCB warning system, after several drones had penetrated Polish airspace the night before.

No European NATO member state has invested a higher percentage of its budget in its conventional armed forces in recent years than Poland. The experiences of Soviet rule and violence have also become deeply ingrained in Poland's collective memory and continue to shape the understanding of security to this day. The closer one gets to the Ukrainian and Belarusian borders, the more palpable the fear of the growing threat becomes. Soldiers report that exercises are becoming increasingly "serious". However, they feel a sense of duty and have confidence in their own abilities; if necessary, even without their allies. The military also plays a noticeably more central role in university education than it does in Germany. By way of comparison: while military security in the MIB module "Practice, Strategies and (Political) Fields of International Politics" at the KU constitutes only one part of the security fields covered – and is given almost equal weight alongside areas such as civil protection and environmental protection – at the University of Wrocław it forms the core of the (security) political science curriculum. A common European security architecture is already almost inconceivable without Poland. However, the country is gaining in importance not only in terms of security policy. The Polish economy grew by around three percent in 2025, a rate similar to that of the previous year. Investments by Polish companies in the German market are also rising steadily. For the first time in 30 years, the number of Poles returning to Poland from Germany exceeds the number of those emigrating to Germany. While Germany is historically, economically and socially omnipresent in Poland, Poland remains, for the most part, the overlooked neighbor to the east in Germany. Changing this, however, does not begin solely at the political level. It begins with us, as a society, engaging more deeply with Poland. As neighbors, as part of Europe, and as a society with its own history, its own concerns and its own expectations for Europe's future. A closer look across the Oder is particularly worthwhile for a strong, united Europe based on partnership.

Interested in security policy? Academic Association for Security Studies (BSH)

by Maryna Mincheva and ThanNaing Aung

The Basic Academy on Security Policy, organized by the Academic Association for Security Studies (BSH), takes place three times a year, offering an immersive four-day program covering a wide range of current German and international security policy challenges. ThanNaing and Maryna, students of the MIB, had the privilege of participating in the 54th and 55th Security Policy Academies in March and May 2026, respectively. The academies focused on Europe's current security agenda as well as highly topical issues such as extremism in Germany, the war in the Middle East, climate migration in Africa, and geopolitical changes driven by developments in Russia and Asia.

Maryna: For me, the Academy was especially valuable in relation to my Master's thesis on the transformation of EU security policy since 2022. The discussion on European deterrence against Russia led by Dr. Alexander K. Bollfrass from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the presentation by Oleksii Leznov from Eastern Europe Youth Empowerment Space on Ukraine's practical experience in countering disinformation and deepfakes, and the session on cybersecurity with experts from the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) broadened my perspective on the domains I explore in my research and allowed me to connect theory with practical insights from the field.

ThanNaing: For me, visiting the Federal Ministry of Defense, the Federal Foreign Office, and the Federal Academy for Security Policy was an extraordinary chance to peek into their perceptions and put myself in the shoes of the security experts, military officials,



(photo: private)

and foreign policymakers regarding the security threats facing Germany amidst current challenges. Out of all the topics, the national security strategy, integrated security and total defense were introduced as key concepts and models that the German Government, in alliance with its European and NATO counterparts, is pushing to implement.

Overall, the Academy serves as an excellent starting point for anyone interested in a career in the security sector. It gives students the chance to become familiar with the work of leading institutions, NGOs, and think tanks, apply their knowledge beyond the classroom through discussions with policy experts and aspiring students from across Germany, and further develop their own areas of expertise. For those who would like to engage more deeply with a specific topic, the Advanced Security Policy Academy provides a more specialized immersion into one field of foreign and security policy each year. We would therefore warmly encourage students interested in security policy to explore the opportunities offered by BSH and, where possible, get involved in their local university group.

The MIBPlus Student Network

The MIB's student network, MIBPlus, was launched back in the summer semester of 2016. It is open to all current students, as well as the program's many alumni. MIBPlus currently has well over 100 members. However, a network works all the better the more people belong to it and get involved. Do you know any alumni and would like to invite them to join the MIBPlus network too? Simply download the membership application form from the MIB website and pass it on...



Use the opportunity to connect with lots of other students and alumni via the MIBPlus group on LinkedIn!

MIBPlus event highlights

MIBStarter (German and English)
When you start your studies at the MIB, there are soon plenty of issues to deal with – from organizing your studies and planning your time abroad to your first assignments at the MIB. MIBStarter supports first-year students and provides answers to the most pressing questions and problems. Students from higher years are also on hand to share their experiences.
Hosts: Dr. Andreas N. Ludwig and Stephan Fouquet

November 25, 2026 – 6:00 pm – Zoom

Lecture series by the Chair of International Relations (English)
In the 2026/2027 winter semester, the Chair of International Relations is continuing its cross-semester lecture series. In the lecture series' anniversary year, six guest lectures by colleagues from Germany and abroad will address current topics and challenges in global relations – ranging from the current situation in Ukraine and the role of sub-state actors in global relations to the situation in Korea and the Arctic.

November 5, 2026 2:15 pm KG A 106	**Prof Volodymyr Dubovyk** (DAAD Visiting Scholar; Odesa Mechnikov University, Ukraine)	Can We Think of the Russia-Ukraine War Ending for Good? And What Comes Next?
November 17, 2026 4:00 pm INT 014	**Prof Dr Sandra Destradi** (University of Freiburg/ DAAD Visiting Professor Reichman University, Israel)	Populism and International Politics
November 24, 2026 6:00 pm Zoom	**Prof Dr Jaume Castan Pinos** (University of Southern Denmark)	Sub-State Actors and Big Politics

December 3, 2026 6:00 pm Zoom	**Juliana Bieg, MA** (University of Basel, Switzerland)	Human Rights on the Line: Civil Society, North Korean Escapees and the Politics of Unification
January 18, 2027 6:00 pm KG A 205	**Prof Dr Kai Oppermann** (TU Chemnitz, Germany)	The Politicization of Foreign Policy: Theoretical and Empirical Implications. The Case of the Turkish Diaspora in Germany and the Politicization of German-Turkish Relations
January 21, 2027 6:00 pm Zoom	**Prof Dr Tomasz Branka** (Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan, Poland)	Greenland: Not for Sale – but Up for Negotiation? Sovereignty, Security and the New Geopolitics of the Arctic

For lectures held online via the Zoom video conferencing tool, please register by emailing andreas.ludwig@ku.de.



Servicestelle Internationale Praktika
International Office

Career Coffee Chat: International Relations in Practice

Internship experiences at home and abroad: Students' insights into their experiences in Germany and Korea – for students of all disciplines

Would you like to gain international work experience but aren't quite sure how to get started? Or are you simply curious about the opportunities offered by an internship at home or abroad? At this Coffee Talk, two students from the MA in International Relations (MIB) will share their personal experiences, offer tips and answer your questions. Come and chat in a relaxed atmosphere and find inspiration for your own next steps! Simeon Mede will talk about his experiences during his internship at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), where he supported the Shaping Futures Academy. Jiwon Moon will share insights into her experiences in Korea. Ask your questions, have a chat and learn first-hand about the opportunities, challenges and practical experiences of other students. Be inspired and discover new perspectives for your own interests and career paths in the field of international relations!

The talk will be held in English.

Hosts: Marianne Montrose Schönmüller and Dr. Andreas N. Ludwig

A joint event organized by the Chair of International Relations / MIBPlus and KU International Career Services. The event will take place online via Zoom. Please join the Zoom meeting five minutes before it starts directly via the

event listing in the Career Center. You will also receive the link by email. Please check your spam folder if necessary.

December 9, 2026 – 12:30 pm – Zoom

Last but not least... – KG A shines in new splendor

After several semesters of construction, the KU campus in Eichstätt is beginning to shine in new splendor. With College Building A (KG A), the first phase of the comprehensive renovation of the KU's central building complex has been completed.

This marks the end of teaching in the temporary container building. Renovated where necessary, given a fresh new look and brought up to the latest technical standards… Although there is still some work going on in a few places, we are looking forward to returning to KG A from this winter term onward!





(photos: private)

Contact and Legal Notice

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Full details of the degree program are also available at: www.ku.de/mib

Questions, requests or suggestions? You can contact us at mib@ku.de...

The latest news from the KU is always available at: www.ku.de

