
VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND NATO IN BRUSSELS

April 6th-8th, 2010

For the first time since the existence of the MIREES programme, this year students have had the opportunity to visit the European institutions in Brussels thanks to an invitation of the MEP Vittorio Prodi and the Italian Delegation at NATO HQ. This very intensive experience was articulated on three days, offering a unique occasion for a better understanding of EU decision-making and procedures. Such a valuable experience has been highly appreciated by students, as shown by their personal impressions, reported here as follows.



The MIREES students class of 2012

"The trip to Brussels gave us a deep insight on the functioning of European institutions, NATO and the regional dimension of Europeanization. It was also a unique chance of meeting persons that work in the field. Officers, parliamentarians and representatives were at disposal for our questions, were glad to meet us and to know our background and future plans. One remarkable event was the round table "The European Parliament and EU Challenges Ahead: Member States Integration, Enlargement or both?" which took place in the EU Brussels Office of the Emilia Romagna Region. The debate has been enriched by different points of view on the enlargement issue. Along with the technical contribution offered by Mr Moggi (European Commission, DG Relex), the academical one provided by Professor Bianchini, the valuable contribution from inside came from EPMs Professors Vittorio Prodi, György Schöpflin, and Leonidas Donskis. The round table deepened on both the achievements and challenges of the European Union since its creation until today. We realised how important is the concept of "networking" and "diversity" in order to overcome the threats of homogeneity and nationalism." – **Serena Bonato** and **Angela Lombardo**



"The trip gave the EU some kind of face, and it was exciting to see many European classmates beginning to consider a place for themselves in this institution. In fact, we were introduced to traineeship and job opportunities within the different European Union institutions, which might be a good chance for those who wish to start professional career there." – **Michelle Rostampour** and **Natalia Evdokimova**

"One very stimulating aspect of this trip has been the curiosity shown for our group. As an international class, the fascinating particular has probably been the fact that we are people coming from EU founders countries (Italy), both older and newer member states (Finland, Poland, Slovakia), possible new members (Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia), Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and U.S.A." – **Isotta Ricci Bitti**



"The meeting with the representatives of the Emilia-Romagna office provided students with a unique insight on the regional dimension of Europeanization, namely on the direct relations between EU and regions, beyond the national dimension. The visit of the Emilia – Romagna Office in Brussels broadened our knowledge on how one region should act in lobbying for its regional interests in the EU. The presentation delivered by Ms Lorenza Badiello (Head of Office) and Ms Rita Malvasi provided us with a clear picture of the office's activities in the field of cooperation strategies and projects with the Southeast European Countries.

Furthermore, their future plans and activities were presented, which helps us to get a wider understanding and ideas on how SEE countries might be more involved in an economic cooperation and activities of this region (and other EU regions as well) that would improve their development and foster the integration to the EU." - **Milan Milenković** and **Dimitar Cvetkovski**

"The visit of the EU Commission/DG Enlargement offered us the opportunity to pursue more practical knowledge about the EU enlargement strategy and the New Neighbourhood Policy. Very interesting lecture about Stabilisation and Association Processes and European Neighbourhood Policy was given by Simona Gatti and Chiara Vallini, the Deputy Head for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Project Manager respectively. Later on, students had the opportunity to start some very interesting and fruitful discussions with these representatives of DG Enlargement about future of these processes as well as future of their countries in relations with EU." – **Irena Petkovska**



"I am very satisfied about the experience we had the chance to enjoy in these 3 days. Visiting NATO and EU buildings was a precious experience even just because of the atmosphere one can feel when entering these places and seeing how people actually work there. The conferences were also very stimulating, and they gave me two very precise impressions, a negative and a positive one; from one side I got the confirmation that some international organizations and politicians can be very "general" and contradictory at times (I had this

impression especially at NATO headquarters), but that also depends on the very long and difficult task they're facing; on the other side, I've been very surprised, in a positive way, of the seriousness, the commitment, the good level of knowledge and the polite way of discussing political issues of the people (either politicians, specialists and just clerks) we had the chance to talk with. I was also delighted to finally see some Italian politicians and employees working and behaving in a serious and respectful way, something that can be rarely seen in Italian internal politics." – **Alessandro Bonomelli**

"Thanks to the trip to Brussels we had the opportunity to see on spot how not only the institutions, but the complex political life in Brussels works. The importance of lobbying and networking, the projects development, and the possibilities for internship were introduced to us by the comprehensive presentation by the representatives of the Reggio Emilia Romagna's office. We had the opportunity to take part in an interesting discussion between the representatives of the European Parliament and the Commission on the organized round table, as well as to meet with important representatives in the NATO headquarters. It was truly enriching experience for which we are really grateful." – **Biljana Stojanoska**

Three days have been a great opportunity to discover closely the functioning of the most important institutions on which Europe depends today. That is why it has been an honour for us as a class and as individuals to meet and discuss openly with EU Parliament members, NATO officials and political sciences scholars. In fact we came back enriched and amazed by the frankness of the confrontations and the variety of perspectives we collected. Eventually we hope that future MIREES students will benefit from this kind of highly formative chance we had.



Mr Vittorio Prodi welcoming the MIREES students
at the European Parliament