



National Model United Nations

*Final Report of the 2017 National Model United Nations Course
at the University of St. Gallen*

April 2017



University of St.Gallen

NMUN what?

A question, which the students of the elective course “National Model United Nations” at the University of St. Gallen were asked frequently during the last semester. The reason for that question can be found in the special quality of the class. It is the perfect opportunity for students with a proper interest in international politics and its organizations, to experience the functioning of diplomacy in the United Nations. Throughout the last fall semester, 24 selected students were prepared by Prof. Dr. Thomas Burri and his teaching assistants, Meike Pauletzki and Aline Wani, for the main event: The National Model United Nations Conference taking place in New York in April, a simulation of an UN Conference with students from more than 140 countries.

Preparation Process

In order to be optimally prepared for the conference, the NMUN delegation had several lectures during the last fall semester. During those meetings, the team gained insights into the UN, its procedures, important documents and declarations. The class learned how to correctly draft a resolution and negotiate during the formal and informal sessions of the conference.

An important part of our preparation was the Mock Simulation of the conference last October in the “Kantonsratsaal”. During this simulation, the team applied the NMUN Rules of Procedure for the first time and trained their public speaking skills in spontaneous and prepared speeches and discussions.

During the conference in New York, each delegation represents one designated country. In order to recreate a realistic simulation, it was important to gather as much information as possible about our allocated country: *Italy*. Thus, it was possible to give a credible impression of an Italian delegation in a UN session.

Field Trip to Bern – The Italian Embassy

Following our preparatory session, we attended our first field trip as a group. Meeting early at the Bahnhof in St Gallen, we boarded the train to Bern. Our first meeting was with Roberto Balzaretti, director of the Directorate of International Law at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. His discussion gave us great insights into international relations from the perspective of the Swiss Confederation. Next, the delegation was invited to the Residence of the Italian Ambassador in Bern. Meeting the Ambassador of the country, which we were representing, was a unique experience. The delegation asked questions on the position of Italy in the various committees and pertinent issues, and deepened their knowledge on the matters at hand.



The delegation greatly appreciated the stay at the residence as well as the very warm and enthusiastic welcome provided by the Ambassador's dog Uffa.

The last important part of the training was the preparation of the Position Papers. Each committee of the conference had to work out a statement of Italy, concerning specific topics, which then formed the basis of our stance during the conference. In addition to that, the writing process was a good opportunity to train the special research process of UN material, and to express a distinct opinion in a concise manner, having only a limited amount of writing space.

Conference

With the slam of a wooden hammer, the debates were declared open on the 9th of April in the grand hall of the Hilton Midtown in New York. The 24 delegates representing the nation of Italy split up in their 12 distinct committees in meeting halls in both the Hilton Midtown and the Sheraton Times Square Hotel. Within the first day of debates, delegates were up to speed with the fast pace of the New York lifestyle and started drafting resolutions in their various committees.

Swiss Mission to the UN

During our free time at the conference, our delegation had the opportunity to visit the Swiss UN Mission.

The Swiss Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Jürg Lauber, gave interesting insights into his work and into the imminent challenges, which Switzerland encounters at the UN. Furthermore, as many of the students in our delegation consider pursuing an employment in the diplomatic sector, the visit also brought light into possible future career paths.



UN Headquarters

On the last day of the debate, six lucky delegates, representing Italy in the three general assembly committees, were invited to have their final committee session in the General Assembly Plenary Hall of the United Nations Headquarters. Whilst sitting in the exact seats of the real-life Italian delegation in the hall at the heart of the United Nations worldwide, the delegates felt the pressure and tension rise upon each casted vote. The session was closed by a tenacious and thought-provoking speech by the

Deputy General Secretary to the UN, Amina J. Mohammed. The rest of the delegation joined after the session for the closing ceremony. Following many pictures and a final hammer slam, the meeting was adjourned to 2018.

Conclusion

At the end of the conference, our delegation was awarded the “Honorable Mention Delegation” prize as well as two position paper awards, won by Lara Engbert & Stefan Jungo and Alexandra Furio & Manuel Weibel. The delegates attended the Delegates Ball on the final night and used it as an opportunity to bond one last time together with all the new friends and colleagues from the conference. Being now back in the peace and calm of St. Gallen, we all look back at the conference with great positivity and satisfaction that we took part in this experience.



Acknowledgements

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