
Group Outreach Project

— POL 2097 - Team Three —

April 30th: Arrive in Paris



We flew into Paris and arrived the morning of April 30. We were able to see some of the sights by private bus and were allowed to explore the Eiffel Tower for a couple hours around lunch time.

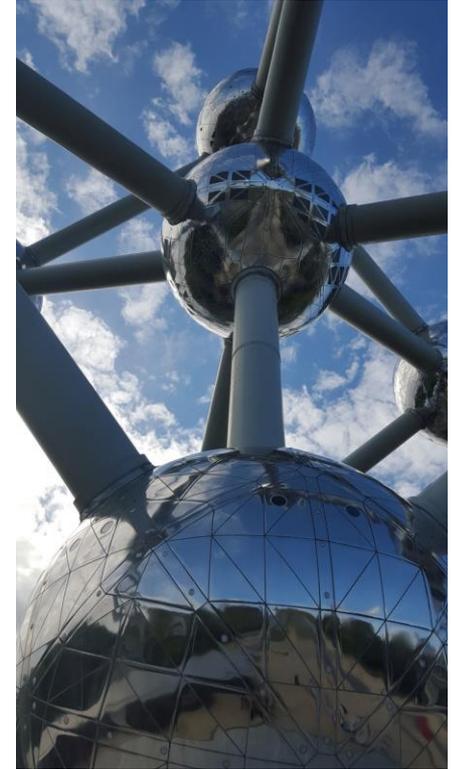
April 30th: Arrive in Brussels

After sightseeing in Paris, we took a three-hour bus ride to Brussels. We checked into our hotel and then were led on a walking tour of Brussels by Dr. Ivanov. Among the places visited were the statue of Manneken Pis and Grand Place.



May 1st: Bus Tour of Brussels

We started the day by taking a bus tour around many of the sights of Brussels, including the European Commission, the Palace of Justice, and the Place Royale, and heard the history of the city from our tour guide, a local. We then stopped at the Atomium, the centerpiece of the 1958 World Fair. From the viewpoint in the top sphere, we were able to see the entire city of Brussels.



May 1st: Time to Explore Brussels

After the bus tour, we were given time to explore the city for lunch. Most of us went to a local market and ate at one of Brussels' many cafes. Nearby was the impromptu monument of thousands of flowers set up at the Bourse in memory of the bombings on March 22.

That night, we ate at C'est Bon C'est Belge. Even though the temperatures dropped, we enjoyed genuine Belgian food and stayed warm under complementary blankets.



May 2nd: Tour of the European Parliament

The information meeting and tour of the European Parliament was our first official visit to an international institution on the study abroad tour.

Composed of 751 members and nine political groups ranging from left to right - and even independent - on political ideologies, the European Parliament is the functioning legislative body of the EU.

During the information meeting, we learned the origins and history of the EU as a whole, while also discussing the future organization and transformation of the EU in years to come.



May 2nd: Visit and Information Session at the EC Central Library

Our day concluded with a visit to the European Commission Central Library.

The EC Central Library serves as an institution that provides resources - both paper and digital - on EU political policies, law, and many more specific reference topics that focus on the European region.

We learned about the various research methods and materials the EC Central Library has to offer. From there, we were able to find reputable information and resources to use for our individual research paper topics.



May 3rd: European Commission and Parliamentarium



Our Tuesday started with a visit to the European Commission where we received an enlightening presentation from a Commission representative, who also happened to be an Englishman and very knowledgeable about the goings on of the EU.

The possible British exit from the EU, or “Brexit”, was a hot topic during this presentation.

May 3rd: European Commission and Parliamentarium

After a nice lunch at the Parliamentarium, we participated in a roleplaying game where our group was broken up into different sized political groups and put through the motions like an MEP when there is a vote coming up. Students were able to debate the issue and negotiate on their party's stance in order to get the most favorable alliances among the other parties. Committee leaders were then able to speak in front of the entire group before the issue was put to a vote.



May 3rd: European Commission and Parliamentarium

After the roleplaying game, we were able to take a self-guided tour through the Parliamentarium.

They had a timeline of European history through the 20th century and the creation of the EU up to the present day.

The EU's Nobel Peace Prize from 2012 was also on display and there was a photo exhibit entitled "Displaced" focusing on women in the current migrant crisis.



May 4th: The European Council and on to the Hague!



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We spent our last day in Brussels visiting the European Council. This was a very exciting visit as we sat in one of the actual rooms that are used by the Council to make decisions and arbitrate topics. Our guide was very passionate about her job and the mission of the Council and the European Union as a whole. Students were again able to ask questions and we covered a wide variety of subjects.



May 4th: Lunch got a little too exciting for some



May 4th: Visit to the U.S. Mission to the EU

After spending about 20 minutes going through security, we were welcomed by an U.S. foreign service officer who gave us a presentation about what the U.S. Mission to the EU does and what his job is. We also had a nice discussion with a U.S. Ambassador to the European Union.

May 5th: First Day in the Hague!

Our first stop in the Hague was a visit to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Our visit began with a robust presentation on the history of the tribunal by a member of the prosecutor's office.

Unfortunately, the court session was cancelled for the day, but we were still able to get a tour of the courtroom.



Cameras and photos were prohibited, which is why this is the only photo from this visit.

May 5th: First Day in the Hague!



Our next stop was the Peace Palace, where we were able to take a guided tour of the building.

The inside of the Palace was beautifully decorated with artistic gifts from different countries around the world.

Inside we got to see the Court of Arbitration as well as the International Court of Justice.

This visit taught us a lot about the history of the Hague and why it became the epicenter of the world for peace and justice.

May 5th: First Day in the Hague!

In the afternoon we took a scenic boat tour through the canal which runs along the perimeter of the city.



May 6th: Visit to the ICC

We visited the International Criminal Court the morning of May 6.

Unfortunately, the court case we were scheduled to see was cancelled for the day. We still received a tour of the facility and saw a courtroom; unfortunately, pictures were not allowed inside the building.



The ICC's building was opened recently. It is very modern and is even equipped with a big reflecting pool and various gardens on the campus.

May 6: Visit to the US Embassy in The Hague



An outside look at the US Embassy in The Hague. Security was tight, as expected.

On the afternoon of May 6, we had the opportunity to visit the United States Embassy in The Hague. Pictures, once again, were prohibited, but our visit and information session were very interesting.

May 6th: Dinner at Sol Beach

On our last day in The Hague we had dinner at Sol Beach. While some of us expected to have our food already cooked, we enjoyed cooking our own meats and vegetables!



May 7th: Amsterdam

We were allowed a free day to go wherever we wanted on the final day before we flew home, and everyone decided to check out Amsterdam. We visited the Anne Frank House, several museums, parks, and the famous I Amsterdam sign.



May 7: Amsterdam



Anne Frank House

May 8th: Flight Home

On May 8, we flew from Amsterdam to Chicago, and then from Chicago to Cincinnati. The flight was long and everyone was exhausted, but appreciative of the experience.



Leaving Amsterdam



Wind Farm in North Sea



View of Lake Michigan as we approach Chicago

