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Summary report

## The EU Study Tour – Better Learning through increased Proximity

The EU Study Tour is an excellent opportunity for students seeking both theoretical and applied learning in real-world institutions. This allows for interactive exploration of questions and the exposure to diplomatic culture, both rare and highly valuable means to fill in what classroom instruction cannot. The option to participate in an internship is also a rare and valuable opportunity, giving work skills and on-the-job savvy which cannot be captured in regular teaching.

### Overview:

The Study Tour invites students to visit important sites related to the culture, history and political machinery of the European Union. These sites can include anything from war memorials to the European Parliament and are often quite some distance apart. Compressed into a brief period, the pace of the EU Study Tour is therefore fast and highly elastic – things may be calm on the bus and fast-paced at an important site upon arrival. This requires solid time-management from students, not only to cope with the academic demands of the program, but also with the externalities of travel (e.g. short-notice changes to itinerary, transportation, lodgings and communications). Students also require discipline to change focuses depending on that day's activities. They may be writing a group presentation on migration trends one hour and listening to a lecture on the role of atomic energy in European green policies the next.

### Unique information:

The Study Tour places students in contact with powerful institutions and the staff within them. Beyond the minute particulars of decades-old policy or institutional relationships on an org chart, this gives students an opportunity to experience these often abstracted ideas in concrete terms as living organizations capable of answering dynamic open-ended questions. Who arbitrates decisions when fiscal policy intersects with supranational law? What body is entrusted to oversee the implementation of environmental policy and at which levels? What challenges does Euroscepticism pose to organization A, B or C? While these sorts of questions may be addressed by academic professionals around the world, seeing them answered from the institutions and their representatives themselves provides a greater and more accurate appreciation of those answers, replete with added context and nuance that may not be captured by a more remote explanation, detached from the day-to-day operations of the EU.

### Unique practice:

If a student does not know the meaning of the phrase “Chatham House Rules” when he embarks on the tour, he certainly will by the end of it! Likely the most important skill a student gains while on the tour is the appreciation of diplomatic culture and protocol,

including dress, deportment and professional decorum. Students, for example, must learn what questions are appropriate to ask and why there is a time and place. The preservation of strategic unity is a fragile thing after all!. It often seems like ceremony and pomp from the outside, but a chance to interact with these systems shows why they are important. While such constraints can be frustrating at first, the necessity of upholding appearances reveals the unspoken ways in which the political machine facilitates cooperation through adherence to these rules. This is a kind of understanding that is best obtained and applied from experience, the kind to which the EU Study Tour provides useful exposure.

#### Unique Living:

Being in Europe, especially among the heights of political power, gives students an appreciation for history, the diversity of mankind and the necessity of finding common ground. The Study Tour, despite being a sober academic endeavor, makes time for exposure to the locales it visits, be this as a group or individually after hours. The practical skills of language, socializing, living abroad and knowing how to conduct oneself in a foreign land are all exercised while on course. Visits to museums, memorials and cultural events like festivals all give a sense for the society that underpins their continued existence and the struggle it took to achieve the opportunities we enjoy. This, in turn, fosters an appreciation for the fact that all mankind is on this earth together and underscores our responsibility to one another to make things better and make things happen. It was said by Samuel Clemens that "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts". It is therefore highly beneficial to those who pursue an education or a career in the systems of power which govern us to have participated in this program.