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EU Study Tour 2024 Participant

For the month of May in 2024, I had the wonderful opportunity of participating in the EU Study Tour. This three-week tour allowed me to visit various international institutions and embassies that play major roles in the operation of the European Union (EU). This memorable opportunity was an amazing learning experience, which was generously supported by the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence.

We visited numerous cities during the tour including Luxembourg, Maastricht, Frankfurt, and Leuven, although most of the three weeks was spent in Brussels. The institutions and embassies that we had the privilege of visiting were the European Commission, the Council of the EU, European Parliament, the European External Action Service, the Court of Justice of the EU, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Central Bank.

From an academic perspective, the EU Study Tour has enriched my comprehension and deepened my interest of foreign affairs, which has motivated me to apply for graduate school in related fields. Prior to participating in the EU Study Tour, I had limited knowledge on the operation of the EU and its role in global affairs. Now having completed the tour, I feel that I have a more critical perspective on international relations in general, which has been, and will continue to be beneficial to my academic career.

We were given the opportunity to network with professionals from the international institutions that we visited, where they would share their international institution's role, their career journey, and their perspective of the EU's 2024 election and the EU's international political affairs. Similarly, we had this opportunity with diplomats from the Canadian Mission to the EU and the Turkish Delegation to the EU. The topic that I enjoyed learning about the most during these visits is the EU's dependency on Russian gasoline, and the economic repercussions of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As this war and its impacts were concurrent with the timing of the tour, it was intriguing to learn about the security measures and adaptation methods the EU was taking in response to it.

From a social perspective, this tour was an opportunity to have personal relationships with many undergraduate and graduate students who are studying similar fields to mine, across Canada. The time that we spent together after tour hours was dedicated to exploring the cities where we were able to experience the local culture through food and architecture.

Overall, the growth of my social network and the knowledge that I gained from international institutions that I never imagined being able to see, let alone visit, has truly been the best opportunity that I have had. The Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence made sure that this memorable opportunity was possible, which I am extremely grateful for.