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The EU study tour significantly enhanced my academic experience, and gave me the opportunity to directly apply skills and knowledge in the classroom to the real world. Through discussions and presentations by officials and academics, I was able to expand my knowledge of European domestic and foreign policy, as well as the intricacies behind EU governance which make its institutions function.

While in Europe, I toured the offices of several key EU institutions, including the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Commission in Brussels. On the journey outside of Brussels, we toured the European Court of Justice and the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg, as well as the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. At each stop, we listened to lectures from senior officials on European policy, gaining invaluable insight into the relationships between the different institutions. Listening to officials describe their work allowed me to gain new insight in the functioning of European bureaucracy and representation - allowing me to compare and contrast how things worked in theory vs. practice.

The environment of the European elections, which concluded shortly after the end of the tour, helped me learn more about the different views of Europe from the perspective of citizens and politicians. During several discussions and visits, we learned about the functioning of the European Parliament, and were even able to participate in a small re-enactment of the job of policy making. Through independent study in Europe, including conversations with locals, local political and campaign posters, and exposure to European media sources, I expanded my awareness of the European political climate, and the influences affecting the positions of each party.

During the final week of the study tour, we listened to a series of talks by a number of officials and academics, including current and former EEAS personnel as well as officials from the Directorates General of Home and Migration Affairs (DG HOME), Energy (DG ENER), and European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). These discussions were some of the most valuable in the study tour, as officials were very frank and vocal about the challenges they faced in their roles, and that the EU faced more broadly. The topics covered a wide range of policy fields, including climate, energy resilience, and foreign policy in the Eastern neighborhood.

In conclusion, the European Study Tour greatly enhanced both my academic experience at Carleton and my knowledge of the EU. Through the study tour internship program, I was able to gain unique experience at DG HOME that few North American students are able to access. Altogether, the EU study tour provided me valuable insight, knowledge, connections and job experience that will significantly benefit my academic and professional career.