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**Centre for European Studies Summary Report 2026 EU Study Tour**

Having concluded the 2026 EU Study Tour Course, I can confidently say that it was one of the most informative, impactful, and rewarding experiences of my academic career. I am incredibly grateful to the Centre for European Studies for facilitating such an extraordinary program and for their generous financial support, which made my participation possible.

The EU Study Tour was my sixth study tour, reflecting my strong belief in the importance of combining classroom learning with experiential education. While lectures, readings, and theoretical discussions provide a solid academic foundation, experiential learning offers a uniquely valuable form of insight. In the context of the EU Study Tour, this meant interacting firsthand with EU institutions, policy practitioners, and organizations actively shaping international affairs...which is precisely what made the EU Study Tour exceptional and distinguished it the most: the extraordinary level of access it provided!

Participants of the EU Study Tour were given the opportunity to enter institutions, rooms, and conversations that very few are invited to experience firsthand. Being able to speak directly with policymakers, diplomats, communication specialists, legal professionals, and EU officials allowed me to gain insights that simply cannot be replicated in a classroom setting. For young people and aspiring professionals, opportunities like this are invaluable because they bridge the gap between academic study and professional reality, providing clarity, confidence, and practical understanding at a formative stage in one's career development.

As an MA student in International Affairs specializing in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, and as someone who aspires to become a Canadian Diplomat, the EU Study Tour was especially meaningful. It not only deepened my understanding of international governance and diplomacy but also allowed me to evaluate myself within these professional environments. What I mean by this, is that throughout the tour, I was able to practise and strengthen skills essential to the field, including public speaking, intercultural communication, adaptability, analytical thinking, and professional engagement.

The EU Study Tour also gave me a clearer understanding of how diplomacy and international governance work in practice and the realities of a career in this field. In turn, this allowed me to reflect on whether becoming a diplomat truly aligned with my interests, abilities, and long-term aspirations. By the end of the tour, I felt more certain than ever that this is the right professional path for me. As a result, I remain deeply grateful to the EU Study Tour for further solidifying my commitment to pursuing a career in diplomacy and international public service.

Among the many highlights of the study tour, the visits to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) were particularly memorable. Visiting the CJEU significantly deepened my understanding of the EU's institutional and legal framework. During our visit, we attended a case brought by Spanish citizens and EU lawyers against the Spanish government concerning the wording and interpretation of an EU directive related to insurance and victim compensation. The hearing was conducted primarily in Spanish and French, with some English. As English is my first language, French my second, and Spanish my third, I was thrilled to follow the proceedings without interpretation devices.

This became an affirming experience both personally and professionally, as it instilled in me a profound sense of pride in my linguistic abilities, and also strengthened my appreciation for languages as both a professional tool and a bridge between cultures and legal systems. In addition, witnessing judges, lawyers, and interpreters operate seamlessly across multiple languages highlighted the European Union's commitment to linguistic equality across member states and revealed the immense administrative, financial, and human infrastructure required to sustain the EU's multilingual governance.

I also greatly enjoyed our visit to the European External Action Service. As someone aspiring to work in diplomacy, this visit felt particularly relevant because EEAS officials could one day serve as professional counterparts if I were posted diplomatically to an EU member state. What made our visit to the EEAS especially meaningful was the honesty and nuance with which they discussed both the aspirations and challenges of EU diplomacy. They spoke candidly about balancing fragmentation and cohesion among member states, navigating competing national interests, and attempting to make efficient and unified decisions within a highly complex political structure. Listening to these discussions provided valuable perspective on international cooperation, consensus-building, and institutional coordination, while reinforcing the importance of communication, compromise, patience, and adaptability within diplomacy.

Overall, the EU Study Tour was an invaluable educational and professional experience that strengthened both my academic interests and career aspirations. It deepened my understanding of the European Union, international governance, diplomacy, and legal systems while also giving me greater confidence in pursuing my long-term goal of becoming a Canadian Diplomat. Beyond its academic and professional value, the tour was personally transformative, allowing me to challenge myself, grow in confidence, and better understand the kind of professional I hope to become.