

EXACT Report on Study Visit to Berlin

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In January 2011 the Marie Curie EXACT fellows embarked on a 4-day trip to Berlin. Between the 18th and the 21th of January the EXACT fellows organized a workshop entitled "CFSP one year after Lisbon" in the framework of Dr. Elfriede Regelsbergers course on "Professional Approaches to Foreign and Security Policy" at the Zentrum für Europäische Politik. Subsequently Dr. Anne Faber held a two-day seminar on "Methodological Approaches to Research" at the aforementioned institute. The programme was shaped in such a way as to permit the fellows to meet several influential figures in the sphere of German foreign policy and to visit one of Germany's most prestigious think tanks: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.

1. CFSP one year after Lisbon

The workshop began with a presentation by Deputy European Correspondent Dr. Hans-Peter Jugel from the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. The latter gave a comprehensive overview of the achievements and failures of CFSP from a German perspective and chiefly focused on coherence and Brusselisation in his speech. The rest of the workshop consisted of presentations by the fellows on different aspects of CSFP after Lisbon (HR/EEAS: the internal set-up in the making, EU inter-institutional relations and the HR/EEAS, EU external representation in international organizations, CDSP: trends, challenges and opportunities and finally prospects for greater coherence in the EU's strategic partnerships post-Lisbon). After each presentation the discussant incited debate on the topic by giving feedback on the content of the speech and by raising a number of questions. External experts (Dr. Cornelius Adebahr, Dr. Annegret Bendiek, Julia Lieb, Dr. Almut Möller, Nicolau von Ondarza, Klaus Wolf and Natasha Wunsch) were invited to contribute to the debate and to provide insider knowledge in order to supplement the fellows' presentations with practical insight.

Several meaningful conclusions were drawn at the end of the workshop. It was maintained that time would be essential for experts to gauge whether the Lisbon Treaty had succeeded in remedying the weaknesses inherent in the EU's institutional system. Furthermore, it was argued that it was impossible to judge how the amendments ushered in by the aforementioned Treaty had changed the perception of the EU as a global player beyond its borders at this stage. Finally, it was held that coherence as such was not essential for the EU to relish the status of a credible actor and that the ambiguity flowing from its policies was at times constructive.

After the first day of classes a dinner was organized with Klaus Wolf from the Federal Ministry of the Interior on "CSDP in operation" which centred on German civilian missions within the EU. The course ended with a meeting with Dr. Barbara Lippert at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik during which the main activities of the foundation were outlined.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to EU External Action

The final session of Dr. Faber's course concentrated on "general questions and theoretical approaches to EU external action". Just as in the previous sessions individual fellows prepared presentations which summarized the readings they had been allocating and then related these to their PhD research topics. Dr. Faber then commented on these, rounding off the debate. The topics addressed in Berlin were case studies, expert interviews, discourse analysis, process tracing and content analysis. The session ended with an exam on the topics covered during the classes in Brussels, Cologne and Berlin.