

N E W S



Convergence of Cultures

*By Hon. Dr. Michael Frendo
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Malta*

<http://home.um.edu.mt/medac/>

Ever since its foundation in 1990, more than three hundred students have benefited from scholarships offered by the Academy. An increasing number of non-scholarship students are choosing to follow courses at the Academy. MEDAC not only encourages students to help increase public understanding of diplomacy's contribution in the promotion of national and regional interests, but, more importantly, it offers students and alumni from different regions in the Mediterranean (and beyond) the opportunity to connect together in a network of dialogue.

The need to enhance cooperation and deepen understanding between peoples, cultures and faiths has never been more important. The practice of inter-cultural dialogue, whether this is initiated by a network of students or exercised at the highest political and religious levels, is an essential element in constructing an alliance of cultures characterised by mutual respect. The cultural gap becomes more difficult to bridge if people become trapped in prejudices, misconceptions and the polarisation among civilisations.

We will need to increase cultural exchanges, improve understanding and boost tolerance and mutual respect. This will require extensive education development programmes, a stepped up interfaith and intercultural dialogue, more open societies and cultural networking. In effect, more needs to be done to persuade nations and communities to try to understand and tolerate one another and avoid seeking violent means of conflict resolution.

The recipe for success I believe lies in fusing cultures together. We need to do more to cooperate with one another for the common good of humanity, serving the cause of justice and peace in the world. Special attention must be given to respect religions, their symbols and places of worship. Leaders have a responsibility to work for mutual respect through genuine dialogue and acts of human solidarity. The way before us calls for humility, patient study and exchange.

Students are called to lead the way.



Hon. Michael Frendo and Dr. Stephen C. Calleya, Director of MEDAC (left) and Dr. Omar Grech (right) at the opening of the XVIII Euro-Med Information and Training Seminar.

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The XIX Euro-Med Information & Training Seminar

By Dr. Stephen C. Calleya

*Director of the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies
and Lecturer in International Relations*

The Nineteenth Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminar took place in Malta between December 9th – 12th 2005. The four days of proceedings focused on recent developments in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, particularly the conclusions of the tenth anniversary Euro-Mediterranean summit held in Barcelona at the end of November 2005.

This international gathering brought together diplomats from the majority of the twenty-five European Union member states and the ten Mediterranean Partner countries that are currently members of this multilateral initiative. The seminar is organized by the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies of the University of Malta under the auspices of the European Commission who assist in coordinating this Euro-Mediterranean confidence building initiative.

In the last ten years the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has provided the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies a welcome normative framework for expanding its training activities in the Euro-Mediterranean regional setting. Hundreds of Euro-Mediterranean diplomats have participated in the Information and Training Seminars that have provided a regular flow of information about various aspects and the functioning of the European Union with special reference to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and security issues in the Mediterranean.

Throughout the four-day seminar academic specialists and other professionals from both Europe and the Mediterranean presented a series of lectures on developments within each of

the three chapters of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, namely the political and security, economic and financial, and the cultural and human resources chapters. Particular attention was dedicated to topics that include The Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism, the EU Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument, FEMIP's contribution to economic development in the Mediterranean, and the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. The seminar also examined developments that have taken place in the Euro-Mediterranean area during the British EU Presidency.



Euro-Med Group Photo.



From left to right: Hon. Michael Frendo, Dr. Stephen C. Calleya, Sanchez Monjo and H.E. Sir Vincent Fean, British High Commissioner to Malta.

The Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training meeting also highlighted the constructive role that Malta continues to play in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership process. The Hon. Dr. Michael Frendo, Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered the keynote opening address of the Nineteenth Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminar on Friday, December 9th 2005.

At the XIX Euro-Med Seminar a special tenth anniversary book on the Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminars was published and distributed

Further information on the Euro-Mediterranean Seminars can be found at www.euromed-seminars.org.mt



Women's Rights Seminar

By Dr. Omar Grech

*Coordinator of the Human Dimension Programme and
Lecturer in International Law*

MEDAC's Human Dimension Programme organised a 2 day seminar on Women's Rights in the Mediterranean: Current Issues on the 17th and 18th February 2006. The Hon. Anton Tabone, Speaker of the Maltese Parliament, officially opened the seminar, which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps resident in Malta. In his address Mr. Speaker Tabone dealt with a number of issues, in particular the importance of fostering the political participation of women at all levels. He also argued that Mediterranean women had to network more effectively and that initiatives emerging from Mediterranean women themselves should be especially encouraged.

The aim of this seminar was that of exploring the key challenges facing women's rights in the Mediterranean region and was structured around a number of key presentations which was each followed by a discussion. The students of the Academy together with representatives of NGOs and governmental officials attended the seminar and actively participated in the debates.

The key presentations dealt with the following topics:

CEDAW and the Mediterranean: State of Play.
Ms. Marit Jorgensen, Coordinator, Euro-Med Human Rights Network.

Trafficking of Women in the Mediterranean.
Ms. Georgia Tsaklanganos, European Women's Lobby, Brussels.

Political Participation of Women: A Jordanian Case Study.
Ms. Natasha Shawarib, Board Member, Sisterhood Is Global Institute, Jordan.

Sexual Rights in the MENA.
Prof. Lilia Labidi, Professor of Sociology, University of Tunis, Tunisia.



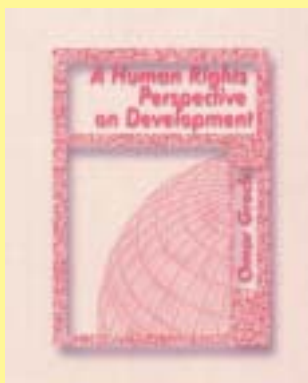
Panel at the opening of the Seminar. Hon. Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives (left), Dr. Omar Grech and Dr. Stephen C. Calleya.

The Political Socialisation of Women and the Image of Women in the Libyan School Curriculum.

Dr. Amal Obeidi, Assistant Professor, University of Garyounis, Benghazi, Libya.

Reforms in the Moroccan Family Code: The Status of Women.
Prof. Mostafa Jari, Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences, Cadi-Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco.

The final presentation took the form of a panel discussion with speakers from Malta, Tunisia and Jordan giving an outline of possible ways to progress the women's rights agenda in the Mediterranean. The panelists outlined what they considered to be the crucial obstacles to a full implementation of women's rights in the region and suggested methods to overcome these obstacles. Gender stereotyping and violence against women emerged as key priorities to be tackled within the Euro-Mediterranean region.



A Human Rights Perspective on Development is a new publication by Dr Omar Grech. It forms part of a series of publications around the theme of development published by 80:20, an Irish NGO working on development and human rights education issues. A Human Rights Perspective on Development was published jointly by 80:20 and MEDAC with support from Development Cooperation Ireland (the Irish Foreign Ministry's development aid arm). It is intended for use by development and human rights activists in their education work and by educationalists in their development work. Like other publications in this series, it seeks to bridge the gap between academic and legal thinking and writing and more popular approaches. Copies may be purchased from MEDAC.



A Personal View

*By Dr. Derek Lutterbeck
Holder of the Swiss Chair and
Lecturer in International History*

Even though I have only been able to take on a position as lecturer at MEDAC on a part-time basis, I have felt most welcome since I started working at the Academy, both by my colleagues at MEDAC as well by the students. Despite my only occasional presence, the MEDAC staff has made me feel part of the team from the very beginning and done an excellent job in organising my stays in Malta. The students as well seem to have accepted my only limited presence at the Academy, and as having to communicate with me to a large extent by e-mail. All of this has made working at MEDAC a very pleasant experience.

At MEDAC, I have been impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the teaching and administrative staff as well as by the pleasant atmosphere and the both efficient and informal working relationship at the Academy. My colleagues, Stephen Calleya, Omar Grech and Marco Colazingari, are all devoted to maintaining the high quality of teaching at the Academy, while always having an ear for the students and their concerns. With Audrey Cassar, administrative as well as many other important issues at the Academy are in the safest of hands.

I have also been impressed by the MEDAC library built up in particular by Professor Gabriel, which is professionally run by David Cassar and the other MEDAC staff. As it seems, the MEDAC library has become something like a secret tip at the University of Malta as one of the most well-equipped and up-to-date libraries.

Last but not least, I have been pleased by the motivation and engagement of the students at the Academy. Even when having

to study a topic such as International History whose relevance for current events is perhaps not always immediately apparent, they have shown interest and an eagerness to discuss, which of course has made teaching for me all the more enjoyable.

I am not only happy to work at MEDAC thanks to the stimulating academic environment and its pleasant atmosphere but also because Malta seems to be an ideal place for studying Mediterranean issues. As perhaps the only country with a purely “Mediterranean identity”, there is no more suitable place than Malta for training young diplomats in Mediterranean affairs. It also seems clear that there is today a growing need for thorough analysis of questions related to the Mediterranean region. At a time when European or “western” countries are becoming almost obsessed with Islamist terrorism, and a discourse of a supposed “threat from the south” seems to be taking hold across Europe, there is a real danger of a growing divide between the countries north and south of the Mediterranean. It is thus imperative that the challenges confronting the region be discussed in a systematic and unemotional manner, and that this be done in the spirit and form of a dialogue between the two sides of the Mediterranean. MEDAC, whose core mission has always been to provide a better understanding of the Mediterranean region, and which brings together students and young diplomats from both sides of the Mediterranean, offers an ideal forum for such a dialogue to take place.

In a one-sentence summary, I am looking forward to the rest of the academic year!



MEDAC Students Visit Rome

*By Dr. Marco Colazingari
Holder of the Italian Chair and Lecturer in International Economics*

Among the numerous MEDAC activities, last February the students also had the privilege of enjoying a 5-day trip to Rome financed under the V protocol through the Italian Chair. This was the second edition of the annual study visit held in Rome to allow MEDAC students to visit international organizations based in the Italian capital city.

The study visit took place between the 5th-9th February 2006. We were all lodged at the Hotel Pace Helvetia, a nice four-star hotel located in the heart of the city. The first day of meetings

started at the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), where Ms Joke Sipkes introduced MEDAC students to the structure and activities of the organization responsible for leading international efforts to defeat hunger and poverty. The visit was followed by a reception cocktail at the Maltese embassy and a brief speech by Ambassador Edward Melillo, who addressed the students highlighting the responsibilities and duties a professional diplomat faces.

The second day saw the students visit the marvelous Vatican City, the tiny independent state of the Catholic church located in central Rome. There, after a welcome briefing by Monsignor Pietro Parolin, Undersecretary for the Relation with States, we all enjoyed Monsignor Auza's lecture on 'The Evolution of Vatican diplomacy'. A cultural tour among the beautiful art crafts and frescos of Loggioni and Cappella Sistina ended the visit. In the afternoon, all MEDAC visited the Swiss embassy, located in a lavish villa of character in Parioli. Swiss Ambassador Bruno Spinner, together with his staff, met the students and provided an expose about all the practical and political aspects of everyday activity at the embassy. An enjoyable cocktail reception followed, where the M.Dip students had also the chance to meet diplomats from their own embassies.

The third and last day of the study visit was dedicated to Italian institutions dealing with diplomatic activity. The first visit was to the Diplomatic Institute, the institution responsible for training young Italian diplomats. After a cultural tour in Villa Madama – the marvelous villa where Heads of State meet when in Rome, Counsellor Renato Castellani, Deputy Director, and Councilor Mario Palma, explained to the students how Istituto Diplomatico trains Italian diplomats in order to prepare them to face future challenges. In the afternoon we all transferred to the nearby Societa' Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale (SIOI), an organization similar to MEDAC, where students aspiring to join the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affaires are trained. In the past

SIOI has also joined MEDAC in a collaboration program for exchanging students of the two institutions. At SIOI Ambassador Alessi gave the students an interesting lecture about the global challenges we face today when training diplomats.

The MEDAC study visit to Rome consists of a program of visits to international organizations, which keeps students and staff busy from early morning to late afternoon. It is also a chance to get to know each other better and become acquainted with beautiful Rome.



MEDAC Students greeted by Dr. Renato Castellani, Consigliere d'Ambasciata, at the Istituto Diplomatico Mario Toscano.

MEDAC Geneva Study Visit

The annual study visit to Geneva for MEDAC students took place between the 19th and 23rd April 2006. The visit is intended to familiarize the students with various aspects of multilateral diplomacy and in particular to emphasize the nature of Geneva as the center of humanitarian diplomacy.

The visit to Geneva started with a lecture at the Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies delivered by Dr. Daniel Warner, Deputy Director of the Institute. Dr. Warner described the emergence of Geneva as the capital of multilateral diplomacy as well as the development of the Graduate Institute into a leading academic center for the study of international affairs.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was the next stop for the MEDAC students. At the ICRC Mr. Max Furrer, Head of the Latin America section briefed the students on the work of the ICRC in general and also described the Colombian case study. Mr. Furrer also engaged in an intensive Q&A session with the students. The students also had a guided tour of the Red Cross Museum where among the exhibits on display the students could see the Prisoner of War card of Charles de Gaulle.

On Thursday afternoon a final session was held at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. After an introduction by Dr. Fred Tanner (Deputy Director at GCSP and former MEDAC Director) two former MEDAC Alumni, Mr. Aitamor from Morocco and Mr. Dimitriu from Romania discussed the nature of the work of the Permanent Missions in Geneva.

Friday 21st April the MEDAC group attended a briefing by World Trade Organisation official Ms. Stewart Bauknight. Ms. Bauknight, adopting a very interactive approach, described the structure and operations of the WTO and discussed various aspects of the current Doha Round of trade negotiations. Following this briefing the group moved over to the UNHCR for a lecture on Refugee issues in the Mediterranean by Mr. Hamdi Bukhari, Senior Legal Advisor at the UNHCR. The final day a visit to the Palais des Nations was organized together with a short trip to Montreux. Dr. Omar Grech coordinated the visit with the help of Dr. Lutterbeck in Geneva.



Group photo at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Diplomacy Lecture Series



- **27th October 2005**
H.E. Sir Vincent Fean
British High Commissioner to Malta
“The British EU Presidency and Foreign Policy”



- **28th November 2005**
H.E. Dr. Saad Elshlmani
Ambassador of the People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to Malta
“Libya's Foreign Policy in Contemporary International Relations”



- **2nd December 2005**
H.E. Mr. Georg Merten
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
“Germany's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century”



- **16th January 2006**
Prof. Guido de Marco
President Emeritus of the Republic of Malta
“The Role of Diplomacy in Current International Affairs”



- **13th February 2006**
H.E. Dr. Elisabeth Kehrer
Austrian Ambassador to Malta
“Austria's E.U. Presidency”



- **6th March 2006**
Hon. Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Croatia
“Croatian Foreign Policy and E.U. Membership”



- **20th March 2006**
Ambassador Salv Stellini
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malta
 “Experiences in Organising a Large International
 Event: CHOGM 2005”



- **27th March 2006**
H.E. Ms. Molly Bordonaro
 American Ambassador to Malta
 “America’s Foreign Policy and the Mediterranean”

Call for Applications: MEDAC Human Rights Summer School 2006

The 2006 Summer School is organised by the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies in collaboration with 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World (Ireland) and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Building on the experience and assessment of the previous 6 summer schools (involving participants from over 15 countries) the 2006 Summer School will aim to introduce and explore the major International Human Rights Instruments from a number of perspectives - the legal, the educational as well as the action perspective. The overall aim is to provide participants with a structured opportunity to discuss and debate the issues arising from these three perspectives. Emphasis will also be placed on the use of art in human rights education work.

Lectures, presentations, exercises and artwork sessions will be presented by various international practitioners. The Summer School runs from the 5th to the 13th of July 2006 and will be held at The Victoria Hotel in Sliema. Interested parties please contact Joann Camilleri. E-mail: joann.camilleri@um.edu.mt



Presentation delivered by Dr. Colm Reagan, Coordinator of 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World at the 2005 Summer School.



The Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminars 10th Anniversary Review provides a synopsis of The Euro-Mediterranean Seminars (or Malta Seminars as they have become known). The twice yearly Euro-Mediterranean Seminars that have taken place since 1996 have succeeded in familiarising European and Mediterranean desk officers with all aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Practical suggestions on how to improve the EMP have become a regular feature of the Seminar workshops and a selection of such recommendations can be found in this publication.

Alumni News



Official Launch of the MEDAC Alumni Association

By Mr. Alessandro Giuliano

M.A. Class 2004-2005

President, MEDAC Alumni Association

The official launch of the MEDAC Alumni Association was without doubt a great success. Ambassadors from Greece, Germany, Austria, France, Libya, Tunisia and Russia together with a number of personalities joined alumni and students at the German-Maltese circle in Valletta for a pleasant evening that is hopefully a good sign of things to come.

For those present at the launch it was a nice opportunity to meet former classmates, lecturers and other alumni that graduated in different years. From the hustle and bustle in the ancient palazzo it was pretty evident that there was much catching up being done. The objectives of the association were being achieved.

H.E. Dorothea Tsimboukeli-Douvos, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic of Greece and our guest speaker, was very well received by everyone at the launch. Ms Douvos and her exceptional presentation on the role of diplomatic academies proved to be intriguing and very interesting. Following the numerous requests by alumni to publish her presentation you can now find it on the association's website.

It was very encouraging to see a significant number of diploma students also present at the event. Diploma students are an important part of our alumni association and we are now working to extend our mailing lists to cover all the previous diploma courses at Medac. The

same goes for the MDip and the MA courses. If you didn't receive any email regarding the launch or didn't receive the association's first edition of the electronic bulletin please visit www.medacalumni.org or call 2340 2821 to register your contact details.

To expand our contact details database and improve the promotion of our activities we are also appointing a contact person from each course and year. If you want to be the official contact person of your particular course please approach us for more information.



Panel at the launch (from left to right): Vassilios Koutsis, H.E. Dorothea Tsimboukeli-Douvos, Dr. Omar Grech and Alessandro Giuliano.



Ms. Sihem Mazouz

M.Dip Student from Algeria

M.Dip. Class 2003-2004

Currently working at the Algerian Foreign Ministry

As a former MEDAC student, my didactic experience in Malta was unique and at the same time fruitful. First of all, it was an opportunity for me to practice my English. The whole course was very up-to-date and comprehensive as to respond to the majority of current diplomatic requirements. In the fields of

International Relations and Diplomacy, we were provided with the necessary means and knowledge suitable for our future career. Among the numerous positive aspects of my stay in Malta, was the various visits paid to High Commissions and Embassies as well as a trip to Geneva to visit International Organisations.



Ms. Amina Selmane

M.Dip Student from Morocco

M.Dip. Class 2003-2004

Currently working at the Moroccan Foreign Ministry

When David Cassar sent me an e-mail asking me to participate in the MEDAC Newsletter I replied immediately 'Yes'. So many memories came to my mind at the same time.

I went back to January 2002, when I visited Malta for the first time. I participated to the DiploFoundation workshop on 'IT and Diplomacy', which was followed by distance learning. I still remember Dr. Jovan Kurbalija, Prof. Kishan, Dr. Sciberras Trigona, Prof. Kappeler, Sylvana and Yasmin, to name but few. I spent then about ten days in Bugibba. I didn't realize at that time that I will be back in a few months.

This sentence still sounds in my ear : "It's the Moroccan student..." said Prof Gabriel when I phoned to asked if my application was accepted, so as not to plan for other projects.

The positive reply had both a positive and negative effect on me. First, I was very pleased to go for a new experience at MEDAC to study, and then I worried about the new subjects that figure among the programme of the Academy, such as economics!!!

Once at the Academy, I just forgot that I'm working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "I'm now a student and I have to do my best", I kept saying to myself.

Thanks to Prof. Gabriel, Dr Calleya, Prof Attard, Dr Grech, with the help of the administrative staff, the whole year was a success. They made every effort to make the students have all they need for their researches.

I learnt a lot at MEDAC scientifically. I also gained a lot of friends and know about their cultures. It was an opportunity that I may not have another time.

Since my M.Dip programme, I have had the chance to revisit MEDAC when participating in the 6th Human Rights Summer Course organized by the Human Dimension Programme in July 2005, which was also a very good experience.



Mr. Josko Klisovic

M.Dip Student from Croatia

M.Dip. Class 1994-1995

Deputy Head, Mission of the Republic of Croatia to NATO

In one word, my MEDAC experience was a revealing one. Living and studying amongst students from different cultural, religious and social backgrounds helped me to fine tune my own opinion on people, places and socio-political processes in the Mediterranean basin. I feel that the experience I acquired in MEDAC helped me to develop a subtle sense for a job I am doing, and duties I am currently discharging (DCM in the Croatian Mission to NATO). Of course, I should have not been able to acquire such an experience if the programme was not led by competent professors with developed sense for each student and the group as a whole.



Prof. David Attard with a MEDAC Alumnus at the MAA Launch.



Ms. Maysoun Al Mozayyen

M.Dip Student from Palestine

Class 2004-2005

Currently working with the Palestinian Foreign Ministry

There are important periods in life that change and add to a person's personality. My Maltese experience was a high point which contributed to enhance my knowledge at both an academic level and personal one.

In this regard, I would like to express my highest gratitude to the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, especially to Professors who helped me increase and broaden my knowledge and experience in the sphere of politics. I am also grateful for the administrative staff for their generosity and serious work to make everything function properly.

Actually, I have written articles before, but this time I find it different to do. I am writing about something close to me and I am contributing as a member of this generous family(MEDAC).

This academy which has been teaching and educating diplomats from all over the world for more than 15 years, to learn and exchange their views and experiences, deserves more than words of thanks. I think by more communications and closer ones, we present our gratitude.

This newsletter is a good way to continue this aim, it helps in keeping students in touch with each other and keeping them updated with MEDAC news, activities, common interests and careers.

To meet people from different experiences and cultures with common interest and career is a good and unique chance. We were not only students who wanted to continue their academic

study, but also were representing our countries and conveying the real picture of our homeland positions and cultures.

So we have practiced the diplomatic skills theoretically and practically; theoretically, we had a variety of topics along the course, practically, through the civilized and friendly dialogue among students and with MEDAC professors and guest speakers who gave us distinctive lectures in different fields connected and relevant to diplomacy.

In addition to this, it was the MEDAC study visits that allowed us to be familiar with many political and economic aspects and made us more close to the real experience in the diplomatic world bilaterally and multilaterally.

Also, I had a chance to participate in Euro- Mediterranean Information and Training Seminar organized by MEDAC. This participation gave me another opportunity to meet with diplomats and to know about the recent developments in the Euro - Mediterranean Partnership. One can say that Malta is a gathering of diplomats, and I think by those great efforts and serious steps made by MEDAC, one day we will see Malta as one of the main centers of diplomacy in the world.

To conclude, three words summarized my experience at MEDAC: KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE and FRIENDSHIP. MEDAC contributed to reinforce confidence by providing me with the required information and knowledge to the diplomatic career. Also, it helped me to have a suitable atmosphere to build distinguished friendships with diverse cultures, in fact that made me more understanding of the other.

MEDAC thanks all alumni contributors to this issue of the MEDAC Newsletter and extends to them all the best wishes for their career. We are also very keen to know more about our former students. A group of MEDAC alumni have also established an Alumni Association for which the participation of our former students is essential. All those former students interested in joining our Alumni Association, kindly visit the website at www.medacalumni.org

The Official Alumni country contacts at their respective Foreign Ministries are:

Bozidarka Kronic, *Serbia-Montenegro*
Lassaad Boutara, *Tunisia*
Hossam El Din El Shenawy, *Egypt*
Sihem Mazouz, *Algeria*
Dmytro Senik, *Ukraine*
Ma'en Al-khreasat, *Jordan*

Reem Jabr, *Syria*
Gang Luo, *China*
Agustela Nini, *Albania*
Lela Garsevanishvili, *Georgia*
Jana Grilc, *Slovenia*
Johnny Ibrahim, *Lebanon*

Maysoun AlMozayyen, *Palestine*
Rowaida Tawfiq Ebrish, *Libya*
George Vital Zammit, *Malta*
Stella Ankrava, *Latvia*
Amina Selmane, *Morocco*

Migration and Diplomacy

MEDAC recently participated in two events that sought to further promote understanding about the important role that diplomacy plays when it comes to addressing the complex issue of international migration.



Panelists, Dr. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (right), Judge Depasquale (centre) and Dr. Stephen C. Calleya (left) and participants at the ELSA / MEDAC seminar on Irregular Migration

The European Law Students' Association (ELSA) which is an independent non-political, non-profit-making student organization for law students and young lawyers, run by students together with MEDAC held a seminar in Irregular Immigration on April 6th 2006. This public event was addressed by Dr. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, Judge Depasquale, Dr. Neil Falzon, Senior Legal Assistant in Malta for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Lieutenant Colonel Emanuel Mallia of the Armed Forces of Malta.

The ELSA/MEDAC Seminar provided a wide spectrum of stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss objectively. The Seminar provided a wide spectrum of stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss objectively the major challenge that irregular immigration is placing on Euro-Mediterranean countries with a particular focus on the situation in Malta, Libya and Italy. Specific themes examined included the human dimension of irregular migration, the distinction between illegal migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and the increasing criminality associated with international migration.

Participants at the seminar were also able to assess the effectiveness of current international mechanisms that are seeking to address the increase of irregular immigration across the Mediterranean. The debate also focused on maritime security and the extent to which a more elaborate regional coast guard type of framework should be established to try and manage the flow of illegal migration.

MEDAC students also had an opportunity to participate in a workshop organized by the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) in Geneva during their study visit in April. Mr. Hamdi Bukhari, Head of the North Africa Section, provided a comprehensive overview of the displaced persons across the Euro-Mediterranean area and beyond. During the visitation the students were able to obtain primary source documentation and statistics published by the UNHCR and also discuss in detail what policy actions international organizations are introducing to deal with the ever increasing issue of human trafficking.



Mr. Hamdi Bukhari (Head, North Africa Section, UNHCR) delivering a presentation at the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva

The workshop also provided all participants with an analysis of contemporary migratory trends across North Africa and the intensive efforts the UNHCR is making to create a network of focal points in this sub region of the Mediterranean. Such a network would enable the UNHCR to obtain first hand information pertaining to irregular migration, a prerequisite to being able to process in a more efficient manner the large number of displaced persons along the southern shores of the Mediterranean.



MEDAC students at the UNHCR



Fostering Euro-Mediterranean Cooperative Diplomacy

By Dr. Walter Fust

Director-General

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC

Looking back at the history, the Mediterranean region appears to be the cradle of diplomacy. Since early days, the various people sharing the destiny of the sea (paradoxically called the “middle terra” or in the middle of the “terres”) have tried to co-exist through diplomatic ties. The “Amarna” diplomacy of the Ancient Egypt was fully developed and included diplomatic missions, treaties, and privileges. Ancient Greece, too, developed an elaborate system of diplomatic arrangements; the word “diplomacy” itself, of course is of Greek origin. The Greek philosophers laid the groundwork for diplomacy.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, diplomacy flourished alongside by Byzantine Empire, which protected its extensive borders through a skilful use of diplomacy. These diplomatic skills were later inherited by Venice, where the first embassy was established in 1452, and later on by other Italian city states.

In the time of Al Andalous, the greatest thinkers in the Mediterranean region were not only philosophers, jurists, scientists but ruminated about diplomacy and over ways to make cultural and religious diversities an advantage. The great Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun was a sociologist, an geographer, a philosopher, and was at the same time an ambassador to the Castilian King, he laid the basis of the modern political sciences.

How does this long tradition impinge on our own times and on the future mission of the MEDAC Foundation? What can we learn from it? Which lessons from the past might be applied to solving the Mediterranean region’s problems of today?

Two important historical threads should be considered. The first is the perpetuation of the classical values of tolerance, intercultural dialogue and compromise in a fragile context prone to tension. The second is the adjustment to rapid change due to the development of technology.

Understanding the others, tolerance and compromise are the corner stones of diplomacy. If diplomacy appears with the creation of the state and is considered as one of the oldest professions, it means then that these characteristics are its oldest core values. The latest developments on the Mediterranean shores, in the Middle East and the Balkans show that the need for tolerance, compromise, intercultural dialogue, and, of course, diplomacy has not diminished and is even more important than ever. Malta, through its geographical position and its mix of different cultural influences can be an important “diplomatic” link between the shores of the Mediterranean sea.

Let us turn now to the second element of change. Due to technological developments, human interaction today often takes place within a new context, and is at times more discordant than in the past. Someone once said that in order to remain the same we have to keep changing, or more precisely, evolving. The Foundation will train diplomats who were born in the 1980s and who grew up during the era of digital communication and of a larger access to a plethora of information.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to adjust our training methods accordingly, to modern life and communication. Ex-cathedra lecturing has to be supplanted by more dynamic forms of teaching taking into account other means at our disposal to collect information but at the same time without forgetting the necessity of interface and dialogue. Instead of long academic courses, shorter courses are needed, which will focus on the participants’ practical needs. The role of the newly created MEDAC Foundation will be to continue to instilling the twin eternal diplomatic values, of tolerance and compromise, albeit by employing new methods, adjustment to modern times.

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