

SMUN DIARY

“Since 2004, Stockholm Model United Nations has provided a forum for young adults looking to enter the world of 21st-century diplomacy and multinational collision building. Every year, hundreds of students from all over the world apply to participate as delegates during our conference, and each year we are fortunate to be accompanied by bright and ambitious young minds looking to distinguish themselves.

Stockholm Model United Nations is a youth organisation founded to encourage an interconnected community of all nationalities, to establish a platform for public debate and to further educate a new generation of diplomats. We offer you the opportunity to participate in Scandinavia’s largest Model United Nations.”

- SMUN



SMUN 2018 – Our stay in the “Venice of the North”

Participating at the annual MUN conference in Stockholm provided the delegation of MUN Zurich with a perfect excuse to escape university’s daily routine and discover a new city. Luckily enough our Chief Head Delegate gave us the hint, that taking part in a conference usually doesn’t leave much free time to explore the city, so most of us took the opportunity to arrive in Stockholm a bit prior to the conference, or to stay a bit longer than Sunday night after the closing ceremony of SMUN 2018. It turned out to be worth it: Stockholm is a vibrant metropole with a fascinating culture.



The organizing committee of SMUN provided a walking tour right before the conference officially started—Friday at 4 PM on Stockholm University’s campus—which some of our delegates took part in. Unfortunately, most of us were still occupied with last minute speech preparation. Without professional guidance, most of us discovered Stockholm by ourselves. The most popular place to be as a tourist seemed to be Gamla Stan, which translates to “Old Town”. There, we found ourselves in the midst of Stockholm’s oldest alleyways. Gamla Stan was where Stockholm was founded in 1252, but the charming low-ceilinged houses were built in many different periods with very different and distinct characteristics in style and architecture. Dating back to the Middle Ages

and known for its story around the rich German merchant Marten Trotzig—who lived in Stockholm mid 16th century—the alley of the same name is known as the most narrow street in Gamla Stan. This was only one of the stops on tourist must-see list in Stockholm: other stops included the Royal Palace of Sweden and the famous square Stortorget.

Thankfully the conference provided breaks, so even the delegates who did not get the chance to explore more of Stockholm and the Swedish culture got a taste of the most important food related tradition in Sweden: Fika. One might describe this habit as an alternative to the British afternoon tea, but instead of tea and scones the Swedish prefer coffee and a cinnamon bun: those two combined get called “Fika”. The traditional food and the walks through Gamla Stan were obviously not the only highlights of our stay in Stockholm, but worth mentioning for sure.

COMMITTEES

Security Council

Last year I had the opportunity to attend SMUN, which is a Model United Nation conference that takes place regularly in Stockholm. At SMUN, I was as a member of a two-person delegation in the Security Council, representing the conference's home country, Sweden. The Security Council was one of two beginner committees at the conference, and over the span of three days it simulated a UN-styled debate on two important issues of our time: the Syrian Civil War and the South China Sea conflict. Although the Security Council was for beginner MUNers, by no means did anyone expect it to be easy; it focused on two very complex topics that remain unresolved even by real-world experts and world leaders to this day. To make the workload easier, my co-delegate, who was from Germany, and I chose one topic each to research. We drafted our respective position papers and learned as much as we could on our respective topics before the conference. It took us over a week and a half to prepare our arguments.

On the first day of the session, the Security Council voted to discuss the South China Sea conflict first, which was the topic I was responsible for. Since SMUN was the second conference either I or my co-delegated had attended, we were both nervous and things did not always go well. I failed to get on the opening speakers list and missed the chance to give the opening speech I had prepared. It also took some initial coordination effort between my co-delegate and I to split up the task of taking notes, communicating with other SC delegations, and debating, but we did our best to participate. Luckily I was able to get my bearings in time and craft an argument out of it for the first round of debate. By the next day, it was smooth sailing. We had facilitated negotiations for a peace agreement between the Council's biggest players, the delegations of China and the US, and helped draft resolution that passed by an astounding majority.

Debating as a neutral country that had very few stakes in the South China Sea conflict was challenging. However, my co-delegate and I felt we did a much better job representing Sweden when we began to debate our second topic at the end of the second day. Thankfully, most of us in the committee had become more comfortable with the experience by then and spoke more confidently because we knew the topic well. Since we were all excited to wrap up debate before time ran out, a group of us worked together to draft a final resolution. We were happy when it passed unanimously. The committee chair finished the session with a few, short events, which gave us the chance to relax and have fun. We all had a great time before heading to the closing ceremony and then saying our goodbyes.

- Gaby

“Security Council Unanimously Resolves the South China Sea Dispute”; “Security Council Finds Solution for Syria in Two Days” – headlines like these may sound utopian to any politically-minded person, but not to the delegates of SMUN 2018. Despite the challenge of finding a consensus in a committee in a council with such an imbalance of power and the ever-looming possibility of a veto, the members of the model Security Council in Stockholm succeeded in solving two of the most pressing current political issues. Twenty-eight delegates representing fourteen countries spent three days debating, lobbying, courting and currying favour with the five veto powers. With the support of a chair who never shied away from shouting at us, cracking jokes or participating in a dance-off, we finally voted upon our resolutions, which passed without a single vote against. Even though the committee was comprised of both MUN veterans with more than ten conferences under their belt as well as absolute newcomers, everyone was able to participate and enjoy an intense, yet diplomatic debate. We learned a lot, got acquainted with students from all over the world and are already looking forward to our next MUN conference.



- Anja and Tim

World Bank and Chairing World Bank

Four members of UZH Model United Nations participated in the World Bank Committee at SMUN. We represented Brazil, Russia, and the United Kingdom alongside co-delegates from other universities and one member chaired. It was a small committee which allowed time for everyone to thoroughly voice their opinions and arguments. During the first session, we started discussing the first topic: accelerating the transition to a climate resilient global economy with climate-smart finance. Although most countries agreed that a greener financial sector is an important factor in combatting climate change, we debated different approaches to achieving this goal and the source of necessary funding. The second day of the conference we drafted and passed a resolution sponsored by Brazil and the United Kingdom as well as Japan and the United States of America that plans summits and promotes technology transfers between nations to facilitate transnational communication regarding agriculture, mining, and logging. The resolution also called for a fund to finance sustainable projects. On the final day of committee sessions, we discussed another topic, namely how to increase financial integrity and transparency. Money laundering and illicit financial flows are detrimental to achieving sustainability goals. The final resolution was sponsored by the same countries and encourages the use of block-chain technologies to transfer loans to local projects in developing countries and supports increased communication and cooperation between state and non-state actors. We learned and practiced many skills during the conference. In drafting the resolutions, we worked to include points that would benefit the countries we were representing while working to compromise with other countries to get them on board. As a result of our efforts to include nations such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, the second resolution passed unanimously.

Last November I had the pleasure of being able to attend Stockholm Model United Nations for the second time in my MUN career. It was an important, symbolic conference even. In a way it marked me coming full circle as a delegate, having participated in “normal”, crisis, and historical committees, and now, after two years, returning to where it all began. This time I participated as a chair for the World Bank committee. Though this was not my first time chairing—I had done it for the year 2017/18 at our weekly sessions—it was nonetheless a new and challenging experience. Teaching twenty-two first-timers about everything MUN has to offer in just under three days was difficult, but no less rewarding. We ended up discussing both topics, resulting in two resolutions that would establish new subcommittees within existing World Bank framework to specifically tackle climate-smart financing and international financial transparency. I had a great time at SMUN 2018, and hope that all the delegates in my committee were able to enjoy their time and learn about the awesomeness that is the world of international MUN conferences.



- Mimi and Luca

Arctic Council

The Arctic Council was represented by seven arctic nations (USA, Denmark, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russian Federation) and five indigenous peoples organizations of the Arctic Council (Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Saami Council).



After two days of intense debates, the Arctic Council passed a resolution on the first topic: the protection and sustainable use of the arctic marine environment. The discussions have been focused on the reduction of plastic pollution in the Arctic sea. The passed resolution addresses the transboundary significance of marine plastic pollution and calls for non-private funding on the impacts of plastic pollution on the inhabitants and the environment of the Arctic.

On the last day of SMUN 2018, the Arctic Council discussed the second topic, minority rights and educational opportunities in the Arctic. The Arctic Council aimed to create an educational framework that meets with the diversity of Arctic indigenous peoples. Eventually the Council passed a resolution where improvements of indigenous education systems are requested, new teachers at all educational levels are prepared, inclusive and equitable quality education are ensured, and lifelong learning opportunities for all are promoted.

- Shoshana

ICC

During SMUN I represented the Office of the Prosecutor as part of the International Criminal Court, short ICC. Over three days we discussed the case of Abdel Rahim Mohammad Hussein, the former interior minister of Sudan, who is accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC was one of two advanced committees at the conference and it was indeed very challenging. Before the conference I got in touch with our co-delegate Kristina from Stockholm. Together we prepared an opening statement and our evidence pack, which contained evidence against the defendant. To find the evidence



we spent a lot of time with internet research about the conflict in Sudan. Additionally, we had to prepare three eye-witnesses that were played by volunteers during the conference.

In the committee session, we first presented our opening statement. Due to our preparation, it was rather easy and went quite well. After that we had to present our evidence. Even though we had read through our evidence and sorted it before the conference, it was truly challenging. We had to improvise and talk freely for hours which was difficult at the beginning. The next day we had time to prepare the volunteers that played the witnesses and later we, the defense counsel and the judges, had time to ask them questions. The interrogation was the most thrilling part of the committee sessions. We never knew if our witnesses remembered the answers we told them before and what questions the defense counsel would ask them. On Sunday, we prepared our closing statement under extreme time pressure. We had to summarize what our evidence would prove and formulate legal arguments as to why we thought that the defendant is guilty. After the presentation of the closing statements, the judges had time to discuss their verdict. Finally, the judges presented their verdict. Unfortunately, Hussein was not convicted.

However, we have learnt a lot during the sessions. We could improve our skills in talking freely, improvising and formulating statements. Additionally, we met amazing people and even after intense and controversial debates we became friends.

- Jule

Arab League

It was a pleasure to be part of the MUN UZH delegation going to Stockholm. For me it was the second time in a row to attend this wonderful conference. To my great surprise I was assigned the tricky role of the National Syrian Coalition in the experienced committee, the Arab League. Soon I realized that representing the rebel coalition opposing the Assad regime on the topic of minority protection might be a tough challenge, and my notion proved to be right during those three intense days of debate.

My committee had a rough start, officially setting the agenda and the rules of procedure proved to be a bit of an obstacle and a source of misunderstanding for both the delegates present and the chairs guiding us through the debate. But after getting used to the rather unusual chairing practice and the dominant opinions in the room—namely Israel and Palestin—our debates took a



surprising turn. After every delegation stated their opinion on the role and the necessity of protection of minorities, the dispute got stuck in a loop: the same accusations kept being made, the same topics of the internal civil wars going on in both Syria and Yemen kept being risen and naturally both the outspoken and eloquent Palestinian representative and the passionate and direct Israeli delegate kept rhetorically shooting at each other. Towards the end of the first day of debate our chairs caught on and resolved the loop by implementing crisis simulations with the help of the Under-Secretary-General Ninos Josef, who proved his impressive regional knowledge of the Arabic states and the Middle East by writing us new crisis updates every once in a while. These led to rather unexpected developments in the political landscape of the Arab League, with new alliances and by the end of the three day debates approximately six resolutions got passed!

For me personally not only the debates turned out to be positively surprising and challenging, but also the social aspect of the annual conference met and even surpassed the experience I had at SMUN 2017. Our Zurich delegation was filled with wonderful inspiring individuals, gathering from various academic backgrounds and different studies. My personal highlight during the socials of the conference was the delegate dinner, which let everyone get to know the delegates of their committees better and on a personal note, a part of the assigned roles during the debates. After the dinner, the organization committee of SMUN transformed the location into wonderful party location, with possibilities of taking delegation and committee pictures downstairs and an open dance-floor upstairs. Although everyone seemed rather exhausted by the intense debates during the

day, the delegation of Zurich turned out to be the most motivated one on the dance-floor and stayed until everyone else had left.

Although there were some ups and downs in the debates regarding chairs and rules of procedure—apparently the Arab league was not the only committee affected by these misunderstandings—with the best possible organization coming from Zurich, thanks to our Chief Head Delegate Yagmur Gonç and our Faculty Advisor Luca Spreyermann, and during our stay, thanks to the dedicated SMUN organization committee of SMUN, overall we all shared a wonderful experience at the SMUN conference 2018

- Olivia

Socials at SMUN 2018 in Stockholm

Where university students from all around the world come together, celebration will not be hard to find. Besides discussing politics and practicing one's diplomatic skills, Model United Nations conferences are about meeting like-minded students and setting up a network of future diplomats. And what suits the purpose of getting to know your fellow committee members better than finishing a tiring day off in style with delicious local food, cold drinks and good music?

After a first day of intense debating, the SMUN OC invited everyone to one of Stockholm's best known and most renowned places-to-be: the Café Opéra. This venue was built in Victorian style in 1895 and includes a brasserie with an integrated nightclub. After its opening, it immediately became an integral part of Stockholm's nightlife due to its unique decorations which turn every night out into a unique experience.

The second journey into Sweden's shimmering nightlife led us to Münchenbryggeriet, a former brewery that is now used to host glamorous parties and events. After its implementation in 1857, hundreds of men and women brewed beer there for over a hundred years, with it being Sweden's largest brewery by the start of the 20th century. Nowadays, the Münchenbryggeriet constitutes the perfect venue for holding SMUN's annual Diplomat Dinner. After a traditional Swedish dinner, accompanied by soft violin music, Münchenbryggeriet turned into a full nightclub with a dancefloor and a DJ, where students could shake off all the stress from the previous days. Stockholm's nightlife turned out to be nothing like its chilling weather – and the socials at SMUN 2018 were definitely something to write home about.



- Tim

Why Joining MUN Was Good for Me

When I say I'm part of UZH Model United Nations Team, I'm usually met with a rather puzzled look. What could I possibly gain from sitting around in a musty lecture hall? From writing formal speeches and –oh horror of horrors – holding them in front of my peers?

Fear of public speaking is still listed as the number one phobia in the United States. And I must admit, my hands trembled more than just a little the first time I walked up to the speaker's lectern, and I was so scared of tripping over my own feet that I strode to the front with all the elegance of a giraffe on stilts. But curiously enough, those feelings abated – and despite myself, I soon found myself ranting on at length in front of an audience of



thirty of forty. I condemned human rights infringements as Honduras, I played mediator as India, I ranted about the West as Syria.

There were countless issues we debated that I had never heard about before and was now suddenly forced to delve into. More than once, I found myself playing devil's advocate, twisting my opponent's words, deploying the very strategies of obfuscation and confusion that newspapers warn about every day. I gained entirely novel points of view on certain issues while strengthening my convictions on other topics with new arguments.

A debate of such quality would never be possible without all the brilliant people in the MUN team at University of Zurich. They come from a wide range of faculties – political science, law, psychology, science or economics – and different backgrounds, nationalities and ethnicities, yet they all share a critical mind, a great interest in current events and the ability to have a heated argument in one moment and share a pint of beer in the next. All in all, MUN has given me so much over the past semester: A deeper understanding for diplomacy, interest in current events, a renewed taste for public speaking and – last but not least – new friendships with the most amazing people.

- Anja

Our MUN UZH delegation

The group dynamic at the conference worked out perfectly. Although everyone spent time with the members of their respective committees during the day, it was lovely to be able to spend time with other UZH students in the evenings. We had so much fun together at dinners and at the hostel, sharing funny stories and interesting experiences from the day. Friendships were made, solidified and kept, even after we returned to Zurich. Although I was a rookie and barely knew anyone before the trip, I got to know the other delegates very quickly and many have remained close friends

- Mimi



SPECIAL ADDITION

Q: Wie war es, das erste Mal an einer MUN-Konferenz teilzunehmen?

Am SMUN 2018 war der Grossteil der Delegation von MUN UZH das erste Mal an einer Konferenz dabei. Dazu gehörten auch Leute, die erst ein Semester bei MUN überhaupt dabei sind. Da stellten sich viele die Frage, ob die Zeit denn schon reif sei, um an einer Konferenz teilzunehmen. Nachträglich muss man sagen, dass alle Zweifel in den Wind zu schlagen sind: Es war eine wunderbare Erfahrung, in Stockholm dabei zu sein. Es gab verschieden Komitees mit unterschiedlichem Schwierigkeitsgrad, womit es auch weniger Erfahrenen offensteht, zu partizipieren.

Eine Konferenz bietet eine Erfahrung, welche die wöchentlichen Sitzungen mit der lokalen MUN-Gruppe letztendlich bloss annähern können: Über drei Tage hinweg intensiv zu diskutieren und Resolutionen auszuhandeln – das bietet den Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer die Möglichkeit, richtiggehend in ihren Rollen aufzugehen.

Neben den eigentlichen Sessions in den Komitees gab es eine Serie von Anlässen, um sich besser kennenzulernen. MUN wird überall auf der Welt betrieben und Konferenzen zeichnen sich gerade durch ihre Internationalität aus. Entsprechend bestand sich die Möglichkeit, sich mit Leuten aus anderen Ländern auszutauschen. Sodann war es aber auch toll, die Leute von MUN UZH besser kennenzulernen, da wir alle im selben Hostel untergebracht waren.

Alles in allem: Neben interessanten und lehrreichen Debatten wurden am SMUN viele Freundschaften geschlossen. Der Umstand spricht für sich, dass sich die meisten der "first timers" bereits für eine neue Konferenz angemeldet haben.

- Jan

Interesse geweckt? Lies mehr im Artikel den njus für uns verfasst hat!

Links njus: <https://www.mun.uzh.ch/en/conferences.html>

Conclusion

SMUN always stood out to me since it was the first conference I ever attended. Their organisation and the quality of the conference is outstanding and as they are a small conference everything is very familial. You can catch the OC having fika and can talk to the SecGens if you have a complaint about something with the certainty that they will immediately do their best to sort out your problem. SMUN was our rookie conference, so most of our delegates were MUN beginners and needed support and supervision before and during the conference. Gladly Luca took over the role of a faculty advisor before the conference and helped our delegates during the preparation process. In Stockholm everything went smoothly and our delegates experienced their first conference in a very nice atmosphere, which was ideal to teach them about MUN through learning by doing.

Our rookies were phenomenal and three of them even got special acknowledgements for their excellent efforts. Anja and Jan got honourable mentions and Megan won the best delegate award of her committee. We are very proud of them and congratulate them for their achievements.

We can't end the diary without thanking our two sponsors being SwissRE and Stiftung Mercator for making SMUN accessible for our association!



Left to right: Fadrina Denoth, Michelle Keppler, Anja Gschwend, Shoshana Sartorius, Jan Egli, Maximilian Herting, Jule Ksinsik, Yagmur Gönc, Tim Gschwend, Megan Waldmeier, Luca Spreyermann, Marco Frei, Olivia Bianchi, Gabriela Morillo, Eric Ortiz, Andrew Oakeshott, Simon Tzourbakis