

WorldMUN Diary

„Harvard World Model United Nations (WorldMUN) is the world's most internationally diverse college-level Model UN conference, and the largest outside of the United States and Canada. Every year, 2,000+ currently enrolled university students from over 110 countries attend WorldMUN in a different location around the world. Past locations include Singapore, Puebla (Mexico), Geneva (Switzerland), Beijing (China), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt), Taipei (Taiwan), The Hague (Netherlands), and Panama City (Panama).“

- WorldMUN



WorldMUN was our big spring semester conference and we had the pleasure of sending a joint delegation with the MUN Team Lucerne. We were a group of 20 students and had the best time together. Read on to find out more about our week in Madrid!

- Yagmur



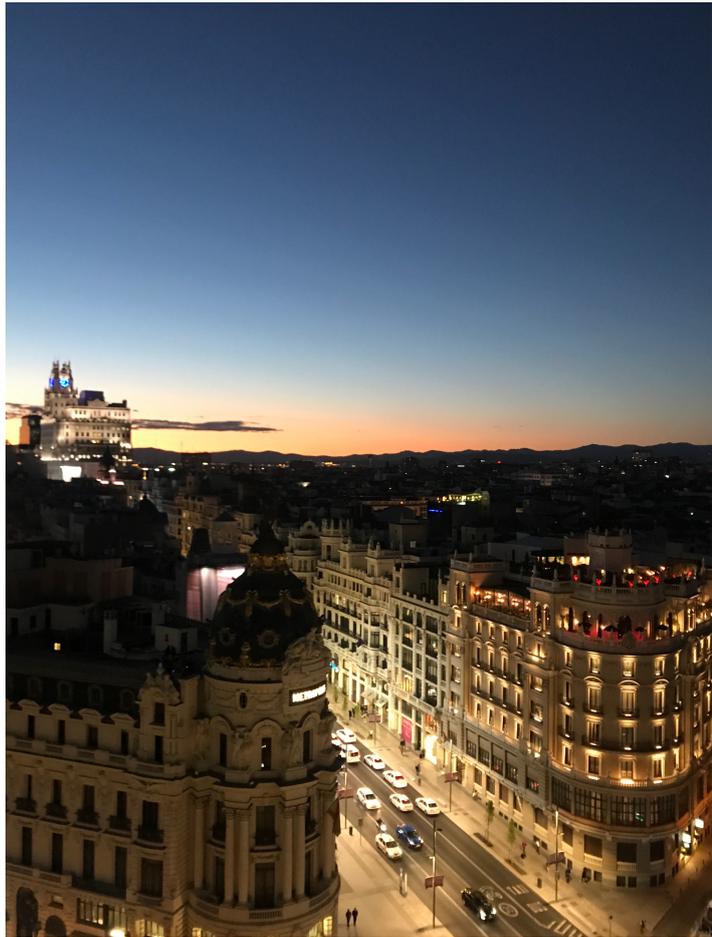
Left to right: Gabriela Morillo, Maximilian Herting, Jeanne Cordy, Andrew Oakeshott, Savana Diem, Luca Spreyermann, Michelle Keppler, Alexandru Badea, Jule Ksinsik, Gianna v. Crailsheim, Megan Waldmeier, Yagmur Gönç, Giorgia Rigazzi, Jessica Fenger, Peter Wallmüller, Olivia Bianchi, Robin Anna Vital, Fadrina Denoth, Tim Hetzer, Annah Gordon-Hoover

City of Madrid

The city of Madrid is one of the most culturally and historically rich cities in Europe. With over three million inhabitants, Spain's capital is a thriving metropolis with oh so many sights to see. It is very well developed with an extensive public transportation network and a modern skyline, all the while retaining much of its impressive architecture. Not only do large portions of the city reflect iconic Iberian and Continental European architecture, but Madrid is also home to the Royal Palace, a number of old parks (one of which, the Buen Retiro Park, was founded in 1631), and a wide variety of cultural sites such as museums and theaters.

Madrid is the third-largest city in the EU, right after London and Berlin. It is located in central Spain, at a surprisingly high elevation of 667 m. Interestingly enough, the world's only publicly available statue of the Devil, Lucifer, can be found in Madrid at an altitude of 666 m. The city was founded in the 9th century, making it over 1100 years old – however, the site has been settled since prehistoric times. Like Zurich, Madrid is not only the name of the city, but also denominates one of the 17 federal states of Spain.

A rich variety of social groups call Madrid home. Not only do various groups of foreigners make up over 10% of Madrid's population, but the city also boasts a large student population. Over 150.000 students are enrolled in its three largest universities alone, the Complutense University of Madrid making up the majority of this figure. Coupled with the city's strong cultural heritage and fantastic night life, Madrid is surely a great place to study!



- Luca

Madrilenian culture

One of the things any visitor of Madrid will know, is that it is a buzzing and vibrant city full of excitement and creativity. In fact, it may have been that particular aspect and not the general architectural majesty and beauty of Spain's capital, which left the greatest impression with our delegation in the end. Within this cultural realm, food is probably one of the most important subcategories. Spain has a rich and culturally diverse cuisine, with Madrid acting as a virtual meeting point of the country's many so-called autonomous communities, each with a different culture and way of life, something that holds especially true for food. As was to be expected then, during the days of the conference we all had a fantastic opportunity to taste lots of it. From croquetas and patatas bravas to tinto de verano and vermut, many meals and drinks were thoroughly tried and tested, although probably barely scraping the surface of what there is to discover. While tapas can be eaten in a lot of places throughout the world, the activity itself, referred to by the Spanish as "tapear" is best done in Spain, with Madrid being an undisputed hotspot in this regard. To this day, the city center features a whole array of "tabernas", mostly traditional family-owned and run tapas bars or pubs, many of them scattered around the tourist hotspots Puerta del Sol and Plaza Mayor. While a majority are used throughout the day by locals, they all operate with a different rhythm and timetable, which definitely took some getting used to for our very Swiss delegation. On occasion, delegates unaccustomed to this gave in and grabbed something to eat at 7 or 8pm, long before many local kitchens even opened for the evening/night shift. The local times were however highly valued when it came to the Metro, which runs as late as 1:30-2:00am. The 24-hour supermarket just around the corner from the hotel was also greatly appreciated. Additionally, the different hours allowed us to enjoy a late-night snack of churros/porras con chocolate at the mythical San Ginés, another enterprise open around the clock on most nights. Though more commonly eaten for breakfast than for dessert by locals, the centrally located churrería also serves the role of offering club-goers a sweet early-morning treat before heading home. Of course, Madrid's culture reaches a lot further than simply the food. The city is home to two of the most prestigious museums in the world: Museo del Prado, considered to hold one of the finest collections of European art and Reina Sofía, featuring prestigious works of 20th century artists Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí. Madrid is also home to much history. From the Spanish royal family to the Guerra Civil (Spanish civil war), much has happened within the city's boundaries over the years. That being said, visiting the sites and diving into the local gastronomy already offers a great insight into Madrid's rich culture, something which every delegate, whether or not they happened to have also visited any museums or art-galleries, will have carried back home.

- Andrew

COMMITTEES

Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

As part of the General Assembly of WorldMUN 2019, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee discussed the topic of Sexual and Reproductive Health of Women. It aimed to answer the question of how women's health can be improved within the context of socio-cultural norms that incorporate harmful and deep-rooted traditional values, such as patriarchal family systems, sex taboos and limited sex education, stigma surrounding menstruation, female genital mutilation, and adolescent marriage practices. Our first committee session was opened with a keynote address by the Spanish representative for UN Women, a UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, with an informative insight into the steps the UN is currently actively taking to advance and better the situation for all women. This was followed by the long anticipated opening speeches. We were lucky to be the third delegation to hold ours while everyone was still quite alert and concentrated. The speeches were a colourful mixture of powerful, attention-grabbing and at times extremely entertaining deliveries, which carried on throughout the week, with speeches ranging from delegates using props to witty poetry to songs (my favourite by far was the German delegation's rendition of The Beatles' Imagine) to emphasize and underline their stances. Nevertheless, concentration and interest often dwindled, which was understandable in a committee of nearly 200 delegates.

The SOCHUM committee was made up of an amiable group of respectful delegates, chaired by a relaxed but authoritative dias, that put great value on trying to give every delegation a chance to voice their opinions and represent their country's interests. This



created a comfortable environment for debate and discussion. While these debates and discussions were highly interesting, they were often quite one-sided. Delegations tended to represent very moderate views, which in many cases were not in accordance with the stances of the more conservative countries they represented and rather reflected the personal views of the students. At one point our dias even introduced a delegation of Libya, made up of two delegates from the Organisation Committee, in order to get more

diversity and controversy into the debate. Despite this, the committee sessions were indeed filled with thought-provoking debates and intense working sessions trying to include every delegation's needs and demands in the Working Papers and Draft Resolutions. The resulting Resolutions are testimony to the hard work and the respectful and admirable cooperation and collaboration within the various blocs.



Having a full week to interact with so many different delegates within a committee and having the opportunity to immerse ourselves in an environment reflective of the United Nation's General Assembly was a particularly remarkable and educational experience. It also reiterated the importance of engagement, discourse, disagreement and agreement.

I am extremely thankful that I was able to be a part of the University of Zurich and Lucerne delegation and

got to take part in such a challenging, but rewarding conference.

- Savana

European Union

Being part of the European Union committee enabled us to debate and work in a very familiar atmosphere with less than 50 fellow delegates.

All issues discussed centred around the wider topic of “religious conflict” and made us realise that with rising levels of religious diversity due to migration and the ongoing expansion of the European Union, dealing with religion in politics is becoming an increasingly important part of European politics. Trying to solve this religious conflict involved not only addressing religious symbols and attire in the public sphere but also talking about different interactions between governments and religious groups as well as engaging with religion and gender equality.

Eventually, the two blocs agreed upon establishing new institutional bodies responsible for religious dialogue and voted in favour of the first of the two draft resolutions that had been introduced. For the delegation of Hungary, however, it was not easy to represent their anti-Muslim rhetoric and unfortunately, one of our main goals - to specifically acknowledge the Christian values and historical background of the European Union in the preambulatory clauses of the draft resolution - failed.

- Gianna



Commission on Science and Technology

Our topic in the Commission on Science and Technology was blockchain, a technology with a multitude of different applications in areas such as finance, public governance and developmental aid.

Academic Level

The academic level in this committee was very high, as many of the participants were experienced MUNers whose studies related to technology or finance in some way. Unfortunately, my co-delegate and I were unprepared for the high standards set by some of the other delegates (although we were definitely not the only ones). This meant that it was very hard for us to hold speeches that would contribute something significant to the general debate. I would also like to mention how impressed I was with how easily certain delegates spontaneously held very eloquent and meaningful speeches. It made me wonder whether we at UZH MUN shouldn't do some workshops on how to spontaneously hold better speeches, as I believe this is an area we all could improve on.

Concerning our own contribution at World MUN, working on the resolution outside proved to be more fruitful, as it was much easier to follow what was going on and negotiate with different delegates one-on-one. I personally learned a great deal about negotiating and resolution writing this way.

I'd like to end this paragraph on a positive note by saying that seeing such a high academic level in a committee was very inspiring and motivated me to work a lot harder in our weekly sessions.

People

Our committee was very wholesome, and I enjoyed working with most of the people I interacted with. In the beginning I was a bit sceptical, as I was not sure whether people at World-MUN would be a bit elitist and / or manipulative. Most of my doubts were assuaged at the Committee Dinner on Thursday evening, when we could interact with the other delegates as normal people



and not as players trying to win a game. I was really impressed to hear how socially engaged some of these people were outside, which showed me that it is possible to meet MUNers who practise what they preach.

Would I recommend it?

I would definitely recommend being a delegate in a CSTD Committee, however one has to be prepared for a very technical debate and be aware that the other delegates will be very well informed. A big advantage of this committee was its size: We were only around 30 delegations, which meant it was easier to contribute to a resolution than in a General Assembly committee.

- Jess

How does Crisis work at WorldMUN?

In comparison with other Swiss MUN teams at the WorldMUN conference, the delegation of the MUN team of the University of Zurich was fortunate enough to be allocated to multiple crisis positions - a big lovely surprise! After having received our character allocations and the study guides and then having started our preparatory research, we were all equally excited to have been given the chance to be a part of such well organised and prestigious Crisis scenario. We were all given different character roles, and we were expected to familiarize ourselves with the scope of our individual powers, rights, duties, networks, and possible actions in order to write our own position papers within the context of each Crisis committee. Although it is not common practice at European conferences that Crisis delegates are obliged to hand in a paper before the Crisis, we all handled this first task well.

The introduction to the Harvard-styled simulations at the conference left us a bit puzzled to say the least, but after the first conference session on Tuesday morning we all figured out how Crisis according to Harvard rules was supposed to be conducted. What struck us as the most unusual was the fact there was no online Crisis platform or software that delegates could use to act out their characters and communicate with each other.



Instead, the chairs acted as the guiding force of the discussions and the backroom was in charge of implementing and coordinating decisions and actions taken by the delegates.

The actions that delegates could take, either on their own, bi- or multilaterally, or even as an entire committee, are called “directives”. These were handled in the Harvard MUN conference via paper instead of an electronic format. The handwritten directives were collected on notepads, which each character had and which circled back and forth between the characters and the chairs. Throughout the sessions, collective directives flew around on single pieces of paper. It was certainly not the most sustainable way of conducting a Crisis- though to be fair it should be mentioned that the paper on which directives were written on was recycled- but for sure it was a very fun, educational and dynamic way of conducting a crisis. The main advantage of paper-based directives was very clear after the first day spent in the committee: rather than staring at a computer, delegates were more likely to interact and negotiate with each other. It is safe to say that it was a big factor for why all Crisis delegates had a great time and made friends for life.

Union Council of Ministers, India 1984 (Olivia)

Starting in the troublesome year 1979 in Punjab, a northern state of India, I got to represent the character of the then-president of the SPGC, Gurcharan Singh Tohra. With great excitement, I learned while researching that I was going to hold quite some power. Historically, my character pulled many strings that led to a very dramatic crisis, reaching its pinnacle in 1984 with “Operation Blue Star” of the Indian government around Indira Gandhi. Knowing this and after researching more on the topic I began to realize that I

will have to put many of my personal beliefs and opinions aside to really capture my character's passions and represent him properly in the Council of Ministers. Along with the religious extremist leader Bhindranwale - who is considered a hero and martyr until this very day - I stood up for the rights of an Indian minority that has experienced mistreatment, unfairness and oppression from the Indian and other governments for a very long time. Together with a few allies we demanded justice, fair treatment, fair political representation. After this was not granted but instead answered by violence



and horrendous police brutality, we even started advocating and actively calling for an autonomous state called Khalistan. This newly founded state would be the new home territory of all devotees of the Sikh religion and would have been located in modern day Punjab. After just half of the week's sessions everyone in the committee already knew, though, that the

simulated Crisis would end just like it did in real life: Diplomatic and reasonable solutions for problems that are as deeply rooted as the misunderstanding between Hindus and Sikhs are easier said than done. So, the inevitable happened, but even worse: Instead of Operation Blue Star taking place as in 1984, we as a committee did not manage to keep conflict stalled long enough so we ended up in a crisis as early as mid-1982. With this rather sad turn I would like to end this short summary by explaining what I have personally gained by the experience of WorldMUN 2019 in Madrid. By facing the challenge of stepping into the shoes of a radical religious extremist - or at least trying to do so - I feel like I have gained a better understanding for not just the powers of religious beliefs but also the feelings of marginalized group of individuals and what it must feel like to not have your voice heard but instead be answered by unjust violence. I am incredibly glad to have been part of an amazing committee that took its task so seriously but still treated each other with a lot of respect inside and outside the buildings of the Palacio Municipal de Congresos under the organisation of the Harvard University and the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

Emergency Assembly of Global Health Officials, 1918 (Gaby)

In MUN conferences, Crisis committees simulate historical or futuristic crisis events. Delegates are assigned to specific characters and must take either single or joint action to resolve the crisis. Each Crisis committee revolves around a specific theme or topic. The goal of the committee is to respond to the crisis at hand and find possible solutions, while managing crisis updates and scenario changes.

For WorldMUN 2019, there were several historical Crisis committees based on historical events throughout the 20th century that involved Spain, the conference's host country. I was assigned to represent the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a committee called the Emergency Assembly of Global Health Officials of 1918, whose task was to find a global health solution to the



1918 global pandemic of the Great Flu, which was also called the Spanish Flu at the time. The flu was a deadly disease exacerbated by the effects of the ongoing First World War.

While the Assembly itself did not in fact exist in 1918, it was created as a historical Crisis committee for the conference by Harvard chairs as a way to allow delegates to discuss and resolve issues related to the Spanish Flu and WWI. The Assembly was created as a forum for debate and included representatives from several great nations who would be responsible for addressing the outbreak of the influenza and for reducing fatality of the disease at the time.

What made it particularly difficult for delegates to address the issue of the flu was the personal interests of the characters (and their nations) we were assigned to. Although public health officials at the time had a great interest in stemming the tide of the deadly disease, they also had their agenda for winning the war. In this fictional committee, all delegates present had to work together to stop the spread of the flu, and balance their actions for the greater good with actions that would allow them to stay one step ahead. How delegates responded to crisis had to be in line with the roles we were given and our nation's stance and interests during the war. For 5 days, we discussed the challenges related to the Spanish Flu, remedies to treat the sick, and methods to find a cure. However, we also decided how to deal with the pandemic as we navigated possible political allegiances among delegates in the committee. In the end, good will prevailed and all delegates worked together for the common good, writing public health directives together and putting our greater political differences aside. There were times when debate was heated, but we nevertheless managed to enjoy the debate, appreciate each other's efforts, and have fun. By participating in this committee, I learned how difficult it can be as a country representative to find common ground between domestic policy and foreign policy and how challenging it can sometimes be to make decisions that require sacrifice for the benefit of many. I was also glad to have been part of this committee and for the opportunity to have learned so much, while getting such great experiences, at WorldMUN.

- Olivia and Gaby

Security Council

As the most important body of the United Nations, the Security Council is indispensable at an international MUN conference, especially at a one as prestigious such as Harvard WorldMUN. This year's Security Council was a present-day Crisis simulation on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given the seriousness and the enduring character of the dispute, it was important to discuss the topic and find viable solutions for



both the Palestinian and the Israeli people. Our delegation was very fortunate to have four delegates assigned to the Security Council, two of us having represented Germany and two of us France. This not only posed an opportunity for us to cooperate even more, as the policies of both countries regarding the Arab-Israeli Conflict are anchored in the European Union's stance on the topic, but it also facilitated forming a stronger friendship between us.

But first, what is the Security Council and how does it differentiate itself from other committees? The Security Council is one of the six organs under the UN Charter and it is tasked with ensuring world peace in times when international harmony faces threats. This means that the resolutions passed in the Security Council are binding for all member states of the UN (unlike the resolutions passed in the General Assembly Committees). The council comprises 15 states, 5 of them being the P5 (or the so-called "veto powers") and the rest of 10 having a mandate of 2 years. As a body inside MUN, however, the Security Council is quite androgynous. It is neither a General Assembly committee (the goal of which is passing a resolution at the end), nor a true Crisis committee. The Security Council lies somewhere in between, so the delegates have the opportunity to "steer" the course of the Security Council. We were given this choice several times during the week, but we concluded that we would like to hold a continual Crisis Security Council simulation. This meant that we would be confronted with several events during the week that would change the course of the debate. This complex structure of the committee not only fosters a climate for a challenging debate, but it also represents an authentic simulation of the meetings of the UN Security Council.

Tuesday morning, the day of the first session, we were greeted with a debrief by a young diplomat working in the UN Department of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Not only did she provide us with an "inside scoop" about the Security Council, its role, its powers as well as its meetings, but she also handed us useful documents for our committee, such as a list of all the vetoes ever exercised by the P5 (permanent members of the UN Security Council), which would be of importance to us later in the sessions. After the debrief, we were ready to begin the debate. We started by holding our, already prepared, opening speeches and every delegation had the chance to present its stance on the conflict.

Already in the first session, I discovered that Harvard WorldMUN is not only a big conference, but also has different rules of procedure than we are used to having at home in Zurich. Everything, including writing directives or resolutions, passing notes or collaborating on a joint statement with other member states, was paper-based. This was tiring at first, but we quickly got used to it. Also, having been my first MUN conference, I was perplexed by the very high level of debate and the speed at which the committee was moving forward.

During our content-packed sessions, we tackled almost every important issue in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, from the assistance of the Palestinian people with humanitarian aid and support from the international community to the condemnation of the acts of violence between both parties. This plethora of topics encouraged the cooperation between the present delegations in order to find a viable solution, for both Israel and Palestine, to end the violent and enduring conflict in the region. The crisis breaks (developments happening in real time which can change the course of the debate) made the climate even more challenging, prompting us to act quickly in order to avoid an escalation of the dispute. At the end of the week, we had passed numerous directives, engaged in challenging debates and gained a new and deep understanding of the deep-rooted conflict in the Near Orient.

Even though just a simulation, the conference helped me enhance my tactics of international relations and diplomacy. I am grateful for having been part of it and I cannot wait to do it again.

- Alex



SOCIALS

Global village

Every year at WorldMUN, one of the most anticipated events is the Global Village, an “international fair” with delegations from around the world setting up booths representing their home country. Delegates then typically bring traditional specialties and drinks from home to share with the rest of the conference. Under JUNES’ leadership, in a collaborative effort between seven MUN teams from Zurich, Lucerne, Basel, Fribourg, Lausanne, and St. Gallen, we hosted the Swiss booth. Our table was fully loaded with cheese, chocolate, various pastries and biscuits, and a wide array of alcohol from around Switzerland, it was indeed a sight to behold. And we can proudly say that we were one of the last – if not the last, booth to remain standing and stocked with food and drinks. It was an incredible night during which we were constantly exchanging Swiss stories and products with things from Lebanon, the USA, Columbia, France, and many more countries and cultures. What a way to kick off a conference!

- Luca



Cabaret Night

On Wednesday night some of our delegation went to 'Cabaret Night'. It is a typical WorldMUN tradition where people from different delegations from countries all over the world had the chance to do a performance. Most delegations did modern dances with pop music from their home countries.

The location called Teatro Kapital was super fancy. It was a theater-club with several floors from which you could look down onto the stage.

Beside learning about pop culture from all over the world this social event was the perfect opportunity to meet other delegates from our committee and the other delegations from Switzerland.

- Jule



Farewell party

After a long week of committee sessions and writing resolutions and directives, most of us decided to treat ourselves by going to the farewell party. It took place at the MEU Lab Chamartín. We had a wonderful time dancing and having fun with our delegation and with members of our committees that we had gotten to know over the week. It was a lovely way to celebrate everything we accomplished during the conference and to say goodbye to everyone we had met.

Some of us got up early the next morning to look at Madrid one last time before our flight. We wandered through one of Madrid's busiest neighborhoods, Sol, and explored Parque de El Retiro, a large park at the edge of Madrid's city centers spanning 1.4 square kilometers! We saw many interesting monuments including a massive sculpture of Alfonso XII and a conservatory made of glass, Palacio de Cristal.

- Mimi



Endnote

Harvard WorldMUN 2019 was truly special and outstanding. Having a whole week to explore the city, get to know your delegation and committee and discuss a topic to its deepest subtlety is quite a unique experience. Additionally the big number of people completely changes the experience. We were overjoyed that four delegates from MUNiLu were able to join us, and we had some amazing bonding time. We also met many other Swiss delegations and can't wait to have more events at home with those lovely people. I will always look back to Madrid with only good memories and am grateful for the experience we all had. The Madrilenian host team and the Harvard OC both deserve our gratitude, as well as our committed and motivated MUN UZH and MUNiLu delegates.

We'd also like to thank our great sponsors who made WorldMUN accessible for many people: our main sponsor SwissRE and our three conference sponsors Mercator, UZH alumni and VSUZH. Thank you for believing in us and supporting us!

- Yagmur



All Swiss MUN Teams