



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA  
SCUOLA DI SCIENZE POLITICHE



# THE EUROPEAN UNION FROM THE INSIDE

## *REPORT*



*Educational Trip in Brussels*

*17-20TH FEBRUARY 2015*



Istruzione e cultura

Azione Jean Monnet

Tuesday 17th february

## MEETING/APERITIF FORLÌ IN BRUXELLES

*Speakers: Luca Angelino, Mirella D'Agnano, Roberto de Giorgi, Anna Laura Gallo, Stefano Lambertucci*

The first impact we had with Brussels and its institutional world it was the meeting with the best former students of our faculty. Their task was to tell us how they managed to reach the positions they occupy. One of the first considerations we can make is how, despite the fact that they all came from the same master's degree, they all took up different European careers: for example, in the European renewable energy field (Luca Angelino, Stefano Lambertucci), in the financial services (Anna Laura Gallo), in the agricultural field (Roberto De Giorgi) or in the EU funding workshops projects (Mirella D'Agnano).

From their stories it emerged that the common starting point was an internship (often not paid) consistent with the European area of interests, this is as an important step in order to join the European institutional context. Most of them succeeded to get in the Blue Book (after taking a test) but it was not enough to find a job: they had to demonstrate their capabilities and competencies in order to put themselves in the spotlight. As they said, it is necessary to be able to write reports and to speak fluently at least English and French (any other language is an addition), to be willing to work in an international team with people having different cultures, languages and way of living. Fundamental qualities to "hit it big" are enterprising spirit, creativity, ambition, the ability to be a step ahead in order to understand and foresee the necessities of the job market, not focusing on a particular area of interests. It is not easy to succeed in this particular context, a strong determination and the ability to adapt are required. These characteristics are necessary especially at the moment of job searching: it is important not to discourage and take all the opportunities offered, even though they are not consistent with the previous career, showing to be an open-minded person. In addition, another way to cope with this situation is to take advantage of the free time keeping on studying or learning a new language and improving the skills. Furthermore the action of lobbying is not to be seen as negative (as Italians consider it): it has an important role in the European planning because of its on-going expansion and it offers also a great opportunity to find a job.

In conclusion, this discussion with these former students gave us the chance to better understand and to look closely to the functioning of the recruitment at the European institutions.

*Nicole Turrin, Giulia Peruzzini, Ilenia Verde e Francesca Para*

Wednesday 18th february

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

*Speakers: **Marco Marinai** (Plenary Organization); **Marta Udina** (Secretariat of External relations and foreign affairs Commission); **Paolo Martinelli** (Former Gianni Pittella Political Assistant, currently he works at DG for Infrastructure & Logistics); **Gabriele Babini** (Former Parliamentary Assistant of Guerzoni and Sassoli, currently he works at DG Innovation & Technological Support)*



The day after our arrival in Brussels, on February 18th, we were given the opportunity to visit the European Parliament. The toured visit of the European institution was planned in order to enable us not only to see with our own eyes the majestic grey buildings, in which a large part of the European Union's life unfolds, but also to grasp the real meaning of the

communitarian decision process. When we arrived Marco Marinai, responsible for the organization of the plenary, kindly greeted us. While sitting on the balcony above the empty Parliament's room we were briefly lectured on how the various groups are seated, from right to left according to their political belonging, in the collective assembly (i.e. Members of EPP, European Popular Party, would be seated on the right side), and on what are their main duties as members of the Parliament.

One of Marinai's main tasks, he explained, is to guarantee to everyone the possibility to participate in the debate. A speech, in fact, can go from a minimum of thirty seconds to a maximum of six minutes. An interesting fact we learned is that whenever a parliamentarian is speaking there are groups of at least three translators per country who simultaneously translate the speeches in different languages. Furthermore, Marinai gave us some insights on how the actual life of the plenary takes place, with some interesting and exemplifying stories of events that occurred during the prolonged



assemblies; events that mostly spiced up the various discussions, proving that, especially when extremely controversial topics are being treated, formulating a final decision that pleases the large majority of the groups is terribly arduous and time consuming. Moreover, organizing the plenary also means monitoring the debate in order for it not to fall into national controversies, a very common tendency according to Marco Marinai. The other members of the institution we had the chance to meet also reiterated this aspect of the communitarian life. Marta Udina enthusiastically explained how the Secretariat for the Commission of the External Affairs of the Parliament works and was open to any of our questions and considerations. In particular she

spoke about Denis Mukwege, the Congolese gynecologist who was awarded the European's Union Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2014. She also discussed the latest revisions in the EU's neighbor policy: the European Union is looking for ways to improve its implementation especially in the Middle-East Area. As a matter of fact the EU is questioning itself whether or not economic pressures are resulting efficient.

Paolo Martinelli and Gabriele Babini, two young and capable Forlì alumni, shared with us their personal life experiences that enabled them to work in Brussels. This part of the visit was particularly interesting also because they gave us two different perspectives of how to work for the European institutions. In fact, Paolo described a more linear and stable work experience, while Gabriele shared a more diversified and seesawing one. Both perspectives, however, turned out to be very successful, proving that working for the European Union can mean being involved in completely different tasks, and this stimulated us to try to understand what are our strongest inclinations, in order to find the most suitable job. The teaching that most powerfully emerged from their speeches is that we must take advantage of all opportunities presented to us (in their own words: "mettersi a disposizione delle opportunità") and learn to cope with the difficulties that such a hectic life inevitably brings up.



In conclusion, the visit at the European Parliament was interesting and mind opening because it enabled us to understand the pros and cons of working for the European Union, an intricate yet fascinating organization.

*Carlo Nakhnoukh, Elisa Bettelli e Marco Giacomazzi*

# EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

Speakers: **Silvio Gonzato** (Director for Human rights and Democracy); **Fernando Gentilini**, (Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey)



The afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup> February we visited the European External Action Service (EEAS).

We received the visitors' pass and we have been accompanied to the room where the meeting with some high officials has taken place.

At first, we met Silvio Gonzato, the Human Rights and Democracy Director, who introduced us about the aim and the actions carried out by the Service. He explained us that the *leitmotiv* of external action is the contractual relationship with neighbor countries which can be characterized by bilateral or multilateral dialogues. In particular, he divided the External Action of the EU into two focal points: one political, which concerns the dialogue with the civil society of the countries involved, and one operative, which manages the funds and the concrete operations. On one hand, the external action operates through 139 delegations all over the world, which have the duty to maintain contacts with civil society and to control eventual violations of human

rights. On the other hand, the European Union has established the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), an agency that approves the projects proposed by local NGOs and provides the technical assistance for their implementation.

Secondly, we approached the diplomatic dimension of the EEAS, represented by Fernando Gentilini, a former Italian diplomatic now Director for the Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey, who is taking part at the peace negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo. He focused on the practical aspects of the diplomatic talks between countries involved in a conflict, particularly regarding the crisis management. He made us understand the features and skills a diplomatic must have in these processes, like the ability to adapt to various contexts and



cultures in critical situations. Through his personal experience, he also illustrated the differences between the EU's approach and the NATO's one.

Both speakers have been open to our questions and have answered us in an exhaustive way.

This visit has been one of the most interesting we have attended during the journey, since we have approached to a job area most related to our studying course and it has been very useful in order to realize how the institution works and which skills we need to improve to enter this field.

The only negative aspects has regarded the rigid treatment we have received at the beginning and the end of the visit that did not give us the opportunity to have a deeper discussion with the guests, this because the EEAS is not use to have visitors or groups, so the security measures are very strict.

*Tiziano Breda, Michele Pitta e Manuel Falciatori*

## MEETING/APERITIF WITH ...

*Speakers: **Sandro Mascia** (Director of Confagricoltura Office in Brussels and Economic and Social Committee Advisor); **Luciano di Fonzo** (EACEA);*

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, we held a meeting with Luciano di Fonzo and Sandro Mascia at our apartments in Rue des Pierres, Brussels.



Mr Sandro Mascia during his speech focused on the description of his career within the European institutions, in particular starting from the end of his academic experience. Precisely, after having spent a period in France, he got the opportunity to do a stage related to the activity of the European Community. This was the beginning of his professional career that brought him to hold the position of Counsellor at the European Economic and Social Committee and Director of the Confagricoltura representation in Brussels. The most interesting part was the description of his activity as a lobbyist, which differently from what

it is generally believed, has a positive connotation in Brussels, since it helps and shapes the policies implemented by the European institutions.

Mr Luciano Di Fonzo, similarly to Mr Mascia, started his career in the European institutions as a *stageur* after a period collaborating with the University of Pescara in matters related to the European Community. He continued to work in Brussels in different areas up to the point in which he started to focus on the information policy of the EU. Now he is Supervisor of Erasmus + - Sport within EACEA. The most fascinating part of his speech was the detailed description about the main programmes which are carried out by EACEA, in particular the educational aspects covered by Erasmus + and the importance of the promotion of sports opportunities.



At the end, after about two hours of debate there was a final cocktail moment during which we had the opportunity to continue to talk with the guests in a more informal way making directly questions about their experience and other specific curiosities.

To sum up, we believe that the idea of organizing this kind of meetings with such important representatives of the European institutions in this more informal way was successful, since it allowed us to get to know the real activity which is carried out in Brussels. Moreover, it was very useful to have some information about the different paths and opportunities through which it is possible to start and to continue a European career. In our opinion, we believe that probably more attention should have been given to the detailed aspects of their working life, therefore making us understand what they really have to do in their daily activity. In conclusion, we really appreciated the opportunity to confront ourselves directly with some EU officers and hence we suggest continuing to organize in some possible future visits to Brussels similar meetings since they appear to be very useful for us as students.

*Alessia Quaglia e Maria Micheli*

## Thursday 19th february

### EACEA

(Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency)

*Presentation of the Agency and of the EU financial programmes they managed. Speakers: **Luciano di Fonzo** (EACEA - Erasmus+ - Sport); **Maria Teresa De Pasquale** (Communication sector); **Natasha Jovicic** (Erasmus+: Sport, Youth and EU Aid Volunteers); **Jean Francois Lahou and Santiago Gutierrez** (Erasmus+: Unit A2 Higher Education-Knowledge Alliances, Bologna Support, Jean Monnet)*



The morning of February 19<sup>th</sup> was dedicated to visit the EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), where we were welcomed by Mr. Luciano Di Fonzo and his coworkers.

During the first part of the meeting, the presentation mainly focused on EACEA's role, composition and the programs that the Agency has been promoting since its foundation in 2006. The Agency is responsible for the management of certain parts of the EU's funding programs in the fields of education, culture, audiovisual, sport, citizenship and volunteering. EACEA is now promoting four main programs, namely Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Europe for citizens and EU Aid Volunteers. Each of these programs is oriented towards a specific sector of the European society and it is aimed at increasing the internal and external mobility of European citizens. In order to better understand the programs that were being illustrated, Ms. Jovicic supported her presentation about the specific actions that are now integrated inside the bigger picture of Erasmus+ by showing us the European Youth Portal, a website that provides young people with several opportunities. The main focus was on the European Voluntary

Service, a program that has seen a constant increase in the number of participants over the past years.

Mr Luciano Di Fonzo introduced the new Sport action aimed at integrating the athletic career of young people with an academic dimension that they could benefit from once they decide to retire. Also, a second aim of this action is to fight the violations that take place in the sports field, such as illegal bets and the abuse of illegal drug-taking.

The Jean Monnet action was then described in the second part of the meeting. The action is aimed at promoting studies and research about the European Union by funding projects and permanent courses. Its main beneficiaries are higher education institutions and associations of professors

and/or researchers, which can apply through different actions that range from annual to multi-year projects. We were then displayed statistics about the disciplines that are more active in the Jean Monnet action, and about their distribution among both European Union and non-European Union countries.

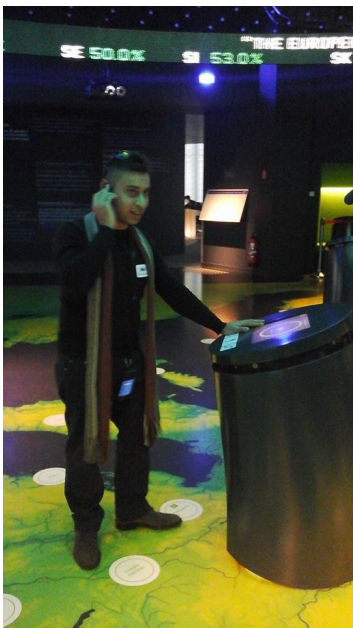
The final part of the meeting was dedicated to our questions about how to benefit from the various programs that had been presented. The overall perception after the meeting was very positive because we had the possibility to get to know more in detail which are the opportunities, at the European level, for universities students like us. It was very interesting to expand our knowledge about all of the actions included in the Erasmus+ program and to see that there are many more opportunities in addition to the Erasmus action, with which we were already familiar with. The only suggestion that we would like to propose is that, since most of us had little or no knowledge about the actions that were presented, it would have been interesting to closer analyze the practical application procedure for the above mentioned actions.



*Francesca Passeri e Ascanio Troiani*

## PARLAMENTARIUM

The visit to the Parlamentarium, visitors' center of the European Parliament located in the building Willy Brandt, was an experience quite different from others received during the academic trip.



Being extremely rich in terms of multimedia the Parlamentarium offers the opportunity to know more about the European integration and its history through photos, videos, maps, audio comments, and many other innovative means. However, due to the time limits of the agenda it was impossible to learn all the materials available in numerous halls of the center. Probably from this superficial acquaintance with the exhibition comes the impression that it is useful first of all for those who want to get basic knowledge of the European integration.

The Parlamentarium stimulates visitors' interest to the European integration for example by offering them a chance to express their opinion on topical questions regarding the EU and to know the statistics of the answers of other respondents.

One of the main advantages of the Parlamentarium is that it is provided with audioguida which let visitors to choose their own rhythm and the sections most interesting to them.



From the organizational point of view, the second half of the last day of staying in Brussels seems to be a proper time to visit the Parliamentarium. The intuitive use of interactive means and their variety provide an edutainment excursion which at the same time allows getting some rest after the days of the intensive program.



*Kristina Slevaresa*

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION – DG AGRI

*Speaker: Carlo Pagliacci (European Commission – DG Agriculture and rural development)*

In the afternoon of Thursday February the 19<sup>th</sup> has been held a meeting with the European official Carlo Pagliacci in the Agriculture and Development DG's headquarters of the European Union.



The meeting was focused in particular on the history of the Common Agricultural Policy, its evolution and the influence it has had and currently has in the process of European integration.

The expectations were high, due to the historical importance that the CAP has always played. Despite some initial disappointments regarding the building of the Directorate-General for Agriculture

and Rural Development compared to other European institutions previously seen such as the EEAS, the welcome given to us by Carlo Pagliacci has been highly appreciated by offering tea, coffee and water to everyone.

After this kindly welcoming gesture, Carlo Pagliacci has explained us history and the different aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy with a clear Power Point presentation.

The CAP is a common policy for all the Member States of the European Union. It is managed and funded at European level from the resources of the EU annual budget. It is divided in four areas:

external relations, direct support and market measures, agriculture and environment and rural development, accounting.

In the 1960s the CAP was established in an European Economic Community worried about the sustainability of food production after war. The Common agricultural policy ensured the principles of: market unity (single agricultural prices within the Community); community preference (common market products protected against low-prices imports) and financial solidarity.

Until the late 1980s, the CAP was a system of market support based on guaranteed prices within the Community. This system became very expensive to sustain: farms become so productive that they grow more food than needed and therefore several measures are introduced to bring production levels closer to what the market needs.

Change in CAP has occurred by steps, first in the McSharry reform in 1992 where CAP shifts from market support to producer support: price cuts and compensatory payments to producers. While internationally the principle of sustainable development was launched, the Fischler reform of 2003 cuts the link between subsidies and production: it decouples farm income support from production by replacing direct farm payments to producers on condition that they look after the farmland and fulfil environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards.

Meanwhile, the second pillar of the CAP, rural development, grows compared to market production.

Changes in the CAP continues in 2013 when it is reformed to promote the competitiveness of agriculture, promote sustainable farming and innovation in rural areas in line with Europe's growth strategy for the coming decade: "Europe 2020".

On the other hand, the problem highlighted by Pagliacci was the huge number of relatively small farms in EU with few hectares in size. This means that farmers can find it hard to get the best market price for their produce. Hence EU helps farmers by encouraging the formation of producer organizations: these allow farmers to form groups and cooperation so that they can sell their products collectively, enabling them to exert greater market power and raise profit and competitiveness.

Throughout the explanation everyone has been closely following the presentation of Carlo Pagliacci who was immediately able to capture the attention of the audience.

The Power point presentation, in fact, was clear and all complex parts of the arguments have always been thoroughly explained.

Another pleasant feeling reported by many students concerns the attitude of Carlo Pagliacci, different from the image of a gray "bureaucrat" that often have certain people who work for some relevant public institutions.

At the end of the lecture there was time to ask more specific questions regarding the CAP and its effects in the medium-long term, especially some regarding the role of Italy in the CAP.

Finally, it is possible to say that the expectations of all were fully met.



*Ornella Mercuri e Ivano di Carlo*

## MEETING/APERITIF WITH ...

*Speakers: Gabriele Visentin (European External Action Service – Head of Division "Parliamentary Affairs").*

On the evening of the 19th of February, 2015, at the Grand Central apartments, the group met Mr Visentin, who is at the moment an Acting Head of Division “Parliamentary affairs” at European External Action Service, in order to deepen the knowledge about the structure and functioning of EEAS and the role of the High Representative of the Union for the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

At the beginning of the meeting he showed the group a brief video edited by the European Parliament in which it was explained the figure of the High Representative even through the words of the actual High Representative herself, Federica Mogherini.

In the video is mentioned the double role of the High Representative, who is at the same time the Vice-President of the European Commission, a topic that was later explained by Mr Visentin too.

After the video Mr Visentin talked about the birth and the structure of EEAS, by mentioning and resuming how is the role of the H.R. shaped and how this figure works in practice; he explained the group which is the “double hat” nature of the H.R.-Vice President and which are the prerogatives of both of the two charges.

The meeting was made interactive by the means of several questions of the students, which showed themselves almost interested in the matter and which were always exhaustively answered by Mr Visentin, who supported his speech using a set of illustrative and clear slides.

He tried to give the students an inside vision of how the succession of Federica Mogherini to Catherine Ashton, her predecessor, took place, in September 2014, and how different are the approaches toward their own roles; according to him there was a discontinuity in the working method and he underlined how much Miss Mogherini is more active in both of her roles, taking into account practical examples.

Then he mentioned the principles of the external action of the EU and the number of the people involved in the functioning of the EEAS.

Invited by a student’s question, Mr Visentin then talked about the European Delegations in the world, mentioning their important role in the management of the European aids directed towards the hosting countries.

Later he started describing the European civil and military missions all around the world, remarking their different objectives and implementations; in particular, he illustrated the Atalanta Mission around the African Horn and its achievements.

In doing so, he showed the group another video edited by the EU, which was dedicated to the several missions in which the EU is actually engaged in.

In the last part of his speech, Mr Visentin underlined the substance and importance of what it is called “comprehensive” or “global approach”, which is the smart use and mix of all the policies which are in the tool-box of the EU and that was particularly important during the Atalanta Mission.

Then, after the lesson, the happy hour started and Mr Visentin, in a very nice and informal way, started answering several questions of the students regarding international relations of the EU and the world political environment (Iran, South America, Ukraine, etc. etc.); the students were led by an extraordinary interest in these topics and the meeting took three hours more or less, expiring at 22:00.

In conclusion, the meeting has been a success: all of the matters were clearly covered and deepened by Mr Visentin, who showed himself really incisive, motivated and prepared; he succeeded in captivating the students that remained impressed and satisfied.

*Immacolata Lenti e Alessandro Venieri*

## GENERAL ASPECTS



From February the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, a group of 23 students of the Political Science School “Roberto Ruffilli” of the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, Forlì Campus, went to Brussels. The main aim of the trip was to make the students acquainted with the European Union (EU) institutions and to inform them about the different career perspectives connected with the Union. The field trip to Brussels was financed by the Vice-Presidency of the School of Political Science and by Jean Monnet *ad personam* Chair of Professor Giuliana Laschi.

The meeting point of the group was fixed at the “Guglielmo Marconi” Bologna airport on Tuesday morning. All students were tasked with buying their own tickets for the flights and the shuttle service from Brussels Charleroi airport to Brussels Midi. In this manner every student was made responsible for his own movements, even though everything was planned and communicated in advance by the Punto Europa staff.

While in Brussels, the group moved around the city with different means of public transport, mainly the underground and buses, and there have not been any delays or complications.

During the field trip the group’s accommodation was at the “Grand Central” apartments in Rue des Pierres/ Steenstraat, where the students were divided in groups of 4/5 people per apartment. This kind of accommodation proved to be optimal because not only the flats were spacious, very clean, modern and equipped with all the necessary furniture, but also because they granted a high degree of flexibility to the students.

In addition, the fact that the accommodation was situated in the city centre, two minutes away from Grand Place, allowed students to move easily around, take advantage of the leisure time to enjoy and discover the fascinating architecture of Brussels, while having at their disposal several useful services, such as supermarkets, restaurants and ATMs.

The scheduled meetings with EU officials and lobbyists gave the students the chance to have a general overview of the EU institutions, the surrounding apparatus, the decision-making process and its outputs. Indeed, the opportunity to speak with people covering different positions at different moments of their careers, gave the students a deeper insight into the EU’s everyday life. The lecturers were very professional, available for questions and curious about the student’s aspirations, constantly giving practical tips on how to work inside the EU. It was an honor for the students to have the possibility to interact with European official of such a high level, who were at their disposal for every question. The rooms reserved for the meetings were always fit for the purpose. Moreover, the combination between formal meetings during the day and informal

rendezvous in the evenings arranged in the apartments allowed the students to get closer to the lecturers, making easier for both of them to share impressions and experiences.

Some students have been part of other field trips to Brussels organized by the central department of Political Science of University of Bologna. But they have noticed deep differences between these former experiences and the last one coordinated by “Center of excellence Jean Monnet- Forlì”, notably for what concerns the pertinence of meetings with their academic and career perspectives. As the majority of them claim in the evaluation surveys they esteem positively the possibility to speak with eminent officials of EU institutions in a small and friendly environment. Another strong point is the fact that they have had valuable information about internships and stages, and last but not the least they could pose questions to EU officials about their daily work.

In conclusion, the overall evaluation of the field trip is very positive. All the objectives have been successfully achieved, as the students have been able to gain a wider perspective on the EU, its activities and the possible careers inside it.

*Davide Possente, Caterina Pasini, Federica Gravina e Daniele Francario*

## Guests:

*Former students of Political Science in Forlì:*

**Luca Angelino**, Head of Policy, EGEN European Geothermal Energy Council

**Mirella D'Agnano**, EU Helpdesk Manager presso European Young Innovators Forum

**Roberto de Giorgi**, Programme manager alla DG agri, commissione europea

**Anna Laura Gallo**, Junior Consultant presso Afore Consulting

**Stefano Lambertucci**, Policy Officer, ESTIF European Solar Thermal Industry Federation

**Gabriele Babini**, Former Parliamentary Assistant of Guerzoni and Sassoli, currently he works at DG Innovation & Technological Support

**Maria Teresa De Pasquale** EACEA - Communication sector

**Luciano Di Fonzo**, EACEA - Erasmus+ - Sport

**Fernando Gentilini**, European External Action Service - Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey

**Silvio Gonzato**, European External Action Service - Director for Human rights and Democracy

**Santiago Gutierrez**, EACEA – Erasmus+: Higher Education-Knowledge Alliances, Bologna Support, Jean Monnet

**Natasha Jovicic**, EACEA - Erasmus+: Sport, Youth and EU Aid Volunteer

**Jean Francois Lahou**, EACEA – Erasmus+: Higher Education-Knowledge Alliances, Bologna Support, Jean Monnet

**Marco Marinai**, European parliament - Plenary Organization

**Sandro Mascia**, Director of Confagricoltura Office in Brussels and Economic and Social Committee Advisor

**Paolo Martinelli**, Former Gianni Pittella Political Assistant, currently he works at DG for Infrastructure & Logistics

**Carlo Pagliacci**, European Commission – DG Agriculture and rural development

**Leone Rizzo**, Visitors Office of European Parliament;

**Marta Udina**, European Parliament - Secretariat of External relations and foreign affairs Commission;

**Gabriele Visentin**, European External Action Service – Head of Division "Parliamentary Affairs"

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