

## **REPORT ON THESEUS EUROPE@WORK: EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY**

**11 - 13 JUNE, BERLIN AND 16 - 18 JUNE, BRUSSELS**

### **ABSTRACT**

From the possibility to see theoretical knowledge of European energy policy being applied in daily practical political life to the fruitful exchange of thoughts within an interdisciplinary and international working atmosphere – the six-day excursion of the THESEUS Seminar Europe@Work ‘European Energy Policy’ in June 2014 was considered a great success by the participating students. The seminar was jointly organised by the Jean Monnet Chair of Prof. Wessels and the Institute of Energy Economics, both part of the University of Cologne. Its goal is to let students experience ‘real life’ politics, including the EU as a vivid political system. It is supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Union.

Political science and energy economics students from the University of Cologne, the Turkish-German University Istanbul and the Charles University Prague travelled to Berlin and Brussels to visit a full range of institutions as well as major interest groups and policymakers to discuss current challenges of European Energy Policy. They got the chance to listen to insightful presentations and to hold lively discussions with important actors of in sum 17 political institutions and organisations as well as companies, who are involved in both the domestic and European arena of policy-making.

In Berlin, they learned about challenges of the Federal Foreign Office in making Germany’s voice heard in international energy policy debates. They dived in descriptions of the day-to-day debates in the German Parliament and were informed at the behind-the-scenes processes of strategy-making within the German Economic Council to shape German energy policy towards a businesses-friendly direction. In Brussels, the students were introduced in the NATO’s calculations about future developments in areas of international conflict and the organisation’s attempts to best transform the structure of the NATO to tackle current and possibly upcoming problems in international relations. In addition, they were given the chance to critically question an energy expert of the European Commission about the institution’s positions in European energy talks and the reasons behind those positioning. At the newly formed European External Action Service (EEAS), they got insights in the institution’s action plan for giving the EU a strong voice in debates with worldwide countries in United Nations (UN) conferences and other crucial meetings with actors of international politics.

At the heart of all discussions was the 2030 framework for European energy and climate policies and its impact on the domestic and international industry. The ongoing Ukraine crisis and its consequences for guaranteeing a secure energy supply in Europe played a central role in the debates. The same applies for the long-term goal of aligning German and European energy policy. The manifold line-up of visited institutions and energy experts during the THESEUS Europe@Work excursion can be added by numerous further addresses, including the Institute for European Politics (IEP) and the Federal Chancellery in Berlin or the Council of the European Union and the company GDF Suez in Brussels. The following report of the THESEUS excursion Europe@Work 2014 summarises the main points of each single discussion held during the visits to Berlin in Brussels.

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## **BERLIN**

### **WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE 2014**

#### **INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN POLITICS**

After the arrival in Berlin, the excursion started with a visit at the Institute for European Politics. The research associate Marco Siddi introduced the topic of European Energy Policy. He focused on the one hand on European energy security by explaining the foreign policy dimension of energy policy and by describing in detail the energy relations with Russia. On the other hand, he presented the current debate on the 2030 energy and climate package. The discussion on energy security focused primarily on energy dependence and the resulting vulnerability of certain member states. The consequences of this dependence became visible during the gas crises in 2006 and 2009. As main challenges in ensuring energy supply, Siddi identified energy policy diversification, high energy demand, transit dependence and different interests among countries. He thinks that a European approach for energy policy should strengthen the market, diversify partners and transit routes and introduce indigenous resources such as renewable energies. Siddi's presentation ended in a debate about energy security from both an economic and political science perspective.

#### **FEDERAL CHANCELLERY**

Speaker Georg Felsheim started the session with a brief overview of the tasks and assignments which are at the core of the daily work of his department of the federal chancellery. After mentioning the most important aspects of his role in the German policy making system, he kindly answered a large number of questions from the auditorium. They covered topics relating to the internal affairs of the European Union as well as to the transatlantic relations and the current situation in Syria. Mr Felsheim voiced his concern about the low voting turnout in European elections and the rise of right-wing parties across Europe. These phenomena should be tackled by

developing better policies in areas such as economic growth, competitiveness and employment. Regarding energy related issues, Mr Felsheim placed an emphasis on the need to find a consensus on climate protection measures among all member states. Last but not least, the seminar featured a thorough evaluation of German renewable energy initiatives and of Germany's position in discussions about nuclear power plants. The inspiring discussion ended with thoughts and ideas about possible consequences of Britain's exit from the European Union.

## **DEUTSCHER BUNDESTAG: ANNALENA BAERBOCK, BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN**

At the German Bundestag, we got to talk to Green Party-member Annalena Baerbock, who was elected to the Bundestag for the first time in 2013 after having worked in European politics for quite some time. Baerbock currently sits in the European Committee where she deals with institutional matters as well as current issues such as the Ukrainian crisis. Due to her membership of the Greens she is highly concerned about climate politics. In our discussion, she first made some general remarks on multilevel politics within the EU system before giving an outline of the position of the Greens on climate policy.

In general, it currently seems hard for oppositional parties like the Greens to push positions through in the German parliament due to their limited speaking time as the grand coalition of Conservatives and Social Democrats holds most of the seats and thus the majority of procedural rights. Looking at multilevel politics Baerbock pointed to the fact that national parliaments are very well able to influence EU politics by having the contractual right to take an opinion on any EU issue (Art. 23 EUV). However, the politician criticized that in most cases politicians don't take up this right and rather tend to blame Brussels after a legislative act has been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. She encouraged national politicians to engage more in European politics to effectively influence their favoured political outcome. Moreover, she referred to the importance of interconnections between European and national politicians of the same party as well as friendship groups among national delegates of different nationalities such as the German-Polish group.

Looking at climate policy, Baerbock pointed to the fact that the EU still has not found a common nominator on reliable targets for the UN conference in Paris in 2015. Thus, she wants the German government to be pushed and pressured to quickly agree nationally in order to reach a common position on the EU level as soon as possible. As a member of the Green party she supports a goal of 45 per cent CO<sup>2</sup> reductions, 40 per cent increase in energy efficiency and a total share of 45-50 per cent of renewables. Despite the fact of Germany being a country with a big industrial sector, she argued that Germany needs to be more ambitious in reducing its emissions by decreasing the usage of fossil fuels, increasing the amount of renewables in the Energy mix and sticking to the withdrawal of nuclear energy. In her view, those targets can be reached by using all different levels of politics within the EU. As the decision of the energy mix remains within national competences, German politicians are asked to take forward-looking decisions whereas in other policy dimensions, such as the Emissions Trading System (ETS), European politicians are asked to effectively reform the system – which in her opinion does not work at all in terms of meeting the initial goals of emissions reduction.

Altogether, her main argument is that in climate policy it seems to be of high advantage for politicians to work in a multilevel system in which they can push favourable positions through by using these different levels. It should ideally lead to an overall more ambitious climate policy which however still seems to be lacking behind when looking at both EU politics as well as German politics.

**THURSDAY, 12 JUNE 2014**

### **FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE OF GERMANY**

Dr. Georg Forstbach, member of the European Department of the Federal Foreign Office introduced three crucial lines of discussion concerning foreign policy of the European Union. First of all, he stated that European foreign policy is not a luxury but absolutely necessary which is due to the fact that a wide range of questions exists which can impossibly be solved successfully on the national level.

Moreover, he argued that European foreign policy is a very fragile balance between the foreign policy of the sovereign member states and the unified external action of the European Union.

As a matter of fact, finding a common voice for the concert of 28 European member states is a difficult matter. His last point was that the European foreign policy goes far beyond the usual foreign policy instruments. This became clear when looking for example at the economic activities of the European Union or the developments of the single market. He stated that the single market is a power instrument for foreign policy since external actors tried to gain economic access. As an example he described the unbundling process which had also consequences for the selling of Russian gas.

During the following discussion he also explained the decision-making process in the Federal Foreign Office, his daily work and changes which occur with new ministers. The other part of the discussion focused on EU-Russia energy relations including energy dependence and the recent proposal from Tusk to create an Energy Union.

### **THE FEDERATION OF GERMAN INDUSTRIES / BUNDESVERBAND DER DEUTSCHEN INDUSTRIE E.V. (BDI)**

The Federation of German Industries/Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. (BDI) acts as an umbrella lobby organisation representing 37 industries within Germany.

At the beginning of our meeting, Dr. Carsten Rolle presented the main positions of the BDI concerning the European climate and energy policy. To begin with, it was explained that this topic is mainly dealt with from a demand-sided point of view but that the BDI also represents some technology providers (of wind turbines or power plants). Germany has a special role as it still has a strong role in manufacturing which distinguishes it from other European countries. With regard to the EU's 2030 targets, Dr. Rolle said that climate policy comes first and that the BDI would prefer a consistent policy allowing technologies to develop freely instead of having to follow prescribed

percentages of energy usage. Additionally, they criticized the energy efficiency target as it was difficult to reach, even for firms that are already among the most energy efficient ones. Furthermore, the BDI supports further Europeanization of the energy market, e. g. regarding capacity markets. The BDI essentially argues in favour of a more harmonized market design and finds it necessary to give competences to the EU level.

In the following, various topics were discussed with the students: the ETS, the BDI's activities in other countries as well as on the EU level and most importantly more topics concerning the Internal Energy Market. Students from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Turkey gave insights into how the German *Energiewende* is perceived by an "external perspective" in the current political energy debates in their respective countries. Finally, the work within a lobbyist organization, such as the BDI, and career opportunities were presented.

## **UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF GERMANY**

On our second day in Berlin, we visited the United Nations Association of Germany (UNA), an NGO founded in 1952. We were presented the three goals of the organization being lobbying for a coherent German UN policy, educating the public and encouraging research on topics relating to the UN. Main issues that are addressed by the UNA are human rights, UN peace keeping and climate policy.

In the following discussion, we debated Germany's role in the UN and whether it should focus on an active individual role or on a coordinated European approach, as well as if and how the two approaches could coexist. For this purpose we took a closer look at how much weight the EU has in the UN institutions like the Security Council. For the last part we discussed current EU policies on energy and climate and discussions about those addressed in the Climate talks leading up to the UNFCCC summit in Paris 2015 – especially how the EU can be a driving force to reach an agreement while finding the right measure of ambition and taking responsibility for its past emissions.

## **FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2014**

### **ECONOMIC COUNCIL GERMANY**

On Friday, 13 June 2014, the group got the opportunity to talk to Björn Spiegel, Energy Policy Advisor in the Economic Council (Wirtschaftsrat der CDU e. V.). Spiegel introduced the background of the council and its view on energy policies. This served as inspiration for the later discussion.

The main topic that the council is dealing with in the field of energy policy is the German *Energiewende* and its political implementations in the context of the renewable energy law (EEG). The Economic Council has great concerns about negative impacts on the competitiveness of the German industry arising from the current subsidy scheme for renewable technologies. It sees that the German approach in energy transition is opposed to the US shale gas resolution. The Economic

Council's opinion is that discussions on shale gas and energy mix transition should be more detached from ideological perceptions and try to focus on the question of how to best face approaching energy challenges. The council claims that the German *Energiewende* is based on the wrong indicators: Set goals such as carbon dioxide reduction were not going to be reached through the subsidy scheme and therefore the question arose: What are we paying for?

The renewable energy law in Germany should therefore be reformed in a way to work more cost-efficient. According to the council, the alignment of German action and European law also has to be improved to avoid opposing mechanisms. Besides political opinions the discussion addressed lobbying in Berlin as well as the composition of the members of the economic council.

## **BDEW – BUNDESVERBAND DER ENERGIE- UND WASSERWIRTSCHAFT E.V.**

The presentation at the BDEW was held by Dr. Stephan Krieger (department of strategy and politics; energy policy and international affairs) and Katharina Klein (department of strategy and politics; energy policy, climate and environment). First, Krieger introduced the BDEW's institutional structure and its co-operations with other federal and European associations. He characterized the BDEW as a think tank that steps in for the long-term interests of German electricity, gas and water industry and German society as a whole. To formulate a common opinion that both satisfies the various interests of the represented industries and is strong enough to impact the political agenda was depicted as the BDEW's main challenge.

After Krieger's introduction, Katharina Klein spoke about the European Climate negotiations. She focused on the main challenges for the EU in reaching its targets for the level of CO<sup>2</sup>-emissions (i.e. a 40 percent reduction by 2030) and the share of renewables (i.e. a 27 percent share by 2030). Klein claimed a shift in the debate from real climate policies to policies of cost efficiency and nation-based solutions. Klein stated that she had low expectations for reaching an agreement on a common renewable energy target. The reason is the member states' differences in their levels of renewables and their national energy mixes. Thus, the BDEW wants the EU-Commission to clearly formulate how it intends to reach that common goal and to guarantee the stability and functioning of the European energy market. The BDEW also asks for a statement on how the Commission wants to deal with member states that do not reach the expected levels. Klein stressed that ambitious climate policy goals were necessary for the EU to remain a credible actor in international discussions and to secure the functioning of the German energy market.

In the round of discussion following her presentation, the instruments of the BDEW to pressure political actors and its co-operations with other associations were explained. Klein mentioned the association's attempt to raise public awareness by the media and to influence (German) political actors by 'behind-the-scenes dialogues'. Klein stated that the BDEW did not have consistent cooperation partners, but cooperated with associations on an issue-specific basis. She did not exclude negative consequences for the success of German energy policy goals in the case that European agreements should fail.

After the first round of discussion, Stephan Krieger switched from climate policy to energy policy in broader terms. He addressed challenges in competition policy and outlined his impression of the

new shape of the European energy industry. Krieger criticized the lack of coherence in European foreign energy policy and economic inefficiencies due to the increase of renewable energies. He fears possible market exits and the danger of shrinking investments in the energy market. Krieger stressed the importance of interconnectors to limit failures in electricity supply. Those arose from differences in the supply of renewables that depended on weather conditions and the time of the day (in the case of solar or wind energy). In the following discussion, he presented a top-down approach to be the best solution to strengthen the internal market. Though, he is sceptical that it will be a realistic solution. As Klein, he made his point by referring to different nation-specific energy mixes. The German “Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz” (EEG) was discussed as comprising two problems: First, there was a paradox of an increase of renewables aligned with rising CO<sup>2</sup>-emissions. Second, renewables were demanded, while the energy system was not functioning properly. In this regard, Krieger stated the lack of transmission lines in the south of Germany that would lead to different price zones in the German energy market. This would mean a malfunctioning of the energy market and a lack of market efficiency. He thus considers it to be necessary to fundamentally extend the grid system. Finally, Krieger stressed the combination of common principal political guidelines and a well-functioning market to result in best outcomes for both society and industry.

## **GASAG: BERLINER GASWERKE AG**

The last visit in Berlin was the company GASAG, the local provider of gas and heat in Berlin and surrounding areas in Brandenburg. In a talk with engineer Klaus Wein we got the chance to learn about GASAG’s activities and challenges of the future energy market – in particular, challenges in the context of the German *Energiewende*, the assignment of gas concessions and the increased competition due to the unbundling process on the German energy market. Ambitious national targets for Greenhouse gas emission reduction and energy efficiency were claimed to challenge GASAG’s traditional business segments regarding the supply of gas. However, they are also seen as new possibilities and areas for action. Future business segments were, for instance, the substitution of oil in the heating sector, increased engagement in the supply of district heating (especially in cooperation with municipal housing companies) and a general modernization of urban areas.

We actively discussed the future strategy of GASAG which identifies high potentials in the context of energy services. According to them, this includes the improvement of urban structures by providing decentralized and autarchic services such as small scale combined heat and power production as well as micro smart grids for efficient load management. Additionally, we talked about the political framework conditions and the organization of GASAG’s political activities in several associations, for example in the German Association of Water and Energy Industry that we have also visited during our Berlin excursion.

All in all, the presentation by Wein and the following discussion at GASAG contributed to a more general view on German energy policies by extending it by the perspective of an energy company.

**BRUSSELS**  
**MONDAY, 16 JUNE 2014**

**TRIANEL, AACHEN**

Our visit to Trianel in Aachen has been part of the Europe@Work's seminar goal to get in touch with participants and affected actors of European energy policies. Trianel GmbH has been incorporated in 1999 by several municipals to bundle industry expertise, respectively synergies and negotiation power, on the national and European level. Trianel is directly affected by energy policy outcomes and hence actively participates to shape those policies.

At Trianel's Headquarter in Aachen we were warmly welcomed by the managing director Sven Becker. He introduced the company and the fundamental changes within the electricity sector that have arisen during the most recent years respectively during the decades that have led to the foundation of Trianel. These changes were the liberalization of the electricity sector and the unbundling of monopolistic utility companies.

After Becker's introduction, Trianel's head of communication Elmar Thyen took over to give us an overview over current topics and issues concerning municipals, respectively the electricity sector, and Trianel's strategy to deal with those. That way, we got an insight into the current market structure of the electricity sector in Germany and the business model of Trianel. Afterwards, we turned specifically to European energy policies. Mr. Thyen updated us on European emission targets towards 2020 and 2050, EU guidelines for state aid in environmental protection as well as coherent directives. Additionally we got insights into the work of Trianel, also in relation to the German government, and general ambitions of Trianel. The company's lobbying work includes the development of positions paper.

Mr. Thyen also shared some very interesting personal experiences and perceptions towards government relations activities. His presentation ended with the chance to ask questions and to discuss those. Among others, we discussed Trianel's shareholder structure as well as the topics of investment security and trade-offs between competition and regulation. Finally, we got the opportunity to see the company's offices and the electricity trading floor.

**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION – NATO**

Visiting the NATO headquarters in Brussels certainly ranks among the highlights of the excursion. As being one of the world's major political and military alliances, military operations are often the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about the NATO. However, the interesting speeches delivered by Guido Brückelmann, Eckart Blaurock and Lorenz Meyer-Minnemann offered a different view on the organization and provided very illuminating information about the work of the permanent delegation of Germany to the NATO as well as the NATO's international staff. Regarding the seminar's topic "European Energy Policy" the main issues of concern for the NATO proved to be very similar to those discussed within the European Union. Particularly in the light of the current Ukraine crisis, topics on energy security and diversification of energy supply are raised more frequently. These concerns are only part of a new variety of threats and challenges the

NATO is facing in the 21st century. In order to effectively manage the increasingly dynamic security environment, constant adaptations as well as the fostering of global partnerships and cooperation are essential for the future work of the NATO.

**TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2014**

## **COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

On Tuesday morning we visited the Council of the European Union. By that, we could gain an insight into the view of one of the most important official institutions of the European Union in the field of energy policy. After giving a general instruction to European energy policy (for example by mentioning that there is an article about energy policy included in the Treaty of Lisbon), Mrs Inéz Hempel, DG E - B, Energy Policies, Atomic Questions, Information Society, explained the aims of the European energy policy. By quoting a report of the European Commission, she made clear that the member states of the European Union are highly dependent on other states outside the Union regarding energy supply. For example, the European Union imports 90% of its oil and 66% of its gas. Nevertheless the member states are also dependent on uranium for nuclear energy. That is the reason why energy security is very important according to the Council of the European Union. How can energy dependence be reduced?

Hempel clarified that it is impossible to abstain from the import of oil and gas. However, she underlined that the EU member states have to speak with one voice in order to improve their bargaining power vis-à-vis the producing countries. Moreover, the member states have to strengthen their energy efficiency and the Union has to diversify its imports.

After Hempel's presentation, we had the possibility to ask questions and had a discussion. One student for example raised the question that the diversification is very expensive because, among others, new gas pipelines have to be build. Besides, Hempel depicted the dependence-relationship as two-sided instead of one-sided, because the producers were highly dependent on the money that they got from the importing countries. According to Hempel, this reduces significantly the risk that a producing country will stop its exports to Europe. Nevertheless, she made clear that the economic strength, which is the foundation of the European's significance in international politics, was highly dependent on the uninterrupted energy supply. Thus, energy security which can be achieved by the diversification of import is a very important aim of the European energy policy. To sum it up, the visit of the Council of the European Union gave us an interesting insight into its position on European energy policy.

## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG ENERGY**

The second point in the program was a visit to the Directorate-General for Energy (DG Energy) which is a directorate of the European Commission responsible for the development and the implementation of European energy policy. First a presentation on the energy wholesale market was given. The recent developments in the internal energy market, like the increasing amount of renewable energy sources or the development of a stronger competition, were illustrated.

Furthermore, an overview on common rules for the internal energy market, e.g. competition law or REMIT (Regulation on wholesale energy market integrity and transparency), was provided. This was followed by an interesting discussion on different topics, for example the development of a capacity mechanism, the diversification of energy sources and supply or on subsidy schemes for renewable energy sources in different countries.

Afterwards, a second presentation on energy policy in general and on the 2030 proposal was held. After an introduction to the energy policy triangle, which includes security of supply, sustainability and competitiveness and shapes the priorities in energy policy, different goals (e.g. to increase energy efficiency or to diversify energy supply) were mentioned. The energy and climate targets for 2020 were presented and compared to the new 2030 framework. The main elements of the 2030 framework are a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 40 % and an increase of renewable energy sources by at least 27 % until 2030. It was illustrated how these goals can be reached and what possible challenges could arise.

In a final discussion a closer look was taken on different relevant issues like the effectiveness of renewable energy sources, the decoupling of GDP and emission or a possible reformation of the European Emission Trading Scheme.

## **PERMANENT DELEGATION OF TURKEY TO THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)**

Mr. Mustafa Osman Turan, Deputy Permanent Delegate, not only gave a highly interesting and seemingly honest speech but also dedicated himself attentively to a variety of our questions covering a wide range of topics. Thereby he contributed immensely to a significant gain in our understanding of the political and economic relations between Turkey and the EU, Turkey's foreign policy concerning its non-EU neighbours and Turkey's energy policies. Mr. Turan kept his own speech short in order to give the audience a chance to push the discussion in a desired direction. Throughout his discourse, Mr. Turan frequently emphasized Turkey's profound willingness to participate in the European Union and pointed out similarities as well as strong historical ties between the countries. Moreover, he criticized the Europeans for misperceiving Turkey's culture and religion in a negative sense. He argued that this leads to the EU overlooking the potential gains that an intense partnership could bring.

Upon request, Mr. Turan commented on the democratic differences between Turkey and the EU, particularly in regards to the recent political developments in Turkey (e.g. the protests accompanied by police violence at the Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul and the controversy concerning freedom of speech). These developments, paired with other factors such as the difficult relationship with Greece and Cyprus, caused decreasing support for Turkish membership from several EU countries, argued Turan. Furthermore, Mr. Turan touched on Turkey's position which is in favour of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a wide bilateral customs union, and the implementation of more extensive freedom for Turkish people to travel inside the EU. Mr. Turan supports a less rational and more ideal-based perception of the EU in order to aid in the struggling process of Europeanization. He described himself as a passionate European and suggested Europeans to consider "the bigger picture" and to follow the European tradition of pursuing peace, ra-

ther than to approach Europe with scepticism. To see a diplomat with interest in our view on current developments motivated each of us to further engage in the discussion. We could have easily filled another two hours of intense discussion about Turkey and the EU with Mr. Turan and thank him for this exciting discussion.

## **GDF SUEZ**

Arriving at one of the headquarters of GDF Suez (one is located in Brussels, one in Paris) was very exciting. We were able to hear five different presentations held by four different people.

First, we heard more general facts about the GDF Suez Group. GDF Suez is a global energy player and an expert operator in the three key sectors of electricity, natural gas and energy services. After this introduction, we heard more about their lobbying on the European level. GDF is always present in the drafting process of European energy policies and tries its best to influence the politicians. Therefore, GDF-lobbyists in Brussels write position papers on basically every environmentally related topic which is to be discussed on EU level and together with other lobbyists or even alone, GDF evolves own policies and presents them to the political leaders. In general, GDF aims to present itself as a reliable partner to the EU to have an impact on the legislation.

Presentations three and four were mostly based on GDF's position on the European emissions trading scheme (EU-ETS). It was highlighted that GDF Suez is strongly supporting the EU-ETS and that the group is interested in keeping it as efficient as possible. The last presentation centred on renewable energy support schemes. In the sector of renewable energy as well as in most other energy sectors, GDF is one of the leading players since the group started early to develop renewable energies and optimizing the energy efficiency of its production facilities.

## **WEDNESDAY, 18 JUNE 2014**

### **EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE**

In the morning of Wednesday 18 June, we were received at the European External Action Service, a building right next to the Schuman roundabout in the „EU zone“ of Brussels.

The first speaker was Mr. Brendan Devlin, energy security political advisor at the European Commission DG Energy. His presence at the EEAS, the youngest EU institution only established after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, represented very well the different natures of different EU institutions. Simply put, the EU Commission provides expertise (such as Mr. Devlin's) and the EEAS is the body to use it in day-to-day EU external action. That is also what Mr. Devlin pointed out in the Q&A and called for even more EEAS input, because EEAS is able to provide more diplomatic tact and has a broader point of view than the experts in the EU Commission. As for the EU energy policy, the goal seen in Brussels is to provide „strategic independence“ for the EU Member States. Energy security will be provided when EU Member States will be able to make any

political decisions they wish without the need to take into account energy matters such as security of supply. There is also an inner dimension to energy security - that is resilience of the grids, which is to be tested in the future with the rising share of renewables in the energy mix. To assure strategic independence, the EU pursues as much supply diversification as possible – new countries, new exporters, and new routes. To name some possible new sources, the Southern Corridor and Africa were named, together with the USA and some Middle Eastern countries. As the political advisor stated, the EU wants to be prepared for a worst-case scenario, which is possible.

The second speaker was a communication advisor at the EEAS, who provided more general information about the functioning of the EEAS. The seminar group learned that EEAS has around 1400 people at the Brussels HQ and some 1900 in its 141 delegations worldwide. Key priority areas for EU external action are the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood, the EU's strategic partners around the world and new challenges, such as cyber-security, water, education as well as the omnipresent energy issues.

## **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

The first topic at our visit to the European Parliament (EP) in Brussels was a general introduction by the Visits and Seminar Unit of the DG "Communication". After a brief overview of the history of the European Union, current issues to be tackled after the election of the European Parliament in May 2014 were discussed such as Euro-sceptic vs. pro-European approaches. The newly introduced competition among four candidates of the four biggest party groups racing for the Presidency of the Commission was also mentioned.

The European Parliament is located at three places: Luxembourg (serving administrative purposes), Strasbourg and Brussels (both serving as working seats). The latter were introduced in the presentation when talking about the framework of the legislative procedure and the EP's interaction with other EU institutions. The different party groups in the EP were also presented with a special emphasis on their daily business. The work of the Members of the Parliament is organized within 20 different committees that report to their groups. According to their recommendation, members of the different groups usually vote within their group.

The daily business of the EP was the topic of our following visit to the plenary hall. The discussions in plenum are translated into 24 languages. Working languages are English, French and German. Before 2004, French was the main working language in the Parliament and in the offices of the MEP's. Due to the membership of various countries from Eastern Europe since 2004, English is now the most common working language in the European parliament.

## CONCLUSION

The THESEUS Europe@Work excursion 2014 leaves the participating students with six days of new insights in the making and challenges of European energy policy. The evaluation of the seminar and follow-up discussions show that the students positively look back to the THESEUS Europe@Work excursion 2014. All students consider the excursion as having been very useful. They value the chance of having gotten direct insights in institutions involved in the shaping of European energy policy and having been able to exchange views with political actors and international excursion participants. Both the institutions and companies visited and the prevailing working atmosphere were valued as having been very good. Especially highly appreciated was the interdisciplinary and international approach of the seminar. For some, having the opportunity to get to know considerations in European energy policy by a discipline that they are not studying (either by the economic or political field) was regarded as having been the most valuable aspect of the whole seminar.

All in all, the excursion can be considered to have been a great success and of high benefit for the political and economic students. All of them noted that they would recommend the excursion to other possible participants in upcoming years.