

## **REPORT ON THESEUS EUROPE@WORK 2014: EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY**

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

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. It 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.