

European Union: functioning, integration and experience – “European Forum Alpbach”

Every year since 1945, the “European Forum Alpbach” has been held in the Austrian mountain village of Alpbach. Austria's most beautiful village lies in a picturesque location



on a sunny plateau some 1,000 meters above the sea level. For two weeks annually Alpbach turns into a counterpart of Davos, a platform for exchanging ideas and experience of the EU experts. This year the Forum hosted more than 500 participants, me and the other girl were the only people to represent Britain at the Forum. Topic of the Forum for this year was ‘Construction and Reality’, concentrating on the implications of the recent worlds economic crisis on societal development.

Speakers and participants of the Forum represent all parts of the world and specialize in various subject areas, such as: science, economics and politics. Among the most prominent speakers at the Forum taking part in discussion and offering solutions to resolving global issues were Secretary-General of the UN Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Austrian President Mr. Heinz Fischer.

The programme of the European Forum Alpbach was divided into three main parts:

- 1) Seminar Week - Up to fourteen seminars dedicated to various scientific disciplines. One aspect of the theme is discussed with renowned scientists in each seminar over six half-days.
- 2) Alpbach Symposiums - These two-three day conferences deal with Architecture, Technology, Politics, Health and Economy. To supplement these, special workshops are held on Banking.



*Secretary-General of the UN
Mr. Ban Ki-moon giving a speech at Alpbach Forum*

- 3) Alpbach Summer School - dedicated to theme “European Law and European Integration” focusing on junior-senior students and recent graduates.

Youth participation in the Forum was ensured through a scholarship programme financed through donations from foundations, businesses and public spending. All participants are welcome to join the Alpbach Initiative Groups and Clubs, which embrace participants of the European Forum Alpbach and exist in numerous European countries. Kyiv Initiative Group is known to be as one of the most active ones having resources to hold its own summer forums targeting youth from different countries.

I had an honor to be one of the participants of this prestigious event participating in the Summer School on European Law and European Integration aimed at introducing students to the fundamentals of the EU functioning, enhancing analytical skills with respect to identifying social, economic and legal issues of the EU integration. This summer school is the only one of its kind in Austria and is run in English and German. Participants get a unique opportunity to immerse into a multicultural environment, learn from the international team of prominent scholars, politicians and civil servants.

Program of the Forum was also accompanied by various cultural and entertaining activities. As it has already been turned into a tradition, every year on the 24th of August, Ukrainian delegation launches celebration of Ukraine`s Independence day, which has become the best known cultural night in Alpbach. Other than that, participants had a chance to have a ride on electric motor bicycles and cars, take part in various brainstorming activities and even a soccer tournament. Citing Roman Dusyk, who was one of the participants on the Forum: ‘European Forum Alpbach has become a great life challenging experience which managed to combine studies, networking and leisure, so that even August snow couldn`t overturn a positive spirit of the event’!

I specially express my gratitude and thank Queen Mary University of London for the support and allocating me an award from the Expeditions Fund. This trip may not have happened if not QMUL which kindly helped me to cover the travel expenses. It was my greatest honour to participate in this prestigious event and represent Queen Mary University of London on the international arena!