



# Newsletter



## Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence - FIU

THIS ISSUE

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## Preparing the EU for the World of Tomorrow

Belgian Presidency of the European Union

In early December, MEUCE hosted the visit of a diplomatic delegation to Miami. Five experts on science, education, and economics from European countries and the EU Delegation visited FIU's School of Engineering and Computing, the National Hurricane Center, and the Atlantic Oceanography Meteorological Laboratory. In FIU's Management and Advanced Research Center, Bart Deelen, an expert in fields such as business, science, and environment, presented to students and faculty on the scientific and technological priorities of the European Union in the time of the Belgian EU presidency. Belgium assumed the union's rotating presidency on July 1st and is handing it over to Hungary on January 1st, 2011.

Bart Deelen has followed the European countries' ambitions to combine their strengths in research for decades. He wrote his dissertation on the EUREKA project, a pan-European initiative to foster innovation that was implemented in the mid-1980s. "It is interesting to note," Mr. Deelen pointed out, "that we have very similar debates in this day and age on both sides of the Atlantic regarding the necessity to join forces in order to stay on top of technological progress."

At the outset of his speech Mr. Deelen emphasized that the current economic and monetary crisis greatly complicated any efforts to push forward with scientific and tech-

nological long-term strategies. Throughout Belgium's leadership period, issues such as the housing and currency crises as well as high unemployment firmly remained at the center of attention of the media, the public, and policymakers.

However, Mr. Deelen reassured the audience that the EU's commitment to innovation was to remain very strong. He gave a brief overview regarding fields in which governments and scientists are particularly active at present. Currently, for example, the EU is defining the union's vision for space exploration and specifying the role of the European Space Agency (ESA). These deliberations might also affect the state of Florida's infrastructure for astronautics. Also, the EU is think-

ing about how European space technology could be used in order to improve African agriculture—for example by means of satellite-based documentation of topographical and climatic changes.

Other current priorities include efforts to simplify European patent law and to enable researchers to move more freely from one university to another. "Work on promising scientific programs is in progress, and we will even intensify our efforts," Mr. Deelen concluded. "Once the current crisis lies behind us, I am convinced that topics such as knowledge and innovation will be right at the heart of European policymaking." (S. Kube)



Bart Deelen, Business Development Manager  
Embassy of Belgium

## European Delegation Visits Miami and FIU



From left to right: Bart Deelen, Embassy of Belgium; Astrid-Christina Koch, European Delegation to the U.S.A. in Washington D.C.; Jacqueline Signorini, Embassy of France; Martin Pizinger, Embassy of the Czech Republic; and Viljar Lubi, Embassy of Estonia

From Dec. 8th to 10th, the Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence at FIU hosted a delegation from different European embassies and the European Union Delegation to the USA in Washington D.C. The delegation was led by Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch, Science Counselor, Science, Technology and Education, Delegation of the European Union to the USA in Washington D.C. ; The delegation was composed of the following esteemed guests: Bart Deelen, Business Development Manager, Em-

bassy of Belgium; Viljar Lubi, Counselor for Economic Affairs and Science, Embassy of Estonia; Jacqueline Signorini, Attache for Scientific Cooperation and Higher Education, Embassy of France; Martin Pizinger, Political Officer, Embassy of the Czech Republic.

The Delegation's tight agenda included the following: a visit to FIU's School of Engineering and Computing, a lunch meeting with FIU's faculty and administrators, as well as a breakfast meeting with the Euro-

pean consular corps, two networking events, a lecture by delegation member Bart Deelen, and visits to the NOAA National Hurricane Center and the Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory (AOLM).

Upon arriving at FIU School of Engineering and Computing, the delegation was welcomed by Dr. Giri Narasimhan, Associate Dean Res. & Grad. Studies; Dr. Caesar Abishdid, Director of External Programs; and Erik Salna, Associate Director, International Hurricane Research Center. After a very productive meeting, the members of the delegation toured the engineering facilities and were shown the Wall of Wind, where Dr. Arindam Gan Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Dept. of CEE and IHRC, Director, Lab for Wind Engrg. Research; Dr. Girma Bitsuamlak, Assistant Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering; and Erik Salna, Associate Director, International Hurricane Research Center, hosted our guests and answered their questions. Afterwards, Dr. Kinzy Jones, Director, Mechanical and Materials Engineering; and Neal Ricks, Nanofabrication Lab Manager, gave the members a tour of the Nano Fabrication Lab, followed by a tour of the Biomedical Engineering Lab hosted by Dr. James Byrne.



At FIU School of Engineering and Computing: in front of the new turbines of the Wall of Wind



At FIU Nanofabrication Laboratory





James Franklin, Hurricane Specialist Unit Branch Chief answers questions posed by members of the delegation



From left to right: Viljar Lubi, Martin Pizinger, Bart Deelen, James Franklin, Astrid-Christina Koch, and Jacqueline Signorini

At a luncheon meeting held at FIU's Faculty Club, the members of the delegation were able to meet with FIU's faculty and administrators and European community members. Joining the delegation at this luncheon were Manuel Molina, Honorary Consul of Belgium; Mrs. Metchild Ewert, Deputy Consul General, Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany; Ms. Erbi Blanco-True, Director of Community Development, Great Florida Bank; Dr. Nicol Rae, Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. John Stack, Director, School of International and Public Affairs; Dr. Rebecca Friedman, Co-director, Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence, FIU; Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Associate Director, Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence, FIU; Dr. Michael Heithaus, Director, School of Environment, Art, and Society; Dr. Sanford Markham, Executive Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Herbert Wertheim, College of Medicine; Dr. Anahid Kulwicki, Director of Nursing Programs, Nursing and Health Sciences; Dr. Georges Philippidis, Associate Director, Applied Research Center (ARC); and Mr. Erik Salna, Asso-

ciate Director, International Hurricane Research Center. The following day, the delegation was also invited to a breakfast meeting with the European consular corps at the Consulate General of France. The breakfast was graciously sponsored by Hon. Gaël de Maisonneuve, Consul General of France.

The delegation attended two local networking events. Hosted by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, The Chairman's Circle & Trustee Reception was held at downtown's Chophouse, where the members were guests of honor and had a chance to network with members of the Miami business community at large. The members were also invited to attend a cocktail reception at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual UM Innovation Technology Showcase, where

they networked with members of the medical and scientific community.

Mr. Bart Deelen, Business Development Manager, Embassy of Belgium, gave a lecture titled "The Science and Technology Priorities during the Belgium Presidency of The Council of the European Union" at FIU on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. The lecture was well attended by both FIU students and faculty. Dr. Deelen was impressed by the quality of students at our university.

Capping their visit to our University and city, the delegation visited the National Hurricane Center, where James Franklin, Hurricane Specialist Unit Branch Chief, offered them a behind-the-scenes look at the world of hurricane predicting and tracking. The delegation members were also graciously hosted by Dr. Robert Atlas, Director, Dr. Alan Leonardi, Deputy Director, who led them on a tour of the Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory.

In short, the delegation's visit to FIU and Miami was very successful thanks to all involved. "This was a great experience, and we are looking forward to coming back. Miami is a great city and FIU a world-class university," stated Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch.

(C. Caly-Sanchez)



From left to right: Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Astrid-Christina Koch, Bart Deelen, Jacqueline Signorini, Hon. Gaël de Maisonneuve, Hon. Countess Eva Kendeffy, Hon. Kevin McGurgan, Martin Pizinger

## Exciting Start for Polish Lecture Series



Promotes Polish Culture in the United States:  
Philanthropist Lady Blanka A. Rosenstiel

This November witnessed the inauguration of an exciting new project: The Polish Lecture Series. This new series is the result of an ongoing collaboration among the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Miami, the American Institute of Polish Culture, the European Studies Program at FIU, and MEUCE. It is thanks especially to Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, Honorary Consul of Poland, Founder and President of the American Institute of Polish Culture, Founder and President of the Chopin Foundation.

MEUCE asked Lady Blanka about her past and present as well as her future hopes for the Polish Lecture Series at FIU. Arriving in the United States in 1946, Lady

Blanka has devoted her life to expanding the arts and advancing understanding of Polish culture and history. When she and her late husband, Lewis S. Rosenstiel, arrived in Florida in 1964, Lady Blanka told us, Florida was "a cultural desert." She did a lot to change that.

She recalls her mother asking her about whether her philanthropic projects included spreading knowl-

edge about her native land. "If you do not do it, no-one will," her mother instructed her. Lady Blanka certainly took her mother's words very seriously and founded the American Institute of Polish Culture in 1972 and the Chopin Foundation in 1975. Since then she has been devoting her life to sharing her love and knowledge of Poland and the arts with communities in Miami and beyond. This year, she has turned to FIU and we are thrilled to be able to help execute her next vision with the Polish Lecture Series.

The first lecture, "Poles and Stalinist Terror: Memory and Oblivion," took place on November 4<sup>th</sup> and was given by Timothy Snyder. Professor of History at Yale University, Timothy Snyder has authored many books on the political history of central Europe. He spoke at FIU to a packed audience of over 140 students, faculty

m e m b e r s , administrators and community members about the complex relationship among events in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s. This is terrain explored in his latest book, "Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin." In it he tells the brutal story of what happened in the

Eastern half of Europe in the twentieth century. He weaves together the narrative of the impact that Nazi atrocities and Stalinist brutality had on the populations residing in the spaces often called the "borderlands," which stretch "from Poznan in the West to Smolensk in the East," including modern Poland, the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Belarus, and parts of Western Russia. He shared with the audience in the Graham Center Ballroom some of the profound details in the book regarding the experiences of Poles during those tragic decades.

Presenting his ideas on a later, but no less complex, period of Polish history, Dr. Padraic Kenney of Indiana University delivered, on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the second talk in the Series: "The Secrets to



Talked about Poland's positive prospects:  
Dr. Padraic Kenney



From left to right: Dean Kenneth G. Furton, Dr. Timothy Snyder, Hon. Lady A. Blanka Rosenstiel, Dr. John Stack, Paul Landrum, Magdalena A. Von Freytag

Solidarity's Success: Poland on the World Stage since 1980." In his analysis of Poland's recent past, present and future, he struck a very positive note as he tackled some misconceptions about Poland and Poles themselves, including stereotypes about pessimism, victimhood, and an insistent focus on the past. Rather, in today's Poland, with its relatively healthy economy and solid place within EU structures of governance, Kenney finds creativity and resilience. Indeed, he painted a strikingly optimistic picture of contemporary Polish society.

(S. Kube)



## The EU — A Role Model for the Countries of Asia?



Dr. Thomas Berger  
Boston University

Entitled “Postwar Japan and Germany in the Context of EU External Relations,” last month’s Roundtable discussion brought two experts on European and

Asian Politics to FIU. Some sixty students and faculty gathered in the Green Library to hear this roundtable, the second such collaborative event put together by the MEUCE and Asian Studies at FIU. The event was sponsored by the School of International and Public Affairs, the Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence (MEUCE), and the Asian Studies Program.

Dr. Paul A. Kowert, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director in the Department of Politics and International Relations at FIU, welcomed the audience and introduced two colleagues of his, Doctors Thomas Berger and Katja Weber. Dr. Berger is a specialist on German and Japanese politics and teaches International Relations at Boston University. German-born Dr. Weber, who has co-authored a book with Dr. Kowert on Germany’s role in Europe, teaches International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. One major theme that ran through both presentations was

Asian countries’ opportunities to establish a political structure comparable to the European Union.

“Since the 1980s, many in Asia have expressed their desire to implement such a stabilizing political and economic structure,” said Dr. Berger. “However, this has to be a goal for the distant future. Asia can look at the EU as some kind of model, yet the type of integration we see in Europe is not going to happen there any time soon.”

Dr. Berger gave several examples of what he views as obstacles on the way towards an Asian union. He pointed out that the integration of such a large, populous, and powerful country as China would likely become a challenge. He also argued that those Asian countries which would be likely to form a union were far more disparate in terms of living standards, form of government, and military aspirations than the nations of postwar Europe. Additionally, Dr. Berger said he was not convinced that the willingness to give up a certain amount of sovereignty and transfer political power to a central government had reached a sufficient degree among Asian nations as to

work seriously towards Asian integration

Dr. Katja Weber took the opportunity to present and discuss a paper that she published recently in *Issues and Studies*, a Social Science Quarterly. She argued that political realities in Asia differ greatly from the situation in postwar Europe. To demonstrate this, she compared Japan’s and Germany’s postwar reconciliation efforts particularly in regard to remembrance, restitution, and apology.

“While Germany acknowledged responsibility for war crimes and destruction, in Japan there was a political trend that emphasized the necessity of freeing Asia from Western influence,” explained Dr. Weber. She continued by explaining that: “There were also differences in how the two former allies

tried to come to terms with the past. Japan used an expression that would translate into ‘remorse’ rather than ‘apology.’ Germany gave formal apologies and illegalized the denial of the Holocaust.” Reiterating Dr. Berger’s formula that “Asia is not Europe,” Dr. Weber argued that European integration provides Asian nations a blueprint for dealing with their historical legacies.



Dr. Katja Weber  
Georgia Tech



Dr. Katja Weber and Dr. Thomas Berger discussed similarities and differences between European unification and a future process of integration in Asia

(S. Kube)

## Exchange Students from Europe Explore Miami

The beginning of the academic year is also the time when many international students from partner universities arrive at the Modesto A. Maidique campus. For decades, FIU's Office of Education Abroad has worked towards establishing partnership programs with many universities in foreign countries. The International Student Exchange Program allows FIU students to visit universities in European countries such as Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Germany. While program participants remain enrolled in FIU, they become familiar with academic traditions in far-away places and oftentimes learn new languages.

In exchange, partner universities send an equal number of students to Miami. For most of the undergraduates, it is their first time to

**Ahmed Ben-Zineb** (23), from the French SKEMA Business School in Nice: Friends of mine who had studied here in the past recommended FIU to me, and I am happy to be here. I also like Miami's downtown district a lot. As this is the last term of my current program, I can only stay here until Christmas—but I can see me come back to live here permanently at a later point in my life.



Ahmed Ben-Zineb thinks he might relocate to Miami at some point in the future

**Ignacio Tagle Hernández** (21), studies Physical Education at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid: "It never ceases to amaze me how widespread American cities are compared to our big cities in Europe. At FIU, I like the different approach to performance assessment: At home, there would be only one big test at the end of the term. Here, there are midterms and quizzes. Personally, I think it is easier to pass courses with a good grade if professors evaluate the effort that you put into a number of assignments. Thus, I think university education in the US is more about teaching students to develop a solid work ethic rather than just testing their knowledge at a specific point in time.

leave the "Old World" and live in one of America's most famous metropolises. Usually, they join FIU's student community for one or two terms, thus fully experiencing US-style campus life. American institutions such as college sports, mixers, and fraternities are not at all common elements of college culture in the homelands of many of the visitors. For students from European countries in particular, Miami's fame in popular culture is another common reason why they choose to come here.

For those young international students who are enrolled in a partner university, tuition is waived for the duration of their stay. The Office of Education Abroad organizes on-campus accommodation for them and assists with managing the large amount of bureaucracy. During the students' stay at FIU, however, the Office does not want to regulate their lives more than necessary. The visitors are encour-



Enjoying himself in downtown Miami: Ignacio Tagle Hernández from Madrid

aged to develop organizational and communication skills on their own. Says Magnolia Hernandez, the Office's Interim Director: "Our school's motto is 'Worlds Ahead,' and this is exactly what we are working towards: Providing students with opportunities to develop leadership qualities and international curriculums." (S. Kube)

**Annette Scott** (25) studies Hospitality Management at the University of Stavanger: I like the people here on and off campus. They are always curious about my native country. I came to FIU because I always fancied going to Miami. I like the city as it is exciting and, substantially different from my hometown. The city center looks very modern, downtown is amazing for shopping and clubbing, and I very much enjoy the warm climate. Oh yes, and despite the fact we too have long coast lines in Norway: the beach here so much better!



From Norway's cold into Miami's heat: Annette Scott





## South Florida Students Gearing Up for Euro Challenge

Some sixty students from eight South Florida schools spent an intensive and long preparation day in the Graham Center's Conference Room on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The expression of concentration and thoughtfulness on many faces hinted at the fact that the students had become aware that their decision to enter in this year's Euro Challenge competition would indeed pose at least a medium-term challenge for them and their teachers.

MEUCE Co-Director Rebecca Friedman and Associate Director Christine Caly-Sanchez welcomed students and teachers from four counties: Miami Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie. "We are very grateful for the generous support that we receive from the EU Delegation to the US in Washington and from the Federal Reserve System," Mrs. Caly-Sanchez said, "since their commitment enables us to organize the competition for the fourth year in a row."

David Anderson, the Executive Vice President of Working in Support of Education, a non-governmental organization which has helped to coordinate the Euro Challenge since its first installment six years ago, advised the audience as to how to properly prepare for the competition. Anderson, who had flown in from New York, appealed to the students to accept the challenge professionally and with dedication. "The testimonials that we have received from participants in previous years," Mr. Anderson emphasized, "were overwhelmingly positive. By making this your project, you will increase your knowledge and practice your research skills, make new friends—and there are truly great prizes to be won." Successful teams stand a chance to win cash prizes of up to \$1,250 per per-



From left to right: Christine Caly-Sanchez (MEUCE Associate Director), David Anderson (Working in Support of Education), Dr. Rebecca Friedman (MEUCE Co-Director), Eva Horelová (Delegation of the EU to the US)

son and maybe even a trip to Europe.

The main objective of the program is to familiarize ninth- and tenth-graders with the basic mechanisms of economy in the context of the European Union, and to help them better understand the interplay between economic developments and political history. "In this regard," Mr. Anderson pointed out, "this is a perfect time for joining the Euro challenge as the current monetary crisis in Europe will leave its trace in the history of the EU."

Basically, the challenge for participating students consists of three parts. Teams formed by three to five students have to firstly describe the current economic situation across the seventeen nation states which have adopted the Euro as their common currency, secondly illustrate one particular economic issue using the example of a particular EU country, and

thirdly—to recommend their own approach to tackle the problem. A jury of experts ranks the teams on the basis of a presentation and a Question-and-Answer section.

Eva Horelová, who coordinates the Euro challenge for the EU Delegation to the US in Washington, provided students and teachers an insightful summary of European integration. She outlined the process from early economic allegiances in the 1950s to the steady expansion of the 2000s.

Also, Ms. Horelová talked about the tremendous efforts that were necessary to tie the countries of Europe closer together. The fact that this union of currently 27 countries has 23 official languages best illustrates the cultural diversity on the continent. "There are many differences," Ms. Horelová concluded, "but also a firm will to shape our future together." (See interview on page 8) **(S. Kube)**



Some sixty students from eight South Florida schools attended MEUCE's Euro Challenge orientation in the Graham Center

## To Be European—or to Be “from Europe”?



On November 10, MEUCE hosted approximately fifty students and faculty members for a lively discussion of

the question “What Does it Mean to Be European?”. Four of FIU’s graduate students—whose roots are in Europe—offered their own thoughts on whether or not they embrace, for themselves, a transnational European identity. International Relations doctoral student Simona E. Merati explained that while she felt first and foremost “Italian” especially while living abroad, many of her generation embraced continental and regional identities rather than national ones.

Pierre Losson, a French graduate student in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, provided a strikingly plausible answer to the question what made him European: “It says so on my passport.” He also said he appreciated not having to present it anymore when crossing borders within the EU.

Having come to the US after the Civil War had devastated his homeland in the 1990s, Political Science student Mirsad Krijestorac from former Yugoslavia stated: “I do not think about being European anymore. I support the EU as an institution, but personally, I have begun to feel American.”

Bilal Ciplak, a Political Science student from Turkey, pointed out that even though his country is an-

icipating its integration into the EU, Turks shared many traditions with people in the Middle East.

“Maybe,” Ciplak offered, “a person can have more than one identity.”



Discussed the problem of European identity:  
Mirsad Krijestorac (former Yugoslavia), Bilal Ciplak (Turkey),  
Pierre Losson (France), Simona E. Merati (Italy)

(S. Kube)

## “Connecting Tomorrow’s Generations of Leaders”



Eva Horelová

Eva Horelová is affiliated with the Delegation of the European Union to the US in Washington, DC. She works in the position of Deputy Head of Press and Public Diplomacy and is also Deputy Spokesperson.

When she visited FIU in early December to talk about this year’s Euro Challenge, MEUCE took the chance to talk with her about herself and the program she promotes.

**MEUCE: What professional path took you from a small town in the Czech Republic to the EU delegation in Washington?**

Horelová: After completing a degree in German Studies at the Charles University in Prague I did an internship with the European Parliament. Then, I entered in a com-

petition and landed a job with the EU Commission in Brussels. For five years I worked in the Department of External Relations, where I was chiefly concerned with public relations and image campaigns. Three months ago, I joined the Delegation in the US.

**MEUCE: One of your tasks is the organization of the Euro Challenge competition. Why is this initiative so important to the EU?**

Horelová: We have a profound desire to reach out to students and increase young Americans’ knowledge on the European continent, European integration, and our common currency. We want to foster a better understanding between the continents and we think that enthusing US students for the history that is in the making on the other side of the Atlantic is a nice way of bringing tomorrow’s generations of leaders closer together.

**MEUCE: According to the experiences you have gathered so far, how well are American pupils informed by and large**

**about the EU by the time they start preparing for the competition?**

Horelová: Some of this year’s team members had participated in last year’s competition, so they already have expertise to some degree. And it always astonishes me how many of our young competitors, who are all in the ninth or tenth grade, have already been to Europe, either with their schools or for vacation. So they know about the Euro as our common currency, to give one example, because they have already had Euros in their wallets. However, what we are trying to do is encourage students to gain a broad perspective on European integration.

**MEUCE: How successful are these efforts?**

Horelová: In South Florida, we started four years ago with eight schools participating. Fourteen schools have registered this year, so interest is growing steadily. On the national level, I think thirteen states are taking part this year. But we are aiming to get all fifty states involved eventually. (S. Kube)



## European Union Reaches Out to American Researchers

Although the Framework Programme is a long-standing initiative of the European Union, a certain portion of the academic community in North America has so far remained unaware of its existence. Basically, the program offers support to researchers in a variety of fields who are keen to work as members of transatlantic teams. In mid-October, Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch of the European Union Delegation to the United States in Washington visited FIU in order to inform scholars about the program's multiple offerings.

Originally, the Framework Programme was implemented by the European Commission some forty years ago in order to bring scholars from different European countries together. In 1998, as part of the EU-US Science and Technology Agreement, the program was then expanded to also foster partnerships between American researchers and scientists in European countries.

The Seventh EU Framework Programme seeks to intensify such collaborations. Core areas in which the EU desires closer transatlantic cooperation include health (regarding problems such as aging and obesity), food (including agriculture and biotechnology), energy, space, security, and transport, among several others. The initiative's main objectives are to help researchers develop and advance in all stages of their careers, to provide them access to infrastructures in support of their research, and to offer the results of research to those who make political decisions.

American participants are required to submit a proposal which will be subject to peer reviewing. One prerequisite for a successful application is that the team includes three independent partners from different EU member states and associated states (such as Israel, for example)—the researcher from the US would be the fourth party in such a construct. Applicants must also demonstrate the need for financial support.

Researchers who wish to address topics within the program's fields are encouraged to obtain information on the Seventh Framework Programme online at [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/home_en.html) (S. Kube)



Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch

Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch visited FIU to introduce the EU program to researchers and graduate students at the Labor Center and the College of Engineering and Computing. The MEUCE News-

letter talked with her about her work for the EU delegation.

**MEUCE: What is the professional path that leads to a position with the EU delegation?**

Koch: I completed a Ph.D. program in Natural Sciences at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, Germany. I then moved to Boulder, Colorado where I conducted my own research on ultra-thin films. After having worked for the German Ministry of Finance, I arrived at the European Commission and became the Program Officer in the field New Materials and Nano-Technology. I guess you could say it was an interesting professional journey.

**MEUCE: What are you concerned with if you do not visit universities to talk about EU programs for researchers?**

Koch: Giving presentations is only a minor aspect of my job. Primarily, I report to the EU in Brussels about the latest scientific developments and trends in the US. Also,

some EU member states have Science Counselors seconded to Washington and I am trying to coordinate Initiatives with them.

**MEUCE: What is the general trend among the academic community in the US regarding co-operations with the EU?**

Koch: Unfortunately, common knowledge about the opportunities provided by the EU is still too limited—that is why we have to spread the word. It is one main objective of the Framework Programme to strengthen ties with American universities as we want to work with the most brilliant minds of the present and the future. This could never be achieved if we just looked for talent in our own backyards. That is why the EU spends a lot of money on promising projects and the creation of long-term scientific infrastructures. Our ultimate goal is to bundle and internationalize promising research.

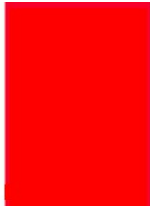
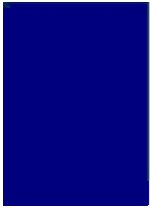
**MEUCE: Do American participants generally appreciate working with the EU?**

Koch: Yes, they do. American participation in the program is growing. Currently, US researchers are the second largest faction behind scientists from Russia. The researchers who have worked with us are usually very pleased with the excellent working conditions and the decreasing extent of bureaucracy. And one of our former grantees, the physicist Dr. Konstantin Novoselov, is one half of the duo who just received this year's Nobel Prize in Physics for groundbreaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material graphene.



Discussed funding opportunities offered by the European Union:  
Dr. Kincaid, Mrs. Caly-Sanchez, Dr. Kostadinova, Dr. Koch,  
Dr. Hristidis, and Dr. Smith

## Students Promote French Culture at FIU



The first week of November was an extremely busy week for Dr. Maria Antonieta Garcia, the Program Coordinator for French in FIU's Department of Modern Languages. Together with students involved in Le Cercle Français and the French Honor Society Pi Delta Phi, she organized this year's edition of French Week on the Modesto A. Maidique campus. Says Garcia: "It is quite an effort to organize such an eventful week, but we feel it is



Dr. Maria-Antonieta Garcia

absolutely worth it: We want to make students and faculty as well as members of the Miami community aware of what French culture has to offer to every-

one."

In 2010, the organizers put even more emphasis on the variety of the program. While students had the opportunity to attend special lectures on French linguistics and literature, a presentation of seminal French cheeses and screenings of films that feature famous actress Marion Cotillard drew many guests from off campus to FIU. Cotillard, who hails from the French city of Caen, established herself as a critically acclaimed actress in Hollywood in the course of the past decade and is now a household name in American cinema.

An exhibition of photographs taken by Cuban-Miami artist Manny Verdecia was certainly among the highlights of the week. Verdecia took the pictures when he visited

the Southern French city of Avignon in the summer. In the month of July, the long-standing Avignon Theater Festival brought some 100,000 artists and visitors from all across Europe to the beautiful city which is extremely rich in history. Verdecia spent many days just walking the streets, crafting visual documentations of the lives and occupations of artists performing on the street.

In the Café of the Frost Art Museum, Verdecia showcased some twenty photographs which beautifully captured the spirit of fringe theater: acrobats and pantomimes putting on make-up, preparing their equipment, performing to passers-by, contemplating in silence, and dining together at the end of their day.

Verdecia used film instead of digital technology to capture both lively and intimate scenes. His black and white photographs emanate a warm retro charm that corresponds to the timeless character of floor shows in the public sphere. Says the photographer: "It is only at festivals like the one in Avignon that you realize how many people actually make a living off performing on the street and working as members

of traveling theater companies. And it happens so often that people just walk by, hardly recognizing what these performers have to offer. My objective," he explains, "was to craft a visual tribute to those wonderful artists."

Verdecia's photos turned out to be quite popular with those more than one-hundred visitors at the event, and Dr. Maria Antonieta Garcia was very happy with the general appreciation of French Week which reunited her with her own mentor. "Dr. Marcelle Welch, who taught in FIU's Department of Modern Languages from the very beginning, gave a lecture on French language," she explained. "This was a moving moment since I was in her grammar class thirty years ago. Now I am a teacher in the department, and I know that some of my students will carry on the French tradition at FIU in the future..."

(S. Kube)



Manny Verdecia showcased his artistic photographs in the Café of the Frost Art Museum during French Week



## Czech Ambassador Talks about Revolutions, Now and Then

The School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), the Broad Lecture Series and the MEUCE brought a very special guest to FIU on November 17<sup>th</sup>: Ambassador Dr. Martin Palouš, the Permanent Representative for the Czech Republic to the United Nations, spoke to more than one-hundred students and faculty members about European integration and Eastern Europe's liberation two decades ago. ("International Politics in the 21st Century from the Perspective of a small state").



Described how he experienced the fall of the "Iron Curtain" in the former country of Czechoslovakia and elaborated on international politics in the 21st century: Czech Ambassador Dr. Martin Palouš

Dr. John F. Stack, SIPA's Director, introduced the honorable visitor as "a distinguished diplomat and brilliant thinker." Martin Palouš's biography is indeed outstanding: Born in Prague in 1950, he graduated from his hometown's Charles University as a Doctor of Natural Sciences. In 1977, he was one of the activists involved in the Charter 77 initiative, a group of oppositionists who openly attacked the lack of civil rights in Communist Czechoslovakia. After the fall of the "Iron Curtain" in 1989, he went on to serve the Czech Republic as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to the United States prior to representing his country at the United Nations. Dr. Palouš has also remained active in academia and will return to FIU in the Spring

as a Visiting Scholar with SIPA, offering students first-hand accounts on European and international politics.

Interestingly, the day of Ambassador Palouš's visit to FIU coincided with the 21st anniversary of the Velvet Revolution which peacefully ousted the Communist government of Czechoslovakia. In his own words, Martin Palouš perceived this moment in history as "miraculous." After having endured suppression by undemocratic regimes for some forty years, the nations of Eastern Europe reemerged as liberated societies after an astonishingly short period of quiet revolution. "We felt like inmates who were finally being released from a gigantic prison," the diplomat recalled.

At the same time, this moment also handed a tremendous challenge to those societies as the inner workings of entire countries had to be re-modeled: politics, law, the economy, the educational system—to name just a few. Martin Palouš provided a model of circles to explain the stages of such complex transformations. After the period of democratization and liberation of the market, the next step would be the replacement of existing states by newly formed nation states. As an example that "divorce can indeed be a happy option," as

the ambassador jokingly put it, his own native country split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. Ultimately, such new nation states would have to be integrated into alliances in order to prepare for new international conflicts.

Martin Palouš emphasized that alliances matter greatly at present as economic crises haunt the Western world and new global players emerge on the horizon. Solidarity and partnership among "those countries that really do care about democratic values," he argued, were vital for the stability of Western freedom and liberty. Something about the emphasis on the Cuba comparison and the perspective of "small states". (See the MEUCE Newsletter's next issue for an interview with Ambassador Palouš)

(S. Kube)



Left: (from left to right) Ambassador Dr. Martin Palouš, Alan S. Becker (Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic), Dr. John F. Stack (Director of SIPA), Dr. Rebecca Friedman (MEUCE Co-Director)

Right: The Frost Art Museum's Café was already crowded when Dr. Stack introduced the honorable visitor



## First-hand Information from Study-abroad Experts

In mid-November, MEUCE offered FIU students a unique chance to obtain information on study-abroad programs in several countries. The event, which was held at the Graham Center's large conference room, began as an information fair: Representatives from seven consulates gladly answered students' individual questions.

Subsequently, education experts from consulates and embassies of the EU member states of France, Spain, Italy, Poland as well as Japan and Canada gave insightful presentations on their respective countries' education and funding programs. Many students who are considering to add a study-abroad experience to their curriculums had the exclusive opportunity to gain first-hand advice from experienced professionals in the field.

Jean-Kely Paulhan from the French embassy in Washington, who is also the director of the L'Espace Campus France program, stressed the popularity of his country, citing the number of 250,000 foreign students who are currently enrolled in French schools. In con-

trast to the situation of young visitors in the US, international students are even entitled to take part-time jobs off campus.

Beata Paszyc, Honorary Vice Consul of the Republic of Poland, emphasized the comparatively low living costs and tuition fees in Poland. She also introduced the audience to outstanding Polish intellectuals and scientists, and gave a brief overview over the Polish cultural landscape.

Vilma Pesciallo from the Italian Consulate General's Student Office outlined the conditions for international students in a very objective matter. She explained that some

visitors had to prepare well for admission into universities but assured the audience that Italy's way of life was worth the effort.

Juan Jose Cogolludo-Diaz, the Spanish Consulate General's Education Advisor, reported on the very attractive Language and Culture Assistants program which provides 2,000 grants for North American applicants in the 2011/12 year. Those accepted usually assist teachers in schools and receive a monthly allowance of 700 Euros.

Miwako Patton, responsible for Public Relations in the Consulate General of Japan, stressed the complexity of her homeland which appeals to aficionados of old Asian history as much as to fans of popular culture. The Japanese government offers a variety of scholarships to undergraduate and graduate research students from the US. Georgette Pepper, the Cultural and Academic Relations Officer of the Consulate General, did away with Canadian stereotypes in a humorous manner. She presented Canada as a modern country with relatively low living costs, high living standards—and an astonishing nine-two universities for young Americans to apply to. **(S. Kube)**



Represented their countries at the MEUCE Consulates' Panel (left to right): Georgette Pepper (Canada), Juan Jose Cogolludo-Diaz (Spain), Vilma Pesciallo (Italy), Miwako Patton (Japan), Beata Paszyc (Poland), Christine Caly-Sanchez (MEUCE), Jean-Kely Paulhan (France)



Students took the opportunity to gain first-hand information on study-abroad programs



Each representative introduced his/her country's particular offers for US students



At the information fair students talked to the representatives directly





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*The Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence team wishes you and yours Happy Holidays and a great and prosperous New Year!*

## SOME OF OUR UPCOMING 2011 EVENTS



- Jan. 26      **Lecture on "Enlightenment Vitalism, Romantic Natural Philosophy and the Construction of Gender"**  
by Dr. Peter Hanns Reill, University of California
- Feb. 03      **Lecture on "Trafficking in Women's: A Global Challenge in a Regional Context"**  
by Dr. Emek M. Ucarer, Bucknell University
- Feb. 10      **Lecture on the Euro**  
By Dr. Tooze, Yale University
- Feb. 11      **Lech Valesa's Lecture**
- March 10-11 **Two-day EU Conference on "The European Union as a global actor in the post-Lisbon period"**
- March 22    **Euro Challenge : Local Florida Competition 2011**

For more details, you may visit [miamieuc.fiu.edu](http://miamieuc.fiu.edu) - [Events](#)