The Daily Bread

Opening ceremony

A morning unlike other mornings, the morning of the 11th of November saw Mr Black (also known as Monsieur Schwarz) welcoming the Model ASEM 2009 participants to Sciences Po Le Havre. In his speech, he admitted his lack of faith in the project till recently, congratulated the Organising Team for their perseverance, which made it immediate reality, and notably admitted to Franziska Zeiner, Head of Project, that “I am wrong and you are right”. Well done! He concluded by encouraging the participants to try and find a way to make ASEM useful, a challenge which we sincerely hope the participants will meet.

The second part of today’s opening ceremony saw “the honorary delegates” stepping out to give their opinion statements, which consisted of their country’s point of view with regards to the issues of green technologies, globalisation and Europe-Asia co-operation, as well as what they plan to achieve in this summit. The Daily Bread presents the not-so-very-different perspectives in a nutshell: dialogue and communication between Europe and Asia is important, globalisation is an imminent and relevant issue, and awareness of the environment is key in light of global warming and ecological damage in the world today. We are here at Model ASEM because “no country can stand alone in this world”, as Luxembourg stated, to achieve greater efficiency and equity in the world, where “small individual compromises are sometimes necessary for a collective success”, as put forth by Germany.

Role Models

We at The Daily Bread believe that the young participants should indeed take the organisers of this event as their role models. Today we would like to present to you Mr Wiese and Mr Chen.

Mr Wiese is a member of every organisation which has been introduced so far: he is a grassroots activist for the Global Changemakers programme of the British Council, a student at Sciences Po Le Havre, debates in his free time and is incredibly punctual. Andreas is fully confident in the Model ASEM 2009, best expressed in the phrase “you reap what you sow”, the assimilation of which they have apparently put a lot of work and effort into.

Patrick Chen, who many participants have mentioned loving because of his witty e-mails, is furthermore a fantastic role model for those attempting to pick up the diplomatic lingo; for example, when asked about the Austrian who was lost in Paris, he responded “well he’s not so much lost as just not being found”. However, he has been heard to utter the words “that’s what she said” which are definitely not part of the diplomatic lingo, at least not yet.
French culture

The 11th of November is a public holiday in France for a very good reason: it is the day of laying down of arms in WWI. As Mr Black pointed out, this is demonstrative of how Europe now celebrates reconciliation rather than victory.

The participants have also been given the chance to taste typical French food; crêpes were devoured with apparent satisfaction. We strongly recommend the Normandy variation of crêpes, which is served drizzled with calvados, and set on fire. Attention! This should only be consumed when of legal drinking age, which is as of today in France, 18 years.

Pillars being built

The participants have started their noble work to address the key issues of the 2009 Model ASEM assimilation. Firstly, in the Political Pillar: How should we deal with security issues linked to natural resource distribution, disparities and shortages? Secondly, for the Economic Pillar: How can green technologies contribute to economic growth and help fulfil the global right to development? Thirdly, the Cultural Pillar: How to find harmony between tradition and modernisation in a globalising world. In a four hour long lobbying session, some participants proved their ability to stay focus on the issues at hand while others slowly dozed off. As a whole, the participants were perhaps a tad naïve, and not always wholly in sync with the actual stance of the countries which they represented. However the enthusiasm is obvious and we are sure that practice will, indeed, make perfect.

Intercultural evening

The highlight of yesterday was the Intercultural Night, where we saw the theory of “the importance of recognising traditions and values” (Indonesia) put into practice. We see the intricate international links rooted in the socio-cultural links between countries: the Germans sang along to a famous Czech song (though they subsequently booed when the Czech delegate claimed that Czech beer was the best in the world). In this informal setting, countries were also able to joke lightly about serious issues, such as in the case of the delegate from Pakistan, who declared, “we [Pakistanis] won’t show you stereotypes since then I would have to blow myself up and we don’t want that” in view of the stereotyping of terrorism today. Participants are increasingly confident and there is in general a friendlier atmosphere; the goal of comfortable cross-cultural conversation has been met.

Quote of the day:

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future”

Franklin D. Roosevelt.