

## **MODEL UNITED NATIONS (MUN)**

### **Conference at Royal Russell School, Croydon, UK 15 to 21 October 2021**

This month, 17 students from Bachiller, accompanied by the MUN Director Nicola Dignum and Piluca Baselga, travelled to England to attend the four-day international conference organised by Royal Russell School. Due to the Covid pandemic, the conference was slightly smaller than usual with approximately 300 students attending from 21 schools from England, Ireland, Spain, Norway, France, Germany and Romania. 14 of our students represented Austria, Belgium and Germany, whilst three students were accepted in the Press and Social Media team. A summary about the trip can be found below.

#### ***Friday 15th October: written by Naia Duña, Delegate of Austria***

On Friday we woke up at 5:30 because we had to be at the airport at 6:30. Then we checked in and at 8:55 we took the first airplane to Barcelona. After 1 hour we arrived to Barcelona and we stayed at the airport until 12:40, then we went to the airplane, but when the airplane was going to take off, the engine broke, and we had to stay at the plane one more hour in Barcelona until they decided that the plane was inoperative and we had to change to a new one, then at 2:20 the airplane finally take off, we arrived to the Gatwick airport and we took a train to Croydon. In Croydon we went to the supermarket and had dinner at the Boypark, and finally we went to the hotel.

#### ***Saturday 16th October: written by Nuria Nanclares, Delegate of Austria***

We woke up around 9 o'clock as we had to leave the hotel at 10 o'clock, and we took a direct train to Royal Russell School. On arrival, we saw our rooms and we got to know the other facilities. The school is very different from ours and has a very English environment. Later, we had lunch in the dining room with other foreign students.

In the afternoon, we each met with our committee, where we met new people and signed our resolutions. At 5 pm, we went to have dinner, which was very strange for us because our schedules are very different. At 6:30 pm, the Opening Ceremony took place, and the ambassadors gave their speeches.

After this, we went up to our rooms to get ready for the party at 9:30. The theme was black and white and we all had a great time. Finally, we went back to our rooms to finish writing our speeches and we went to sleep.

#### ***Opening ceremony and Ambassador speeches: written by Teresa Martinez, Ambassador of Germany***

On Saturday afternoon, the Ambassadors of Ayalde, representing 3 different countries, which were Austria, Belgium and Germany, attended the opening ceremony at the 39th Royal Russell conference and made a speech as the representatives of their Delegations. This year's ambassadors were Maria Gomez, representing Austria, Carmen Calzada representing Belgium, and Teresa Martínez representing Germany,

who were accompanied by one delegate of their own delegation. However, not many people were able to attend the opening ceremony due to covid-19, and there were only 2 delegates representing each delegation.

The opening ceremony was definitely so exciting. Firstly, ambassadors, guests and delegates were introduced to the Mun Director and the Headmaster, as well as the Chairs, Secretary General and main representatives of the conference, who all gave a speech as an introduction to this annual conference. After that, the Ambassadors' opening speeches took place. The Security Council delegations were asked to start and afterwards, in order to choose which delegates were going to make their speech, the Headmaster, did a lottery, and the country who got chosen started speaking and then it went in alphabetical order. As the ceremony progressed, it was the turn for the Ayalde's Ambassadors to make their speeches. Despite nerves being present all the time, they managed to speak in front of all delegations, loudly, clearly and above all confidently. When the speeches had finished, the Chairs and Secretary General finished the session and now the conference had definitely started, and all delegates were prepared to have fruitful debates and a great time during the conference.

***Environment Committee: written by Maria Olaizola, Delegate of Belgium***

In the Environment Committee we have debated resolutions on four topics. I am representing Belgium, which is particularly interested in the question of single use plastics and the question of protecting citizens of LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries). The other two topics are about meat consumption and target setting to mitigate the climate emergency. My committee is formed by 23 students representing different countries, and three Chairs, who basically direct the debate.

The first day, we had to do a policy statement which consisted of giving a short speech stating your country's position and intentions for the topics to be discussed. After that, we started doing resolutions or merging the ones we already had with other delegates; I merged my resolution with the delegate of Belize. Then, we had lobbying for gathering at least 10 signatures in order for your resolution to go to the Approval Panel, where it is decided if your resolution passes and is corrected. Mine passed and was up for debate in my committee the next day, but sadly it didn't pass to the General Assembly. On Saturday and Sunday, we've been debating other resolutions and deciding if they would pass to the GA. For the question of protecting citizens of LEDCs from the COVID pandemic, the resolution of one of our students (Teresa Martinez) has passed to the GA. Being this the first time that this has happened we are all very happy and proud. She made a speech on the GA and I made another one supporting her resolution. Everyone in my committee was very nice and funny; I even met two other Spanish speakers, one was from Mexico and is coming to our MUN Bilbao Conference in January, for which we are all very excited.

***Specpol Committee: written by Nuria Gamez, Delegate of Germany***

At first, when I heard of MUN, I was thinking of going as a photographer, but as there were so many volunteers for the press team I had to go as a German delegate in the committee of SPECPOL (Special Political and Decolonisation Committee). The committee of SPECPOL was composed of about twenty six countries and three Chairs. The first day, after some speeches of our policy statements, we played some games to get to know each other and then, we got in groups to write resolutions and send them to the Approval Panel.

The two days that followed, we debated one resolution for each topic. The first one was about the question of the settlements on the West Bank submitted by Poland, the second one was the question of the rise of far-right groups submitted by Thailand, the third one was about the question of the Western Sahara submitted by Brazil and the last one was about the question of Afghanistan submitted by Turkey. Finally, the one which went to the General Assembly was the resolution of Thailand about the question of the rise of far right groups which didn't get passed.

***Special Committee on Protection of Minorities: written by Loreto Marsal, Delegate of Germany***

The Special Conference on the Protection of Minorities was made up with twenty nine countries, which discussed such worldwide concerning issues as the Treatment of Uighur (Muslims) in China, Anti-semitism, the question of guaranteeing the rights and welfare of uncontacted peoples in the Amazon basin, New Guinea and other remote locations, and the question of the treatment of children in refugee camps.

Every delegate was very participative and kind. The speeches and resolutions were professionally made and debated. We talked and made lots of friends, while having enjoyable debates and reaching amicable solutions for the topics above mentioned. Those debates were fruitful and nearly every resolution passed, resolutions made during the first day, by mixing them with other delegate's ones.

Carmen Calzada represented Austria, María Gómez Belgium and I Germany. Each of us had to debate depending on the country's opinion. We had to make opening speeches (policy statements) on a chosen topic, and we did several points of information (Pols) as well.

***DISEC Committee: written by Patricia Lazaro, Delegate of Germany***

The DISEC committee consists of a series of nation representatives coming together to talk about world pressing issues concerning Disarmament and International Security. This year we have debated four topics: the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, the Iran nuclear deal, the arms race to outer space and the South China Sea. In this conference our school represented the countries of Germany and Austria in this committee. The both of us spent days learning about different views and diplomatic manners on how to address everything from countries to topics.

Germany has deep ties with two of the four topics. With the help of a multitude of other states, all together we wrote a resolution about the South China Sea. After a long debate in our committee, thankfully it was passed and went to the General Assembly. In the GA, again it was strongly debated and with sixteen votes in favour, twenty-six against and two abstentions, it did not pass.

***SOCHUM Committee: written by Marta artiach, Delegate of Germany***

The SOCHUM committee stands for human rights and tries to solve issues that go against the social, cultural and humanitarian aspects of life. In this particular conference, the topics debated have been prison conditions, sex tourism, regulation of social media and repatriation of the families of foreign terrorist fighters. They have all been really exciting and we have been able to come up with great resolutions to every one of them, however, only the resolutions on sex tourism and prison conditions have made it into the GA.

This delegation, the delegation of Germany, believes actual prison conditions to be harmful to the prisoners' mental and physical health. For this reason, it proposes an approach to prison which focuses on the improvement of the prisoners' behavior to fit in society once they complete their sentence. As for sex tourism, we understand that for some countries it is the only way to have an income, which is why we do not wish to eliminate it. Nevertheless, we are concerned with the consequences sex work may have, for example STDs and/or sexual abuse. This is what we have tried solve through the resolutions debated over the passed days. The regulation of social media has been the most difficult topic, as censorship does not respect a person's human rights especially the right to freedom of expression. Lastly, on the question of repatriating the

families of foreign terrorist fighters, Germany believes that in the case that the fathers have died during terrorist fights, their wives and children should be either repatriated, if the country of origin is able to take care of them, or taken by the country where the fight happened if it is not.

Other than Germany, Ayalde has also represented Austria and Belgium. We have all enjoyed this committee very much and we encourage everyone to debate in this committee at least once.

### ***ECOFIN Committee: written by Ainhoa Gil, Delegate of Belgium***

The Economic and Finance committee was made up of 25 delegates. We debated the questions of the regulation of cryptocurrencies, the taxation of transnational corporations, the recovery of stolen assets from LEDCs, and the measures to create job opportunities for refugees. The resolutions were all great and debating them was really interesting. We also played some games to get to know everyone in the committee, and all delegates and Chairs were really nice and funny. Our school represented two countries in this committee: Austria and Belgium. I represented Belgium, and my resolution on the question of measures to create job opportunities for refugees was debated. However, it did not pass, so it was not debated in the General Assembly. The only resolution from my committee that was debated in the GA was the question of the taxation of transnational corporations submitted by the delegate of Thailand. I have really enjoyed being in this committee, learning about these topics, and getting to meet amazing people.

### ***Social Media: written by Sofia Collado, Press***

At this conference, I was in charge of MUN Bilbao's instagram and twitter accounts. I started preparing for this conference 4 months ago. Social Media consists of managing all those accounts and uploading new stories and posts everyday in order to inform everyone who follows us what's happening and what we are doing.

I had to admit that sometimes it was a bit stressful because of the bad internet connection but apart from that i really enjoyed this experience. It was my second conference working for social media and I will love to continue doing this job and being part of this MUN Bilbao team. Please follow us @munbilbao

### ***Press Team: written by Sara Zumaran, Press***

We were 8 people in Press between writers, photographers and social media, and the only ones that are not from Royal Russell are Inés, Sofia and me.

Inés and I, with the other writers, made 4 magazines, one of them is called "spanish issue" and there you can find some interesting things about our culture. In the other magazines you can find information about each day of the conference and photos. Meeting new people in the press team has been amazing, we have met new people who were all fantastic. It has been interesting and very different and has made us learn to work with other people and with a very short time.

### ***General Assembly: written by Carmen Calzada, Ambassador of Austria***

In the General Assembly from Monday, each committee had to debate one resolution from their committees. From SOCHUM, submitted by Georgia, the topic debated was the sex tourism, and passed; from SCPM, submitted by the Russian Federation, the topic debated was the question of guaranteeing the rights and welfare of uncontacted people in the Amazon basin, New Guinea and other remote locations, but it did not pass; from ECOFIN, submitted by Thailand, the question of taxation of transnational companies, it did not pass; from DISEC, the topic debated was the question of militarisation of the South China Sea, which did not pass; from Environment, submitted by the UK and Germany,

the topic debated was the question of protecting citizens of LEDCs from the Covid pandemic, which passed; from SPECPOL, the question of the rise of far-right groups, and it did not pass; and from Security Council, the topic debated was the question of reform of the International Criminal Court.

In the GA from Tuesday, the resolution debated in the SCPM committee, submitted by Estonia, was the topic about the treatment of Uighurs in China, which did not pass; from SOCHUM, submitted by the Russian Federation, the resolution debated was the question of prison conditions, and it did not pass; the topic debated in Environment, submitted by Panama, was the question of target setting to mitigate the Climate Emergency, which passed; the Crisis Special committee, which was submitted by several delegations, debated about the unknown spherical objects, but it did not pass; and from Security Council, submitted by the Russian Federation, the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has passed.

The delegate from Environment who gave a speech about the question of protecting citizens of LEDCs from the Covid pandemic on Monday is Teresa Martinez, who is from our school. Luckily, her resolution passed, because she did a great job and put a lot of effort into it.

***Discos: written by Maria Uriarte, Delegate of Belgium***

There have been 3 discos throughout the conference; the first was black and white, the second with a theme of pajamas, and the last, which was on Monday, about the 90s. At the first disco, they put a lot of songs in English, but it was very cool, we made a lot of friends. In the second, it was a pyjamas theme, many people didn't go in pajamas, but others yes, it was very cool and the DJ put many songs in Spanish. Finally, in the third disco, we were from the 90s and it was very cool but they did not put almost any songs in Spanish. We took a lot of pictures and had a great time!

***Mass: written by Maria Uriarte, Delegate of Belgium***

Today, Sunday, we have gone to Mass. We had to get up around 7 in the morning, we got ready and went to the bus that picked us up in the school parking lot. We had to be punctual. The Mass has been very pleasant, we have been welcomed to London. After that, we left and returned to the bus, back to school.

***Closing ceremony: written by Paula Vidal, Delegate of Austria***

The closing ceremony started at 3pm in the afternoon a few hours after we had lunch at Royal Russell. They called all the delegates to take their places and we started with some speeches from the Director of MUN of the Royal Russell school and the main organizer of MUN. Then they gave awards to the Press, Media, Secretariat and to the Chairs for their incredible involvement and wonderful work. After the awards, the Secretariat handed out some certificates to the delegates that had best carried out this conference and had been most involved, and after they announced the top 3 delegations with prizes in which then they had to make a speech thanking for the prize. Finally, they thanked us for attending the conference and thanked us all for our great involvement and wished us the best of luck for the next conference and told us that they were waiting for us next year.

***Theatre: written by Alejandra Garbati, Delegate of Austria***

After leaving Royal Russel, we left our things in the hotel rooms and went to London by underground. We noticed there were a lot of corridors so we stayed close so that we wouldn't get lost. Once we arrived at London, we divided into two groups: the people that were going to the theatre and the ones who didn't. The ones who were going to the theatre had forty five minutes to have dinner, so they went to a McDonalds. Afterwards they went into the theatre and watched "Les Misérables", which is a French play about a thief who becomes a good man and changes his behaviour. The ones who didn't go to the theatre had the whole night to go around the area. They had dinner at an Italian restaurant, and the people working there discounted them ten pounds from their meals. At 22:30 we all reunited and went into the underground. We arrived at the hotel and we went to sleep since we were really tired.

***Wednesday 20th: written by Ines Chapa, Press Team***

To start off with the day, we went to a supermarket and a café to have breakfast. After having eaten, we went to take the train, but a drill started when we were about to get on it so we had to run until they told us it was only a test. Then we took a walk through Hyde Park until we reached Notting Hill. After eating in Oxford Street we went straight to the British Museum at 3:00 p.m. but could only stay until 4:30. Then we stayed in Oxford Street so we could go shopping and after that we went to Hamleys shop with our teachers. We started sightseeing with them at Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square and then the Big Ben - which was still being repaired and we could not see much of it, and the London Eye. Then our teacher Nicola had a splendid idea, which was trying the challenge of getting 21 people inside a telephone cabin. We could fit 8 inside it, but at least the experience was the funniest.

Then we had some spare time to get dinner around Covent Garden and Leicester Square and do some shopping there. After that we rushed to take the train, but it was delayed and we had to wait there about 15 more minutes. Finally, we arrived at our hotel at 23:45.

***Thursday 21st: written by Maria Gomez, Ambassador of Belgium***

Last day in Croydon!! After we all woke up and had breakfast, we started filling our suitcases again... what a sad thing tho :( Some of us went to Croydon town to have a walk. Loreto, Marta and I went by our own to outside Croydon to visit a beautiful church. In our way to the church we walked through a street full of fruit stalls. Then, all of us met again at an Italian restaurant and we realized the owner of the restaurant was spanish!! She was from Galicia and she was a little rude but as a whole, the service was fine.

By 15:00 pm we picked our suitcases from the hotel and we went to the train station. We arrived at Gatwick where the airport was. The flight was at 21:00 pm (UK time). We didn't want to come back to Spain because London Royal Russel has been such an incredible experience but at the same time, we wanted to come back to see our relatives...

However, we all are looking forward to repeating this wonderful adventure!!!