NATO ACT Strengthens Bond with University of Bologna

Lieutenant Commander Dave Jones, ACT PAO
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FORLI, ITALY. Staff from NATO ACT Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (SPP), led by Mr Dick Bedford, Strategic Issues and Engagement Branch Head, played a very active role in a joint NATO/University of Bologna Summer Workshop and NATO Model Event over the past week.

The week started with a combined workshop with the Department of Political and Social Services at the University of Bologna – School of Political Sciences –Forli Vice Presidency, and was followed by the NATO Model Event. Now in its tenth year, it was held once again in the beautiful setting of the Sala del Consiglio, Fondazione Cassa Di Risparmi Di Forli, close to the University’s Forli Campus; it again proved to be the perfect venue for the students to explore, discuss and seek resolution to a fictitious scenario.

The student Ambassadors were very capably led by Ms Lucrezia Lo Schiavo, the Secretary General for this year’s event. “I feel privileged to have been chosen as the Secretary General this year and I am very grateful to ACT and the University of Bologna for the unique opportunity.”

“The event is a great chance to see democracy in action as we debate the realities of the scenario. It has been a fascinating experience and I have learned very much, not least how difficult it is to achieve consensus with so many different viewpoints” she said.

The NATO ACT team for the NATO Model Event included Lieutenant Colonel Alfonso Alvarez, in his last such event before departing NATO ACT, and was particularly pleased with how it was conducted. “Having been involved in these NATO Model Events for three years, I am delighted with the enthusiasm and professionalism that the students bring to these events,” he said.

“I am always very happy to return to the University of Bologna to take part in these events and I am humbled by the welcome that we receive each time we come. It is a real pleasure to bring NATO to this wonderful City and University.”

This year’s event saw participation from students representing many European Universities, including: the Italian Universities of Bologna, Bologna (Forli Campus), Trento, Roma, Palermo and the European University Institute of Florence, the University of Bath, England, and Cork University in Ireland. Furthermore, there was representation from the El Manar University of Tunisia.

The event is orchestrated by Professor Eugenia Baroncelli, the associate professor for the School of Political Sciences. “I am very grateful to NATO ACT for their participation in the workshop and the NATO Model Event this week”, she said. “The students gain very much from the level of discussion and exploration of potential actions to solve the crisis and, in particular, the interaction with NATO Military Officers, to understand the NATO decision process and the difficulties therein”.

As part of SACT’s Educational Outreach programme, NATO Model Events are held in Turkey, Italy and the USA throughout the year to help students and faculty members learn more about NATO and to understand more about the countries that they represent and that make up the Alliance.