

Master in Advanced European and International Studies

*Applied European Policy and
Governance Studies*

Academic Year 2025/2026



ANNUAL REPORT



1 OVERVIEW

The 2025/2026 Applied European Policy and Governance Studies programme of CIFE's Master in Advanced European and International Studies (MAEIS) was composed of a group of 18 students from 13 different nationalities. The itinerant programme offered students intensive courses in Nice, Brussels and Berlin over three terms extending from 6 October 2025 to 2 July 2026. Afterwards, students were given the option of continuing with an internship of 3 to 6 months. The following table represents the timetable of the programme:

Dates	Location
06/10/2025 – 08/01/2026	NICE Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE)
12/01/2026 – 06/04/2026	BRUSSELS Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) & Fondation Universitaire
08/03/2026 – 12/03/2026	STUDY TRIP Strasbourg – Luxembourg
08/04/2026 – 02/07/2026	BERLIN Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE)
02/07/2026	End of the Academic Year & Graduation Ceremony
Until 31/12/2026	Optional Internship

In the Applied European Policy and Governance Studies programme, CIFE seeks to address the next generation of European decision-makers and offers unique educational experiences at the crossroads of theory and practice. The programme was taught in English and French with a trilingual option (courses in German).

The programme aimed at preparing students for professional life in a challenging context. The academic curriculum was designed to enable students to develop an overarching and all-encompassing understanding of the political, social, economic and cultural challenges of today's world, especially in the EU.

Following the leitmotif "Learning and Living Europe", the students rotated each term, moving their place of study from Nice to Brussels and then to Berlin. During their stay in Nice, the students were given an overview of the construction and the decision-making dynamics of the European Union, as well as introductory courses to Economics and International Relations. In Brussels, they had the unique opportunity to combine theory and practice by visiting numerous EU and policy-related institutions and by meeting experts and professionals. During the third trimester, students delved deeper into today's EU challenges, including EU enlargement, external trade relations and partnerships and the involvement of citizens in EU politics. In addition, courses on Germany's European Policy and German federalism (taught in German) rounded off the academic year. The students of the trilingual option did additional research on a topic related to EU policy and activities at the regional (state) level.

2 ORGANISATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The curriculum was composed of five compulsory modules during the Nice, Brussels and Berlin trimesters:

- A** European Integration and Governance
- B** EU Policies and Flagship Initiatives
- C** EU Neighbourhood and External Relations
- D** The European Economy and Globalisation
- E** Professional Skills Workshops

University teachers from various European universities, as well as experts from international and European organisations and researchers from our partner institutes contributed to our programme.

Various teaching methods and course formats were applied within each module, including lectures, seminars, group work, student presentations and interactive workshops.

A European Integration and Governance (70 ½ hours)

This module aimed to familiarise students with the complexity of the European integration process and the main features of EU policy making. The dynamics of European integration were studied from a historic perspective and current and future challenges were discussed. This included federalist approaches that do not see the EU as a process of integration, but rather analyse it in a comparative federal institutional approach, and which study European integration from a perspective of multi-level governance. The module addressed EU law and legal procedures, as well as dynamics and concepts such as differentiated integration, participation, political change and Euroscepticism.

TRIMESTER 1: NICE (36 hours)

Paul CULLEY *EU Policy Advisor, Tutor and Trainer, Former Director at the Council of the EU*

- EU Institutions and Decision-Making

Frédéric LÉPINE *Deputy Director General of CIFE*

- Processus d'intégration régionale

Matthias WAECHTER *Director General of CIFE*

- Historical Aspects of European Integration

TRIMESTER 2: BRUSSELS (19 ½ hours)

María CASADO GARCÍA-HIRSCHFELD *Legal Officer in the Office of the Secretary General of the European Schools, Director of the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) Centre in Brussels*

- Droit européen

Doris DIALER *Attachée Health and Consumer Affairs, Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU*

- Lobbying and Advocacy in Europe

Catherine VIEILLEDENT *Group Europe, Union of European Federalists and Active Senior of the European Commission*

- Roundtable: Rule of Law in the EU – The State of Play



TRIMESTER 3: BERLIN (15 hours)

Johanna FÖLKEL *Political Communication & PR, Disinformation and Conspiracy Ideology Expert, Founder of breakingcycles.de (Alumna 2024/25)*

- Workshop: Disinformation in the EU – Actors, Strategies and Policy

Sören KEIL *Senior Teaching and Research Fellow, University of Passau*

- Comparative Federalism

B EU Policies and Flagship Initiatives (40 ½ hours)

Students gained insights into key policies such as enlargement, cohesion and competition policy, including various aspects such as the dynamics of decision-making and national interests of the member states, implementation, budget, among others. In addition, they were equipped with methods that enabled them to acquaint themselves independently with unfamiliar policies, based on knowledge of the competences of the EU and its institutional structures. In this module, experts and decision-makers were invited to discuss current issues in relevant policy fields. This included flagship initiatives of the EU and topics of political relevance, such as climate policy, digital policy and migration.

TRIMESTER 1: NICE (15 hours)

Francesca ASTENGO *Lecturer and Researcher, IES*

- EU Migration Policy

Frank RUSSOW *Lecturer, Business Transformation Coach at R+V Versicherung*

- Geographical Perspectives on EU Policy Making



TRIMESTER 2: BRUSSELS (16 ½ hours)

Laurent BAECHLER *Director of the MAEIS European Integration and Global Studies*

- La politique climatique de l'UE

Christophe LECLERCQ *Founder and Chief Executive of Europe MédiaLab (Stars4media), Founder of EurActiv*

- EU Digital Sovereignty: From Legislation and Media Subsidies to a Democracy Infrastructure

Gilles LEPESANT *Senior Researcher at CNRS, Géographie-Cités*

- Politique énergétique de l'UE

Alvaro OLEART *Postdoctoral Researcher at Université Libre de Bruxelles*

- The EU's Digital Policy: The Regulatory Framework

Ardi PRIKS *Policy Analyst, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN), European Commission*

- The Common Agricultural Policy

TRIMESTER 3: BERLIN (9 hours)

Willem NOË *European Commission Economics Expert on EU Integration and Enlargement*

- EU Enlargement Policy

André SCHMIDT *Chair of Macroeconomics and International Economics at the University of Witten-Herdecke*

- EU Cohesion Policy

C EU Neighbourhood and External Relations (53 hours)

The module focused on the EU's policy towards its direct and wider neighbourhood in the East and the South, as well as its relations with relevant regions and important international players including the United States, China, Russia and further emerging countries. We explored the major schools of thought regarding international order and conflict that draft a comprehensive and holistic explanation of international politics, in order to understand public discourses and discuss solutions to today's challenges for international cooperation and security. International guest lecturers coming from universities, think tanks, diplomacy and politics were invited to discuss prevalent and emerging issues of EU external action and international politics, including conflict resolution, globalisation and the future of transatlantic relations.

TRIMESTER 1: NICE (27 hours)

Susann HEINECKE-KUHN *Director of the MAEIS Applied European Policy and Governance Studies*

- Theory and Practice of International Relations in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Kai OPPERMAN *Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Technology, Chemnitz*

- The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy

TRIMESTER 2: BRUSSELS (9 hours)

Anna DIMITROVA *Lecturer and Researcher at the ESSCA School of Management, Paris*

- Case Study: The EU and the US

Mariam KHOTENASHVILI *Executive Director, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)*

- The Eastern Partnership of the EU

TRIMESTER 3: BERLIN (17 hours)

Susann HEINECKE-KUHN

- Case Study: The EU and Russia
- Debating Exercise: The EU as a Global Actor

George TZOGOPOULOS *BESA Research Associate, Lecturer at the Democritus University of Thrace, Director of EU-China Programmes and Senior Research Fellow at CIFE*

- Case Study: The EU and China
- International Security and Conflict Resolution





Nice, with the students of the MAEIS Mediterranean Studies

D The European Economy and Globalisation (49 hours)

The module dealt, among others, with the following subjects: EU economic integration, the EU in the world economy, the strengths and limitations of globalisation, the key players in globalisation, the European economy and globalisation, economic interdependence, EU regional trade agreements and the rise of emerging countries.

TRIMESTER 1: NICE (30 hours)

Jean-Claude VÉREZ *Director of the MAEIS Mediterranean Studies and Associate Professor of Economics at Université d'Artois, France*

- Économie mondiale et européenne

TRIMESTER 2: BRUSSELS (6 hours)

André SCHMIDT

- The EU's Competition Policy: Provisions and Practice

TRIMESTER 3: BERLIN (13 hours)

André SCHMIDT

- Economic Interdependence and External Trade Relations of the EU and Selected Regions



Start of the Academic Year, with the students of the MAEIS Mediterranean Studies

E Professional Skills Workshops (63 hours)

In an ever more globalised world and increasingly multicultural working environments, young professionals need to be equipped not only with knowledge, but with professional skills regarding capturing and presenting information, consensus building, conflict management, negotiations and much more. In this module, professors sought to develop an understanding of cooperation in political processes and various approaches in support of dialogue, negotiation and conflict management.

TRIMESTER 1: NICE (22 hours)

Paul CULLEY

- Practical Skills for Policy Analysts/Officers

Nina FRAUENFELD *Executive Director, SuccessAcross*

- Cross-Cultural Communication

Anne TOPENOT *Communication Trainer and Founder of the Speaking Academy*

- Speak with Impact

Mark YOUNG *Negotiation Trainer, President of Rational Games, Inc.*

- Negotiation Skills

TRIMESTER 2: BRUSSELS (29 hours)

Emil ANDERSEN *Head of Communications and IT, DG Environment, European Commission*

- Political Communication in the EU

Paul CULLEY

- Practical Skills for Policy Analysts/Officers

TRIMESTER 3: BERLIN (12 hours)

Frank BURGDÖRFER *CEO, polyspektiv*

- Project Cycle Management



Guided Tour of the European Quarter, Brussels



Council of the EU Simulation, with the students of the MAEIS Mediterranean Studies

3 INTERMODULAR COURSES

Simulation Game: Council of the European Union Summit

- **A New Refugee Policy for the European Union** with **Frank BURGDÖRFER** and **Leonie AUGUSTIN** *polyspektiv*
Article 1 Process of Applications
Article 2 Accommodation and Care
- **Kick-Off Session** on 17 November 2025
- **Pre-Negotiations** on 27 November 2025
- **Council of the European Union Simulation** on 2 to 3 December 2025

Conferences, Speeches, Expert Briefings and Discussions

NICE

- Inaugural Lecture: How to Turn Fear into Hope by **Herman VAN ROMPUY** *President of CIFE, President Emeritus of the European Council and Former Prime Minister of Belgium*
- Mediterranean Youth Academy (MYA) 4th Edition organised by the Mediterranean Youth Foundation
- Round Table on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of CIFE's Master in Mediterranean Studies:
"L'enjeu migratoire au sein des espaces européen, méditerranéen et africain : une approche constructive"
- Energy Forum 2025: "BTP et aménagement dans le nouveau contexte de l'intelligence artificielle et de la transition énergétique"
- Introduction to Monaco's Political System by **Felicita GUILLLOT** *Consultant in European Law and Monegasque Public Law*
- Briefing and Discussion on "Les défis actuels en matière de sécurité en Europe : l'importance de la complémentarité" with **Caroline BOISSEAU** *Consultant and Trainer, Former Analyst and Policy Officer at NATO, the French Prime Minister's Office and the French Ministry of Defence*

BRUSSELS

- Workshop on "European Strategic Autonomy" with **Ilaria GIUSTACCHINI** *Partnerships and Project Manager, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)*
Susann HEINECKE-KUHN
Niklas HELWIG *Leading Researcher, Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA)*
Mariam KHOTENASHVILI
Zsolt PATAKI *Senior Policy Analyst, European Parliament Research Service (EPRS), CIFE Alumnus and Member of the Scientific Council of CIFE*
- Keynote Speech: "European Strategic Autonomy" by **Jim CLOOS** *Secretary-General, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)*
- Expert Briefing: "The Office of High Representative and the External Action Service" with **David DALY** *EEAS, Former EU Ambassador to Thailand and Australia*
- Expert Briefing: "EU External Relations and Development Cooperation" with **Carolina DE ALBUQUERQUE** *International Cooperation Officer, DG INTPA, European Commission*
- Expert Briefing: "Where Should European Policy Go in 2026?" with **Lowri EVANS** *Former Director General of DG GROW (Single Market), European Commission*
- Expert Briefing: "Proposal for a 'Traineeships Directive': Background and Inside View on the Negotiation" with **Philipp JAUERNIK** *Labour and Social Affairs Attaché at the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU*
- Expert Briefing: "Serving in the EU's Diplomatic Service" with **Evgenia KARATARI** *Deputy Head of the EU Situation Room at the EEAS*
- Expert Briefing: "The Road to an EU Presidency: From National Representation to EU Stewardship, Inter-Institutional Coordination and Priority Setting" with **Luka Marija URBONAITÉ** *Deputy Antici at the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU*
- Expert Briefing: "Have the 2020s Changed How the Council Views the Single Market?" with **Laure WAGENER** *Seconded National Expert at DG GROW – Digital Services, Permanent Representation of Luxembourg*
- Expert Briefing: "Erasmus Mundus: What the Story of this Programme Teaches Us about EU Policy Making" with **Martin WESTLAKE** *Former Secretary General of the European Economic and Social Committee*

BERLIN

- Briefing and Discussion: "Young Voices and Perspectives on German Foreign and European Policy" with **Etienne HÖRA** *President, Polis180*



Visit to the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels



Start of the Brussels Term

Research Methodology

Susann HEINECKE-KUHN

- Master Thesis Colloquium (8 sessions)
- Dissemination of Academic Output: Policy Advice and Academic Publishing

Individual Research Consultations with various thesis supervisors (CIFE academic staff and external lecturers)

Career Coaching

Alina ANTON *Outreach and External Relations, European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO)*

- EU Careers Information Session

Paul CULLEY

- Overview of Traineeships and Jobs in the EU
- Tips on EU Traineeship Applications: Exchange with Alumni

Nina FRAUENFELD

- Preparing Applications for International and European Careers
- Individual Career Coaching

Meet Our Alumni Session

with **Nadezhda KOEVA** (2008/09)

Language Courses

NICE

- French Classes with **Viridiana INO** *Teacher of French as a Foreign Language*
- German Classes with **Julia VASILEVA** *Language Trainer in German and English*

BERLIN

- German Classes with **Hanna ZIEREN** *Coordinator of the Full-Time Master Programmes in Berlin*

4 STUDY TRIP

The annual study trip with the students of the *Master in Advanced European and International Studies – European Integration and Global Studies* to the European and international organisations in Strasbourg and Luxembourg took place from 9 to 12 March 2026. The following discussions and debates were held:

STRASBOURG

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Presentation on the Role and Work of the Court

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

- Briefing on the New Democratic Pact for Europe
Tatiana MONNEY *Policy Advisor, New Democratic Pact for Europe, DG II Democracy and Human Dignity*
- Visit to the Hemicycle of the Parliamentary Assembly

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- Presentation on the Values, Roles and Functioning of the Legislative Process of the European Parliament
- Visit to the Hemicycle during the Plenary Session

LUXEMBOURG

EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

- Presentation on the Roles and Activities of the EIB
Chris KNIGHT *Communications Officer*

EUROPEAN STABILITY MECHANISM

- Presentation on the Roles and Activities of the ESM
- Information on Career Prospects and Recruiting at the ESM

MONS

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED POWERS EUROPE (SHAPE) / NATO

- Presentation on the History, Evolution, Structure and Missions of SHAPE
Cindy BOUVIEZ *Staff Officer, Engagement, Outreach and Internal Communications Section*
- SHAPE Transformation into a Warfighting Headquarter



Study Trip to the ECHR, Strasbourg, with the students of the MAEIS European Integration and Global Studies



Study Trip to the EIB and the ESM, Luxembourg, with the students of the MAEIS European Integration and Global Studies

5 OTHER VISITS

NICE

- Guided Tour of Nice (Promenade des Anglais, Vieux Nice and Colline du Château) with **Cécile BÉRANGER** on 9 October 2025

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MONACO

- Presentation on Diverse Aspects of Monegasque Politics
Mathilde LECLERC *National Assembly Member, Chair of the Committee on Education, Youth and Sports*
- Guided Tour of Monaco on 28 October 2025
with **Felicitas GUILLOT**

BRUSSELS

- City Tour: “Brussels: The Unusual Capital” with **Manuel SCHMITZ** on 13 January 2026
- Visit to the UN/UNDP Representation Office in Brussels on 21 January 2026
- Visit to the European External Action Service (EEAS) on 26 January 2026
- Visit to the European Economic and Social Committee / Committee of the Regions on 10 February 2026
- Visit to the European Parliament on 19 February 2026
- Visit to the Council of the European Union on 20 February 2026
- Visit to the European Commission on 25 February 2026

BERLIN

- Guided Tour: “In the Footsteps of Divided Berlin” on 10 April 2026
- Visit to the Embassy of Sweden in Germany and briefing on “Swedish Foreign, Security and Defence Policy” on 23 April 2026
- Visit to the German Federal Chancellery and briefing on 28 April 2026
with **Edgar LENSKI** *Deputy Europe Advisor, DG General EU Affairs, Coordination with EU Member States, EU External Relations*
- Guided Tour of the Reichstag Building and visit of the dome on 29 April 2026
- Visit to the Berlin Senate and briefing on “The Berlin Metropolitan Area in the European Union” on 29 April 2026
with **Johanna EISENBERG** *Deputy Head of Division European Affairs, The Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery*
- Visit to the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and briefings on “The 2028–2034 MFF Negotiations” and “Russian Influence in Eastern Europe” on 7 May 2026
with **Linn SELLE** *Alfred von Oppenheim Director of the Europe Centre of DGAP* and **Anastasia POCIUMBAN** *Research Fellow at DGAP*
- Briefing and Discussion at the European Academy Berlin (EAB) on “Europe, Participation and Involvement of the Locals”
with **Sarah EILINGSFELD** *Deputy Director and Head of Studies*



Visit to the National Council of Monaco

6 TRILINGUAL OPTION

Students who chose the trilingual option attended additional courses (taught in German) on Germany’s European policy, the federal structure of Germany and the European policy of the German Länder. To illustrate how European policy is actually made in Germany, students visited various institutions such as the Bundestag, federal ministries, the Federal Chancellery and representations of a federal state in Berlin. The trilingual option entailed an extra written assignment written in German on a topic related to Germany’s European policy. Students not taking the trilingual option also had the possibility to participate in these activities on a voluntary basis.

Courses (9 hours)

Manuel KNAPP *Adviser on Civic Education, European Academy Berlin*

- Die deutsche Europapolitik: Einführung

Sören KEIL

- Die föderale Ordnung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und europäische Politikgestaltung



Visit to the German Federal Chancellery

7 MASTER THESIS RESEARCH TOPICS

Zoé ALBALADEJO (France)

La modernité politique expliquée par Hannah Arendt et Max Weber

Thesis Supervisor: Frédéric LÉPINE

Firas BEN MAHMOUD (Germany / Tunisia)

From Norms to Power Politics? The EU's Strategic Reorientation and the Case of Sanctions Against Russia

Thesis Supervisor: George TZOGOPOULOS

Malak CHERKAOUI (Morocco)

L'évolution des relations algéro-marocaines (1956–2026) : De la solidarité anticoloniale à la rivalité hégémonique

Thesis Supervisor: Frédéric LÉPINE

Karlién DELEU (Belgium)

Progressive Milestone or Missed Opportunity? A Critical Analysis of Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

Thesis Supervisor: Sören KEIL

Valeria ESCRIVA APARISI (Spain)

Lobbying and Governance: How Tech Actors Shaped the EU AI Act

Thesis Supervisor: Sören KEIL

Livia FANTACONE (Italy)

Between Values and Borders: The Structural Contradictions of EU Migration Governance

Thesis Supervisor: Francesca ASTENGO

Benjamin GAMBS (Ireland / Austria)

EU Integration and European Strategic Autonomy through the Context of the Russo-Ukrainian War

Thesis Supervisor: Sören KEIL

Celine KASTEEL (Belgium / Netherlands)

Between 'Puissance' and 'Pouvoir': Assessing the Consistency of EU Normative Power in Ukraine and Gaza

Thesis Supervisor: George TZOGOPOULOS

Kiki KUIPHUIS (Netherlands)

Open as Possible, Closed as Necessary? Balancing Openness and Security in EU Science Diplomacy and Horizon EU

Thesis Supervisor: George TZOGOPOULOS

Noelia MARTÍNEZ HANZELIKOVÁ (Spain)

The European Union as a Security and Defence Actor in Africa: Assessing Coherence, Effectiveness and Competition with National and External Interventions

Thesis Supervisor: George TZOGOPOULOS

Hannah ROURE (France)

L'influence des préférences nationales et des résistances politiques sur la transposition des politiques migratoires européennes en France (2015–2026) : entre souveraineté et contrainte juridique

Thesis Supervisor: Matthias WAECHTER



Tomas SANZ MARTÍN (Spain)

The New Momentum: Can the EDC Be Revived?

Thesis Supervisor: Matthias WAECHTER

Reshika SEETOHUL (Mauritius)

A Comparative Analysis of OECD Recommendations and Their Implementation in Migration Policy Reforms: Assessing the Impact on Migration Governance Outcomes in Germany and Italy

Thesis Supervisor: Francesca ASTENGO

Giulia TAGLIENTO (Italy)

Democracy According to Whom? European and Russian Perceptions of Democracy Under Putin

Thesis Supervisor: Susann HEINECKE-KUHN

Nuria TORREGROSA VÁZQUEZ (Spain)

EU Foreign Policy as a Challenge: The Case of Georgia

Thesis Supervisor: Susann HEINECKE-KUHN

Aliaksandr TUR (Belarus)

EU Peacekeeping Missions: Aspirations and Reality. Comparative Study of EUTM Mali and EUFOR Althea

Thesis Supervisor: Susann HEINECKE-KUHN

Alec VIDA (United States / France)

The Politics of Saying No to Brussels: Constraining Dissensus and the Irish Treaty Referendums

Thesis Supervisor: Matthias WAECHTER

Joel WLOTZKI (Germany)

The Jordan Compact in the Context of the Barcelona Process: Normative Departure or Strategic Continuity

Thesis Supervisor: Francesca ASTENGO



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