

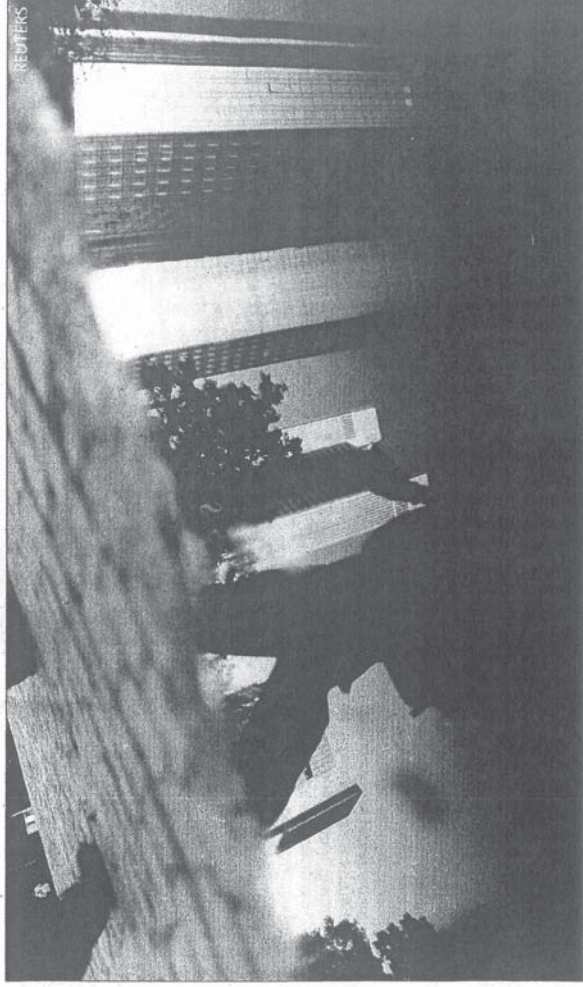
# Schools for Europe's diplomatic

The EU's greater foreign-policy ambitions are being reflected in EU studies courses, writes Ian Mundell

**N**ext week (25-26 October), the College of Europe will host a conference on challenges facing the 21st-century diplomat, with a programme that illustrates how the profession has evolved in recent years. There are many issues to cover, including a more significant European Union dimension, indicated not just by the college's interest but also by the presence of speakers from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission.

The area where European and diplomacy studies meet represents a relatively new niche in higher education. The College of Europe was among the first institutions to address it, setting up a master's programme in EU international relations and diplomacy studies in 2006. The aim was to anticipate changes heralded in the (draft) constitutional treaty and subsequently implemented by the Lisbon treaty.

"It is not just foreign policy in a classical sense, but also external aspects of internal policies that have gained increasing importance," says Sieghinde Gstöhl, the programme's director of studies. "It was identified as a market niche to have a specialised



master's programme that combined diplomacy studies with a European perspective, but covering these external relations in a comprehensive sense: the EEAS, the Lisbon treaty, the EU's expanding role as a global actor."

The programme tackles the crossover between Europe and diplomacy in everything it does. For example, EU trade policy can also address commercial diplomacy, or a Common

Foreign and Security Policy course can also address diplomatic sanctions," says Gstöhl. There are also specific courses on the EU's external representation and its neighbourhood policy that focus on the EU as a diplomatic player.

#### Language skills

Most of the students already have a master's degree and will have studied the EU before. "We can draw on that

and be much more specialised," says Gstöhl. One aspect of this is an emphasis on practical skills, with courses covering subjects such as international negotiation analysis, project management, political risk analysis and public relations. Unusually for the College of Europe, students are also required to study a new language. "We think it is quite important for somebody who wants to work in the field that they can

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acquire a basic knowledge of a new language relatively quickly," Gsöhl says. Options include Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish and German.

Beyond the formal courses, the college encourages students to learn from their peers. "Students live on campus, and part of the concept is that they have to learn to live and work together in a very multicultural, interdisciplinary environment." This year, there are 81 students from 42 countries.

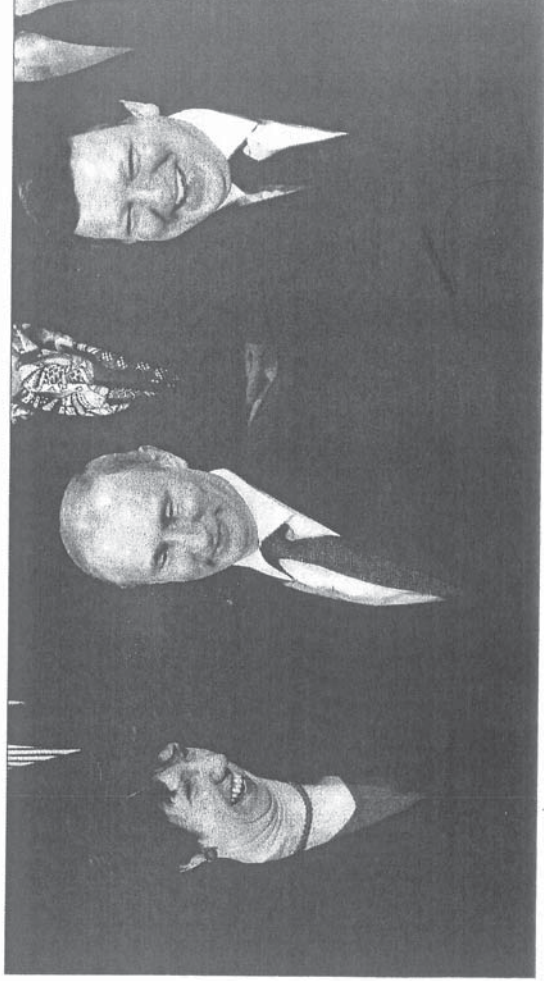
Graduates from the programme tend to go on to the EU or other international institutions, as well as national foreign services and public administration. "But a lot of them aim to go into diplomacy," Gsöhl says. "The EU delegations are particularly attractive."

## Integration

While the College of Europe remains one of the few institutions to structure a master's degree around the EU and diplomacy, Europe has not been neglected in other, broader programmes, such as that offered jointly by Leiden University and Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations in the Hague.

"Although our two-year master's programme focuses on international relations and diplomacy more generally, European integration plays an important role in the curriculum," says Madeleine Hosi, a professor of international relations at Leiden and director of the programme.

Courses include European integration, diplomacy in Europe and



DIPLOMATIC TIES Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign affairs chief, Vladimir Putin, Russia's prime minister, and José Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission. REUTERS

the politics of European monetary integration, with students often choosing to tackle European issues in their master's theses. But the programme, established in 2003, has not significantly increased its coverage of Europe with the arrival of the Lisbon treaty. "There has not really been much change," Hosi says.

As a programme based in Europe, with a European perspective, such developments have been taken into account, but at the same time other powers and patterns of diplomacy cannot be neglected. "On the global level we are currently observing shifts in power, both economically and politically, and the European Union is certainly not the only player on the world stage."

However, Europe has moved up the agenda for Oxford University's foreign service programme, which trains aspiring diplomats from around the world.

"We study and discuss the significance of the European integration process and of its institutions, in particular how the EU's internal policies are formulated," says programme director Jeremy Cresswell. "It is very important for non-EU nationals and diplomats to understand more about what Europe is, how it functions and – from a practical point of view – how to engage with EU representatives."

The Lisbon treaty has caused a significant change. "This year and last year it was a matter of explaining that

when you are on the spot in a foreign country, the EU ambassador has a much more significant role than he or she used to have," Cresswell says. "The European embassies and missions in third countries now have to work more closely together with what used to be the Commission representative. It is important for people to understand that, whether they are working in foreign ministries or as third-country diplomats."

"Of course, it is also important for those who are European diplomats to have a better understanding of how post-Lisbon is working, with all its strengths and weaknesses."

Ian Mundell is a freelance journalist based in Brussels.

## The eurozone's sovereign-debt crisis has sparked renewed interest in EU studies, writes Eric Culp

As Europe changes, so does the way it is studied. The spectre of sovereign defaults, renaissance nationalism, rising unilateralism and bilateralism, and ever closer links between states and major financial institutions have radically altered how the European Union goes about its business.

This is forcing European studies professors to adapt their teaching to keep pace. At the same time, the more Europe affects people around the world, the more students gravitate to European studies – enrolment is on the increase.

The good news is that state and financial crises have pushed an often overlooked component of European relations – political economy – to the fore, according to Erik Jones, director of the Bologna Institute for Policy Research, part of Johns Hopkins University. He suggests that difficulties within the eurozone and their global impact have made economic and financial relations between countries much more important than diplomatic history, once the main focus of European studies.

While his process remains the same – “the way I teach has not changed,” Jones says – he has been updating the content of his lessons. “I’ve had to add in financial issues,” he says.

### Small focus

Jones says the debt crisis has not only put the spotlight on the role of economics and high finance in Europe’s past, present and future, but is also “hugely helpful” in piquing interest in smaller member states and how they can drive

# Bad for the economy,



EU policy. In fact, it was the threat of national insolvencies that prompted Jones to ask students to write about the responses of individual countries to the sovereign-debt crisis. The resulting reports were later collected in a book. In addition, the “polarising” media

debate has enlivened classroom discussions and allowed for the introduction and examination of controversial positions from some of the smaller and more radical political parties in member states. “You can bring in voices from the German Free

Democrats, the True Finns and the Dutch Freedom Party,” says Jones. This gives students a chance to argue and debunk populist views that some Europeans are lazier or more corrupt than others.

The eurozone crisis has also

# good for students

reinvigorated the study of Europe itself, Jones says. Interest rose from 1999 to 2003 thanks to the introduction of the single currency and the different positions adopted on the Iraq war. But he says the failed ratification of a European constitution

caused many students to turn their backs on Europe. While the number of European studies scholars has not returned to the levels of a decade ago, the economic and financial problems have boosted interest. Jones is not the only one noticing an

**NOT CHILD'S PLAY** Three plastic figures on a trader's desk at the Frankfurt stock exchange. There has been a rise in the number of people signing up for EU studies courses as a result of the eurozone debt crisis. REUTERS

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increase in interest. "My suspicion is that the crisis has generated more interest in courses about the European Union," says Vincent Della Sala, a professor of European studies at the University of Trento. He adds that the region's importance among international relations scholars is on the rise, too.

### Teaching tools

Paradigm shifts in Europe are pressuring educators to keep pace with the frenetic activity of politicians, civil servants and financial leaders. "The crisis is really a teaching tool," Della Sala says. "Academic publishing takes a while to catch up with events, so I have to integrate more contemporary and ongoing issues into classes." This has its advantages, he says. "The news offers a wider context in which to present the material."

Of course, the lack of textbooks on the current state of European policy makes learning about it that much more difficult for those starting out in European studies programmes. Della Sala says students unfamiliar with the EU are "more perplexed than anything else" as they try to comprehend the current changes along with the standard course material.

For advanced students, he says, "it's more a question of helping them make sense of what's going on. They are just trying to understand how this will affect...the future of the EU."

In some cases, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Stephan Keukeleire, director of the master's programme in European studies at the University of Leuven, wants his students to focus on policy-making, and he sees parallels between Europe's history and the events of today. "Just like in the late 1970s and 1980s, decisions are being pre-cooked by Germany and France," he says.

However, Keukeleire, who also teaches at the College of Europe in

Bruges, has been telling his students that they need to look at Europe from a more detached perspective. Over the past few years, he has developed an "outside-in" approach to examining the EU, forcing students to take a step back. The view is not always pleasant. "Students are in shock", he says, when he tells them that "the BRIC countries [Brazil, Russia, India and China] are changing the rules of the game".

Keukeleire says some of those who take his EU introductory classes for second-year students as part of the bachelor's programme can have trouble getting their heads around it all. "The EU is complex for them because it is complex for us." But the huge amount of media coverage about the eurozone crisis helps. "It's easier to teach because it's in the news everyday," he says.

### No changes

Not everyone has been revamping the curriculum. Edward Arnold, director of the Centre for European Studies at Trinity College in Dublin, has not changed the course in the bachelor's programme. "For the past 24 years, we have had a history of ideas/cultural history angle to European studies, and we have not changed our approach to teaching in the face of [this] economic armageddon."

Horst Tomann, head of the amalgamated, one-year master's of European studies programme at Berlin's three major universities, has also left teaching plans unchanged, at least for now.

Jones says the impact of eurozone malaise in the classroom has claimed at least one victim, namely the creation of a coherent narrative for East-West relations – how former Soviet countries have dealt with the EU since the end of the Cold War. "That is an unfinished agenda," he says.

Eric Culp is a freelance journalist based in Frankfurt.