

# WORLD CLASS —Global

## Preface

In diplomatic schools across the globe, a fresh generation of young thinkers are learning how to improve international relations from the institutions that spawned today's political heavyweights.

WRITER  
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Talleyrand attended seminary. Metternich went to law school. Kissinger studied political science.

But the era of diplomacy as accidental career path – staffed by learned generalists who stumble into the field of statecraft – has come to an end. The 21st-century envoy, from chiefs of mission to consular aides and even pouch-carriers, is likelier to have been educated specifically to represent his or her country abroad, and have a diploma or certificate to prove it.

There is plenty of work for them to do, as even in an era of austerity, the diplomatic corps are on the march. Geopolitical strategists in Beijing and Brussels see the best way of accomplishing their objectives – China to assert its economic

clout particularly in resource-rich regions, the European Union to present a unified policy through its External Action Service – is by populating every foreign capital. Barack Obama's draw-downs of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan mean a shift in nation-building duties. The US may have abandoned its bases in Iraq but in Baghdad it now maintains the world's largest embassy – replacing boots with suits. Diplomacy is more important than ever. — (M)

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REPORT  
Schools: diplomacy



## Starting dialogue *Santiago*

It's the last week of the term at the Academia Diplomática de Chile. Andrés Bello, and Robert Funk, a widely quoted political scientist from the Universidad de Chile, is lightening up his class with a model United Nations. He assigns a country to each of the 20 students and gives them a few minutes to prepare before they argue for or against an imaginary motion calling for regime change in China. The students whip out matching tablet computers and gen up on their assigned states' foreign policies.

The students' focus is no surprise. The academy subjects hundreds of applicants to a battery of tests on knowledge, psychological makeup and the ability to handle pressure, says

director of studies Natalia Escobar.

The academy building is the century-old Palacio Edwards, a block-long Victorian façade with a marble staircase, a solemn prayer room and glass-topped cabinets to display diplomatic medals. But hidden inside is the student lounge, an open-plan office full of flat-screen monitors, and the main auditorium, with the clean lines and polished wood of a new private university. The school aims to break out of the traditional walls of diplomacy and connect more directly with the public, says Ambassador Pablo Cabrera, the school's director.

Chile's diplomats can keep taking classes at the academy throughout their careers but nothing compares to the first year, with its course of 14 classes in the first semester and 18 in the second. The load is comparable to law school, students say.

With unemployment at a historic low in Chile, the diplomatic corps is trying to attract those who could earn more in law or business. It is recruiting more women and students from beyond the capital. The academy itself also helps, as students are paid while they attend, Cabrera says. "That's no small thing." — SEB

The lesson: A more diverse intake is boosting Chile's diplomatic power.



- 01 Ambassador Pablo Cabrera
- 02 Students between classes
- 03 Palacio Edwards, the academy's home
- 04 A makeshift UN



02  
Central planners  
*Bruges*

Its location may be a quirk of history but in many ways Bruges is the perfect setting for the College of Europe. Each day thousands of tourists pour from trains and coaches to stroll the cobbled streets and marvel at the chocolate-box version of Old Europe, complete with medieval squares, Gothic churches, quaint lace shops and lazy canal-boat trips.

In the midst of all the history, the next generation of leaders, diplomats, lobbyists and strategists are debating the new Europe, a continent overshadowed today by recession and unemployment, but one in which many young people see a bright future where they can make their mark.

"The EU is so recent when we think about it and it changes so quickly, it is something that is continually evolving," says Claire Baffert, a 26-year-old academic assistant and former student at the college. "That it what is motivating when we study – we have the feeling that it can change and what you're doing now can have an impact."

It was in 1948 that a Spanish diplomat brought his dream of a pan-European education institute to the Hague Congress, a

meeting which helped lay the foundations of the European Union.

Nearly seven decades later, the College of Europe is the leading postgraduate institute in European studies, boasting alumni including Danish prime minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, UK deputy prime minister Nick Clegg, former president of the European Commission Manuel Marin, and many other European cabinet ministers.

The Bruges setting predates the establishment of the core of EU institutions in nearby Brussels: it was down to a Capuchin friar from Bruges who lobbied so persistently that the founders agreed to bring the college here.

Politicians and analysts worry that soaring levels of youth unemployment – which many blame on EU austerity policies – will create a generation hostile to the very idea of an integrated Europe, and the professors need to prepare their students for the hurdles that lie ahead. Professor Phedon Nicolaides, director of studies for economics and law, says they now incorporate analysis of the crisis in their classes. But he stresses that they are not there to sell the dream of the EU to the next generation.

"We are not trying to proselytise them, we are trying to teach them to think critically and incisively," he says.



A chief motivation for students is the opportunity to mix with people from all over the world, and the future networking possibilities that opens up. Enrique Ibanez is typical of College of Europe students. The 25-year-old Spaniard speaks four languages fluently, has just graduated from the International Relations and Diplomacy MA and would like to work in the EU foreign service. While he sees flaws in the EU – in particular its communications with ordinary people – he is confident it will overcome the current crisis and emerge stronger.

"There are other poles of power emerging, so no single country – not even Germany – could play the role as a whole that the EU could have on the international stage." — CM



- 01 David O'Sullivan (centre), chief operating officer of the European External Action Service, gives a lecture at the College of Europe
- 02 Main courtyard of the new building
- 03 Students at a lecture
- 04 Claire Baffert, 26, an ex-student of the college who now works there
- 05 Professor Phedon Nicolaides

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- 01 Staff and management
- 02 Friday prayers at a neighbouring mosque
- 03 IDFR director general, Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari
- 04 IDFR's publication
- 05 Student in language lab
- 06 Director of training, Lim Juay Jin
- 07 Director of academic studies, research and publications, Rahimah Yeop
- 08 The Treaty Room
- 09 A library meeting



03  
Learning fast  
*Kuala Lumpur*

A short walk from the room where Malaysia's post-independence leaders navigated their fledgling nation through the challenges of the Cold-War world, the country's next generation of diplomats is learning the skills of their craft.

As it's a Friday, a holy day for Muslims, they start with a prayer. The 21 impeccably dressed young men and women, gathered around a conference table, bow their heads and ask God for guidance, forgiveness and inspiration.

For the first hour, they'll talk leadership. In the next, they're subjected to a peculiarly hostile press conference. After that, they head to the language lab.

While early Malaysian diplomats used to get their training on-the-job, these days they're required to study for between three and six months at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in the heart of Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur. The school's courses cover not only theories of diplomacy but practical skills such as the art of conversation, how to host a banquet and the most appropriate way to deal with the media.

The Institute, which is part of the Foreign Ministry, ran 33 diplomacy-related courses and 25 language courses last year and devised a number of programmes tailored for diplomats from emerging nations, hosting officers from Libya in the wake of the revolution Colonel Gad-

dafi as well as civil servants from Burma.

"We feel we are responsible and we have the tools – we might be a developing country, but the government allocates the money for this purpose," says the Institute's director general Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari, who took the job after a diplomatic career in locations ranging from Laos to Croatia.

Malaysia secured its independence – peacefully – from the UK in 1957. The new country, largely Muslim but with large communities of ethnic Chinese and Indian citizens, found itself battling not only a Communist insurgency but a hostile neighbour in the form of Indonesia. It's perhaps not surprising that peace, stability and security were placed at the core of the country's foreign policy.

"Malaysia started from zero and it went through ups and downs, but we can now see the successes and how they might apply to Timor," says José Antonio Amorim Dias, a former activist who's now Timor Leste's Ambassador to Malaysia. Dias turned to the Institute to develop a short programme for his country's newly appointed Heads of Mission, keen to learn more not only about Malaysia's experience in nation building, but also to boost senior officials' command of English. "We have to set an example as a good citizen of the world," says Ku Jaafar. "We must make Malaysia a preferred brand name, a model in international relations." — KM

The lesson: **Malaysia is becoming an Asian leader in teaching diplomacy.**

