

Dear president Mendez de Vigo,  
Dear rector,  
dear directors of studies,  
dear professors,  
dear alumni, guests and prize-givers,  
dear marineros and marineras,  
dear friends,

It is an honour to stand in front of you all today and we are delighted to have the chance to address a few words to you in the name of the College of Europe Manuel Marín Promotion!

As we have all been sitting here for quite a while now, listening to the great achievements of the past 10 months, Momen and I thought that we would provide you with some information that is helpful for all the people present, especially for those coming from the outside.

For the reception you will soon find yourself wandering around the Verversdijk campus (the one that most of us consider "far away") and might ask yourself how to handle so many people and especially the "so-called" future of Europe all at once. But fear no more, we have it covered!

We will now give you a brief introductory course on the College of Europe do's and don't's:

As a 1st step we will show you how we differentiate students by departments:

- We have the rule that if you walk up to someone who looks completely unfamiliar it is probably a LAW student. This, because they have been hiding away in the library most of the time. But, they are also the ones who are most likely to already have a job waiting for them at this very moment.
- If you run into a person that tells you about this amazing conference they have attended and if they cannot stop talking about the EU elections, you are most likely speaking to a POL student.
- If the person in front of you seems to be an adventurous person, chances are that you are speaking to an ECO student, these guys go on their study trip just before exams!
- Now if the person in front of you looks relaxed and like a fun person to hang out with it is probably.... a MATA student! Because let's be honest, they have taken over the title „ClubMed“ from the IRD students. And as we all know, IRD has a Diplomat in training as we speak!

In a 2nd step we will show you how to smalltalk like a college student:

- Hi, did you go to the College?
- Yes, you?
- Yes! What promotion?
- Veil, you?
- Manuel Marín.
- What department were you in?
- IRD, you?
- Ahhhh ClubMed! I was in POL. What residence were you in?
- KV, New Zealand, I mean the hospital, you know the new one that used to be called Wispeluin. Nevermind, the one close to the station. What about you?
- Biskajer, the "best" residence.
- Yeah well that's debatable.
- Who won the boat race in your promotion?
- OUDE ZAK! And did you hear who won the Henrik Brugmans football cup? The Marineros!
- Oh by the way, what are you doing after the College?
- Wait, is there a life after the College?!

The next lesson is how to make everyone feel like you have also secretly lived here. For this you can do the following:

- Complain about the Repas Froid (please note that there are a minuscule number of students, probably countable on one hand, who would disagree with this).
- Tell people that you are so exhausted because you have been spending too much time at the cave. (Note here that the cave is a bar with a Flemish name, that we traded for the more descriptive term this year) Be careful, however, because after this people might assume you have some solid drinking skills)
- Complain about the weather. Yes, this always works.
- Tell someone that you cannot believe how much potatoes Belgians seem to eat.
- Complain about tourists and how they walk around in the streets like headless chickens.
- Brag about you honorary citizenship or go to a bar and order the famous Brugse Zot.

Finally, you should also know what you should not do at the College.

- When writing an email, do not reply to all, unless you effectively have to announce the end of the world - to the whole world.

- Do not write politically incorrect things in a Whatsapp group-chat unless it is your attempt at getting an internship with a company involved in professional hacking, because nobody will be able to use their phones properly anymore for the rest of the day.
- Do not skip the queue at the canteen unless you can stand all the angry glares or unless you are an AA or someone of the college administration who has made sure to have an "important meeting" right after lunch.

So, as you have probably seen now, being part of the College of Europe, next to the academic part of course, entails a lot of social interactions and activities. Living, eating, studying and spending our leisure time together for 10 months has made us know each other very well and we have grown tighter by the day. Going on study trips together, organising national weeks, suffering through deadlines and supporting each other when reality hits, has allowed to forge bonds that will undoubtedly go far beyond this closing ceremony and the last days at the college.

So, let's make more of this promotion than just having the same line in our CVs, let's always remember how we are all better off when we help each other, how everyone is unique and can bring other things to the table for the community. Let's cherish everyone's individuality and build our futures with a sense of community by being understanding, grateful, patient and to have trust but also to be curious and to strive for more.

All of this would have not been possible without the help of the college academic and administrative staff. And while we are incredibly grateful to all the people inside the College bubble, we would also like to thank our relatives and friends who have supported us through these intense 10 months. None of us would be here without you, thank you!

Over to you (Momen) now.