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## **Astana EXPO**

### *MIREES' Report*

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As a student of the Master program MIREES, within the Faculty of Political Science, at the University of Bologna, last May I received the scholarship to work at the International Specialized Exhibition EXPO 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan, following an interview that had tested my knowledge of English and Russian languages. I could choose between two internship periods: the first one from the very beginning of EXPO, in June; and the second one from half of July till the end of Exhibition.

I worked as a volunteer at the Italian Pavilion from July 16th to September 3rd 2017. My tasks included welcoming and assisting visitors, as well as answering questions regarding the pavilion and the use of renewable energies in Italy.

During my internship at this international event I improved my language skills, both English and Russian, as I was in constant contact with both Kazakh visitors and foreigners from all over the world. I had the opportunity to meet important figures belonging to the political sphere and acted as a tour guide within the pavilion. Moreover, I could put into practice my knowledge in the field of energy, gained attending the Energy Security course taught at the MIREES program by prof. Arunas Molis.

I developed productive working relationships with the other members of staff, including members of other pavilions, helping to create a peaceful and cooperative working environment. I also gained new professional skills, particularly in the field of problem-solving: I devised viable solutions to any kind of issue which occurred in the daily activities of the pavilion.

This experience opened my mind to different cultures and traditions. Before my arrival, all I knew about Kazakhstan were stereotypes that were disproved each day. I hope to use what I learned during this experience for writing of my Master thesis; I plan on analyzing the links between the Kazakh government and the Expo, since I experienced first-hand the reality outside Astana. I had the chance to visit some cities such as Almaty, Korgalzhyn, and Burabay and to see, as locals say, the “real Kazakhstan”. Environmental problems and corruption within the government are the main current issues that must be solved, at least partially.

I hope to get involved in future Expo events. Thanks to the internship, I have understood that I would be happy to work in this field, which allowed me to know new people, explore different cultures, and improve myself both personally and professionally. To conclude, I would like to thank all the people and institutions that made this internship possible and gave to so many students the opportunity to work in an international context.

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