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## **Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe (MIREES) 2013 Graduation & Welcome Ceremony**

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On September, 28<sup>th</sup> 2013 the **Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe (MIREES)** celebrated the graduation of 38 young women and men from 15 different countries and welcomed another generation of promising students from all over Europe and the world. The graduation ceremony and the inauguration of the new academic year took place in the spacious Aula Magna of the School of Political Sciences in Forlì and saw the presence of distinguished guests.

The solemn event began with an opening address by the President of the School of Political Sciences, **Dr. Daniela Giannetti**, followed by a short speech by **Patrick Leech**, Town Councilor with Portfolio for Culture and International Relations. The graduating students and their guests were then greeted by the representatives of the MIREES partner universities, namely **Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Corvinus University of Budapest, Saint Petersburg State University and University of Ljubljana**. These inspiring speeches were mainly directed to the students (now alumni), who are about to start a new chapter in the books of their lives.

In the second part of the program, the International Coordinator of MIREES, **Professor Stefano Bianchini**, presented a detailed report on the last two academic years. The Students' Representatives gave a short and emotional speech on the time spent in Forlì and at the partner universities, referring to this period as one of the happiest in their lives. As «fresh» MIREES alumni they were then kindly invited to join the **Mirees Alumni International Association (MAIA)** by one of its representatives and founding members Sara Barbieri.

This year's keynote lecture was delivered by the Deputy State Secretary for European Bilateral Relations and Cultural Diplomacy at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Gergely Próhle**. The esteemed speaker expressed his insightful views on the Central European year in Hungarian Foreign Policy, in light of the country's Central European Initiative (CEI) and Visegrád Group presidency.

The long awaited moment for 38 graduating students finally concretized itself towards the end of the ceremony, when they were awarded their Master of Arts diplomas. Their smiling and happy faces, together with the melodious intermezzos of the Collegium Musicum Almae Matris of the University of Bologna, provided the ideal setting for the opening of yet another academic year and constituted the best possible welcome for the new cohort of MIREES students.

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