IFMSA March Meeting in Hurghada

This year during 1st-7th of March our partner organization, the International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA) held their annual meeting in Hurghada, Egypt. I went there on behalf of the IADS and witnessed a week full of interesting trainings, sessions, new people and got lots of great ideas for development and cooperation within our association as well.

I arrived a few days before the GA to attend the Global Health Advocates training. It was organized by several members of the TOM (Team of Officials) or IFMSA and consisted of various sessions and tasks.

All together there were several 3-day trainings happening at once that were attended all together by around 300 people.

My GHA group consisted of 17 people. In general, we learned about how the UN and the WHO work, how to write policy statements, policy documents and other political writings. We had a chance to practice elevator pitching, lobbying for advocacy issues during high-end meetings, working on global topics and most importantly networking.

I am very glad to have been part of this training as I strongly believe that dental students in general have been way too distant to global health topics for way too long. Based on this knowledge and contacts we will start organizing also global & public health trainings for our members of IADS and initiate a systematic focus area on global health. Dentistry and oral health comprise a huge part of global healthcare and there are enormous issues where we must have our say and work towards Universal Healthcare. As the medical students have been active regarding these topics already for a long time, it is very comforting to know that they will help us to get started as well.

I also attended a few days of the GA of IFMSA and it had a big “Wow” effect on me. The MM2018 was attended by around 1200 people and there were delegates from around 100 countries. It was extremely interesting to watch and see how a federation of such capacity works and functions. Their GAs have a very different structure compared to the ones of IADS with some sides we could definitely use and others definitely not yet. I just noticed that this article became something very "official", so I’ll add a bit about the venue and atmosphere as well.
The meeting was held at a beautiful venue, the Sahl Hasheesh Resort. It looked as if a huge palace next to the sea with gardens, pools and waterslides at the back. It was very warm as well with temperatures rising up to 27°C during the day and the seawater around 18°C. This was like summer for me coming from Estonia where we had -15 and snow at the time. The people I met there were lovely, smart and fun. I knew and had worked with some IFMSA officials before so it was very much fun to meet them again or in some cases for the first time. The week was packed with meaningful day sessions and fun evening social events.

In general, I was very pleased with the meeting. As an external I was taken much care of, we managed to discuss future potential platforms of collaboration between IADS and IFMSA and most importantly start working on building a strong network of interprofessional collaboration.

All I can say now is stay tuned, work with IFMSA, IVSA and IPSF also nationally in your countries and regions and let us know more about what cool global and public health events your countries are organizing and students attending.

Ave Põld / Estonia
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