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Feedback on the trip to New York

In the context of a corresponding seminar, four Master's students at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich have, together with Professor Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina, made an expedition to the *69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women* in the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. It is an annual session that lasts two weeks and gathers representatives of UN member states, civil society organizations and other UN entities to discuss specific topics on the progress and gaps in the implementation of the *1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.

This year's topic was on the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, its implementation during the last 30 years, and the future challenges to achieve gender equality, a topic that is fully aligned with the Master's theses of the attending students.



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At the CSW in the UN Headquarters, the group have attended various conferences organized by official government delegates and civil society from all around the world, including ministerial segments in the General Assembly Hall and other Conference rooms.

They have noted the advantages of the multilateral system of bringing experts and non-experts from around the world with different insights and data to the same place to discuss what is essential for the promotion of humanity and sustainability in the given context.



Apart from the conferences organized at the CSW, they have had the honour to attend two roundtables at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, together with representatives of Swiss NGOs.

The first roundtable was led by Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, who explained Switzerland's participation at the CSW and the great advancements achieved since 1995 towards gender equality, such as the recent reforms on maternity and paternity leave and on the qualification of sexual violence crimes. The other roundtable was led by Co-Director of the Federal Office of Gender Equality Stephanie Lachat, who gave protagonism to the attendants, and the four students presented their ongoing Master's theses, which received applause and important feedback.

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The group also attended a meeting at the Permanent Mission of Italy to the UN, with Counsellor Francesco Fedele of the Department of Political Affairs, engaging in a conversation on the general functions and status of the Italian mission at the UN, which gave insights of not just the legal participation and effects of member states in the UN, but also of the importance of political perspective in the multilateralist system of the UN.

The expedition gave the students in-person insight into the collaboration of the international community in advancing women's rights, achieving real gender equality and the *SDG 5*. Apart from such collaboration, they also experienced the diversity within it, and the diverse approaches that member states take to reach gender equality.



The group met the former Co-Chair of the Women's Bar Association of New York, Fay Yvette Parris, with whom it held a Socratic Seminar, discussing the importance of women's rights and the need for having effective implementation of gender equality laws along with education of the society.

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Besides this, it was generally a great opportunity to meet people around the world with the same and different perspectives on the topic and to establish meaningful conversations and networks.

We would like to take this opportunity to kindly thank the Foundation for Legal Education and Research at the University of Zurich, NGO Post Beijing Switzerland, University of Zurich for their support in this wonderful and memorable experience.

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