

## **Completing an Internship in The Hague: “You are very fortunate that you are studying in one of the most international cities in the world”**

Mikkie Jongstra attended the Advanced Master’s in International Relations and Diplomacy driven by a curiosity to work in the public sector. As part of his program, Mikkie had to complete an internship. While initially he wanted to work abroad, he decided to mainly apply for internships within the Netherlands. He was able to complete a summer internship at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Europe department. There, Mikkie was able to get a real experience of how it is to work in the international relations field.

“I got really lucky because during my time there were three state visits and a lot of other summits. I got to help with the German state visit in the first week of me. Being there, I got to guide the ministers and got to see all the talks that were happening.”

Mikkie had the opportunity to work on various tasks but the main one he focused on was helping the execution of a summit between the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs went smoothly. Being part Italian, in addition to being a Dutch citizen, allowed him to join this summit during which he was able to see in practice many things he learned during the Master in International Relations and Diplomacy.

“During the classes I was thinking: why am I learning about these negotiation techniques when it is likely that I will never be in a room with 10 world leaders? Because that is always a scenario that they depict for you. But now I saw it happening on a much smaller scale, in negotiations between my department and the Italian embassy. When someone makes a stab at someone else about the smallest thing, you see how they handle that and don't really get off the rails because they know we still have to work with these people for two more months. So, seeing how these skills that I learned in my negotiation classes, for example the active listening, empathy, keeping your composure, are so vital in smaller situations too.”

Mikkie chose not to leave The Hague for his internship as it is *the* city of peace and justice which offers plenty of opportunities for networking and being in contact with international institutions such as NATO, foreign embassies and UN offices. Mikkie recommends fellow students to apply for internships in The Hague also because, since many of them are unpaid or underpaid, it is more affordable to not have to leave the city to complete an internship.

“I think you are very fortunate that you are studying in one of the most international cities in the world, so take advantage of those opportunities that already present themselves here.”