

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION 2015

Fifty young people from around the world gathered in London between 11th and 15th May 2015 to take part in the annual ESU International Public Speaking Competition.

Among them was the candidate representing France: Aymon Salvaing de Boissieux, a student at the Lycée Saint Martin in Angers. Aymon travelled to London by Eurostar, arriving at St. Pancras station and enjoying a traditional British lunch of fish 'n chips before the opening ceremony which took place at Dartmouth House. Steve Roberts, ESU Director of Charitable Activities, welcomed the participants, many of whom wore national costume. The candidates then signed their names on a huge map of the world before enjoying dinner together.



Congratulations to the team at Dartmouth House who organised the competition and looked after the young candidates. They



took them this year, amongst other places, to the Tower of London, on a boat trip to Greenwich, to workshops at the Globe Theatre, to a performance of "Mathilda" at the Cambridge Theatre. More importantly, over the course of two days they transformed 50 young individuals from different countries, cultures and backgrounds into a solid group of friends who would support and encourage each

other throughout the competition.

The heats took place at Dartmouth House on the morning of Thursday 14th. At 9am on Friday 15th the names were announced of the 18 participants who would progress to the second round. At midday 6 finalists were selected to compete in the grand final which took place at the headquarters of the competition sponsors, the HSBC bank.

Congratulations to the winner, Alma Agútsdóttir from Iceland, whose speeches were entitled 'The Complexity of Culture' on the theme 'Culture is not a Luxury, but a Necessity', and 'It's Ignorance, it isn't Bliss' on the theme 'to be Ignorant of the Past is to Remain a Child'. The runner up was Khaleel Rajwani from the Netherlands and the Audience's choice was Pierre-Lois Hance from Belgium.



Congratulations to must go to Aymon, the French candidate, who was a credit to his family, his school, and to the ESU Loire Valley. In Aymon's own words:

"I went to London thinking that the IPSC would be a great experience but that I wouldn't like the competitive atmosphere. I was wrong. The experience was awesome. I was given the chance to meet 50 interesting and interested young people from all around the world. We had to compete with each other, but we were all aware that we would never again be surrounded by such a bunch of amazing people. We all tried to enjoy the week as much as we could, merely taking time off to sleep and eat. The week was exhausting and very intense because we were always talking to each other, learning about the entire world and profiting as much as we could from our time together. Our mentors who were organizing the competition were about 25 years old. Every one of them was an accomplished public speaker. They taught us so much about public speaking through the workshops we attended. I sincerely express my gratitude to ESU France - Loire Valley for giving me the opportunity of my life: it changed my way of looking upon the world and this has no price. That experience is the best thing that could happen to anyone and I hope this competition will last forever, so that lots of amazing people can mix and know about each other as I was lucky enough to do".

Photographs of this year's competition taken by the official photographer may be found at www.photobox.co.uk/album/3501677608.