

Visit report - 3/10/16 - Consulate General

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The first excursion of the study tour went to the Consulate general of the Netherlands in New York. The consulate is the link between Dutch people and Americans. It supports Dutch people with business start ups in the United States. It also is the place to provide the exchange of knowledge between the Netherlands and the US. And last, also in other ways they support Dutch people in the US, for example when Dutch people are involved in accidents as was the case one week ago.

After arrival, the consulate general started the day with a presentation about the American ambitions. He stated that the American ambitions are to do business with Europe. A lot of investments are already done between the US and the EU (from both sides). Both unions have a lot to offer to each other. The Europeans for example are technically very qualified. Sometimes, the expertise of the EU are unknown to the American politicians, but at the end they have to admit the strengths Europe has and they see the advantage of collaboration. A second aspect of the American ambitions, the one that is very civil engineering related, is to improve the infrastructure. The private sector in the United States is very strong according to the consulate general, and also the public sector is sufficient. However, the infrastructure throughout the whole country is not maintained well and therefore in really bad state. Improving this, is one of the ambitions of the United States.

The next presentation focusses on a subject that is studied for the macro study as well, namely the American culture and the differences in comparison to the Netherlands. A special focus was on the incorporation: how to start a company in the United States? It was told that Dutch companies that have American Ambitions face a lot of difficulties by starting in the USA. Products that are popular in the Netherlands may not even be of interest of the Americans. Very important in the US is to really sell your product: convince the audience that the product is good and that something is in it for them. It is important to have anytime a pitch ready about your strengths and those of your product. To show this, an assignment was carried out. Three students were picked from the group to instantly give a pitch about why they should be hired by the consulate. Of course, the students were not prepared, but the challenge was to be convincing though. Just as it will be when entering the US business sector.

With this assignment, the end of the excursion had come. It taught us a lot about the ambitions of the Americans and how to behave as a Dutchman in the US. A valuable basis for the coming three weeks and, who knows, later in time when entering the American business sector.