

---

# Annual Report 2018-2019

---

55th board of Studievereniging Machiavelli



From left to right:

Tiziana Schopper

- *Education coordinator*

Eelke Vlieger

- *International coordinator*

Emil Hiddema

- *Secretary*

Thijs Barendrecht

- *Chair*

Saskia van Dalen

- *Political activities coordinator*

Tommy Blomvliet

- *Social activities coordinator*

Maike Dudink

- *Treasurer*

---

# Table of Contents

---

General Policy Plan .....	2
Chair – Thijs Barendrecht.....	5
Secretary – Emil Hiddema.....	8
Treasurer – Maaïke Dudink.....	11
Education coordinator – Tiziana Schopper .....	14
Political Activities Coordinator – Saskia van Dalen.....	17
Social activities coordinator – Tommy Blomvliet .....	21
International coordinator – Eelke Vlieger .....	25



# General Policy Plan

With a mixture of pride, disbelief and melancholy we present to you the annual report of the 55th board of Studievereniging Machiavelli. Proud as we are, happy with what we have achieved, and how close we grew as a team. Disbelief because it feels as if it was only yesterday we wrote our policy plan, and melancholy as this amazing year full of new experiences and friends is coming to an end. In this manner we would like to thank everyone we worked together with in the past year: Of course all members, especially those active in committees, the department staff, and all external parties and associations we worked with. We are proud of our nominated candidate board and we look forward to giving them the best transmission possible. This year was extra special as it marked our 55th birthday and thus 11th lustrum. Therefore, a reflection on the lustrum year is included in this report.

The General Annual Report will be structured just like the Policy Plan and half year report, starting with 'The Association' followed by 'Cohesion', 'Lustrum' and a conclusion. We would be happy to answer any possible questions concerning the annual report during the Nomination General Assembly of the 19th of June.

## **The Association**

As of September 2017, the association Machiavelli grew enormously, this mostly because of the internationalization of the Bachelor of Political Science. Students from all over the globe made the wise choice to come to Amsterdam, and became members of our association. Of course this made it possible to not just learn about political systems from all countries, whilst sitting people in the lecture hall actually from those countries. However, this is easier said than done as an atmosphere had to be created in which both international and Dutch students felt welcome to participate and develop themselves. Of utter importance in this was organizing activities open and interesting to everyone. Activities like the Sinterklaasborrel and Machiavelli Meets Mokum took place. However, we also had to make hard choices regarding this. For example by deciding not to host a Provincial States Debate, as international students couldn't vote for them, and instead putting all our efforts in a European Elections Debate.

Throughout the entire year we worked closely together with dozens of partners, ranging from other associations within our faculty to business partners. Machiavelli is a very well-respected association in the entire country, because of our enthusiasm and work ethics. This was for example shown by us hosting the National Congress of Public Administration 2019 in Amsterdam. The congress was organized by members of both Machiavelli and Faculty Association EOS and was an enormous success. With the Faculty Association, in which all study associations of the faculty are represented, we managed to organize an unforgettable party, and a congress themed 'The struggles of our generation'.

As you could have read in our Policy Plan our committees have been restructured in ways that give our members more autonomy in organizing events, and thus to develop themselves. As you could have read in our half annual report this didn't work very well in every committee. Therefore some changes were adapted, or even completely withdrawn. Each coordinator reflects on this in his or her own personal annual report. It is up to the 56th board how they want to structure the committees. We will inform them thoroughly about our experiences this year during the transmission period.

During the year we had a fair share of bad luck: Think of our trip to Egypt that we had to cancel after warnings from the department and domain, shifted exam dates causing us to reschedule events and more. We are proud of how we managed to cope with the always changing circumstances but are also self-critical. Events were sometimes not spread out well over the year causing members to feel overpromoted, this has also negatively influenced attendance rates at several events.

This report is written in the build up to one of the most important moments of the year, the Nomination General Assembly. During this General Assembly the members can express their opinions and even vote on the nominated candidate board presented by the Application Committee.

During this General Assembly this annual report will be presented by the chair of the 55th board. This as a measurement to make GA's shorter. During the mid-years GA a motion has been accepted stating from now on the voting for all documents: annual report, half-year report, and policy plan will have to be closed. In order to make this a fast procedure efforts have been made to make this procedure go online. However, it turned out to be difficult to find an online voting procedure that would make authorizations possible, yet made sure no one could make two accounts and hence vote twice. Also for this GA a video is being made to promote the working and content of it. To check the effectiveness of this promotion Google Analytics is being used.

## **Cohesion**

Of course a good relation between the board and the members of Machiavelli is of essence. Members should always be able to ask any board member any serious or non serious question, a good connection with the board is also a good motivation for members to come to borrels even during the more quiet exam weeks. Where in the half year report we stated that in the last half year we would try hard to establish a great connection with even more members this proved to be hard. This because it is of course more difficult to reach out to those not regularly attending Machiavelli events. The possibilities for lecture talks also lessened in the past half year. This because of lecturers not allowing it, and lectures being poorly attended in general.

The move of the Machiavelli room was a big theme this year, mainly for the faculty association. The new offices are bigger, but a lot less visible than the previous ones. This lead to less members 'chilling' in the Machiavelli room. However, the past months we were happy to see an increase in this number. Maybe the complete rearranging of the board room had something to do with this. However, we also did a lot to increase the visibility of the Machiavelli room. Already in the very first weeks we organized a lottery: members could leave their name in a phase once a day during one week. Out of all the names in the vase three winners were selected. Furthermore we made a 'committee wall' on which all active members have a place, made fun snapchat videos and more. At the time of writing a game day is being organized on which members can play games in the Machiavelli room with the board, and fellow members.

Machiavelli has members of all nationalities, spread out over a Dutch track, and an international track. Something we noticed was a lack of cohesion between the members in the two tracks. Not surprising as of course tutorial groups are also very important when it comes to making friends. However, we want the cohesion within Machiavelli between all members to be as strong as can be.

Therefore in collaboration with the department we planned to organize an event on which members could cook food from their home country and serve it to other members. Because of a lack of own finances we couldn't organize this independently and contact with the department got stuck because of several circumstances. Therefore we could not organize this event anymore.

## **Lustrum**

This document is one of the final pieces of the 55th board, during the 55th year of existence, and thus the 11th lustrum year of our association. However, although this was already our 11th lustrum year we unfortunately could not build on the experiences of previous lustrum years. The amount of online information about earlier lustrum years and the relation between board and possible lustrum committee, was minimal. We chose to have a structure in which the lustrum committee worked autonomously from the board, only with Thijs as Lustrum Coordinator in the committee. In this role he mostly provided dates, contact details and other practical information. The already full year agenda lead to the fact that many events turned out to be organized in collaboration with the board. This logically wasn't the initial plan and therefore a date was found for a completely separate event being Machiavelli's birthday party. Another great success was for example the old-board dinner for which the 45th till the 55th board were invited.

The Lustrum Committee contributed a lot to making this a year to remember. Therefore we would hereby like to thank Tessa, Toto, Linde, Piet, Shannon & Merle again for all their work, and the pleasure we had in working together. Of course the lustrum would not be complete without an almanac. We would like to thank the almanac committee, and especially Piet Seidenberg, for the hard work that was put in this amazing book. Of course the lustrum merchandise was also a great addition to the festivities. The socks and shirts are true collectors items. To ensure that the next lustrum will be at least equally great the lustrum committee, as well as the 55th board, will evaluate the Lustrum year thoroughly. The results of these evaluations will form the base for a 'Lustrum Transmission Document' for the 60th board and next lustrum committee.

## **Matters for next year**

We have great confidence in the 56th nominated candidate board, and in their abilities to face all the challenges our association faces, and will face. Next year will only be the first year in which all years of the bachelor have internationalized, getting members from all nationalities and ages involved in Machiavelli will therefore remain a challenge. Another challenge we see is our decreasing social media reach. This is part of a larger development of decreased social media use and therefore makes it of utter importance to always look for new ways to inform members about our activities. While writing this report appointments with the department are already being scheduled to talk about how Machiavelli activities can be more incorporated in for example the 'rooster' and on Canvas. This issue has also been discussed with our befriended associations. These discussions gave us some good input to pass on to our successors.

## **Conclusion**

Without losing self-criticism, we are very proud of this year. Many challenges, and problems were faced and solved. Many new students fell in love with Machiavelli just like the seven of us did in our first years. We pass on a financially healthy association. We look forward to our last task: providing the next board with all the knowledge we have, and preparing them as good as possible for one of the best years of their life.

## Chair – Thijs Barendrecht



The past twelve months have without doubt formed the most educational, memorable and most of all fun year of my life so far. I want to thank everyone I worked with the past year, especially my board. Working together with six other engaged board members in organizing a diverse range of events, activities and trips has been amazing. However, of course it also brought challenges. Looking at these challenges we faced I can only say I am extremely proud of this board. Where I started my policy plan

with a thank you to my predecessor Lucas van Straalen, I will begin my annual report with expressing my confidence in my nominated successor Linde, I am looking forward to giving her a thorough transmission. The association will be in good hands with you and the 56th nominated candidate board.

### Internal Policy

As I already stated in my half year report my newfound concept of 'Shared Autonomy' was not a concept to never forget. Where on the start of the year I was afraid to micromanage, I soon realized that this by no means could cause us to not be updated about our day to day Machiavelli work. The seven functions sometimes looked a bit like seven islands, the half year weekend became a turning point in which those seven islands drifted back towards each other. We as a group grew closer throughout the year which was also visible in more intense discussions during for example board meetings. This is something I perceive as a positive development as it means the board is at ease to speak of their true opinion. During the second half of your board year you have gotten familiar with each other character traits and qualities. The second half year also provided more space for the board to focus on non-Machiavelli related activities, even studying, this stimulated a more relaxed atmosphere.

One of my goals was to be a very approachable chair, when reflecting I feel positive about this. As far as I know members easily contacted me at any given moment to have a question answered, or to just have a conversation. The same goes for my board members. When in difficult situations on both professional and personal level and think I have been of good help. Where I do not disagree with the previous me when saying autonomy is extremely important, the past half year I have been more pro-active. By being more involved in the early process of for example of organizing events, my feeling is that this prevented some events to become stressful at the last-minute.

However, I remain self-critical and see that there is room for improvement. The ways in which I see chances for improvement will be thoroughly transmitted to my successor. What I am most proud of is the following: in my policy plan I described Machiavelli as the place where friendships are made, relationships are established and students can develop themselves on both a social and professional level. This year we have been able to create an atmosphere in which this was again the case.

Next to a chair the Machiavelli board also knows the position of Vice-Chair. The tasks of the vice-chair is to lead board meetings when the chair can't be present, and co-representing Machiavelli towards external partners. However, in practice the most important task of a vice-chair is to serve as a person of trust within the board. When board members experience difficulties in the relation with their chair, it can be difficult to discuss these issues with the chair directly. The vice-chair can serve as an intermediate. Normally the vice-chair is picked at the very start of the year. We recommend the 56th nominated candidate board to only make this choice after a month. When a board is familiar with its internal dynamics it is easier for it to make a balanced decision on who should be the vice-chair.

### **External Policy**

Representing Machiavelli has been a huge honour, and a great responsibility to take. As Machiavelli is not only a member of, but also very involved in several nation- faculty- and university wide collaborations. Think of the National Consultative body for Public Policy associations (LOB), The Platform for Political Scientists (PvP), Faculty Association (Fv-FMG), ASVA and more.

We have been very active in both the LOB and PvP, the way associations deal with their specific challenges and problems have taught us a lot in how to cope with our own difficulties. For example regarding the question how to get more members to hang out in our board room. The member associations of the LOB decide in which city the annual 'National Congress of Public Administration' (LCB) is held. The LCB of 2019 was hosted in Amsterdam and I had the amazing experience of being in its board. After a successful congress I look much forward to next years edition in Delft, the bid Machiavelli voted for. The PvP is an association in which all four study associations for Political Science are represented. I regularly met or skyped with the chairs of these associations about best practices, and discussed the progress on the two events that have been organized by the PvP: The PiP-congress and Political Science Cross your Borders. For the first one I would like to thank our members to the PiP committee: Alexandra, Piotr and Roni. I very much enjoyed the congress, the amount of UvA-lecturers also again told us we made the right choice to go study at the UvA. Political Cross Your Borders was held in Nijmegen. Because the only option to schedule this during our exam week zero of our members were able to attend. To avoid this from happening again we as PvP will advice our predecessors to plan dates before making the individual year plannings.

In the Faculty Association (Fv-FMG) I held the position of secretary. The chairs of all FMG associations form the board of the Fv-fmg. We lunched with the dean twice and regularly had contact with faculty manager Tom Verhoek. One of the key elements in the beginning of the year was to make our board rooms completely ready for use, as well as easy to find for our respective members. However, regarding the latter a lot still has to be done. The faculty states that there is no budget to update the signings which is something we still discuss during our last weeks as Fv-fmg board. Other issues have been the incentives for members to become active in their association, and the impact of internationalisation. Of course also this year a great party and congress were organized under the auspices of the Fv-FMG. The reason I applied as secretary is because I was afraid combining the Fv-FMG chairmanship with the fact I was also in the LCB board this year would become too much.

During the year I regularly had contact with Guus, the chair of the alumni circle. This to discuss our collaboration in for example organizing events together. The future for political science students is often vague. Therefore it is very useful to meet people who have been through it all and are now active in the field. Of course this is not just good for your job orientation, but also for your network. One of the results of our collaboration was the 'Alumni Lustrum Boat Tour', it was amazing to hear Machiavelli stories from alumni of various generations.

Over the past half year I have also been very active in the External Relations Committee. a lot of parties and governmental institutions were mostly keen on working together on career events. Given the fact our major career event had already taken place this didn't lead to any deals for our association. However, the work was not useless as we documented our company contacts precisely. This way future boards are quickly able to find relevant companies who are keen on working with us on our events.

### **Long term goal**

A major goal for me this year was to be more appealing for members of older year layers. In order to achieve this we made multiple efforts in involving master students. In the first two months this seemed to have a good effect as a fair group of master students became regular visitors of the borrel. However, this gradually became harder. One of the reasons for this is of course the fact that the second half year for master students is stressful. However, we also noticed that social events do not cater the needs of most master students. Therefore a pillar of our acquisition committee was to organize inhouse days. Despite emailing dozens of companies we did not manage to do this.

As I already noted down in the half year report the Advisory Council made us realize that the best way to stimulate active membership under older years is a long term strategy. By working hard to ensure currently active members have the time of their lives, it is likely that many of them will remain active in Machiavelli through the course of their studies. We are confident this shift of attention will indeed be visible during future years.

### **Conclusion**

Arriving this paragraph touched my emotions. Concluding this year after all the hours and unforgettable moments I experienced is difficult, yet a beautiful thing to do. Although I look back at this year with self pride, but mostly pride for our team, I remain self-critical. The coming weeks I will work on the transmission to the 56th board with full commitment. We celebrated our rich history during this lustrum year, but I am filled with joy when I think about the future and being apart of it. No longer as chair, but as a proud member.

## Secretary – Emil Hiddema



It is already the end of the year and I am happy to say that I can look back on a wonderful year. At the time of writing this, it has been exactly one year since I heard that I was selected as a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> nominated candidate board. This year has been both exciting and full of learning moments. Before I go into my annual report, I first of all want to thank the committee members of the *Derde Dinsdag* for showing their capabilities and making it a great magazine as it is. Secondly, I want to thank my fellow

board members for helping me with my tasks which at some point became quite overwhelming. In this annual report, I will mostly evaluate the last couple of months that have passed. As many of you may have read in my policy plan and half year report the function of Secretary is divided into four categories. For each of these four categories, I will give a short evaluation.

### **General Assembly**

This year we've had already in my eyes two successful General Assemblies. At the time of writing the last General Assembly of the year is approaching. In this report, I will look back on how the organization of the General Assembly went. The promotion of the General Assembly will be discussed under promotion.

Concerning all the General Assemblies this year, I find the cooperation with the presidium fruitful. In anticipation of this General Assembly, we have already had several meetings where we discussed numerous scenarios and how to deal with these situations. During the General Assembly in February, there was however more of a chaotic atmosphere than we anticipated, this was also due to some shifts in planning concerning the availability of possible Application Committee members. In the end, this problem was resolved during the General Assembly and was talked about in an evaluation meeting together with the Presidium. Another problem that arose was the duration of the General Assembly and the General Assemblies in general. Also the time it took to discuss a submitted motion took longer than we anticipated. For a long time, a general complaint is that the General Assembly is taking too long. Therefore we have decided to not present our report individually but leave the presentation up to the Chair. The coordinators will still be available to answer questions. The individual presentations took too long and told things that can be easily found in the discussed reports. We will implement this change to our last General Assembly and hopefully, this will have the desired effects.

Lastly, I will challenge my successor to search for things that make the General Assembly more attractive. This year I have tried with several ways to make the General Assembly more attractive, I will share my experiences

## **Promotion**

Concerning promotion, I have mixed feelings on how this went the last couple of months. On one hand, the individual quality of promotion articles has been constant and of good quality. We have always, as a team, strived to reach the best promotion we want to achieve. On the other hand, promotion from our part hasn't always reached the potential it always had. This claim is mainly focused on our reach on social media. As I have stated in my half-year report the reach on big platforms such as Facebook has been rapidly declining. We have shifted some of our attention to platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. The problem however with these social media channels is that they are not as extensive as a platform such as Facebook. Promotion is very important for a good turnout, so to find new ways to promote is very essential. For example: Every month we have sent out a members mail, but according to our statistics only 40 % of our members open these emails. I will use the transmission to pass on these findings to my successor, and I hope my successor can find good ways or new methods to improve the situation we have encountered during this year.

For the promotion of the General Assembly, I have made a couple of informational videos to explain what the General Assembly entails, those videos have been received positively. This new way of promotion helped to give information about the General Assembly. One of my goals was to not only get a good turnout but to also let people know what a GA is even if they had never visited a GA before

To end on a positive note, I have learned a lot and improved greatly concerning this part of my function. To be responsible for a task like promotion has taught me to work closely together with every one of my board. Therefore, I want to thank the rest of the board for their patience and positive input to improve promotion. Even though there is a lot of room for improvement, I have great faith in my successor to come up with fresh and new ideas.

## **Derde Dinsdag**

When I was writing my half-year report the Derde Dinsdag hasn't been released yet this. I can say with pride that I was able to release two editions of the Derde Dinsdag in between the 2nd General Assembly of last February and upcoming GA in June. A third edition of the Derde Dinsdag is already in the making. The plan for this edition is to have it before the beginning of next year and distribute it during the book emissions this way the new members are familiar with what the Derde Dinsdag entails, this may also result in these members joining the Derde Dinsdag Committee

The thing I battled most with, at the beginning of the year was my lack of experience with being a chief editor of the Derde Dinsdag. Therefore, this third edition will be part of the transmission. Together with my successor, I will use this edition to see what problems can arise when being a chief editor of the Derde Dinsdag. This can also help my successor get a better idea on how to shape the Derde Dinsdag next year. I also had trouble to ask for the help of my fellow board members. I have been able to overcome this problem, and this is partly the reason for the fact that I was able to release these two editions. Together with an enthusiastic committee, I can also say that the Derde Dinsdag looks like a professional magazine, which can be enjoyed by a wide array of political science students. In the process of making the Derde Dinsdag I have learnt plenty of new skills and improved in others. As I have mentioned before, I want to keep on working to show my successor what the workload of the Derde Dinsdag entails during the rest of my transmission.

## **Administrative**

The administrative tasks have been the most labour intensive. Taking minutes and maintaining the member file are some things to be done every day. In my half-year report, I mostly talked about organizing the Constitution drinks. For the past couple of months, the work has mostly been about maintaining these tasks. These tasks include maintaining the website and the members' mail.

In the first part of the year, I had some trouble using the new program we used to send out the members mail. The last couple of months I have succeeded to send these out on a regular basis.

Lastly, I have worked together with Maaïke to make sure the contribution could go as smooth as possible. Updating the member database makes sure contribution will go smoother every year from now.

## **Conclusion**

I am very proud to have been a part of a board of this great association. This board year has been with ups and downs but in the end more ups than downs. I am looking forward to working together with my successor and teach her all I have learned this year. Being a secretary has taught me a great ordeal of new skills and I will remember this year for the rest of my life

## Treasurer – Maaïke Dudink



Acquisition, Book Emission and Lustrum.

Although the year for me has definitely not come to an end and I am still working hard on our end of year realization and many other tasks that I will mention throughout this report. It is still a good moment to reflect on what the past four months and see what has gone well, what could have been improved and what has been learned. I will structure this report in the same way as my policy plan and half year report; Financial Health and Administration, Communication,

### **Financial Health and Administration**

There are many aspects to consider when talking about the financial health of the association. One very important aspect of the last GA were the financial setbacks we have experienced in the past year. Since the GA I have been working hard on solutions and have talked to the UvA in getting their help to keep the association financially stable. At this point, I am confident in saying there will be no huge financial setback this year. Since the year is not over and not all payments have been made and realizations have been completed I cannot say exactly how it will end up but am confident in a positive outcome. We have been able to save considerable amounts on some general costs, and the College of Social Sciences (CSS) has agreed to let us redistribute subsidy that we have not used, from IAPPS, political activities and education that ended up costing less, not cutting in costs only redistributing if less was used than expected. Something I have learned from this, especially through communication with other associations of the CSS, is that our subsidy can be used a lot more broadly than I was aware of, for example for website costs, payment traffic, and secretarial costs. This is knowledge I will pass on to my successor and use to make a more stable budget where everything that is budgeted can be used.

At this point in the year, the book sales profits for the second semester are still unknown to me. I have an indication of how many books we sold but do not know exactly how much profit we have made as this usually takes quite a long time. I have some indication and can see that my prediction that we would make less profit than we had budgeted is correct. The projection I am currently basing this on is that we will make around 2400 euros. Currently, Thijs and the Fv-FMG board are working together to find other sources of income for the associations as everyone is experiencing less income from book sales. As a board, we are also coming up with ideas but have not come up with anything concrete that could fill such a big hole in our budget. This is something I will thoroughly discuss with my successor and suggest how to best tackle this issue.

A big part of the administration that I am currently still in the middle of is the members' contribution. First thing I want to state is that I started with this task too late and this is a mistake I have definitely learned from and will pass on to my successor. A big problem I faced when inking the membership contribution is that in the new website there was no SEPA form included. Even though it was in our terms and conditions we did not have permission to get the membership contribution from any of the new members through direct debit. I have tried to solve this issue through emailing all these members with a payment request and information on how to transfer. I am still in the middle of this process.

### **Communication**

I will keep this short because not much has changed since my last report. Communication with other board members is still going well. We are communicating quite a lot about fixing the areas we have less income than expected. I think it is clear what is happening, and they are updated on what needs to happen to bring the overall budget to a good close.

### **Acquisition**

The external relations committee has been making a lot of progress and has contacted a lot of possible partners but sadly to the point of writing this has not resulted in any partnerships. We are talking to quite a few companies and have good chances of making a partnership by the end of the year. I hope that there will be members of the committee that will remain in the committee, because we have committed members that keep getting better and more comfortable contacting company and I think consistency is something this committee needs to be able to succeed, since getting used to contacting companies can be quite difficult.

Looking back at this year the acquisition goal was set too high, but there was also a lack of effort from me at the beginning of the year because I was new to it and did not have enough time for it. This is something I will pass on to my successor so that he will not make the same mistakes as I did.

### **Book Emission**

The income from the second book emission is still uncertain at the time of writing this, however, I do know that it will be less than we had budgeted at the beginning. This is something we will hopefully find out soon, exactly how much money has been made but for the time being a rough estimate is all I have received from Athenaeum.

The second book emission did run smoothly. After a few small bumps in the first emission, I was able to learn from these mistakes and find how to best work with my other board members and the people at Athenaeum. There was one book that arrived later, in two batches, this was the first year's international relations course. This book was written by the professor and was not finished yet at the time of the book emission, for the Dutch book people were still able to order it and then pick it up later before the course started. For the English version, this was as PDF offered to students. After the book became available, they could buy it at Athenaeum.

The shared contract is still going well, communication between associations is good and so is the contact with Athenaeum. Next year the three contact association (Machiavelli, SEC and Pegasus) will most likely stay the same, Machiavelli will definitely be one. One other association has also joined the contract (Sarphati), so we will be acting on behalf of seven associations now. The treasurer of SEC and chair of Pegasus are also discussing if we should set up a transmission document together for the BVC-FMG or if we should each talk about it only in our individual transmission documents (which is already the case for us and will remain this way). I think a shared transmission document will have added value that we as Machiavelli can ensure that other associations are passing on the same quality of knowledge in a field that affects us. There are of course also benefits to a shared transmission document, that everyone gets the same information to work with.

### **Lustrum**

Just like communication, I do not have a lot to say about this point. Communication with the Lustrum committee is still going well, and I feel that I am accessible to the committee and the Lustrum treasurer.

### **Conclusion**

It is very hard for me to conclude because I feel that there is still so much to come and there are many things for me that are not rounded off yet. However, I can confidently (and with the awareness of how much of a cliché it is) say that this has been one of the most challenging, interesting and fun years of my life and have been so thankful for the opportunity to be on the 55<sup>th</sup> board of Machiavelli. Thank you all for making this year as great as it has been.

## Education coordinator – Tiziana Schopper



Writing this is, as everything has been this year, challenging and exciting at the same time. Challenging, because one of the most educational, exciting and daring years of my life is coming to an end; and exciting because I know that great times lie ahead for both me, as an individual and of course for Machiavelli. I am so thankful for everything that this association and its members have given me, taught me, and all the experiences I was able to make. I am thankful for every single person I have met that was with me along the way, for all

the support and all the challenges that have helped me grow so much. So from the bottom of my heart, to all our members, to my advisory council buddy Luuc, and of course to my board: thank you.

I will structure this report as I did with my half-year report: the committees, the quality of education, internationalization, exam trainings, older year's and master students, events and finally personal goals.

### **The committees:**

For the events in the second half of the year I ended up working with individual committees instead of a selection of the big committee, which I actually really appreciated, because it brought in people that had not joined the education committee in the beginning of the year and so also new, fresh ideas. This was unconventional, but it is definitely an option that I would consider worth exploring, because it does open the possibilities for new members to participate and bring in their ideas.

The first year's council was something that I genuinely struggled with, because even though I tried getting students excited for the council, the general interest seemed to be low. I hope that this is a sign for the students being content and not really needing a place to express their collective concerns, but still I think that a large, representative first-years council could be useful. I therefore decided to try a different approach and structure the first-years council meeting a bit like an event, with promo posts to incentivise students to attend. As I am writing this, the meeting has not taken place yet, so we will have to see how it works. I do however realise that this was something I struggled with all year, and I would definitely advise my successor to put a stronger focus on that.

Lastly, I mentioned in my half-year report that we considered starting a second-year's council. We realised throughout the year that this wasn't necessary, because I was able to collect complaints on a personal basis and therefore was able to keep a good overview of what was going on in the second year.

### **The quality of education:**

The quality of education is one of the pillars of our study association, and I can assure everyone that I gave my very best to assure that the quality stays as high as possible. Throughout the year, I kept an eye on all courses for possible problems, and if problems arose, I asked the students about them, collected messages and brought these to the department. With this method, I was able to discuss problems with the HOPT course with the responsible teachers and make suitable agreements to improve the course. A similar method was used to evaluate the Sustainability politics course, and a meeting with the responsible teachers will take place soon to discuss any problems. I was also always open for students to approach me with any individual concerns, which many students did. I am happy to say that I was able to assist many individual students with their issues and that I have always done so to the best of my abilities.

Furthermore I still cooperated with the department of political science, attended their meetings and defending the students interests towards them. I am glad that the department always had an open ear and often took my advice to heart.

### **Internationalization:**

Throughout the year we were able to see that many problems that the international students had in the first year did not occur again, which of course made us very happy. This shows that the department of political science has come a long way in improving the integration of political science students into the Dutch student life and culture, and of course Machiavelli will always aim to further said integration. I think the next step should be to bring the two tracks closer together, and maybe new options for that can be explored, therefore I would strongly advise my successor to put a focus on that next year.

### **Exam trainings:**

We started our cooperation with tentamentrainingen.nl this year, and even though there were some hiccups, we were overall happy with this cooperation and the quality of the trainings. This year has really given us the opportunity to explore all possibilities and pick the best ones to have a successful cooperation. We will adjust some things, but we look forward to continuing our cooperation with tentamentrainingen.nl.

### **Older years and master students:**

As mentioned before, we tried to involve master students specifically in the first semester, but sadly reaching them was quite hard. Of course we hosted the career event, which was aimed towards master students, but the attendance of master students was quite low. I did however stay up to date on any educational issues within the Master, mainly through the programme committee.

### **Events:**

I started the second half of the year off with the career event. We had many different big names and interesting workshops at this event, so content-wise it was a very good event, even though it was a bit much, being two full days long. Sadly, the attendance was much lower than expected. I am not 100% sure why this is the case, but maybe it should have been promoted more or differently. I would definitely advise my successor to organise the event again, but keep it shorter or restructure the event. Furthermore, it is essential to focus on promotion for this event to increase attendance. Besides the career event, we had a pub lecture in cooperation with the lustrum committee, which was very nice. Another event that I am modestly proud of was the open evening. It was a lovely event and we were more than happy with the attendance rate, therefore a great success.

We decided to last minute add a speed dating event where First-year students can meet Second-year students and get advice on their study choices. I am in the midst of organising this, and I hope it will be a successful event and help first-years with their study choices.

### **Personal goals:**

Looking back at the personal goals I have set myself at the beginning of this year, I am proud of what I have achieved. Students often approached me with their personal (education related) problems, which shows me that I have been accessible and helpful, which was very important to me. Furthermore, students have made use of the possibility to message me in either Dutch or English, which leads me to believe that I have created an environment in which students are comfortable, and of this I am very proud.

I am the first international board member of Machiavelli, and I am glad that I was able to make this experience. I hope that many more international students will fall in love with this association the same way I did and make the leap to apply to be on the board of Machiavelli. I have done everything I could to make the board of Machiavelli accessible to internationals, and most importantly, I think I showed how valuable a board year can be, also for us as non-Dutch students.

### **Conclusion:**

I have always given my best to fulfil my function, no matter which obstacles I faced. I hope that my successor can learn and grow from my challenges. I am proud of the things I achieved and humbled by the things I didn't achieve, and the most important thing is that this year was exactly what it should have been: a wonderful, challenging and educational learning experience. I wish my successor the very best, I know they will do great, and I will always be there for them. There are great times ahead for Machiavelli

## Political Activities Coordinator – Saskia van Dalen



Here we go: it is time for already the last documentation of my board year. In this report I will discuss the past events, look back on the overall experience and reflect. The past year has been a great learning experience, alongside my fellow board members and my committee. Together we have achieved a lot in terms of organized events and keeping things running and personal growth was a big part of it as well. A thank you to all those mentioned before is in place: all in this together we made the best of every situation we encountered. So

without further ado onto the layout of my annual report and the actual report itself. Same as last time I will discuss my set goals for the year first. After this it is time to once more take a good look at the functioning of the Political Activities Committee (PAC). The heart of my section of the annual report lies in discussing and reflecting on the events that have been organized in the second part of the year. After this I will conclude and it has become time to pass the baton.

### Goals

One of my main goals this year was to maintain structure and keep a tight schedule for myself. As expected this has proven to be quite difficult for me, but it has improved since the half-year reflection. The weekly walk-in committee meeting never got off the ground, mostly because I felt it was too difficult picking one moment in the week where everyone could benefit from it. Instead I have increased the subcommittee meetings and pushed for even more frequent communication via other channels. This was a solution to the problem of not getting regular updates, without painstakingly searching for a set date. The plan for the second half of the year was to work more alongside Thijs, and as a more general idea to always have someone within the board to spar with. I feel like this has had the effect I anticipated on: being more productive, accountable and working more structured. Asking for help is something I still struggle with, but indicating problems earlier on and delegating tasks have begun to come easier for me. It is however still difficult to delegate tasks seeing as I have a habit of rather doing things myself. Another goal I had this year was to be very accessible and easy to reach with ideas, struggles and whatnot. Same as earlier in the year I noticed that people came up to me on their own. My last and maybe biggest goal this year was to offer a broad spectrum of events with differing venues, formats, weekdays, timeslots, themes and promotion approaches. In order to achieve this I tried to look at politics in the broadest way I could imagine, not limiting my activities to politicians and things on the current political agenda. Aiming to reach as many members as possible I hoped that changing things up in between events would help. The general committee however pointed out to me that they preferred the events earlier in the week. This and other comments will be passed on to my successor. Overall the diversity described before found a way into the political activities. For instance we fought hard to have as many political parties represented at our European Elections event as possible: I think we succeeded and it really added to the quality of the event.

## Committee

The aim for the committee this year was to keep everyone active in attending meetings, but above all to create cohesion and atmosphere of awareness of the activities organized by fellow committee members. Seeing the committee as more of a community that goes beyond dry evaluations and focuses on the things we all share: a love for politically relevant themes and being a group of politically engaged people ourselves. On this regard I feel like I have not reached my goal.

Although some committee members showed a very strong group spirit, others have 'strayed' during the year despite efforts of catching up in our mutual group and individually on personal and PAC-related topics. Another way of tackling this was the application to be in the committee, which seemed to pay off in the beginning: I will advise my successor to look into this once again. I do think pursuing a PAC community is something good and there is plenty of room for improvement in the future. One of the attempts at this community is still a work in progress, which is called the "Politics & Pilsner" group. Coining this new addition to the association has been somewhat delayed, so reflection upon it would not make a lot of sense at this point. This is why the project will be up for my successor to either pick up or drop. Using the subcommittee members in promoting the events to encourage the group feeling has worked out well. Once again it was difficult to remain a coordinator instead of an organizer the past couple of months, especially because we had multiple events without committees (which meant I had to organize instead of coordinate, and switching between roles for different events is a challenge for me). We chose not to have subcommittees for these events because it was already a collaboration with other parties, so I was afraid to lose the oversight. However Thijs assisted me in both of the events, which was a big help. Overall I think it went better than in the first part of the year. Like mentioned before it has become clear to me the importance of having frequent communication when it comes to subcommittees, this realization was of great help in the second part of the year.

## Events

This year holding events with (strictly) international themes was one of the ways I tried to get the biggest turnout. Same as the events earlier on I felt like this approach paid off. For me it was important that every event had a significant debate portion, because I personally feel like reflection is very important in academic culture. The last political events have had such a debate element and I am glad I succeeded in incorporating this. Most of the events were theme events, which is what I strived for from the beginning.

### *Machiavelli's Docurama: Four years after Blatter*

Starting off with an event that was, sadly, one of the least successful this year: the Docurama. In an effort to highlight the less obvious concept of 'politics' I intended from the beginning of the year to have an event on FIFA. Unsure of what format would be useful for this, we ended up choosing the Docurama for this subject. In the weeks leading up to the event we were struggling to find an expert on both politics and soccer (or FIFA in particular), because this is a pretty niche field of experts. However this does not excuse the fact that we were not able to find a speaker for the event. Also because of these problems we encountered the promotion got delayed, which is why the turnout suffered. In hindsight our motivation was there, but the idea might have been flawed to begin with.

### *GSSS MasCot Focusweek Democratic Dys[U]Topias*

An event long in the making we had teamed up with MasCot because they wanted to reach bachelor students as well as master students this year. Very enthusiastic about their renewed approach we started the collaboration. Communication was not always perfect and it is one of multiple examples of how difficult working together can be, even when meeting up regularly and keeping thorough notes. There were bumps in the road, but in terms of content think we put up a quality event. However the turnout was meagre and the audience consisted mostly of non-Machiavelli members. We suspected this was also due to the amazing weather that day and the fact that this event was held in the afternoon before another event.

Whereas I was hoping that using different time slots would increase attendance, one of the reasons people gave for not wanting to attend is the timing. Lastly I believe the promotion could have been done better.

### *European Elections Debate*

This event was already on my mind at the beginning of the year and we started planning early on. Another combined effort, with multiple political youth organizations from Amsterdam, meant that communication was sometimes unclear and holding meetings in order to clear things up was difficult from time to time. In hindsight I should have been more on top of things. Our main goal with the event was to inform people and even more important: raise awareness and get people to vote. We managed to deliver on the promise of an informative part to start off the event and a debate between a variety of parties as the heart of the evening. The event attracted a respectable crowd, again sadly consisting of a majority of non-Machiavellians. This probably had to do with the big trip being moved to this week and also because there were multiple other options to visit a free event on the subject. The motivation and enthusiasm of the political youth organizations, participating with stands loaded with promotional materials and up for a chat, and candidates in the debate really carried the event and I think it was one of the most successful ones this year.

### *Everyone Marches: Machiavelli Discusses*

When writing this piece my last event is still in the works, as it will take place the day after this General Assembly. We chose a theme that is close to the heart of everyone, whether you are for or against protests: you will encounter them. To keep the balance within the event we tried to use an approach similar to the platform economy event: multiple experts holding a short lecture that highlights different viewpoints and afterwards having a small panel discussion on the future and/or usefulness of all the protesting and marching that is happening nowadays. So far the event seems very promising and I am confident we will go out with a bang.

### *Politics & Pilsner*

Organizing political events for Machiavelli requires structure and maintaining the usual quality means that you have to start planning well ahead. Unfortunately this means that sometimes very important subjects do not get the attention they deserve. To accommodate a platform to debate these things and to create a bigger cohesion within the PAC and between politically engaged Machiavellians, I decided to start a trial. If everything goes according to plan we will have had two Politics & Pilsner editions take place this year. Hopefully this is enough for my successor to determine whether they want to continue the project. As for me: I am positive about the effort to fill a possible gap in the life of Machiavellians where they can debate subjects with peers away from party affiliations.

### **Conclusion**

This year has been a great challenge for me, pushing me to use my all. Sometimes my efforts resulted in greatness and sometimes I feel like I could and should have done better. Something I am still proud of is how people never seemed to refrain from talking to me about all that was on their mind, but mostly their ideas. In return I sought to honour their contribution by trying to implement it and some of the suggestions even came to light. Most importantly I hope that people enjoyed the events the PAC organized this year and the committee members will stick around a bit longer. It has been a huge learning experience and the fact that we had our lustrum added to the amazing year. Alas all good things come to an end and even I must leave the PAC at some point. Therefore onto the future: I am more than confident that Julia will do great next year. I look forward to see where she will take the PAC and what creative solutions and activities she will come up with.

## Social activities coordinator – Tommy Blomvliet



It feels like yesterday that I received the call that I made it into the 55th board of Machiavelli, but here I am, writing my annual report to reflect upon my year as the Social Activities Coordinator. A year in which both me and my position changed, in a positive way. But also, a year in which both me and the SAC position faced new challenges, of which the outcome turned out as lessons for the future. This annual report will be similarly structured as my policy plan and half-year report. I will start with the social cohesion within our

association, what was done to enlarge this and what could have gone better? After that I will reflect on the committee structure that was changed this year: what went well and what could my successor change? The third point that I will discuss is the cooperation with the Lustrum Committee and last but not certainly not least I will reflect on the social events since the last General Assembly and my year in general.

### **Social Cohesion**

As said, this first paragraph will be about the social cohesion within Machiavelli. As I already stated in my half-year report; this was a pretty ambitious goal. Looking back at this policy goal, I think it was quite ambitious and therefore did not give the outcome I aimed for. We did do everything possible to get this outcome and I'm very proud of what we achieved when it comes down to social cohesion. Despite the fact that we do see diversity within friend groups, it could be better. I will therefore advise my successor to have some events in the beginning of the year where members from the two different years and tracks can meet each other, because I think that this is something that could have helped to enlarge the social cohesion this year.

### **Committee Structure**

This year the committee structure was different than other years. I'm proud about the fact that this change turned out positive and I changed my position from an organizing one to a more coordinating one. This gave the committees more authority and responsibility during the organization of the events. However, I think that the committees can have even more authority. Therefore, I will propose the following changes to the current committee structure to my successor:

- Instead of a party committee, a borrel committee is introduced. This committee has the same structure as the sports- and cultural committee, which remain the same as this year.
- This borrel committee is responsible of all the borrels, including the pub quizzes
- For events as the weekends, the first party, the prom and the ending festival, committees are formed by application for the individual event. Just like it is done now with the trips
- The general Social Activities Committee will be repealed and the three permanent committees will come together once in a while to evaluate each other's events.

The reason why I will advise my successor to repeal the general committee is that because of the decentralization of the events, this method will be more efficient.

## **Lustrum**

The third point that I will reflect on is my cooperation with the Lustrum committee. In general I think we had some amazing Lustrum events. They organized some very nice events by themselves and as we speak we are in full cooperation to organize the Lustrum Festival 'NiccoLLòwlands'. The committee consists of three LuCo members, one SAC member and myself. I think we have a very fruitful cooperation and everyone is working really hard to make it the best festival as possible.

## **Events**

Then last but not least, the events that were organized between the last GA and the end of the year. Because of some factors that we had no influence on, a couple of social events had to be rescheduled and did not take place yet. Therefore I cannot reflect on those yet.

## **The borrels**

As stated in my half year report, there was some work to do to get the borrel back to the borrel we want it to be. In the weeks after the last GA I made a plan to make the borrel more attractive again. I used the input from The Future of Machiavelli, the Social Activities Committee and my own expertise to come up with ideas. The volume of the music was turned down in the beginning of the borrel, we promoted playing games with the board during the borrel and also football matches were a nice incentive. Next to that, more 'special' borrels were introduced as an incentive to come to the borrel and this turned out quite well. For example the Sweaterborrel was a great success. However, when there was no special borrel the attendance was not as high as we wanted. Why the borrel has such a low attendance, could be because tone was set after a while, but we will see if that is the case next year. We used all the input we got and I will give this input definitely also to my successor. For the last few weeks, there is something special planned for every borrel, so I hope to end the year like the beginning: a lot of members and even more gezelligheid.

## **Second Weekend**

If there is one event that I envisaged differently, it is Second Weekend. The weekend itself was amazing and the members attending had a great time and there was a lot of bonding between members from different years. Because of the fact that essay deadlines are not known at the beginning of the year, we only found out later that the week after the weekend was full of deadlines. By the time the course modules were published, the location and bus were fixed and could not be changed anymore. In the end we travelled to Limburg with 20 people and had a great weekend, full of games, drinking, partying; a classic Machiavelli weekend, only with less participants.

## **Cultural Events and Sportive Events**

I'm very happy with the fact that I broadened these type of events more, both in quality and quantity. In the second half of the year two more cultural events were planned, of which one still has to take place. In the last months 2 sportive events were organized and while writing this our yearly football tournament is being organized.

## **Political Science Got Talent**

PSGT was a great success. Comedy, singers, musicians, the level of all the participants was once more staggering. The committee did a great job in organizing this. Just like the sports committee had done with Mackickiavelli, this was the first event they organized completely by themselves and they did it amazing. The location was very nice, the jury was critical but fair and the attendants got to see a great show. The rightful winner received a very nice new award, that can be used for the coming years as well.

## **Mackickiavelli**

The second sport event of the year was ‘Mackickiavelli’, a kickbox lesson at a gym given by an amateur kickboxer and trainer at that gym. With a group of 21 sport enthusiasts we were pushed to the limit with kicking, punching and muscle training. I think these events are a very nice addition to the event spectrum that Machiavelli has and therefore I will advise my successor to continue organizing such events.

## **Machialympics**

Despite the fact that the entire event was already organized, we unfortunately had to cancel the event the day before it would take place because of the fact that not enough people registered and some registered participants cancelled last minute.

## **StuDoVo**

As we speak, StuDoVo is being organized by the sports committee. I am delighted to say that a team with teachers mobilized themselves as soon as we invited them and the committee is working very hard on making it as successful as possible.

## **Parties**

While writing this report, the organization of the Lustrum Festival is in full swing and it promises to be an unforgettable day. The party that took place since the last GA is the FMG party. Despite the financial setback we had due to a miscommunication with the fv-FMG treasurer, it was an amazing party. The theme was FMG X ABC and Machiavelli had the letter M. Everyone dressed up really nice, the location was perfect for a party with almost 700 guests.

## **Extra goals for the past half year**

Professionalization of practical aspects

I have looked into several options to professionalize the ticket sale for example, but most of these options didn't make it easier for the members or it was too expensive. I do advise my successor to always keep his eyes open for such things, because there is always room for professional improvements.

Perfectionate the new committee structure

As stated in my second paragraph I have a new advice for my successor and next to that I will update all the transmission documents for the committees

Continue with my own work, but also look around more

This was more of a personal goal because I felt that I was not up to date about everyone's work as a result of working too much on my own. After I noticed this and mentioned it in my half year report I changed into a more interested and supportive board member. For example, I helped with designing De Derde Dinsdag and wrote a piece for the second edition. The pitfall I had to avoid was losing the balance between helping others and my own events, but I feel like I managed this quite well.

## **Conclusion**

This year has been a rollercoaster of mostly positive things. I can say with all due conviction that the seven of us always gave our very best to make everything a success and everyday again with a smile on our face. I don't feel like passing my position onto someone else already at all, since I enjoyed it so much, but I am more than sure that the seven fresh faces that got selected are ready to continue with the solid foundation they have, in combination with the knowledge of the challenges we faced. I am very more happy with my own functioning this year and the events that I have organized with the committees. It is amazing to see so many people having fun, meeting each other and still talking about it as a result of your hard work. I can't wait to see what my successor has in store for Machiavelli and in particular the social activities!

## International coordinator – Eelke Vlieger



Whilst writing this report I am realising that the year really is coming to an end. Our board year has given me so many opportunities and experiences, I know I will cherish it forever. Our board year has also provided a lot of challenges, both for me and as a group. Yet I believe that we have overcome these challenges and have learned from them both as individuals and as a group. In this report I will be reflecting on the trips I have organised since February and the goals that I set for myself at the start of the year. Before I start I would like to thank my board but especially my committee members. Without them I would not have been able to organize these trips successfully.

### Parallel Trips: Lisbon & Tuscany

I have already reflected on my choice to appoint a Trip Coordinator to take over most parts of my role for one of the parallel trips. This turned out to be very successful. It meant that we could both focus on our trips, giving them the attention they deserved. I want to thank Pepijn and his committee especially for taking this role on them and making the Lisbon trip a true success. I would advise all my successors to retain this structure if they want to organize two parallel trips.

I chose to allocate 25 places for both trips. This number turned out to be a bit much as the trips were not entirely filled up. I chose this number because I thought that there would be enough people interested in joining a lustrum trip. To make sure everything went well in Lisbon I asked Thijs to join the Lisbon trip. The trips took place from the 20th until the 24th of February.

#### *Lisbon*

To make sure I could reflect on the Lisbon trip well, I made sure to talk with the Trip Coordinator, Thijs, and the participants. Luckily I found out that nearly everything went really well, almost everything went to plan.

The group flew to Lisbon from Schiphol. On Sunday they flew back from Lisbon to Eindhoven instead of Schiphol. We chose to do this because it made the flight quite a bit cheaper. The only negative side to the flights were the flight times. The group departed around 6 pm on the 20th and flew back quite early again on the 24th. This meant that the group had less time to explore the city. I don't think that there was much we could do about it in the end. The Lisbon group had a nice agenda with a visit to the Dutch embassy, the Portuguese parliament and a few cultural spots like Castello São Jorge. The hostel was in quite a good location and served breakfast, which was a plus. It would have been nice if there were more pictures taken on the trip to Lisbon but luckily most people have pictures on their phones. Overall the participants and the committee were very satisfied with the trip itself but especially with the group cohesion. The group was a nice mix between all different kinds of students and did almost everything together. I was very happy to hear this.

#### *Tuscany*

I wanted to organise a lustrum trip which would go back to Machiavelli's roots. We therefore went to Florence and decided to make a stop in Pisa while we were there. Although this trip

was 50 euros more expensive than a usual small trip I think everyone thought it was worth it. This price also included a trip to the Uffizi, a museum with an amazing art collection. We also flew from Schiphol and landed in Eindhoven. This made the trip to Tuscany really relaxed, landing at Eindhoven was not such a big deal as most participants just go their separate ways after the airport. When I decided to go to Tuscany I knew that arranging political activities would be hard. We tried our best however and managed to arrange a lecture on Italian politics at the University of Pisa, met up with Italian students from Florence and did a Machiavelli tour through Florence. The lecture was quite interesting but the other two activities were not as politically relevant as I hoped they would be. We did, however, have a lot of nice cultural experiences as Florence is a very beautiful city. The Uffizi was really impressive and the participants said that they did not feel like they missed out on political activities. The hostel in Pisa was not the best but that was okay because we were only there for one night. The hostel in Florence was very good and had quite a good location, we walked everywhere.

I was very happy with the Tuscany trip. It might not have been the most politically relevant but we did travel back to Machiavelli's roots. We are very lucky that he happens to come from one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The group was a good mix of different years, nationalities and friend groups. This made it a nice and relaxed group, the cohesion was good and people were really happy on the trip.

### **Big Trip: Tunisia**

the start of the year I wanted to go to Egypt. I had already booked the flight tickets, was looking into our travel schedule and was trying to arrange some political activities. About two months before we were supposed to leave we were warned by some professors from the UvA to not go to Egypt. They deemed it too dangerous for students who were interested in politics. This was because of negative things that happened in the past to politically active students and academics. After consulting with these professors I had to make the hard decision to cancel our trip to Egypt. This was a hard and costly decision. According to the Dutch government most areas of Egypt were safe to travel. Therefore I did not consult experts before I made the decision to go here. If I would have done that all the extra stress, costs and effort might have been prevented.

I found it hard to gather enough motivation and energy to keep on working on the big trip but it had to be done so I did it. Me and my committee made the decision to postpone the trip and go to Tunisia instead. We ended up only going with ten people. I wanted to go with 25 so this was once again a setback for me. In the end we also had no International students joining us, this was really unfortunate but understandable as International students simply have less money to spend. I don't know exactly why the interest in this trip was so low. Maybe it was because of all the confusion surrounding Egypt, maybe the dates were not suitable for most people. I think most people did not realise what an interesting country Tunisia is. I tried my best to convince more people to go via all kinds of promotion but it did not work in the end. The group that did go was really nice though. We had a great time together, I was really happy with that.

Arranging political activities in Tunisia proved to be very difficult. We arranged a meeting with the Dutch embassy, a gay rights organisation and a woman's rights organisation. We also tried to arrange a meeting at the Tunisian parliament but they never responded to our emails or calls. Unfortunately both appointments at the NGO's did not go through. The women's rights organisation cancelled two weeks in advance and we could not make the gay rights organisation because we missed our connecting flight to Tunis because of a French strike.

We therefore arrived on the 10th instead of the 9th of May. Fortunately we could rearrange the meeting with the Dutch embassy. We would have missed our appointment on the 10th of May because of the strike mentioned before but eventually went to the embassy on the 16th. This made the schedule of the 16th quite full but I am glad we did it because we would not have had a single political activity otherwise.

It was Ramadan in Tunisia and this required some extra time for planning and preparation. Time we did not really have. We did get a lecture from Maaïke Voorhoeve about Tunisia and the culture there. This helped immensely. It was unfortunate that a lot of markets and shops already closed at 16:00. Also some of the train schedules were different, this caused us to miss some time during the day where we could have visited a souk or a museum. We also had some trouble with the restaurants. Most restaurants served a special Ramadan dinner and this was not really vegetarian, even though we were told in advance that Tunisia is very vegetarian-friendly. There was not that much to do in Sfax and our hotel wasn't that good. This made our time there a little bit less exciting but we made up for it by going to El Jem, a beautiful Amphitheatre. Tozeur and the desert tour there was really cool to see. It was unfortunate that we missed almost a full day by travelling from Tozeur to Tunis. I could have planned this better.

Overall I am reasonably happy with the trip. The group was great, and we made the most of what we had. I do think however that we, and especially me, could have planned a few things better, such as the restaurants and the parliament. I hope my successor won't have to cancel his or her big trip and plan it in a rush. To prevent this will update the transmission document with the advice to consult experts when travelling to areas that have repressive regimes. We as a group had an amazing time though and that in the end is what it is all about.

### **King of the Road: X**

We just came back from King of the Road and it was once again an amazing experience. This was my second time in the KOTR committee but if anything, this only enhanced my experience. For the tenth King of the Road I decided on the theme of 'Double or Nothing'. On each day there were three parts where you could gain points. Whilst driving to the midday destination, a game at the midday destination and whilst driving to the evening destination. Each team had the opportunity to double their own points once and make sure another team did not receive any points for one time. This turned out to be a great idea, making sure we did not know up until the very end who would win. We did have less money than planned for the BBQ at the end in Oosterpark than planned. This was because we had to pay for sheets in two of the three hostels where we stayed. Fortunately, there was enough food for everyone in the end. I think that King of the Road was a huge success. Every participant also said this to me. It was a great trip to end the year with.

### **Conclusion**

It is all coming to an end and I am sad but in the end satisfied. I've faced a lot of challenges this year and in the end, I've overcome them. I could never have done this without the rest of my board and the bond that we have created with each other is something that I will always hold close to my heart. I think that we can be proud of what we have achieved, and I look forward to helping my successor find her way. I want to thank my committee members for the last time for all their help and support. I wish my successor all the best, I know the Machiatrips are in safe hands. So long!