

## Case study

# Economics and Finance of Europe: an intensive programme for the Diputación Foral de Bizkaia

### Client request

The Diputación Foral de Bizkaia approached LSE Executive Education in 2007 to deepen its representatives' understanding of the latest trends within EU economy, fiscal policy, competitiveness and trade. We created an intensive ten-week programme which has subsequently run annually.

### Approach and methodology

A small group of participants from the Basque country, with a first degree, work experience and good English language ability, are selected via a rigorous application and interview process.

The interdisciplinary programme draws on three core LSE Departments: the European Institute, Government Department and the Department of International Relations. It blends regular LSE lectures at a postgraduate level, giving participants a chance to mingle with other students, with seminars specifically designed for the group and led by key LSE academics. Topics include the history and theory of European integration, comparative political economy, socio-economic cohesion and public budgeting. Participants are advised on suitable open lectures to attend and have full access to library and IT resources.

*'I was most interested in comparative political economy and the 'EU in the world' module. I did a book review on *Poverty and Prosperity*, a presentation on the economic crisis and an essay on the barriers to Turkey's entrance to the EU. The most interesting lecture on our Harvard trip was on US security in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, and the use of Guantanamo Bay.'*

*Usoa Agirre Retolaza, 2009 participant*



Visits to Parliament and the Greater London Assembly



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The participants are taken through key steps in applying theoretical knowledge and structure in the process of economic policy making and actively encouraged to participate in debates involving trade and regulatory issues. Independent study is a crucial aspect of the course and students are formally assessed by the course director at the end of the programme using tests, presentations and essays.

'Life at the LSE is very intense and there is plenty to learn and see. You have to study a lot, and spend hours in the library if you want to get the most out of the course. Our teachers are of outstanding quality, both at LSE and at Harvard.'

Olga Gretchoukhina, 2009 participant

In addition to the academic teaching programme, students are taken to specialist institutes, government departments and organisations to enhance their understanding of the UK's environment and culture. The London Assembly and the Houses of Parliament are among participants' favourite trips. External speakers and events provide different perspectives, ranging from the UK Secretary of State's suggested progressive response to social change, to the UK Minister for Europe's analysis of the EU's global role.

A key component of the course is the five-day field trip to the Center of European Studies, Harvard University in the USA.

'The programme offered by the Diputación de Bizkaia and the London School of Economics gave me the opportunity to study in one of the most prestigious universities of the world within the field of economics and to gain knowledge on a wide range of European issues. Being at Harvard University when Obama was elected president of the USA was a real experience.'

Joana Revilla Gutiérrez, 2008 participant

## Benefits

The students gained a comparative perspective on specialist areas of interest to the Diputación de Biskaia and the Basque Country in general, emerging with a deepened understanding of the EU economy, fiscal policy, competitiveness and trade.

The benefits continue beyond the programme. LSE Enterprise organises biannual alumni events in the Basque country, enabling former participants to continue networking with each other and with LSE once they have returned home to put their new skills to use.

'This has been one of the best experiences of my life, both academically and in terms of discovering a new city, new culture and new people.'

Olga Gretchoukhina, 2009 participant



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