Welcome to this newsletter for the wider International Affairs community at HSG and beyond: students, faculty, alumni, partners and friends.

Once per semester, we would like to inform you about what is or has been going on, and keep you up to date about events coming up.

**MIA Lecture: Contending with the State of the State**

By all accounts, both Plato and Aristotle were highly original political thinkers. From what we know, however, neither of them was able to think beyond the polis, a social format which had existed for a few hundred years at the time. Today, we would like to believe that we understand a great deal about the historical contingency of social and political organisation. Yet we, too, seem unable to think beyond the contemporary state, a social format that is fairly recent itself. Two thirds of the world's sovereign states, after all, are less than 70 years of age.

Why is it that we are so fixated upon the state? Where did this format emerge, under what parameters and paradigms did it spread across the world? What are variations of the state today - and how is statehood bound to evolve? We invited MIA Guest Professor Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou and Prof. Christoph Frei to a thought-provoking conversation about the state of the state.

**MIA Fundamentals 2020: Chances and Challenges in a Digitalizing World**
The 2020 MIA Fundamentals week taking place on campus but with restrictions, was both very special, due to the world’s pandemic, but also a highlight for the start into the reformed MIA programme. We are looking back to an inspiring online keynote by business consultant **Ria Thomas in London** who shared fascinating insights into cyber corporate governance and resilience strategies and a lively panel discussion with IA alumni and faculty, moderated by **MIA programme director Prof. Tina Freyburg**. The week was complimented with a challenging business case and group work. Read more by MIA students Martina Rothenberger and Nolwenn Rumeur.

Meet International Affairs Students

**Peace for Change**

In July MIA student **Isabelle Diserens** started an academic internship at the Swiss Embassy in Minsk, Belarus. Before she left, she had no idea she would witness the country experiencing a real turning point, with civil society, especially women, as well as the use of social media playing such an extremely important role. Read more.

**Internationalisation at Home**

**Thomas Visneider** is currently taking the course "Energy and Climate Governance" offered by Prof. Philipp Thaler and Dr. Adrian Rinscheid as part of the CBS-HSG-WU Online Course Initiative. He reflects on his experiences as an online exchange student and the insights gained during this course. Read more.

**Best Master's Thesis in Law and International Affairs**

Congratulations to **Fernando Monte Abrahao**, recent graduate of the MIA Dual Degree Programme with Sciences Po, for being awarded this year’s **Paul Alther Prize** for the best Master’s thesis in Law and International Affairs.
on “Access of Developing Countries to the Green Bond Market”. The thesis aims to address both the state and the determining factors of green bond market development across developed, developing, and least developed countries. In doing so, it proposes a green bond market development index based on the assessment of three green bond databases. This index is then used as the dependent variable of the thesis’ statistical analysis, a multiple linear regression model. Fernando is now a Ph.D. candidate in the International Affairs and Political Economy Programme (DIA).

Meet our Alumni

Introducing the "Hauptstadt-Bericht"

MIA alumnus Janos Ammann moved to Brussels to try to understand European politics. He follows the debates taking place in Europe and breaks them down for a Swiss public on his blog hauptstadt-bericht.eu. Read more about his idea and blog.

The new HSG Learning Center: Great Chances

MIA alumnus Dr. Dominik Isler is the president’s delegate for the curation of the HSG Learning Center. Together with project manager and MIA student Florian Wussmann, their objective is to enable innovative formats of collective learning. When the HSG Learning Center is put into operation, it will serve as a field for experimentation, for lifelong learning as well as for interdisciplinarity and integration. Read more about their vision (in German).

News from the Faculty

Welcome: Laura Seelkopf

We warmly welcome Laura Seelkopf as new Assistant Professor of International Political Economy! Her research and teaching interests relate to questions of global and comparative political economy focusing on taxation and social policy. She is also interested in economic inequality and foreign aid. Laura has studied in Konstanz (Germany), Pavia (Italy) and Essex (UK) and worked in Bremen, Florence and Munich before coming to St.Gallen. She is associate editor at the Journal of International Relations and Development and serves
as board member for the German Data Forum and the German Political Science Association. She is looking forward to getting to know her new colleagues and students and is excited to be part of such a vibrant and international community.

**SEPS Teaching Award 2019/2020: Christoph Frei**

"My first time at this University back in 2015, I went to a presentation about the International Affairs programme. That evening when riding home, I decided that I wanted to attend this university. Not because it is cleaner than any other university in Switzerland or the fact that there were two presentations up at the same time at the Audimax. It was because I felt this thirst for knowledge, this deep-rooted interest in what was being taught and the willingness to share it. I felt this in particular at this one presentation about International Affairs held by Prof. Christoph Frei.", as SEPS student representative Christina Borner cites a BIA student in her laudation.

This opinion is obviously shared by many students. This year’s teaching award had a particular focus on the transition to online teaching. We asked our students to leave comments and examples that illustrate why this particular faculty member deserves the award:

"Professor Frei embraces the new technology and immediately provides answers to all questions in the chat."

"Professor Frei brings the HSG campus feeling to the students’ home office."

"Christoph Frei is an excellent motivator. His character, way of speaking and his „groove“ is unique!"

The International Affairs @ HSG Team compliments Prof. Frei for this special award!

**Presenting the “MIA Mornings: Skills and Competences”**

How can infographics and data visualizations help to structure the complexity of today’s world and break messages down to the essential core? What are the differences in outcomes when some actors approach negotiations as if they were zero-sum games, while others have a positive-sum mindset and manage to create value?

The workshops offered by Joana Kelén on “Infographics” and by Dr. Valentin Ade on “Negotiation Techniques for Cooperation” are just two examples for the many offers among the MIA Mornings this semester. In this new teaching format, MIA students can hone their thematic, methodological as well as professional skills by taking workshops such as “Economic Reasoning”, “Legal Research”, “Web Scraping with R”, “Data Handling and Manipulation” as well as “Agile Project Management”, to name just a few.
The offer is needs- and interest-driven. Suggestions of additional workshop topics are welcome: mia@unisg.ch.