

Interacting with Ambassador Milos Vukasinovic

Did you know that the proper way to address an ambassador is “your excellency”? I didn’t, when the President of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) Matthew Rands, addressed the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations in this way. Ambassador Milos Vukasinovic spent Tuesday March 6th , 2018 at Utah Valley University and he was kind enough to start out with a quick meeting with those of us going to the United Nations. Bosnia and Herzegovina along with Uzbekistan are the Permanent Missions at the UN cosponsoring our side event at the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) on March 19, 2018.



Monica English introduces herself to VIP guest

We were able to briefly introduce ourselves and tell Ambassador Vukasinovic about the individual projects we will talk about at the UN. Matt then presented him with a folder of information about UIMF. His response was warm and engaging.

The doors were then opened, and the room was filled until there was standing room only for Ambassador Vukasinovic's lecture on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because my research interest is in conflict and peace, this area of the world is fascinating to me. Peace accords were signed in 1995 putting an end to the 3 ½ year old long Bosnian War. Since then the country has experienced relative peace. The ambassador spoke of the stark difference he saw in his country during the war and after the war. He proudly talked about how Bosnia and Herzegovina has applied for membership in the European Union and hopes to achieve the necessary changes to join within five or six years. He told us that they will have to adopt at least 400 different laws to be in compliance with the European Union's requirements.

We learned that Bosnia and Herzegovina are focused on fighting against poverty, that until the economic crisis of 2008 there had been good progress made on this front, but since 2008 the progress has been impeded.

One thing that stood out to me is that Bosnia Herzegovina is three nations within a single state. This means that there is not a majority within any of the three nations. Even so a strong majority of each of the three nations supports

During the Q&A one of the questions asked was whether the ambassador was optimistic about Bosnia and Herzegovina's prospects for the future. He chuckled and answered "'I am optimistic, as ambassador I have no right to be pessimistic.'

It was wonderful to learn about the country that has so graciously allowed us a platform to speak about UIMF at the United Nations.

Monica English, student member of the UVU delegation at CSW62