More than 70 students of the Jamaica campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) engaged the EU Delegation to Jamaica in a robust and stimulating class on EU-Jamaica /Caribbean relations on November 8.

The mostly undergraduates from the Department of Government turned up for class with the EU team led by Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska. "It was an amazing and productive opportunity to talk with the students on the work of the EU broadly and go fairly in depth in specific areas of cooperation," she said.

"The students were engaging and displayed a keen sense of awareness of national and regional issues while also asking the tough questions as students of government and international relations should," Wasilewska added.

The students enthusiastically participated in the session with many posing questions covering Brexit, accountability in the provision of development aid, the EU's work in human rights, post-Cotonou negotiations as well as the Economic Partnership Agreement with CARIFORUM countries.

"The EU Delegation's lecture was a most enlightening experience," shared Gabrielle Hemmings, a 22-year-old final year International Relations student. "Not only did I leave the lecture feeling far more informed on the European Union's relationship with Jamaica, but I also felt reassured in the strength of our future relationship despite current uncertainties related to Brexit."

Emphasising the EU's role in peacebuilding, another student, Brandon Sullivan, hailed the EU for its global role in defending human rights and rule of law. "I gained a great deal of knowledge on the
commitments between the EU & Jamaica — coming out of great structural changes to key partnerships & alliances," said, Sullivan, 21, a final year student on the International Relations programme.

"I also gained a great deal on the EU's raison d'être; being a guiding force for the upholding of human rights, justice, global peace and supporting countries in their drive to create more equitable avenues for seeing to the well-being of citizens worldwide."

Ricard Bardia Divins, Head, Cooperation, spoke on support modalities and the current areas of focus under the European Development Fund; Vanna Lawrence, Project Manager, addressed support in the justice, civil society and human rights sector. Sagoh Djete, Programme Manager covered the EPA and broader trade relations with the Caribbean.

Althea Buchanan and Jovan Johnson from the Press, Politics and Information Section encouraged students to consider the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship programme as well as provided details on the Delegation's engagement with Jamaica and upcoming events.

Dr Kavita Johnson, the UWI lecturer who invited the EU team, said the goals of the class were achieved. "I think it went extremely well and I was happy that the students were able to have that level of interaction," she said, encouraging the team to return next year.

Some post graduate students and other members of the academic community also attended the class.

The visit to the UWI is part of the Delegation's outreach efforts to increase engagement with Jamaica's diverse youth population.

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