

Thursday June 24th

This morning we woke up in beautiful Paris and had a nice French breakfast with croissants and coffee. Our last company to visit was Serpol, a French company that is specialized in the treatment of polluted areas. As usual there was an introduction about Serpol and the RUG before the students started talking. The students case study dealt with the use of plants to remediate fuel polluted grounds, called phytoremediation. This cleaning process worked by growing plants that create a favorable environment for pollutant degrading microorganisms. Thereby stimulating the growth of these microorganisms. This case study was presented by three students in a small room with the project manager of Serpol present. Unfortunately our contact person from Serpol wasn't able to be with us today, but the project manager was excellent in explaining us everything about Serpol's remediation activities. Although there was only one Serpol person listening to the case study, we had an interesting discussion afterwards on the phytoremediation case.

After a typical French lunch with lots of pasta's, cold meats and cheese, we went back to the company for a case study presentation of the company itself. They explained how they used nutrient broth injections to enrich polluted soils, so that specific toxin degrading bacteria could proliferate. There was another case presented dealing with polluted ground water. We learned about stripping water, first making word jokes but it was actually a great concept: the water is put into a stripping tower, where it is dispersed into very small water drops. This allows for the pollutants that are into the water, to evaporate into the surrounding air. This pollutant containing air is then sucked of and cleaned by passing it through a filter. It is exactly this equilibrium area which is extended in the tower by the use of small plastic balls in different forms. These balls were given around so that we could all see them closely. While hearing everything about water we had to keep in mind our own hydration level as well: the French temperatures and low oxygen level in the room made us complete dizzy, but there was enough water to fill us constantly. We thanked the very nice people of Serpol and drove back to our hostel in a very hot bus, all looking forward to our free time in Paris.