



Vice president of European Parliament speaks at Rusk Center events

Diana Wallis, vice president of the European Parliament, visited the School of Law this past November as part of back-to-back events sponsored by the Dean Rusk Center and the Georgia Society for International and Comparative Law.

First, Wallis joined other American and European private international law experts to explore new European Union legislation on the law applicable to torts and to compare it to approaches in U.S. law during a day-long colloquium.

Their discussion, titled “Colloquium on Rome II: the 2007 EU Regulation on the Law Applicable to Non-contractual Obligations – European and American Perspectives,” will be published by the Dean Rusk Center in its 30th Anniversary Paper Series.

Presenters included: Wallis, the law school’s Kirbo Chair in International Law Gabriel M. Wilner, Powell Chair Emeritus Russell J. Weintraub of the University of Texas School of Law, Dean and Professor Symeon C. Symeonides of the Willamette University College of Law, and Dean and Professor Johan Meeusen of the University of Antwerp Law School.

The next day, Wallis delivered a speech titled “Who Runs Who: Does Europe Follow the U.S., or the U.S.

Europe, on Major Policy Issues?” which was co-sponsored by UGA’s Willson Center for Humanities and Arts as part of the Willson Center – Dean Rusk Center Annual Lecture Series. Her presentation will also be published by the Dean Rusk Center as part of its 30th Anniversary Paper Series.

In her presentation, Wallis explored some of the similarities and differences in how the European Union and the United States have handled various global issues including the war in Iraq, terrorism, the death penalty and recent changes in the environment and climate.

“One of the things that has always been important to me, both as an elected parliamentarian and indeed even before as a lawyer, is the importance of global exchange and interchange between various peoples and various countries,” Wallis said.

“I believe that when we look at one another’s achievements and use this sort of comparative approach we can learn from that, and we can learn much,” she said.

While never really answering the question “who runs who?” Wallis did suggest that it is really more of a give and take between the European Union and the United States and, if we are willing, we could learn a great deal from one another.

“The European Union has a story to tell ... about how we have moved forward based on particular values [and] how we have been able to develop a method of governance that allows us to share resources and to protect resources for future generations.”

