

Visit to the Ministry of the Environment

Peter Bungate

Undoubtedly one of the many advantages of having professors that have had extensive careers as policy makers is not only their insight into the practicalities of policy making but also their access and connection to officials and ministerial departments. On 24 June Professor Okazaki led the Environmental Administration class into the central halls of Japanese environmental policy making at the Japanese Ministry of Environment in Kasumigaseki. For future environmental policy makers the chance to meet active policy makers was an opportunity not to be missed.

Mr. Nomoto and Ms. Moritani from the Office of Decontamination of the Ministry of Environment gave a presentation on the progress of ongoing decontamination work in the areas surrounding the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant complex, the site of the triple disaster five years ago. Radiation and decontamination can be sensitive topics among citizens, industry and within the government itself, and Mr. Nomoto and Ms. Moritani discussed some of the difficulties they face in their role as policy makers and administrators, including community engagement, developing long-term plans and effective coordination with reconstruction efforts. Following the presentation the class was invited to be candid in our questions in a follow-up Q&A session. We left Kasumigaseki encouraged by the work of the Office and the enthusiasm that Mr. Nomoto and Ms. Moritani have for the challenges ahead.

This brief excursion was a great opportunity to meet current policy makers in a small group setting and gain a new level of understanding of environmental administration, especially in a changing and contemporary area of policy. We are grateful to Mr. Nomoto and Ms. Moritani for making themselves available and taking the time to meet with us. Last, but not least, we are thankful to Professor Okazaki for organising this event.

