

UACES Scholarship 2010

Katjana GATTERMANN, *London School of Economics & Political Science*

I used the money granted to me by UACES for my trip to Brussels in June 2010. The purpose of this trip was to conduct interviews, 18 in total, with press correspondents from several countries writing for different quality newspapers and staff in the press directorate of the European Parliament as well as to receive an overview of the journalistic work environment in Brussels (and reportedly in Strasbourg). The interviews form the qualitative part of my thesis and serve to comprehend the differences in reporting about the European Parliament.

The timing of the trip was particularly helpful, since I was able to address the by that time ongoing disputes between the European Parliament, the Council, and the Commission concerning the case on the exchange of information via bank transfers within the SWIFT system between the EU and the US. I received some valuable background information and opinions regarding the perceived role of the European Parliament in the legislative battle which I will use to generate a case study in one chapter of my thesis. Moreover, the interviews underlined important findings of my quantitative analysis representing the other component of my research project. Differences in opinion especially became apparent with respect to the legitimacy of the European Parliament and its political power.

On the other hand, meeting with the journalists revealed some further interesting insights which add new ideas to my argumentation throughout the thesis. However, although I learnt a great deal the information I received was also quite overwhelming sometimes when listening to all the different attitudes and perceptions. At some point I even began questioning some of my own research concerns. Nevertheless, I also believe that this was a good experience as it puts my analysis on more solid grounds. Eventually, I am grateful that the interviewees showed interest in my research and spared some of their time to meet me and share their views and expertise.

Another benefit of the stay in Brussels is that one can feel the beat of politics on location, especially through informal contacts in the institutions and other organisations. This is helpful to better comprehend how political journalism works in that system more precisely. Given the experience and the academic achievement from my research trip, I am very grateful for the generous financial support provided by UACES and the European Commission.