

UACES Scholarship 2010

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Outline of project

The project researches why and under what conditions an EU Member State supports the liberalisation of economic migration policies at the EU level. The project uses Germany as a case study, but within which four different EU policy initiatives are deployed as sub-cases. These sub-cases are the freedom of movement provisions of the Association Agreement the EEC concluded with Turkey in 1963, the provisions on freedom of movement and the right of establishment of the Europe Agreement with Poland, the EU Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of paid employment and self-employed economic activities (COM(2001) 386 final), and the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment, the so-called Blue Card Directive.

Academic achievements

In these research trips, I gathered crucial empirical data for two of my case studies, the Europe Agreement and the Blue Card Directive, and researched German literature in the State Library of Berlin for my entire PhD project. During my January stay in Berlin, I conducted five interviews and laid the groundwork for eleven further phone interviews. In Brussels, I conducted three interviews and made contacts that led to four further phone interviews. All of the interviews were for the Blue Card Directive Chapter. The interviews helped me to learn about the positions of relevant actors with regard to the Directive. I interviewed officials of relevant German Ministries, EU institutions, German Members of Parliament as well as representatives of German trade unions and employer associations. Without the interviews, a detailed account of the governmental preference formation would not have been possible.

In the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, I researched files of the Federal Ministry of Economics relevant for the chapter on the Europe Agreement in Poland. As the Economics Ministry was in charge of the file (together with the Foreign Office), I was able to go through the files that were documenting the process of preference formation on the Europe Agreement. I managed to establish why the provisions on freedom of movement and the right of establishment made their way into the Agreement and that they were more contested than so far assumed by the literature.

In the State Library in Berlin, I could read German speaking works in the field, of which some were difficult or impossible to obtain in London. I found many useful contributions to all parts of my project which helped me to close a number of empirical and theoretical gaps.

Positive and negative aspects

I enjoyed my time abroad and consider it immensely important for my research. Being on the constant move for several weeks is exciting but also tiring. Also the extremely cold winter in Berlin made it at times difficult to travel from one interview to the other (as I tended to use a bicycle), although I did enjoy the white winter landscape. Generally, people were very helpful, in particular the interview partners as well as staff of the Federal Archives in Koblenz. Also the research department of the Ministry of Economics was extremely generous to grant me special access to files that are normally not yet accessible due to the retention period. I feel the data I gathered in these research trips is crucial for the empirical core my PhD dissertation.

I am highly grateful for the generous support of UAECES and the European Commission without which the trips would have been extremely difficult to conduct in that form.