

UACES Scholarship 2010

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Outline of project

In my dissertation I examine how and why the domestic and international causes lead to substantially different outcomes in the minority policies of Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia and Austria. In the course of my UACES research trip I traveled to Ukraine and Romania to conduct interviews with political leaders, government officials and civic activists. I focus in my dissertation on the policies of these two states vis-à-vis the Hungarians (in Romania) and Russian speakers (in Ukraine). I examine how international actors have promoted an ethically neutral language policy in these states and how the latter's domestic politics—especially the relations of power between majority-minority groups and the perception of threat to the majority language—has affected their implementation of the norm of bilingualism in domestic practice. The financial support from the UACES and the European Commission for this research trip is gratefully acknowledged.

Academic achievements

During my UACES research trip to Romania and Ukraine I was able to conduct altogether nineteen interviews in eight different cities with political leaders, government officials, and civic activists. The interviews were tape recorded and conducted in three different languages—English, German, or Russian—depending on the fluency of an interviewee in any of these three languages. One interview was conducted in Romanian with the help of an interpreter. The original version of the interview will be analyzed in Romanian when I gain sufficient proficiency in this language. Among interviewees, I was able to meet with four ministers (one serving)—including former Minister of Foreign Affairs Borys Tarasiuk in Ukraine and former Minister of Defence Ioan Paşcu in Romania—as well as with eight members of national parliaments. I was also able to meet, on the last day of my stay in Romania, with former Romanian President Emil Constantinescu (1996-2000) who kindly agreed to meet with me for the interview. During my research stay in Ukraine and Romania I also bought several academic books related to my dissertation in the original language, as well as several dictionaries and language course books for foreigners.

Use made of resources, facilities abroad

Due to a focus of this research trip on conducting the interviews, no institutional facilities or resources were used during my stay in Romania and Ukraine.

Positive and negative aspects

Altogether the experience was positive and I have good memories from my research stay in Romania and Ukraine. There were few logistical hitches but they do not reflect the positive experience I gained from meeting many interesting people in Ukraine and Romania.