



Jean Monnet Network on EU-Canada Relations

Visiting Scholar Report for Summer 2019

**By:
Abou Baker Kaddour**

**MA Sustainable Energy Policy Program
School of Public Policy and Administration
Carleton University**

September 2019

For 6 weeks in the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to be a visiting scholar at the Technische Universität München (TUM) as part of an internship organized by the Jean Monnet Network on EU-Canada Relations. The internship took place at the Bavarian School of Public Policy's Chair of Environmental and Climate Policy. The internship was under the supervision of Prof. [Miranda Schreurs](#), who is a well-known and active academician in the field of climate policy and many other fields. The internship was a valuable experience in various ways, that contributed to both my academic and personal skills' development. The latter being because I was able to interact with academicians in the field that I am active in i.e. energy and environmental policy. Also, it gave me insights about academic and research trends in the field. Apart from doing my own research, I was given the chance of participating in an ongoing research project, attending two PhD colloquiums, two presentation from authors about their ongoing book and a three-day workshop on the Japanese and German energy transitions. All that while experiencing the summer life in one of Germany's most popular destinations: Munich.

For the first two-weeks of my internship, I was able to work with Dr. Stefan Četković on his ongoing project. The project looks at how certain political parties in Europe take position with respect to climate policies. This positioning also plays a role when the parties are elected into parliament, as they might affect the process in which climate policies are implemented. My role was to conduct research on the factors that affect political parties' positioning with respect to climate policies. Also, what are the reasons that some parties take certain positions as opposed to other parties. As someone with an engineering background, the research was a good opportunity for me to expand on my political science and political theory knowledge. And certainly, the brief knowledge I gained through the two-weeks research activities allowed me to look at the politics of climate from a different perspective, especially, considering that climate 'politics' is actively happening in Canada. Parallel to research activities, I was also able to attend classes taught by Prof. Schreurs and her team. At that time, it was the end of the semester, so most of the classes had presentations of students' projects which were of a diverse nature and included some interesting topics such as: Cyber Feminism, EU plastics policy, degrowth theory, Anti-nuclear civil societies in South Korea etc.

One of the topics that caught my attention, and is worth mentioning, was Biodiversity. This was because, although it is an important factor of sustainability, it is not much discussed about in the sustainable energy field. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) came into being in 1992

as part of the The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. What was also interesting, that the CBD did not have binding targets similar to the Kyoto protocol or the Paris agreement, which makes it harder to implement. What was also interesting, is that The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which helps facilitate work on biodiversity, gives much importance in its goals to Traditional Knowledge and land rights of Indigenous people. Specifically, Target 18 of Goal E calls for the implementation of Traditional Knowledge in the efforts to protect biodiversity. This caught my interest due to the rising issues of incorporating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Canada's energy, forestry and infrastructure projects, e.g. Site C in B.C and Trans-mountain pipeline expansion etc.

I had the chance of attending two PhD colloquiums. The students presenting at the colloquiums were both from TUM and from Freie Universität Berlin (FUB) and originated from more than 5 countries. This resulted in a diverse range of topics such as: Energy Transition in Germany, Electrification in Mozambique, Technology and Power, Economic Sustainability in Africa, Old Age Pension systems in Authoritarian Welfare States and Bee policy in the Alps. The presenter of the latter will be a visiting researcher at Carleton University in Mid-October. Moreover, I was able to also attend two presentation by authors about their ongoing books. The first book aimed at providing a historical analysis about the Oil & Gas sector in the US. The other book was about mercury contamination and had some interesting insights about one of the most famous pollutants like the fact that mercury in fish might actually have been released in the 1500's and is still circling the eco-system it entered.

As for my own research, which I did conduct for a full month under the direction of Prof. Schreurs and with substantial help and advices from her team, I looked at the history and current status of the German energy transition '*Energiewende*'. What is interesting to see is how the concept of energy transition is somehow embedded in Germany. Starting the 1960s, Germany started shifting from its abundant coal resources towards mineral oil and nuclear. Later on, in the 1970s, the rise of anti-nuclear movement and the oil crisis prompted the German government to support research and development of alternative sources such solar, wind and biomass, while still supporting nuclear. Currently, the '*Energiewende*' is still progressing with challenges related to public acceptance and infrastructure to link the wind energy rich north to the high demand south. The pros of conducting such research in Germany in an academic environment is that most of the

academicians around me were familiar with such topics, and therefore their advices gave me research 'shortcuts' that allowed me to look into the most interesting aspects of the energy transition rather than getting lost into the extensive literature.

During my last days in Munich, I was invited to attend a workshop at the Science and Study Center Raitenhaslach. The center is located in an old monastery that was built in 1762 and now serves as an academic retreat, as it is located outside the city. It was an interesting experience to be able to take a break from all the presentation and take a walk in the forest with the river separating Germany and Austria flowing aside. The workshop was about the Japanese energy transition and had 12 scholars from both Germany and Japan. When it comes to the energy field, Japan is always an interesting case considering the unfortunate Fukushima events of 2011. Part of the workshop was a presentation by Prof. Schreurs about her last trip to Fukushima. Prof. Schreurs presented photos and videos of the city that had to experience both a tsunami and a nuclear accident. As much as the clean-up was interesting, the impact on social life was, and still is, frustrating. Although it is known through the news, seeing the impact through the lens, and listening to the personal experience of a person who was there recently (after the accident), made it sound more realistic.

Briefly, the experience I had in Munich was immensely advantageous for me. I got to experience the life of academia, meet people who actively working towards the same goal on a higher level, and develop much skills that I needed.

I would like to present my sincere thanks to Carleton University, Technische Universität München, Centre for European Studies, EU-Canada Network, Erasmus+ and all individuals that made this valuable experience happen.



My last day in Munich, I was invited to dinner along with the PhD candidates under the supervision of both Prof. Miranda Schreurs (4th from right) and Prof. Stefan Wurster (5th from right).