

Narrative Report
Graduate Travel-Research Fellowship on the European Union,
European Integration, EU-Canada Relations

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In June 2007 I traveled to Brussels (Belgium), Vienna (Austria), and Ankara (Turkey) to conduct research on my project “Human Rights in Turkey in the EU Accession Process.” In this project I investigate the role of different institutions in the policy formation and implementation process; and the interactions between European, member-state, and candidate country actors. More specifically my project was concerned with the specific twinning projects between EU countries and Turkey as a candidate country. I focused on projects which aimed at assisting Turkey in complying with the Copenhagen criteria, more specifically prevention of torture and ill-treatment. Since academic studies on twinning projects are quite scarce primary research into this field is essential. Hence, the grant provided by the Carleton Center for European Studies was extremely useful in making my research trip possible. The data gathered from this research trip will be integrated into my Ph. D. dissertation.

With the help of the grant I was able to conduct interviews with one official from the European Commission’s Enlargement General Directorate, three persons affiliated with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights and one official from a European institution. Increasing the number of interviews with officials from the Commission has not been possible due to dense agendas of the persons concerned. Due to ethical reasons I cannot give the names or institutions of the interviewees.

The interviews were a significant opportunity for me to increase my knowledge about the role of different institutions within Europe that promote human rights in candidate countries. I better appreciated the role of the Commission in this process. The trip also helped me to deepen my research and establish new professional relationships. With this primary research it has been possible for me to understand quite clearly how the twinning projects between EU members and candidate countries work, the dynamics of these projects and the economic side of them. Since some of the interviewees were scholars at the same time, contact with them provided me with new directions in my research. Another outcome of the interviews was the identification of other significant actors in the process. With the help of some interviewees, I was able to contact other persons who had a role in the formation of twinning projects and thus my sources of information increased significantly.

My research trip to Europe has been very fulfilling and I hereby express my gratitude to all the individuals and institutions that made this program possible.