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Centre for European Studies Travel Research Grant Report
Visit to France, Summer 2024

While pursuing a Master of Arts in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (EURUS) at Carleton University, I had the incredible opportunity to spend the summer of 2024 in Europe thanks to the funding from the Jean Monnet Centre for European Studies and the support of the EURUS program. During this time, I improved my academic knowledge through the European Union Study Tour in May, gained professional skills through my internship at the European Commission in the Directorate General of Education, Youth Culture and Sport in the Erasmus+ Programme unit during June and July, and advanced my progress on my Master's degree throughout my time in Europe. These activities culminated to an exciting summer of learning, researching and travelling across Europe.

The assistance provided by the Centre for European Studies Travel Grant was instrumental to advancing my progress on my Major Research Paper and providing me with the experience of being a real historian. Given that my research focuses on European Memory Laws with regards to the way they shape collective memory in the unique case of France, I travelled to Paris in order to visit the Archives nationales de France to gather research on my topic. From the preparation required prior to the visit (such as the selection of documents through the online website) to the logistical planning of the trip (such as the arrangement of travel plans and the materials permitted into the archives), each step introduced me to the world of primary research. When the time finally came, I found myself sitting at one of the workstations in a large, bright room sifting through cases of documents, surrounded by fellow researchers scribbling away. At times, I discovered that the documents I had ordered were not what I expected; others were gems that gave me exactly the information I needed and even provided new directions for my paper. Sometimes, researching truly can feel like a treasure hunt!

I am deeply grateful to Carleton University, the EURUS programme and the Centre for European Studies for providing me with this incredible opportunity. I truly had a marvellous time in Europe. The grant allowed me to plan my trip and budget for expenses with ease and accuracy, thereby giving me peace of mind. In addition to meeting new people, I was able to discuss, debate and observe phenomena that I had only read about in scholarly papers; being there in person added a completely new dimension to my understanding. Furthermore, the archival work opened up many new possibilities of which I had not considered or been previously aware, making it invaluable to enriching my research and reaching a holistic analysis of my thesis. Thus, not only did the grant make it possible to achieve my academic dreams of being a historian and furthering my research for my Master's degree, but it also enabled me to pursue my personal dreams of travelling through Europe and being immersed in French language and culture. As a result, I was able to achieve academic, professional and personal goals during this trip, thereby making the summer of 2024 a truly unforgettable experience.