

## **Travel Research Grant Report**

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This past September, with the generous funding of a research travel grant administered by Carleton's Centre for European Studies, I traveled to Brussels, Belgium. The travel grant supported my ongoing research for my Master's Research Paper, tentatively titled: "What Happened? The Europeanization of Asylum Policy in Crisis."

The ongoing refugee and political crisis in Europe has created regional strains on national asylum systems. Trends previously observed in the European Commission, such as the shifting-up of policy from the national to supranational level, halted last year. My research examines 2015 as a case study for the Europeanization of asylum policy, the constraints felt within European Union institutions, and shifts in the policy development and implementation processes. Much of the research required involves primary sources, and recent documents and communications issues by policy centres and EU institutions. As a result, a primary gap is the internal and informal dynamics of policy formulation, the locus of which, is in Brussels. To resolve this issue, I conducted interviews with members of the European Commission and policy centres in the Union's capital.

In Brussels, I met with policy analysts from the European Commission's DG Migration and Home Affairs – Asylum. I was able to present my research, ask vital questions, and receive an insider perspective. I was able to additionally interview members of two prominent European policy think tanks. These interviews offered insight into the measures taken in Brussels last year to stabilize regional asylum systems, while offering varied positions on the issue. The information gained from those privy to the inner workings of policy development last year has proved to be of great value for my ongoing research.

The opportunity to interview officials working in the policy community was highly fruitful and stimulating. The information gained has contributed to drawing a much fuller, and more precise picture of the issue. In the past year, a number of new proposals have been propositioned by the European Commission's Migration and Home Affairs, and the potential for investigating these new shifts in policy, and directly questioning those responsible, and those working in the field, has enabled me to fill substantive research gaps.

As I begin work on my MRP, I anticipate these interviews, and my experience in Brussels, will provide a priceless contribution, the result of which I believe will be a research paper of much greater intellectual value. The trip would not have been possible without the generous funding awarded by Carleton University's Centre for European Studies, and I extend a sincere thank you.