

Narrative Report  
Graduate Travel-Research Fellowships on the European Union,  
European Integration, or EU-Canada Relations 2015

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In September 2015, I travelled to Europe to conduct research for my graduate program's Masters Research Proposal (MRP) topic entitled, "International Climate Negotiations: Assessing the EU as an International Actor."

During my initial stages of research I noticed a gap related to my sources. I found that general information pertaining to my topic could only be attained through secondary sources. While these sources were beneficial, secondary sources can be plagued by biased viewpoints. I came to the conclusion that my research would greatly benefit from primary sources that could compliment or challenge my secondary sources. After discussions with my supervisor, we both agreed that it would be important to gain insight from interviewing EU officials that were directly involved in climate negotiations. In July 2015, I received topic approval by the department (EURUS) and the Ethics Board at Carleton to conduct research in Europe and proceeded with contacting the relevant EU people who would be available to meet for an interview.

My first interview was conducted in Bonn, Germany on September 2, 2015, during the United Nations Climate Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. I interviewed an EU official who was directly involved in negotiations with the EU Commission's climate negotiating team. The interviewee gave me an in-depth historical run-down on the EU's progression related to climate change negotiations. The interviewee provided further detailed information about multiple conferences ranging from Copenhagen in 2009 to Durban in 2013. In addition to providing an excellent historical list of prior negotiations, he also provided me with his insight regarding my secondary sources. He challenged the presumptive argument that the EU failed at Copenhagen, by instead offering an alternative viewpoint that the EU was constrained by outside powers during these negotiations.

My second interview was conducted in Brussels, Belgium on Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. This interview was with another EU official who works with DG Clima as an attaché assigned to the North American Division. This interview went very well. She gave informed answers, yet had a noticeably different perspective in comparison to my first interview. In her opinion, the EU bureaucracy in Belgium dictated climate change policy from the top downwards instead of climate change policy resulting from "a bottom-up," or "grassroots" movement. She was also able to give me informative answers on how the EU dealt with countries on a bi-lateral basis, including Canada under Harper. This interviewee's information will help tremendously when I present my theoretical argument in my MRP.

In conclusion, both interviews are very important for my research and I gained important knowledge which is invaluable to my understanding and something I would not have been able to attain from secondary sources.