

Travel Bursary Fund Report 2019

The Role of EU Institutions in the Attraction and Retention of High-Skilled, Third Country Nationals

Bridget Healy – Summer 2019

Host Institution: Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Host Supervisor: Dr. Florian Trauner

Home Supervisor: Dr. Martin Geiger

Research and Objectives

The research seeks to address an important gap in knowledge and understanding of the EU's role in the recruitment and retention of high-skilled talent. In order to do so, the research relies on a two-fold approach of (i) document analysis of primary source materials (such as Directives, resulting position papers, and reports) and (ii) elite, semi-structured stakeholder interviews with EI institution representatives as well as other relevant stakeholders with a presence and involvement in policy promotion in Brussels (think tanks, international organizations, etc. This research generates an in-depth understanding of the role of EU institutions in the promotion and facilitation of high-skilled talent within the European Single Market aimed at meeting wider economic growth goals. Preliminary findings suggest that, while the EU institutional capacity to create policy change for greater attraction and retention of high-skilled, third country nationals in this area of migration is limited through exertions of political will and venue-shipping preferences, there are avenues/opportunities for attraction and retention - namely in the areas of skills recognition, credential recognition and qualification, and mobility partnerships with third countries and formulations of bilateral relationships.

The Process

Methods and techniques applied included stakeholder network analysis (use of online portals such as EU Who is Who, and other EU-specific databased, resulting in a demonstrated/nuanced understanding of organization around EU institutions); snowball method of stakeholder finding and engagement; document analysis and stakeholder research using the EURLEX system; and other methods/techniques specific to the European/EU context that will prove invaluable in future research/career endeavours.

Outcomes of the Travel Research Conducted in Brussels

- Generation of the fieldwork component for the completion my Master's Research Project (MRP) entitled **The Role of EU Institutions in the Attraction and Retention of High-Skilled, Third Country Nationals** (pending April 2020).
- Over twelve (12) interviews with high-level EU institutional representatives (e.g. European Commission's DG-HOME, DG-EMPL; European Parliament; Council of the European Union; Political Advisers).
- Over eight (8) interviews with representatives of relevant stakeholders based in Brussels, working in the areas of immigration law, business associations, international organizations, migrant associations, etc.
- Over seven (7) informal meetings with preeminent scholars in the field of European migration studies.
- Attendance at three (3) preeminent conferences - 27 May 2019 OECD-EC-EMN Conference: [A New European Agenda on Migration?](#), 6-7 June 2019 2nd Biennial EU in European Affairs Conference (EUEA 2019): Controversial Approaches to European Solidarity – From Burden Sharing to Integration; & 25 June 2019 Committee of the Regions Conference: [Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Small Territories: A factor for development](#) .
- Attendance at Institute for European Studies methodological seminars, such as 22 May 2019: *What is Process Tracing and What Makes it Good?* (Guest Presenter: Ingo Rohlfing is Professor for Methods of Comparative Political Research at University of Cologne).
- Pending September 2019 – Working Paper addition to the Migration, Diversity, and Inclusion Section; EU Profile for *Talent Mobility for Innovation* (PI: Martin Geiger).
- Standing invitation 21-22 November 2019 – ICMPD's [Vienna Migration Conference](#).
- Standing Invitation 14-18 July 2020 - IV ISA Forum of Sociology (Porto Alegre, Brazil).
- Pending January 2019 – Abstract submitted in part of SSHRC Connection Grant Proposal: *European Studies: Made in Europe? – Canadian and Global Perspectives* (PI: Mukhtar Hajizada)
- Pending submission for publication include but are not limited to *The Review of European and Russian Affairs* and the *Patterson Review*.
- Pending applications to be submitted include but are not limited to: Migration and Diaspora Studies Conference 2020, *Working Abroad: The Experience of Highly-Skilled Migrants in Foreign Labour Markets (IV ISA Forum of Sociology)*; Centre for European Studies Conference 2020, and National Metropolis 2020.

Note of Thanks

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