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Report on EU research visit to Glasgow, Scotland, the UK, 11-16 July 2017

The Centre for European Studies and the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at Carleton University funded my research visit to Glasgow in July 2017 in order to support my research work in the United Kingdom on the topic of European public sphere and European integration.

The main purpose of my research visit was to present and discuss the results of my research on the European public sphere at the 24th International Conference of Europeanists “Sustainability and Transformation” that was held by the Council for European Studies at the University of Glasgow on July 12-14, 2017. The conference included 303 panels, mini-symposia devoted to the issues of European integration, EU governance, the role of European institutions and actors, and current transformation processes that take place in the European Union. This conference was directly related to my PhD research that is devoted to the European public sphere and media institutions, and the EU governance. The topic of my presentation was “Eurosceptic news vs. News with a European agenda in the European Union”, and it was delivered at the “Social media and Social Political Context” section.

I also took part in the work of a number of other sections, including “European Disunion”, “Democracy, Deliberation and Mobilization in the EU”, “Participatory Democracy”, “Can Solidarity Endure?”, “Crises and Transformations in Europe”, also on contemporary research methods, collecting data, and academic publishing from the Routledge. In particular, I participated in debates on ‘solidarity’, specially, provided insights on various types of solidarity - political, sustainable and transnational. I took part in the discussion of pro-European and Eurosceptic discourses, and the role of the European Commission and the European Council in the development of the public sphere.

The purpose of my travel was also to collect first-hand information and data related to the European public sphere and European integration. My visit to the United Kingdom allowed me to collect unique information on the role of the public sphere, citizen participation and social media in the ongoing Brexit case. I plan to use this material for the preparation of research articles and other publications. I also was able to create a database of European academic journals and serials related to the topic of European public sphere and European integration.

I also was able to establish contacts with the leading experts on media and public sphere, including representatives of Carnegie Europe, University of Glasgow, University of Oslo, University of Copenhagen, University of Leicester, and Jagiellonian University (Poland). For my PhD project, I am going to conduct research interviews with European experts on the development of the European public sphere and media institutions similar to the ones I had conducted at the UNESCO, European Commission, the Euranet radio and Euronews television editorial offices and during my previous field trip to Europe in 2014.

Finally, I used this opportunity to work at the University of Glasgow Library. Since 1964 this library that has been a European Documentation Centre, and as such it is a depository of official publications of the European Union, so that there I could have access to a number of EU and UK policy documents on communication strategy and public information not available in Canada.

The funding generously provided by the Centre for European Studies, the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at Carleton University was critical to enabling me to undertake this research. It has provided me with information, insight and first hand contacts, but most importantly it has deepened my knowledge of the issues of European public sphere and European integration, current discussions on various aspects of the public sphere to a level not affordable through exploration of literature alone.