

## **Narrative Report**

Graduate Travel-Research Fellowships on the European Union,  
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Thanks to the generous help of the Graduate Travel-Research Fellowship on the European Union, I was able to complete my field work in Correns, France between August 13th to August 25th, 2014. The goal of my dissertation is to understand the governance mechanisms to support the development of locally-based sustainable food systems (SFS) at the municipal level. I am doing so by comparing four municipalities in the EU and Canada that are supporting the development of SFSs.

During my time in the France, I was able to interview the mayor of Correns; 6 local farmers and vintners; 1 of the members of a new local food co-operative opening shortly in Correns; and the head of Corren's Agenda 21 council. I was also able to attend Correns' annual two-day *Fête du Bio et du Naturel*, which allowed me to have a number of informal but insightful conversations with both local and regional farmers about the dynamics supporting environmental and sustainable food policies in France more generally and in the region more specifically. The Festival also hosted a keynote presentation by the head of an Italian agricultural co-operative who came to Correns on behalf of a European exchange program between sustainable communities. The conversations held during and after the presentation gave me a deeper understanding of both the local and EU-level dynamics at work to develop sustainable food networks.

More generally, the two weeks of field work allowed me to gain a realistic picture of the dynamics currently supporting sustainable food in Correns. It also shed light on some of the collaborative efforts between community, businesses and the municipal government to support the local food economy. My trip also gave me a deeper understanding of local demographics, geography, and overall discourse and culture in regards to food and agriculture in Correns.

Being in Correns on a day-to-day basis allowed me to more candidly engage with members of the community who gave me more personal perspective on the town's efforts than they might during structured interviews. It also gave me the opportunity to engage in more spontaneous interviews and conversations I could not have had over the phone, especially given Correns' more rural setting and tightly knit community, in which community members often referred me to one another.

Overall, my trip provided me with invaluable insights into community dynamics and how new forms of SFS governance are developing on the ground in Correns. I would like to thank the Centre for European Studies for helping me fund this opportunity to gain a first-hand understanding of governance relating to sustainable food in Correns, and completing my dissertation field work.