

Ebru Gurbuzer

CES Travel Grant Report

The focus of my Major Research Paper (MRP) is on the role of social organizations in the integration of Turkish communities in Vienna, Austria. The generous funding provided by the Centre of European Studies at Carleton University has allowed me to travel to Vienna to gather key information on my topic.

I arrived to Vienna at the end of May 2013 and started to live in one of the most densely populated Turkish districts in Vienna; *Reumannplatz*. I was able to quickly create a strong network of friends who assisted me in locating and joining numerous Turkish organizations, many of whom were located in the same district. It was amazing to see these communities first hand because you begin to better understand why the integration of Turkish communities is a popular topic of discussion. Although I read about Turks living in *Reumannplatz* in academic readings, I was able to use this opportunity to see experience the difficulties and challenges that Turkish families encounter when living in a host-country. Similar to other Turkish migrants, I used the Turkish organizations and their networks to assist me with crucial necessities such as finding housing, meeting new friends, and everyday errands including banking.

In September 2013, I relocated to a different district called *Schottenring*. Here, the majority of my neighbours were Austrians and this provided a different perspective to my research. I interacted with members of the host-country to understand their views and perspectives on the integration of Turkish communities and the role of social organizations. Throughout the months of June and July, Turkish organizations held many demonstrations and awareness campaigns in this district. Many of these events were not promoted or discussed in the local media, thus it would have been extremely difficult to be informed of the details and impact of the interaction between the social organizations and the host society.

Furthermore, my experience living in Vienna allowed me to attend numerous events hosted by various organizations. My schedule was quickly filled with weekly meetings, brunches, demonstrations and more. Each Sunday, I attended a brunch at the *Ataturk Cultural Centre*, which was followed by music lessons, sports outings, or book clubs. On Monday and Tuesday evenings members of *Kunst Wiederstein* gathered to discuss projects for raising awareness on political, economic and environmental issues in Turkey. On Thursday evenings I attended the directorate meetings for both the Youth and Senior Executives of the *Ataturk Cultural Centre* to plan upcoming events and outreach programs. On Friday, I would attend the Prayers at the mosques. Following the prayers, the religious leaders gave lectures addressing issues and concerns related to the youth of the society. Finally, Saturday was the busiest day of the week since there were numerous events happening simultaneously, thus I would be managing my time to participate in many event as possible.

My experience living in Vienna has greatly assisted me in gathering, assessing, and analyzing key information for my research. Without the help of this funding it would have been very difficult to draw my conclusions and actual experience being a member of all these wonderful organizations.