

Transatlantic Summer Academy

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My name is Svetlana Polyakov, Masters student at EURUS, Carleton University. One day as I was roaming the halls of Dunton's 13th floor, I came across an interesting summer program on one of the bulletin boards, Transatlantic Summer Academy (TASA), "Weapons of Power and Tools of Management - Alliances in the Past and the Present" held at the University of Bonn, Germany. The Academy captivated my attention from the very start, as its intensive summer program was very interesting. It consisted of: excursions to all the EU hot spots, such as the Council of Europe, European Parliament, Court of Justice of the European Communities, and EU Commission, and NATO headquarters, to name of few; many historical as well as modern museums and guided tours of cities and cathedrals, yet the most important and interesting part of the program were the lectures by various field experts of EU and NATO for example, the panel discussions consisting of professors and professionals of the EU composition and of course the simulation games which were the signature of the program, where the participants had the chance to role play and essentially truly grasp the reality of what goes on behind closed doors in such institutions as NATO, UN, and EU.

TASA has greatly contributed to my research project, as my focus of concentration is NATO-Russia/EU relations. The program consisted of 27 participants all graduate students from all around the world. The class discussions during lectures were absolutely fascinating, having the opportunity to hear the opinions and ways of thought of different schools and cultures was an extraordinary experience. This program is the definition of multi-disciplinary education at its best.

The program has opened my eyes to better ways of conducting research, through the advise from my peers to the advise of those who have long finished their MA's and PhD's. This program was also a great opportunity for me to do some real face-to-face networking with field professionals and experts of my research topic. For example, the visit to NATO headquarters to me was most fascinating, as it so happened, one of the topics of our lectures there was NATO-Russia relations, past and present. The lady who was the Russian representative to NATO conducting the lecture was extremely nice (as were all the lecturers through the entire program, very approachable and informative), I spoke to her after the lecture— explaining who I was and my research topic, she had given me her card, and told me that if I ever needed any advise or help with research— she will be more than happy to assist me!

TASA was an experience of a life time! I made new friends, have learned so much, got to visit institutions that I have been studying for years, and most of all I got a great start on my Master's research— this Academy has benefitted my professional as well as personal growth tremendously. None of which would have been possible without the great help of Prof. Joan DeBardeleben, a wonderful carrying person, who had encouraged and supported me from the very start, and who helped me along with the Center for European Studies (CES) to make this opportunity a reality. Thank you Prof. DeBardeleben, thank you CES, and thank you to all those who had a part in helping me, because without you my trip would not have been possible. I will never forget your kindness and your support!