

Graduate Travel Research Grant Report 2013
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Thanks to the research grant provided by the Centre for European Studies, I was given the chance to travel to Brussels and Berlin to conduct research for my MA thesis in September 2013. The subject of my research is the EU – Russia Energy Dialogue and its influence on German-Russian energy relations. The contacts and interviews gained through EU officials, academics and think tank experts enabled me to have a better understanding of the subject at hand and helped me better direct my research.

My research aims specifically to determine whether the EU – Russia Energy Dialogue has been influenced the energy trade relationship between Germany and Russia. Answering this question requires collecting a large amount of qualitative data, which although is very abundant and easy to access, is very difficult to sift through and organize without understanding the fundamental underpinnings of the Energy Dialogue, and Russian and German energy policy.

The CES grant allowed me travel to Brussels and Berlin to meet and interview contacts in the EU's Directorate General of Energy, European External Action Service, and the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Through these contacts, I was able to gain a better understanding of how European, German and Russian energy and foreign policy functions, making it easier for me to analyze the data I collected. These contacts also provided me with useful primary information that was crucial for my research question, and led me to other primary and secondary sources.

Of course, having to travel overseas to conduct interviews for research has given me invaluable experience in carrying out such activities. The grant gave me the opportunity to appreciate the intricacies and difficulties of finding and conducting interviews on an international scale. This is a skill that will definitely serve me well in my academic and professional careers.

I would like to thank Prof. Joan DeBardleben, Prof. Crina Viju and Brigid Bedard for all their support and for recommending me for the CES Travel Research Grant in the first place. Without their assistance and encouragement, the research process for my thesis would have faced many more obstacles and would have taken much longer to complete.