

Field Report

Research Fellow Name: András Oláh

Host University: The Johns Hopkins University – School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Academic Program and Year: Master of Arts in International Relations and Economics (2016/17)

Contact E-mail: andras.m.olah@gmail.com & aolah1@jhu.edu

General impression of my research stay abroad:

My academic year in Washington DC was the most academically and professionally productive year in my life. Living and studying in Washington DC provided me with the unique and truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with the very top of the academic world through countless think tank events and conferences at the world's leading academic institutions (e.g. the Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Center for Strategic and International Studies), as well as to get a glance into the inner-workings of the very top of the global policy making community by having the chance to meet and interact with representatives of some of the most renowned international organizations, such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Additionally, I also had the chance to not only observe but get engaged in the work of Washington's policy-making world by working in the United States Congress over this past summer at the U.S. Helsinki Commission, a congressional committee that works on Europe-related issues both in the US Senate and House of Representatives. As someone who specialized in European energy and security studies, I had the chance to entirely organize a major congressional briefing on energy security in Eastern Europe, a topic closely related to my research project that I conducted as an Austrian Marshall Plan Research Fellow. Among others, as part of this congressional briefing, I had the chance to conduct interviews with some of the world's leading scholars on Central and Eastern European energy security based in Washington DC, which interviews' key points and conclusions I incorporated into my research study. (My publication on some of the key conclusions of this congressional event could be read in the following article that I published together with my supervisor at the U.S. Helsinki Commission, Paul Massaro, the U.S. Helsinki Commission's policy advisor on energy security: <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/beyond-pipelines-breaking-russia-s-grip-post-soviet-energy-security>)

Quality of the host institution:

The Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) is one of the leading international policy schools in the world. The level of education was not only of high quality due to the university's outstanding professors who come from the top echelons of policy-making circles, academia, and the private sector, but also due to the endless opportunities to engage in academic and professional activities outside of the classroom. In addition, Johns Hopkins SAIS was also highly supportive of all kinds of student initiatives, among others, the university provided me and some of my student colleagues with the

opportunity to organize a half-day-long conference on a topic related to my energy and security field interest, namely on energy and security in the Arctic region by bringing together some of the world's leading experts and policy-makers on the topics discussed (more information on the event could be found here: <http://events.sais-jhu.edu/arctic-security-conference/>)

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization:

At Johns Hopkins SAIS I had the opportunity to study from some of the very best energy expert in the world, whose teachings helped me tremendously to complete my project for the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation. Among others, I learnt about the complex relationship between energy, security and politics under the guidance of *Professor Douglas Hengel*, one of the leading experts on U.S. energy policy towards Europe, who worked as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy, Sanctions and Commodities between 2007 and 2010. As I am primarily specializing in natural gas markets and policy, I immensely benefited from the classes of *Professor Nikos Tsafos*, who, for almost 10 years, has been working in the private sector as an energy consultant, specializing on natural gas markets. I also had the chance to learn about the nuclear energy sector and nuclear policies from two long-time leading American professionals on the field, *Professor Robert Alvarez*, who served as a Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary for National Security and the Environment under the Clinton administration, and *Professor Bruce MacDonald*, who was previously senior director of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States. Finally, as a student of *Professor Dymphna van der Lans*, the CEO of the Clinton Climate Initiative, I had the chance to learn about the difficult challenges related to climate change that energy policy makers face today with regards to energy transitions.

Recommendations for future Austrian Marshall Plan students and fellows:

After seeing how much an academic year in Washington DC could offer for me, I would highly recommend to any future Austrian Marshall Plan students and fellows to take an advantage of every opportunities in the city as much as possible. The location of Johns Hopkins SAIS provides students and fellows with the unique opportunity to study next to the leading think tanks in town, which hold events on a daily basis that are excellent for doing research, learning, professional development and networking. Additionally, I would encourage students to reach out to the faculty and student body of other universities (Georgetown, George Washington, American University, etc.) and attend their events / conferences as well. Similar academic institutions with conferences to visit are also recommended outside of Washington DC alongside the East Coast of the United States. Finally, it is highly suggested for students from Central Europe to take an advantage of the endless professional opportunities that the city has to offer on Capitol Hill, in the private sector, or at international organizations based in Washington DC. Either by engaging with the academia / professionals through events or work and internships, students from Central Europe can benefit immensely by learning about the American perspectives on policy and economic issues which will benefit them in the long-term. I believe that this obtained knowledge is necessary to foster our understanding of each other on both sides of the Atlantic, and thereby further strengthen the Transatlantic bond that should continue to serve as the basis of European-American relations in the future.