

# Field report

Submitted to the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation to fulfill the documentation requirements for a Marshall Plan Scholarship

Name: Levente Juhász

Host: Carinthia University of Applied Sciences

Home: University of Florida

Duration: March 15, 2018 – June 20, 2018

I had the pleasure to spend an enjoyable three months at the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (CUAS) in Villach, Austria between March 15 and June 20, 2018 with the financial support of the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation. My home institution is the University of Florida (UF). I was in the last phase of my PhD program at the time of my scholarship, and I successfully defended my dissertation since then! My research group at UF has a long history of successful cooperation with CUAS., yet, I was the first person from my group to receive this scholarship and conduct research in Austria.

Students need international experience to pursue a successful career later, and I personally believe that it is even more important in academia. Therefore, I think of the Marshall Plan Scholarship as an exceptional opportunity to get this experience. I declare my research stay highly successful from a personal perspective. Being based in Austria allowed me to reconnect with European researchers working in my field. Of course, transatlantic collaborations are possible with the technology we have today, but being able to meet face to face and make connections is still inevitable. For example, I would have not been able to meet with colleagues from the University of Salzburg, or even connect with people at CUAS if I had stayed in Florida. In addition, staying in Villach also made it way easier to present my research at Europe's most prestigious GIS conference, the AGILE 2018 which was held in Lund, Sweden this year.

In the USA, I am located in a research center within the Miami metropolitan area, which is home to more than six million people. I learned beforehand that the population of Villach is about 60,000. I had an idea of CUAS that I developed from my interactions with students previously visiting my research group, but I did not really know what to expect. I was honestly surprised by the quality of CUAS starting from my very first day. Everywhere I looked I found well equipped computer rooms, modern classrooms and auditoriums, and great staff. Everyone I came contact with (administrators, educators, researchers) were on top of their respective fields and I believe their knowledge would be desirable everywhere in the world. I also learned about the history of CUAS. I really liked the local feel of the institution and I believe that through they research they are addressing local issues, which I find very useful. I felt welcome at CUAS from day one, which was largely because of all the friendly people I met there.

For prospective Marshall Plan Scholars thinking of applying for the scholarship program, my first recommendation is very simple: DO IT! As I mentioned above, international experience is super important these days. Regardless of the direction of your travel, you will gain a lot, both professionally and personally. I came to realize over the course of my career that a change in my environment usually results in increased productivity. And moving to Villach from Miami for three months is a big change. I enjoyed

the relaxed atmosphere of Carinthia, the beautiful scenery and everything that came with these. For example, instead of being stuck in the South Florida traffic for more than 30 minutes every morning, I enjoyed riding my bike by the Drava River. And it indeed did wonders with my productivity which was useful during the last phase of my PhD.

Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity the Marshall Plan Scholarship provided. It was a very useful experience both from a personal and professional point of view. At last, I want to give special credit to Dr. Gernot Paulus for having me at CUAS and for making sure that all I need to focus on was my research.

Levente Juhász