

# Report to the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation

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## Overview

I was awarded an Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation Fellowship for the year 2020 to accomplish the research project entitled Internal and External Implications of Illiberalism in Europe, hosted by the Foreign Policy Institute, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C. This report summarizes my activities undertaken as an Austrian Marshall Plan Fellow. It will first outline how my initial work plan was structured and which activities were planned to be undertaken. Then I will describe the changes that occurred due to the Corona-virus pandemic which has changed the initial setup somehow. I will then discuss the research project(s) and research output I have carried out based on the Austrian Marshall Plan Fellowship and highlight the activities that I was involved in thanks to the Fellowship both on site (in Washington, DC) as well as remotely.

## Initial Workplan

I am a political scientist focusing on the European Union with a special interest in policies (environment and energy) and politics (parties, social movements, and decision-making) based at the University of Life Sciences and Natural Resources (BOKU) in Vienna. The research proposal I have applied for the Austrian Marshall Plan Fellowship reflects this duality in my work by placing it into a perspective that differentiates between an ‘internal’ dimension of policies and politics – and their ‘external’ implications.

My project entitled Internal and External Implications of Illiberalism in Europe has analyzed the Janus-faced challenges liberalism is facing globally: it is both about the loss of confidence in the ability of core liberal-democratic institutions to provide adequate responses

to central questions societies face *and* about the external contestation of the international world order. The underlying idea is that these two challenges are closely intertwined and we need to address both faces in order to understand the rise of illiberalism during the last decade. My research addressed the Janus-faced – internal and external – challenge of illiberalism in Europe by pursuing two research objectives: i) Internal Challenge: How can we explain illiberalism's rise in EU member states? What are the structural and ideational drivers behind the illiberal wave? How can foreign policies of illiberal states be characterized? ii) External Challenge: What are the implications of the rise of illiberalism in some of the member states for the EU's external role?

These two research objectives translated into two research projects which are carried out independently from each other and build on my previous work in the field of European, Central European and Eurasian Politics on the one hand, and Energy and Environment policy on the other hand. As both of these research fields are very prominently represented at SAIS, my research could profit from the expertise gathered in these fields of study.

My project goals relating to these two projects were:

Internal challenges: The original goal during my stay at SAIS was to finalize the manuscript of a monograph that builds on previous work. Chapters would address the ideational basis of illiberalism in both countries by looking at discourses and narratives, as well as their implications for practical policy-making in fields such as social policy, state reforms or state-society relations. Adding to this, the book would also offer deeper insights into the foreign policies of illiberal states, focusing on their EU relation, policies towards Russia, but also transatlantic relations.

External challenges: The original goal was to work on publications and new research about the EU's role in Global and Regional Energy Governance. Nowhere has the tension between the internal and external face of EU energy policy been more obvious than in the case of the EU's immediate neighborhood. At the same time, the current energy and climate policies of the EU are challenged by domestic opposition of some member states (like Poland), popular mobilization for more climate awareness, and opposition to that voiced mostly by populist parties, who object to the EU's global progressive role in energy policy.

Taken together, the benefit of my Austrian Marshall Plan Fellowship was to find possibilities for academic exchange related to my project, and equally importantly, to find time without

other duties (teaching, supervising, working on unrelated projects) to concentrate on this work.

### **Adjustments to the Workplan due to the pandemic outbreak**

I have initially applied for a longer period of stay at SAIS but due to professional and personal changes this was already shortened down to six weeks before I have started my visit. I have worked as an Interim Professor at the Freie Universität Berlin in Germany before joining FPI and due to my teaching duties upon rejoining the University of Life Sciences and Natural Resources (BOKU) I could only stay for a shorter period of six weeks. Also, the initial plan to be joined by my family for one part of my stay did not materialize, adding a further argument to the making the stay shorter.

In order to maximize the benefit of my stay, I started planning activities in D.C. well before my stay (see below for details). This proved to be much worth, as my plans were changed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, basically at the same time my Fellowship at FPI has started. After the lockdown was initiated in Washington, D.C., making personal encounters impossible, I had to relocate to Europe to support my family, particularly as the schools have closed. Thus, I continued working remotely on the research project. There were some smaller changes to the two legs of the research I have carried out.

Internal challenges: Due to the strong foreign policy focus at SAIS/FPI I have strengthened my interest in this field, related to the illiberal states that were analyzed. Together with a stronger focus on international/European political economy in the case of illiberalism and an emphasis on the role of ideas herein has been arguably the strongest intellectual influence I have received during my short stay at SAIS. Here I have profited from discussions with FPI colleagues, including other Fellows, and other researchers at SAIS.

I have been also very much honored to be the co-organizer and participant of a very prominent conference on “Illiberal Thought Collectives”, on March 6<sup>th</sup>, which was one of the last live events that took place at SAIS. The international conference, which I have co-organized with Professor Mitchell Orenstein of UPenn, brought together about 15 scholars from Europe and the US and was attended by over 100 persons in the Rome Building. I am very thankful for FPI providing organizational, logistic and financial support for the event which also featured SAIS faculty and other FPI Fellows (Maria Snegovaya) on its panels. My already existing collaboration with Professor Orenstein was much strengthened through this conference and we have planned several follow-up events and publications. Beyond that, the

conference has resulted in several contacts, which led to several publication plans and common project application with the attending scholars (Magdalena Gora, see below). The next event, scheduled for mid-March 2020, UPenn, and including a stronger regionally comparative perspective, had already to be cancelled due to the pandemic situation in Philadelphia.

While I did not finalize the manuscript for the book on illiberalism during the 6 weeks of my stay, I have worked on several publications for peer-review journals related to the first leg of my research project, some of which are already published, or are under review. These are the following:

### **Published**

Varga, M. & Buzogany, A., 2020. The foreign policy of populists in power: Contesting liberalism in Poland and Hungary. *Geopolitics*.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650045.2020.1734564>

### **Submitted to journal**

Illiberal thought collectives and policy networks in Hungary and Poland, with M. Varga, as part of the Special Issue in *European Politics and Society*, on Illiberalism in Europe, edited by Ramona Coman and Clara Volintiru

Contesting the EU's External Democratization Agenda: An analytical framework and application to populist parties in power, in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, with Oriol Costa, Magdalena Gora

### **Final paper**

Illiberalism, ideas and idiosyncrasies of Central and Eastern Europe's national conservatives

External challenges: The original goal in this leg of the project was to work on publications and new research about the EU's role in Global and Regional Energy Governance. I could not follow up on this part of the project during my stay at SAIS and already scheduled meetings with the research group maintained by Prof Urpelainen had to be cancelled due to the pandemic outbreak. I have continued to maintain contact online and participated in several events Initiative for Sustainable Energy Policy (ISEP) has organized during the Summer Term. I have also made contacts at the World Bank with researchers working in the field.

In the meantime, I continued working on publications related to the project. I have finalized three peer reviewed papers and a book proposal, which was submitted, and since then accepted by the academic publisher *Routledge*.

### **Published**

Die Klimakrise deuten und Veränderungen einfordern: Eine Framing-Analyse der Fridays for Future, Antje Daniel & Anna Deutschmann, Aron Buzogany, Patrick Scherhauffer, *SWS – Rundschau, in Print*

### **Submitted to journal**

Whose legislation? Voting on energy and climate policies in the European Parliament, *Journal of European Public Policy*, with Stefan Cetkovic

Between illegal protests and legitimate resistance. Civil disobedience against energy infrastructures, *Utilities Policy*, with Patrick Scherhauffer

### **Other**

I am also editing a Special Issue on “Environment and Populism”, for the academic peer reviewed journal, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*  
The call was published in March 2020.

Taken together, I have published 2 articles and submitted 4 other papers to high-ranking peer-reviewed journals during the period I have received the AMP Fellowship. All have or will carry acknowledgments to the AMP. Additionally, I have worked on several project applications, a book proposal and organized 4 panels at different conferences.

## **Other activities carried out in relation with the AMP Fellowship**

Beyond the academic output I have highlighted above, I have profited much both from my stay at SAIS and the remote period until April 2020 (and beyond) in various ways. I would like to highlight some of the activities I undertook.

- As mentioned above, the conference on “Illiberal Thought Collectives” has been the main intellectual exchange opportunity during my stay, which was supported by FPI, SAIS and drew substantial audience
- Beyond that conference I exchanged views with SAIS faculty, including Matthias Matthijs, Charles Gati, Marsha Olive.
- I was invited as Guest Speaker to Masha Olive’s class (did not take place) and to give talks at UPenn and Rutgers (did not take place or was shifted online).
- I have met with other D.C. based academics to exchange views – Marlene Laruelle (George Washington U), Geard Todd (Virginia Tech), Arpad Klimo (Catholic University)
- I have attended talks at SAIS, the Wilson Centre, Atlantic Council, Brookings and The World Bank
- I have liaised with other fellows at the FPI, including AMP Fellows.
- Participated (remotely) in workshops of the Initiative for Sustainable Energy Policy (ISEP)
- Was invited to discuss the manuscript of a book by Maria Snegovaya, 2 days, remotely, funded by the Institute of Humane Studies.
- Was invited to submit a short piece on my current research on George Washington U’s new illiberalism blog.

## **Future plans related to AMP activities**

- I have maintained frequent exchange with the Fellows at the FPI and with two of them we plan to work common publications.
  - o Maria Snegovaya on Russia related positions of European political parties
  - o Frank Stengel on conceptual issue relating to foreign policy and populism

## **Conclusion**

To summarize this report, the AMP Fellowship allowed me to have a very productive year, despite all odds, which resulted from pandemic. The main objectives I have hoped for related to AMP Fellowship have been fulfilled. I have done well academically during and after my stay at SAIS, as seen in the number of publications that I could finalize or at least work on. But, equally importantly, I have profited from the opportunity of new personal contacts and brief but intense view into the D.C. political “bubble” of think tanks and academic institutions, which was highly enjoyable and interesting.

My stay would not be as pleasant without the tremendous help of the FPI leadership and staff, who helped in more ways I could ever imagine. I am very grateful also to the Vienna based AMP Office, who made this stay possible. Many thanks to you all!

Signed 30/11/2020, Vienna

*Arav Buzagiu*