

## Exploring the Academic World: Inside Out

Dana Depo and Nicole Koenig



EXACT Network Seminar, September 2012

Cologne, 15. - 28.09.2012: The two-week EXACT Network Seminar on Academic Research Skills hosted by the University of Cologne presented a platform for academic discussion among experienced academics, twelve EXACT Early Stage Researchers and eight external participants working on their PhDs. Supervised by Geoffrey Edwards from the University of Cambridge and Robert Kissack from the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), the event aimed to convey essential academic and research skills and to provide in-depth feedback on the participants' individual research.

The seminar was organised around three central elements. The first consisted of guest lectures by experienced researchers in the field of EU external relations. Ten experts from different European universities or think tanks presented their research and pointed out challenges they have encountered along the way. The second element centred on the participants' research. Based on the topics or methodology, the experts and participants were mutually assigned as commentators. The participants' presentations provided an opportunity

for intensive feedback from the experts, the seminar directors, and the other participants. The third element of the seminar addressed 'practical' research skills such as academic teaching, publishing, funding, writing and interviewing.

The seminar was concluded with a public roundtable discussion entitled "EU Executive Powers and External Action". The discussants were the seminar directors, Robert Kissack and Geoffrey Edwards; Gianni Bonvicini from the Istituto Affari Internazionali; John Peterson from the University of Edinburgh; Wolfgang Wessels from the University of Cologne; and two EXACT fellows, Marlene Gottwald and Nicole Koenig. The roundtable was kicked off by a presentation by Nicole Koenig on the EU's role and coherence in the Libyan crisis.

The event was a fruitful mix of academic lecturing and sharing experiences in conducting research, but also allowed to receive valuable feedback on the work of the PhD researchers. In their concluding remarks Wessels, Edwards, and Kissack, gave practical tips and mentorship on how to proceed and finish timely with the research.

## Content

- Page 2 Bi-annual thesis workshop  
Think Tank Report  
TEPSA pre-presidency conference  
Simon Stroß
- Page 3 UACES annual conference  
Inside EXACT: IWE  
Anita Sek
- Page 4 Promoting quality assurance culture in Europe and Africa  
Leonhard den Hertog  
Selected Publications  
Upcoming Events
- Page 5 Doing interviews far away  
Visiting Scientist: Prof. Brigid Laffan  
Mail from Edinburgh

Editors: Leonhard den Hertog, Miguel Haubrich Seco, Aline Bartenstein, Wulf Reiners

## ONE LAST HEAVE – FINISHING YOUR PhD

After two busy and productive years, most EXACT Fellows are now into the final nine months of their fellowship. I therefore take this chance



to address the Fellows directly with some – hopefully encouraging – words on their final spurt: You have got a lot done, met a lot of new and interesting people, learned a lot at your think tanks, and grown in confidence.

All the while, making steady progress on your dissertation! Obviously, the EXACT programme has asked a lot of all involved. But however much any Fellow has managed to write for their thesis, there is still time to finish it, and do so on time. Here a few friendly pointers:

### • JUST KEEP WRITING

As I've told all of my supervisees repeatedly, any supervisor can give the most and most effective help by responding to text. It is only when we actually draft a chapter that we can tell where the gaps in our knowledge are, after which we can work to close them.

### • IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT

Especially, draft chapters that are 'finished enough' to allow your supervisor to help you can be very imperfect.

### • TALK THROUGH YOUR DIFFICULTIES

If you get stuck on a specific issue, seek advice from other EXACT Fellows or PhD students at your institution. If that doesn't work, go see your supervisor. Whatever you end up doing post-EXACT, there are few prizes for starting a PhD that never got finished. So, look to the hero inside yourself and get finished!

*John Peterson, University of Edinburgh*

# EXACT bi-annual thesis Workshop

Andrew Byrne

EXACT researchers gathered together in Dublin for 3 days in November for our thesis workshop and to attend the TEPSA Irish Pre-Presidency Conference in Dublin Castle. The workshop was kindly hosted by the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) and the Dept. of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin.

We were fortunate to have Prof. Geoffrey Edwards (Cambridge University) and Prof. Brigid Laffan (University College Dublin) each spend a day with us, as we presented draft thesis chapters and received valuable practical

input. The workshop was a chance for all fellows to come together from our 3 host institutions and share advice in a practical atmosphere of peer-led review. Profs. Laffan and Edwards were able to give guidance on all chapters and on preparation for the Viva. The workshop also gave Prof. Laffan a chance to meet the group and discuss her plans for the forthcoming year as EXACT Visiting Scientist.



## Results of Think Tank Report

Aline Bartenstein

EXACT carried out an Interim Think Tank Report evaluating the cooperation and achievements of the Think Tanks (CEPS, EIPA, FIIA, IAI, IWE and TEPSA) regarding the final outcome of the cooperation with the EXACT programme. Altogether, the cooperation of EXACT and the Think Tanks can be evaluated as extremely fruitful on all levels. A special remark was given by FIIA: *"While acknowledging that the EXACT was a one off exercise, we feel that it might be worth of thinking ways to continue the project in one way or another."*

Overall, the results of the EXACT Interim Think Tank Report show that both cooperation and coordination are of extreme value for the Think Tanks, the fellows and the EXACT programme. The fellows gained experience in working at the intersection of science and society and could intensify their academic profile. The Think Tanks profited not only from the additional academic input by the fellows but also from the network opportunities. Also from management perspective the Training Phase II can be evaluated as highly successful.

## Simon Stroß

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Before joining EXACT in 2010, I studied Political Science, Cultural Anthropology and African Studies at the University of Cologne. During a semester abroad and study trips to African countries, I developed a keen interest in the external relations of the EU in general and on its development policy in particular. With my PhD thesis I want to contribute to the discussion on how certain EU policies that impact on developing countries can be formulated in a coherent and coordinated way.

During the first two years of EXACT, I have worked at TEPSA in Brussels and EIPA in Maastricht. In the last project year that just started, I focus on finalising my thesis and teaching at the Charles University Prague. I have always enjoyed working together with researchers from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds and the EXACT framework provided me with plenty of opportunities in this regard. Now I just have to get the thesis finished to round up three truly remarkable years!

## TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference in Dublin

Peter Valant

The EXACT fellows participated in the TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference in Dublin on 22 and 23 November 2012, hosted and organised by the IIEA, the Irish Institute of International and European Affairs, in collaboration with TEPSA.

The conference was opened by the welcome words of Brendan Halligan, Chairman of the IIEA and discussed the future priorities and challenges of the upcoming Irish Council presidency in the first half of 2013. Wolfgang Wessels, on behalf of TEPSA, stated his strong confidence regarding a successful and productive Irish presidency.

Four sessions involved representatives from different backgrounds such as politics, diplomacy, academia and the private sector. A numerous representation of Irish ministers and other speakers presented the programme of the Irish Council presidency. Session two focused on the current

crisis in the Eurozone and discussed the legal and political challenges it poses for the future of the EU. Session three addressed the EU digital agenda and EU energy policies. The fourth and last session dealt with the European Union as a global actor. Two EXACT fellows, Simon Stroß and Peter Valant, wrote the conference report which is now available on the TEPSA website.

The overall impression of the TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference was extremely positive and enriching. Up-to-date information on a number of EU policy areas and fresh ideas to tackle the challenges ahead offered many chances for academic and policy exchange. Taking place in the famous halls of Dublin castle, the TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference made the stay in Dublin for the EXACT fellows very memorable.



# EXACT Fellows at the UACES Annual Conference in Passau

Niklas Helwig

Two fellows presented their research at the 42nd UACES Annual Conference, which took place in Passau early September 2012.

Leonhard den Hertog presented a paper co-authored with Joanna Parkin and Sergio Carrera from CEPS on the three EU home affairs agencies in the external dimension of EU migration policy: Frontex, Europol and the European Asylum Support Office. Leonhard argued that their specific Home Affairs nature, such as their 'experimental governance' strategies, poses specific challenges to individuals on the move. In the paper they show how some of

the activities carried out by these agencies negatively affect foundational EU principles and rights. As a consequence, 'accountability' theories in Agency literature have to be reconsidered.

Niklas Helwig presented on the High Representative's capability-expectations gap. While the expectations towards the redesigned post of the EU High Representative are high, its actual capabilities are limited, as the post is confronted with the prerogatives of the European Commission and the member states in many aspects of EU foreign policy. However, it can use its position at the

heart of EU foreign-policy making to offer co-leadership with its EU partners and thus to overcome the capability-expectations gap. Niklas also presented on a separate panel on CFSP performance after the treaty of Lisbon. The various panels and round tables offered an opportunity to learn about the latest research in EU studies and to meet scholars in this field. Beside the conference there was time to discover the picturesque town in lower Bavaria, where Ilz and Inn meet the Danube.

In each issue the newsletter presents one of the nine EXACT partner institutions. The institution presented, Institute for World Economics (IWE), is based in Budapest and hosted two EXACT fellows. Leonhard den Hertog and Marco Siddi joined the team between November 2011 and March 2012.

## Inside EXACT: the (former) Institute for World Economics (IWE)

Leonhard den Hertog

IWE has been a long-standing partner in many European projects and has offered excellent research and collaboration on all kinds of economic and political issues. Since a few months it has merged with the Research Centre for Economic and Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This section highlights some of the activities and characteristics of the Institute.



ry and on the Central and Eastern European EU Member States at large. In the newly merged Research Centre four new departments have been created: 1) Global Questions, 2) EU Studies, 3) East-Central Europe and 4) non-European economies. This guarantees a global outlook and wide expertise. The team is composed of a good mix of young and experienced researchers, with several young researchers also combining their policy analysis work at IWE with writing a dissertation at one of Hungary's universities.

The IWE produces working papers and short notices on topical developments. Another successful output has been a recently started blog which can be found at: <http://vilaggazdasagi.blog.hu/>

The research it undertakes covers all areas of economic policy which include, to name but a few: global financial regulation, EU-China trade relations and EU's economic and financial development. Of course, in many of those activities the focus is on the impact these developments have on Hunga-

### Anita Sek

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In November 2012 I joined EXACT and started my training and work at TEPSA.

I am a person driven by passion. In whatever I do, being it my professional life, studies or civil society, I do it with my whole heart. I hold Master degrees in EU International Relations and Diplomacy (College of Europe, 2012) and in International Relations (Jagiellonian University, Krakow). I also studied in Warsaw and Vienna (LLP Erasmus).

I experienced real world politics in a number of institutions bridging theory and practice, as a trainee inter alia in the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Embassy in Moscow. Diplomacy, external action of the EU and ENP belong to my long list of research interests.

This is the reason why I now focus on writing my PhD proposal on the international actorness of the European Union in the relations with its 'Strategic Partners'.

# EXACT Fellow promotes quality assurance culture in Europe & Africa

James Nyomakwa-Obimpeh

In October and December 2012, EXACT Fellow James Nyomakwa-Obimpeh participated in workshops in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Accra (Ghana) organized by the European Union and African Union Commissions.



Workshop Participants (Addis Ababa-Ethiopia)

The workshops aimed to promote cooperation among higher education institutions in Africa and in Europe. The EXACT Fellow has been contributing to ongoing policy dialogues between European and African policy makers especially in the promotion of quality assurance mechanisms among universities and higher educational institutions on both continents.

The workshop in October 2012 dealt with the role of academic and research cooperation in generating knowledge exchange. Taking place in Addis Ababa, the workshop brought together practitioners from both continents. They discussed examples of good practice of aca-

ademic cooperation and research collaboration which could serve as models and orientation for higher education institutions. The workshop ended with a declaration on modalities for a stronger cooperation between Europe and Africa in higher education.

The workshop in Accra with the theme "Linking institutional evaluation practices, quality rating mechanisms and reinforcing quality assurance at continental level" took place on the 18-19 December 2012. This workshop brought together experts working on quality assurance from Africa and Europe to identify the need common criteria for quality assurance on a continental level. It highlighted the fragmentation of quality assurance practices in Africa and has prepared the way for a follow-up conference on a similar issue expected in May 2013 in Gabon.



James Nyomakwa-Obimpeh, Accra - Ghana

## Leonhard den Hertog

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With the EXACT programme in its final stage it is now my turn to introduce myself to the readers of our newsletter!

I come from the Netherlands where I obtained my LL.M. in Legal Research (European Law) at Utrecht University. I was born in Gouda which makes the pejorative term 'cheese head' for Dutch certainly applicable to me! Before EXACT I worked as a research assistant at Utrecht University, as a paralegal at an Amsterdam-based law firm and with a European Commission funded project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Within EXACT, after having spent time at CEPS (Brussels) and IWE (Budapest) I am now based at the University of Cologne with regular visits to Edinburgh as well. My PhD deals with organisational dynamics and constitutional principles in EU's external dimension of migration policy. I approach this topic (and other topics) from a multidisciplinary angle combining law, political science and international relations. In Cologne I have also been involved in teaching on EU external relations, especially on EU-Africa relations.

## Selected Publications

Helwig, Niklas/ Ivan, Paul and Hrant Kostanyan: 'The European External Action Service in the New EU Foreign Policy Architecture: Reviewing two years of practice', CEPS special report, forthcoming February 2013.

Raspotnik, Andreas/ Rudloff, Bettina: 'The EU as a shipping actor in the Arctic - Characteristics, interests and perspectives', Working Paper, SWP, December 2012.

den Hertog, Leonhard: 'Fundamental Rights and the Extra-Territorialisation of EU Border Policy: a Contradiction in Terms?', in: D.Bigo, S. Carrera and E. Guild (eds.), 'Foreigners, Refugees or Minorities? Rethinking People in the Context of Border Controls and Visas' (Ashgate), January 2013.

Siddi, Marco: 'Italy-Russia relations: politics, energy and other business', in: Zsuzsa, Ludvig (ed.), 'What role for Russia? Eastern European Studies Series 4, Institute of World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (forthcoming January 2013).

## Upcoming Events

3rd - 6th April 2013: ISA 2013 conference taking place in San Francisco. With Miguel Haubrich Seco.

5th - 8th April 2013: Annual conference of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies at Cambridge. With Marco Siddi.

18th - 19th April 2013: EXACT PhD Sessions, Edinburgh, with all fellows and Prof. Laffan.

8th - 11th May 2013: EUSA conference 2013 in Baltimore. With Dana Depo, Marlene Gottwald, Miguel Haubrich Seco, Nicole Koenig, Simon Stroß, and Andreas Raspotnik.

10th - 12th July 2013: EXACT Final Conference in Brussels.

# EXACT researcher in action: Doing interviews far away

Vanessa Boas

Conducting interviews in Central Asia is surprisingly easy once a number of daunting obstacles have been overcome: the language barrier, restricted access to potential interviewees and limited freedom of speech. Extra patience is thus needed as the fruits of one's work are not borne as speedily as in European capitals. Of course, Central Asian countries vary substantially and consequently the degree to which the interviewer is confronted with these snags differs across the board. As I focused on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and thereby did not have to deal with the real "baddies" of Central Asia, my experience was only painful at times. Those moments of discomfort largely stemmed from complex Russian discourses which were beyond my grasp and cumbersome security procedures artificially wedged between me and my interviewee.

However, a handful of strategies enabled me to overcome most of the hurdles I came across. Firstly, I prepared all my interviews well, usually with a Russian native speaker. Secondly, I used the network of contacts I had established during my time in the region to facilitate access to desired interviewees. This significantly sped up the process. The final hurdle, that of freedom of speech, was harder to skirt around and I had to be more selective. In Kazakhstan, civil servants are likely to provide you with the latest government propaganda, while civil society based in the capital has equally been co-opted. Luckily, Almaty (the former Kazakh capital) and Kyrgyzstan, were more open in this regard and I had the opportunity to speak to a number of brave and inspirational individuals.



Visiting Scientist: Prof. Brigid Laffan

In the third and final phase of EXACT, the fellows will receive support for the finalisation part of their Ph.D. from Prof. Brigid Laffan. Prof. Laffan of the College of Human Sciences, University College Dublin, is joining the EXACT team from February 2013 on. She brings in her academic expertise, her professional experience as lecturer, her experience in shaping the debates on European integration and a wide network of contacts. Together with the fellows she will carry out inter alia a PhD progress workshop in Edinburgh and also prepare the EXACT Final Conference in July 2013.

## Mail from Edinburgh – It's all about the weather?!

Marlene Gottwald

While the weather conditions were much different during our first EXACT visit in Edinburgh in the beginning of December 2010 (see Newsletter February 2011) – the heaviest snowfall for 20 years – we were equally warmly welcomed by members of the University and the friendly Scots in general when arriving in April 2012.

The Scots say that in Edinburgh you can experience all five seasons in just one day. Going through sunshine, rain and even a bit of snow during a one-hour city tour on the open top of a bus in mid April made us realize that this has some truth in it. After now nearly eight months it is still hard to not to talk (or complain) about the weather all the time. However, Edinburgh has not lost its image of the charming fairy tale city that you get when you arrive for the first time. Its calm atmosphere disappears only one time a year



during the festival season in August when the city is buzzing with people from around the world and the cultural programme is almost overwhelming.

Regarding academic life, the University of Edinburgh offers plenty of opportunities to connect with other scholars and students in various research groups and workshops on politics, international relations and the European Union for instance. Moreover the University provides a wide-ranging choice of language classes, professional and academic skills seminars as well as teaching opportunities.

Against this great academic, social and cultural background, we should not be too worried (anymore) about the weather during our last year of EXACT. However, a wee bit more sunshine at times would be a draw!



EXACT is a Marie Curie Initial Training Network on EU External Action. It consists of the following partners:

University of Cologne, Charles University Prague, University of Edinburgh, Centre for European Policy Studies, Trans European Policy Studies Association, European Institute of Public Administration, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Institute for World Economics, Research Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.