

EXACT Report on Study Visit to Edinburgh

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From the 9-10 December 2010 the PhD-students of the EXACT Marie Curie ITN on EU External Action paid a visit to Edinburgh. The University of Edinburgh is one of the three partner universities of EXACT and will host eight of the fellows during the course of the program. The trip offered the students the possibility to get to know their future university environment as well as to obtain an inside on the current research carried out at the University of Edinburgh.

Day one started with a welcome and an introduction to the university and its study- and research programmes. **Charlie Jeffrey** (Head of School of Social and Political Science) emphasised the strong international standing of the school as one of Europe's leading centres of research in the social sciences. School's research was rated world leading or internationally excellent in one of the past international research assessments. Moreover, the school has a strong interdisciplinary structure, linking for instance research in law and politics. **Fiona Mackay** (Director of the Graduate School of Social and Political Science) welcomed especially the eight EXACT fellows that will carry out parts of their study in the graduate programme of the university. They will be part of a research community with 300 students from over 30 countries and have the opportunity to take part in the research training of the graduate school as well as to gain teaching experience in the undergraduate programme. The key features of the research training, such as intensive courses on statistics and theoretical and practical approaches to research, were also highlighted by **Andrew Thompson** (Programme Director for Politics and International Relations). In the end of the PhD-research it is the tradition of the school that the students present the final results at a showcase presentation.

The welcome was followed by a research presentation by **John Peterson** (Professor at the University of Edinburgh and member of the EXACT Supervisory Board) on the research project "The European Commission of the 21st Century". The research team, in cooperation with the European Commission, carried out the largest survey on Commission officials so far. The questions covered a broad range of issues such as demographics of the officials, the working environment, the impact of reform and enlargement and the relations to other institutions.

A different research target was scrutinised by **David Howarth** (Jean Monnet Chair and Director of EU Centre of Excellence) who carried out a study on the OECD committee on Capital Movements and Invisible Transactions. Using the principal-agent approach, he could show in his analysis how an international experts committee acts beyond its delegation roles and works against the preferences of OECD member governments. Due to the institutional interconnectedness of the committee and the exertion of peer pressure, the OECD had a substantive impact on capital liberalisation.

The rooms of the Old College building offered the perfect surrounding for the evening reception, which was also attended by other Politics and International Relations as well as EU Law PhD students. All students were welcomed by **Jo Shaw** (Professor at the School of Law and member of the Europa Institute).

The morning of the second day in Edinburgh was dedicated to the presentations of the EXACT partner project 'MERCURY' which is being coordinated at the University of Edinburgh. The Europe-wide project aims at examining critically the European Union's contribution to multilateralism. **Mark Aspinwall** (Coordinator of MERCURY and Head of Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh) gave an overview of the project and the key aspects the researcher from nine universities and think tanks from Europe, South Africa and China are working on. This was followed by presentations of recent deliverables of the MERCURY project. The paper by **Nur Abdelkhalik** "Externalising migration policy: The European Union's 'Global' Approach" examines constraints at EU level, posed by the division of competences between the EU and its member states as well as differing policy prioritisations, on the multilateral pursuit of migration policy objectives with the Mediterranean. As a result of bypassing intra-European constraints, the European Commission increasingly supports the implementation of migration-related initiatives coherent with the 2005 Global Approach through international organisations. **Chad Damro** presented its concept of 'Market Power Europe'. Due to the economic power of the European Single Market and its significant institutional and regulatory capacity, the EU is capable of externalising economic as well as social regulations. Thereby the EU potentially relies more on coercive means and tools as other concepts of the EU acting as a power might claim.

In the afternoon the Edinburgh based EXACT PhD students had the possibility to have a face-to-face discussion on their research project with their respective supervisors John Peterson, Christina Boswell or Chad Damro. The rest of the group was able to take a guided tour through the ancient walls of Edinburgh Castle.