

European Union Centres Network, EUCN
European Parliament Internship
(07/09/08 - 05/12/08)

Report
by Yoon Ah CHOI

Introduction:

EUCN offers every year an opportunity for students to work with a Member of the European Parliament for three months. Successful candidates for this internship receive funding and a suitable placement.

Motivation:

As a research student in European studies, I wanted to gain more knowledge and practical experience in this field. The internship could bring professional and personal development by engaging in the activities of the European Parliament, becoming more aware of important political issues and meeting experts. Furthermore, I had not been to Europe despite the strong link I had with European culture, literature and languages.

Preparation:

My internship starting date was postponed from March, to anytime leading up to September. Having organised my tickets and visa in advance, I decided to go to Europe early and stay in France to work on my thesis while waiting for the confirmation on placement. Through personal connections, upon my arrival in Brussels, I was hosted by Odile Masse, a librarian who works in the parliament. She was very helpful and explained how everything worked, i.e. transport, accommodation, how to find my way the parliament and various things the city had to offer. I found a flat located in Etterbeek which is a suburb known as the European quarters. It was only a 20 minute walk to the parliament. I also had the option of taking a bus to commute to work and lived near metro and tram stops, which was very convenient.

Placement:

I worked for Mr. Liam Aylward, Irish MEP from the UEN political group. He was Vice-Chairman of the Temporary Committee on Climate Change, member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. He is also a substitute member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and Committee on Fisheries. Mr. Aylward was named on the French honours list for year 2008 for his work in promoting EU Agriculture and the EU Food safety.

Duties:

Administration-

Handling phone calls, answering constituents' enquiries (emails/letters), arranging meetings for my MEP, organising conferences, keeping up with Liam's parliament activities/agenda

Research-

Attending meetings, summarising documents, writing briefs on certain subjects, studying position papers, preparing recommendation of votes, analysing voting results, reading up on relevant topics, checking press releases

Topics-

Climate change, Emissions Trading Scheme, Effort Sharing, clean technology, environment, health, water scarcity, flooding, pesticides, obesity, medicinal products, organ donation

Conclusion:

The parliament offers a positive and dynamic work environment with on-going exhibitions, events and themed-weeks. I thoroughly enjoyed the nature of work I was assigned to during the internship and the company of my Irish workmates.

Useful information:

Security: Entry to the Parliament is restricted. Passes are required to enter, otherwise, must report to the accreditation centre where a temporary pass can be obtained. NB. Bring passport and organise someone with authority to sign you in – ie. assistant, political advisor, assistant or MEP.

Transport: Same ticket for buses, tram and metro. Valid for 1 hour. Much cheaper to 10-trip passes (11.50€) than single tickets (2€). For map - <http://www.stib.be/netplan-plan-reseau.html?l=fr>

Accommodation:

Key words – apart/chambre à louer, co-location, apart/chambre meublée
Recommended areas- Schuman, Etterbeek. Avoid areas near train stations.

Links - <http://bruxelles.vivastreet.be/>
<http://www.petitesannonces.be/>
<http://www.quefaire.be/>

European Stagiaire Association:

<http://www.epstage.eu>