International Fund Application

EUROFORT:

Political Attitudes toward Trade Agreements in the European Union

The European Union (EU) is the unique exemplar of a collective of states which enjoys both supranational powers and binding procedures for democratic decision-making. Yet in spite of its remarkable accomplishments over more than fifty years, the EU is now facing a multitude of simultaneous crises, some of which call into question the very essence of European integration. The EU is challenged, as never before, to develop internal cohesion and solidarity while simultaneously maintaining open borders in a globalizing world.

Now in its fourth year, the EUROFORT project examines the process of European integration in a new light, studying how it has and will develop in response to external pressures, such as migration, economic competition, and the resurgence of global power politics. For 2017, the research focuses on the ability of the EU to conclude trade and investment agreements with other countries. We hope to use the opportunity provided by the new International Fund to make this research happen and involve Princeton undergraduate students in both gaining a transatlantic perspective and collaborating in producing original research.

Research focus

Trade has always been the raison d’être of European integration; trade policy has therefore been at its core from the very beginning. The European Economic Community, ancestor of the current day European Union, was founded in 1958 as a single market protected by a common commercial policy. The free circulation of goods and services between European member states necessitated a common external tariff at the outside border negotiated on behalf of all members by a single voice (Meunier 2005).

For decades, the EU was one of the world’s two superpowers in the field of trade. The largest importer and exporter in the world, the 28-nation bloc had strong bargaining power when negotiating international trade deals. Considered a highly technical matter, trade negotiations were left to the expertise of European Commission negotiators, who concluded a myriad of bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements. This contributed to the rapid spread of globalization, which
made the EU richer but also decimated the industrial fabric of European economies and disrupted patterns of interest representation (Hall et al., 2014).

Recently, a growing number of politicians and civil society organizations have expressed sharp criticism about free trade and the EU’s role in promoting the liberal orthodoxy embedded in international trade agreements. Doubts about the benefits of free trade are not unique to Europe, as the 2016 American election made clear. What is unique about the European case, however, is that in addition to a contestation of the substance of trade agreements, critics also focus on the nature of the democratic delegation of the authority to negotiate these trade agreements from the individual member states to the EU. By contesting the authority of the EU to carry out its core policy responsibility, the critics are questioning the legitimacy of the entire European integration project. This raises a series of questions. What political, ideological and demographical cleavages separate politicians who are for and against the EU’s role in negotiating free trade agreements? How do the critics of international trade and EU authority in this area justify their positions to the mass public? Are their justifications effective in garnering electoral support and convincing citizens of their position? And how do political actors in favor of international trade and European integration counter their critics? What justifications do they use, and how effective are they, by comparison, in appealing to citizens and voters?

The 2017 EUROFORT project involves studying how European politicians justify their positions for or against trade and investment agreements negotiated between the EU and other countries, and how these justifications affect public opinion about trade, EU authority, and as a result, the prospect of European integration altogether. Project participants will focus notably on recent negotiations between the EU and Canada for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), between the EU and Singapore for the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) and between the EU and the U.S. for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Student researchers will collect and analyze the statements of key political actors from the various involved countries in party programs, media outlets, and parliamentary debates.

**Genesis of the Program**

Sophie Meunier (Princeton) and Ellen Immergut (Humboldt) created the EUROFORT program (Fortress Europe: How the Rest of the World Shapes European Integration), which ran as a Princeton-Humboldt Strategic Partnership between 2014 and 2016 with a different research focus every year. After some tinkering, they developed an original collaborative model involving student exchanges as follows.

- Students were recruited to the project in the late winter through a competitive call for proposals aimed at early stage researchers—advanced undergraduate students (mostly Juniors at Princeton, with the possibility of including Sophomores and Seniors; advanced SOWI BA Students at Humboldt). These students worked during the summer both as Research Assistants for the project and as data collectors for their own research (for instance, Senior Thesis research for Princeton students, and BA Theses at Humboldt).
- The recruited Humboldt students as well as the Humboldt faculty leaders came to Princeton every year in May to attend a research planning and mentoring workshop, which took place the day before the EU Program at Princeton’s Annual Workshop on European Integration (currently in its ninth year), which they attended. During the planning workshop, the undergraduates discussed their summer research assignment with the Princeton and Humboldt professors for whom they would be working. These discussions clarified the
theoretical framework for the research, the methodologies to be used, the exact research tasks, and the methodological training that would be provided. These discussions also allowed the Princeton and Humboldt students who would be working together to get acquainted, and to exchange practical information as well as to socialize with one another during the two days at Princeton.

- During the early summer, Princeton students spent a full week at Humboldt, received methodological training relevant to their summer research assignment, and began their joint research together. The undergraduates were also allowed to participate in the Berlin Annual Workshop on European Integration and select Berlin Summer School events.
- After the research jumpstart in Berlin, the students were then free to conduct the research elsewhere depending on their topic (some students went, for instance, to the European University in Florence, where EU archives are located; others conducted interviews with policymakers in EU countries from Austria to Malta).
- All materials and data collected, quantitative and qualitative, were then made available to all the participants to the project, who could use it for instance in their senior thesis.

As part of EUROFORT, Meunier presented her work on European trade and investment policy in Berlin, and Vössing presented his research on how European policymakers craft and deliver their policy justifications on European integration in Princeton. They decided to partner for a new round of research, which will productively combine their expertise to create a new and exciting research agenda.

Calendar and Logistics of the EUROFORT Summer Fellowship Program

This program will provide a total of up to 3 summer fellowships for Princeton student researchers. It is open to A.B. (ideally Juniors) and Ph.D students. It will also cover one visit to Berlin by Meunier and one visit to Princeton by Vössing.

The concrete timing and travel plans would be as follows for each of the two years of the project:

- January: the call for proposals for EUROFORT Summer Grants program is issued.
- February: the awards decision on the EUROFORT Summer Grants are made by a joint-Princeton-Humboldt committee.
- May: Princeton summer research grant recipients attend a Summer Research Orientation consisting of a mentoring seminar and individual meetings with Profs. Meunier and Vössing. They will also attend the Princeton Annual Workshop on European Integration.
- July: the Princeton undergraduate summer research grantees participate in the Berlin Research Week at Humboldt University. The research week is organized specifically for the Princeton grantees. The students will receive one-week of methods training and intensive advising on their own research projects (for their senior thesis, for instance). Moreover, they will participate in hands-on cooperative research with Prof. Vössing and Humboldt students involved in the research project, after which they will go on to conduct their research in Europe, as needed. They also have the
opportunity to attend portions of the Annual Berlin Summer School in July and a research workshop on Comparative and European politics to take place the end of June.

- August: The research results are due at the end of the month.

**Contribution of the project to Princeton’s internationalization**

The overarching goal of the project is to engage students and researchers in common research and teaching activities for mutual benefit and the joint development of a transatlantic and global perspective. Students will explore the topic of internationalization as well as travel abroad to conduct research. Moreover, they will have the opportunity to be actively involved in the planning and execution of a collaborative international research project. The organizers of the project are leading scholars in their fields, who have a global perspective on their academic research and teaching, evidenced by international networks and a string of successful international cooperation projects. Students will benefit tremendously and expand their own international scope by being involved in cutting-edge research and by experiencing first hand the benefits of transatlantic cooperation not only in the area of teaching but also for scholarly productivity and enrichment.

Importantly, the project also contributes to Princeton’s internationalization by helping to maintain and expand our highly successful cooperation between Princeton and Humboldt that was started in 2014. With its emphasis on seed funding and the development of new projects, the Humboldt-Princeton strategic partnership program allowed us to establish our cooperation. Other sources of funding and support are now required to maintain and expand it – the European Union Program at Princeton will contribute some funding but the help of the new International Fund is crucial to actually make the 2017 and 2018 summer fellowships happen. The experiences that we have made in the past three years allow us to carry out our cooperation and the benefits it provides for the internationalization of Princeton even more effectively.

Sophie Meunier, *Research Scholar in Public and International Affairs and Co-Director EU Program at Princeton*

Konstantin Vössing, *Associate Professor of Political Science at Humboldt University Berlin*
Research Focus

The European Union (EU) is the unique exemplar of a collective of states which enjoys both supranational powers and binding procedures for democratic decision-making. Yet in spite of its remarkable accomplishments over more than fifty years, the EU is now facing a multitude of simultaneous crises, some of which call into question the very essence of European integration. The EU is challenged, as never before, to develop internal cohesion and solidarity while simultaneously opening up its borders in a globalizing world.

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Summer Fellowship Program

This program will provide a total of up to 3 summer fellowships for Princeton student researchers ($2,000 stipend plus $1,500 travel expenses). It is open to A.B. (ideally Juniors) and Ph.D students.

Princeton student researchers will first attend a short planning workshop in May in Princeton with Professor Meunier. Then they are expected to participate in the EUROFORT research week from June
26 to July 2, 2017, organized by Professor Vössing at Humboldt University Berlin. During the research week, students will receive training that prepares them for their research tasks, and they will collaboratively work with students at HU Berlin to conduct the research. Aside from the week in Berlin, the rest of the research can be conducted by the student in the place and time of her/his choosing (with prior agreement by Profs. Meunier and Vössing).

The student researcher will then turn over to EUROFORT all the data collected (e.g. scans of archival materials, interviews, etc., to be deposited in a common repository) and a report that summarizes the main findings and organizes the collected material.

We are looking for students with a good understanding of European integration, an ability to work independently, and good planning and writing skills. EUROFORT students are allowed and encouraged to use the research collected for their own independent research (e.g. Senior Thesis at Princeton).

Your application needs to contain the following materials

- Curriculum Vitae
- Current transcript
- Letter of recommendation from one of your faculty advisers
- Short essay explaining (1) why you are qualified to undertake this research; (2) which specific topic and/or country you would prefer to work on (e.g. CETA); (3) which languages you speak, write, and/or understand, at which level of competence; and (4), if applicable, how this research will help make a critical contribution to your AB work.

Deadline for application: February 17, 2017

Submit application as a single PDF File (except letter of recommendation, to be emailed directly) to smeunier@princeton.edu with Subject line: EUROFORT

Sophie Meunier, Research Scholar in Public and International Affairs and Co-Director EU Program at Princeton

Konstantin Vössing, Associate Professor of Political Science at Humboldt University Berlin