



## **My Berlin summer internship with the German Foreign Ministry (Auswärtiges Amt)**

### **Gergely Lodinsky**

***Gergely Lodinsky, who graduated with a degree in Global Studies and German Studies from Bard College in 2009, completed an internship at the German Foreign Ministry in 2007. He reports to us about the challenges of the USA-Interns internship including conducting interviews and writing reports in German, navigating a foreign governmental apparatus and figuring out a better advertising strategy for the German government.***

In College, my focus was on international relations, German history and literature as well as perfecting my German language skills. After hearing about the *USA Interns program*, I got into contact with Juliane Adameit. Hoping for an internship in politics, I was grateful to secure a *Hospitant* position at the *German Foreign Ministry in Berlin*.



From June 4 to July 31, 2007, I worked at the merged public diplomacy (Kommunikation) and cultural (Kultur) sections. On my first day at work, *Martina Nibbeling-Wrießnig*, my mentor, showed me a large spider diagram highlighting the hierarchy at the foreign ministry. After pointing out her place in the bureaucracy, I was left to make sense of the convoluted chart.

My assignment stemmed from the fact that the Cultural Section had extensive methods of measuring the success of their projects while the public diplomacy section did not. The Deutscher Bundestag was becoming increasingly hesitant to fund projects without clear benchmarks of success, and my mentor was tasked with finding out what other governments and organizations were doing to solve similar problems. I was given a free hand to plan, organize and conduct interviews with foreign missions, professors and organizations to find methods of measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy projects. After the merger of the two departments, my duties also included writing about cultural section meetings pertaining to aid in Africa.

For my main project, I conducted interviews with staff of the American, Spanish, and French embassies in Berlin and an economics professor at the Technical University of Berlin. My first assignment threw me straight into the deep end: I was tasked with setting up an interview with the Public Affairs section of the United States Embassy. Due to a prior commitment, my mentor ended up letting me and another intern conduct the interviews. After each interview, I had to write a report in German, which was put on file at the Ministry.

After June, I became *Frau Nibbeling-Wrießnig's* only intern. I effectively became her personal assistant. I was the note taker in 3 meetings and assisted my mentor in other discussions related to distributing Cultural Department aid to Africa. I was tasked with writing reports on the meetings in German.

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-2- Gergely Lodinsky - Internship in Germany



Gergely Lodinsky with USA-Interns friends  
in Frankfurt am Main “am Römer”

My internship included an extensive amount of time outside of the office: the Foreign Ministry organized various events for interns. I was able to attend lectures on German-Foreign relations at the Australian, Japanese and Polish Embassies. I also received an informational tour of the German Foreign Ministry political archives: I saw the Hitler-Stalin pact, the Treaty of Rapallo, the contract that dissolved the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and Bismarck's decree in 1870 to create a Foreign Office for the Northern German Union. Additionally, I visited the headquarters of the Axel Springer Verlag, sat in on a meeting of top journalists at Berlin's Tageszeitung and was in the audience of the political show "Maybrit Illner".

I flew down to the Steuben-Schurz Society get together with four other Berlin interns, and we were given important information

about living and working in Germany. We got to meet other American interns placed around Germany and shared experiences. The event culminated with a reception at the US Consular General's residence, where our work was honored by Steuben-Schurz President *Dr. med. Ingrid Gräfin zu Solms-Wildenfels* and then *Consul General Jo Ellen Powell*.

Writing some time after the internship, I can unequivocally state that the USA Interns program was immensely beneficial both academically and professionally. My writing and speaking abilities in German improved considerably, and I went on to write a senior thesis on the sports program of the former East Germany using mostly German language sources. After graduation, I continued pursuing my interests in international relations and the German language as a Fulbright Grantee at the University of Vienna in Austria.

(Redaktion- SSG/USA Interns: G. Schanno, J. Adameit)



Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft e. V., Frankfurt am Main 2012  
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