



Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft – USA Interns



My Internship at the Ministry of Justice in Wiesbaden, Germany

Katherine Mesrobian

Katherine Mesrobian, studying International Studies and Business at the University of Pennsylvania, had the opportunity to intern at the Ministry of Justice, Integration, and European Affairs during the summer of 2013 in Wiesbaden

Ever since middle school, I have been passionate about learning German. Ironically, I chose to learn German in middle school because I wanted to learn a new language, i.e. not French or Spanish. Although I have no German background, I took to German with vigor throughout high school. I attended a German summer camp in Minnesota and I would read children's books in German. It had always been my dream to study abroad during college and perhaps, if I were lucky enough, to live abroad after college. I realized that my dream to study abroad would be fulfilled during my sophomore spring semester. With this knowledge, I hoped to complete an internship in Germany the summer before my sophomore year to immerse myself in the German culture.

Unsure of where to start, I began to talk to my German teacher at college. He recommended the *Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft* Program, as previous Penn students had taken part in this program. Within a few days, I had sent an email to *Ms. Juliane Adameit*, who helped me immensely throughout the application process by answering my numerous questions. For instance, I was not exactly sure what type of internship I wanted to partake in.

With the *Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft*, I could list two fields of work that interested me (I eventually wrote down politics and economics). I applied to the *Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft* in February, and by March, I received news that I had a potential internship. Luckily for me, I had the opportunity to intern at the *Ministry of Justice, Integration, and European Affairs* (Ministerium der Justiz, Integration, und Europa).

I arrived in Germany on May 5th. The next day, I arrived at the Ministry of Justice excited and a bit nervous. After meeting each person in the fifth section of the ministry, I proceeded to try to memorize a complex chart handed to me that listed the entire hierarchy of the ministry. Although I struggled to memorize the entire chart, it was a valuable tool to meet other employees within the section.

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Over the next two months, I was able to learn about many facets of the German political system, particularly about integration policies in Germany. For the majority of the internship, I worked on translating the 2013 Statistical Analysis of Integration in Hessen, a forty-page pamphlet that described the empirical findings about integration and people with an

immigration background in Hessen. However, I did not spend all of my time translating text. One of the most enjoyable aspects of my internship was the flexibility in the schedule.



I was able to organize my own workday, which allowed me to interact with many employees in the integration section. From my interactions, I was able to work with the employees on a variety of projects. For instance, I helped research immigration policies in Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. In addition, I had the opportunity to visit a multitude of other governmental institutions. For example, I had the opportunity to visit the *Staatskanzlei*, another state government building, as well as other ministries in Wiesbaden.

Overall, I benefitted enormously from my internship at the Ministry of Justice. My ability to speak and understand German improved immensely, and I now have a firm grasp of knowledge of the German school system and the German political system. This internship provided by the *Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft* provided the jumpstart I was looking for to improve my German capabilities for my semester abroad. I'm looking forward to continue improving my German within the next year.

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