

Master in European Studies Program, Hochschule Bremen

Applying for an internship in Brussels

Dear students, here is some information for you from our alumni Henrique Silva Pacini Costa from Brazil who is currently doing an internship in Brussels:

"If you are thinking about applying, don't think much. DO IT! It is a priceless experience for those into European Studies.

The traineeship selection process is based in two steps:

First : general selection of candidates made by the traineeship office. They pick the best applications, always observing nationality. I.e. we are three Brazilians in the Stage, there are 3 people from turkey and about 40 Italians... 15% of the vacancies are open to non-EU applicants. There are about 50 nationalities among the 600 trainees from the winter stage 2007-2008.

Second: "Blue book" - once the traineeship office selects your application, your name will enter a list that is given to the specific services. To have an idea, about 5000 people applied last time, and 1500 went to the blue book.

During the blue book phase, many trainees lobby for their positions. I did that, and it helped me. You have to be very careful and use a soft approach to do that, because over pushing can de-motivate officials from picking your name. Do what you are best: send emails, call people (if you are naturally persuasive and confident on your arguments and conversation skills). Some blue book candidates send letters as well.

In the other hand, some people never lobby for themselves and are nevertheless selected. It is a tricky thing, but one thing is absolute truth: what you have to offer is YOURSELF, YOUR EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION AND MOTIVATION. If you are lobbying, you need to show in your (short!!) emails that you have the profile they need, and that the traineeship would help you in your academic and professional endeavors. Attach a copy of your CV, listening to Ms. Blaschke' s recommendations.

In the application you have to choose your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices for your traineeship. (I.e. DG Translation, DG Research, DG Education and Culture, DG TREN, DG RELEX....). Forget about the 2nd and 3rd, trainees are 99% chosen from their first option. There are some exceptions of individuals who were chosen from their second options, but few.

Attach as many documents as possible to the application file. I inserted **copies** (not originals!!) of everything - BA diploma, a declaration of my ongoing master's, language certificates, work experiences (proof of internships I had done until then).

Be very careful with what you write on the field "motivation for the stage/specific DG". I applied for DG TREN (Transport and Energy) and I mentioned that I was writing my master thesis in the field. It is important to show some previous engagement/concrete interest in the position you are applying to, that will pick the evaluator's attention.

Then, if you are not selected: So what?? Use the same structure you have learned to apply for other internships.... UN, World Bank, IEA, ... there are thousands of places where EU studies are highly valuable, and attention will be given to your application. Good looking applications are usually the winners. Always type things to make it look professional, signing your name on the end.

Then, if you are selected: Prepare yourself for living 5 intensive months. The monthly allowance is 950 EUR, with health and accident insurance included. They also reimburse you for your travel to Brussels (and the return to your city). The trainees have activities every single day, and social life is maybe the best in Brussels (for trainees based in Luxembourg social life is much worse... boring I would say.. But other conditions are the same). Internet, printer, scanner and telephone are all included and you will have your own pc. Events, conferences, seminars and meetings pop in your mailbox all the time, meeting people from high level from all over the world. Important documents will be handled by you, so be responsible with all you deal with - it is important to contribute in kind to the great chance of doing an internship in the European Commission.

If you have any other questions, I will be happy to answer. Good luck and always trust yourselves!!! “

Henrique

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