

Miles Harrison
Bursary Report
22 April 2019

**Reflecting on the Europaeum Oxford-Geneva Bursary,
undertaken between 17 March and 17 April 2019**

Having grown up in the U.S., studied during my undergraduate years in Scotland (St Andrews, '17) and Russia (St Petersburg State University, '15), and now as a Master's student in Global Governance and Diplomacy at the University of Oxford, I've learned that few environments can be as enriching and stimulating as an exchange across cultures and institutions. Through the generous support of Europeum, I was very fortunate to be able to include the Graduate Institute in Geneva to this roster of academic organizations and experiences. During my four-week stay in one of the world's great capitals of diplomacy and multilateralism, I was not only able to progress my thinking for my dissertation on economic sanctions through access to the Institute's world-renowned resources and expertise on the topic, I was also able to get a taste for life in Switzerland—a unique opportunity for which I am profoundly grateful.

After returning to further studies in October 2018 following a brief year of work experience—and subsequently realizing that the one-year MSc program at Oxford would go by much faster than I had anticipated—I came across the bursary while looking for opportunities to make the most of the networks between institutions provided by being a student again. Picking up on my interest in the use and governance of coercive policy tools in diplomacy, I had already decided that I wanted to write my dissertation broadly on economic sanctions, a well-trodden area in international affairs that would challenge my ability to make a distinct academic contribution. However, while I was determined to undertake some form of travel for my project through Oxford's many exchange partnerships, I had not expected to find a program so ideally suited to my interests at the perfect institution for conducting research on sanctions: the Graduate Institute in Geneva. Before arriving, I had encountered journal articles and books on sanctions authored by Graduate Institute faculty, and looked forward to immersing myself in the institution's knowledge.

The first few days into my stay, it became clear that the four weeks would be even greater than a fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives on sanctions. Members across the Institute—from fellow Masters' students, to PhDs, post-docs, Researchers, and Professors—were remarkably open to meeting and went out of their way to include me in the academic community. Particularly in light of my short stay, it was invaluable get to know fellow desk-mates on the 7th Floor of Petal 2 as well as to present my ongoing research and receive feedback from faculty in the Global Governance Centre. In particular, I benefitted from the valuable advice of Professor Thomas Biersteker, one of distinguished voices in the field of international relations and sanctions, as well as the interdisciplinary perspectives of Professor Gregoire Mallard, Dr. Erica Moret, and Farzan Sabet. I thank them for sharing their time, ideas, and resources over coffee, in the proverbial classroom, and outside of it (see the enclosed photo of a "sanctions hike" in the Valais Alps).

Although the focus of my research moved towards investigating the role of the U.S. as a global sanctions enforcer, rather than universal sanctions regimes imposed by the United Nations, the links between the Graduate Institute, the UN, and the world of sanctions practitioners through the Geneva International Sanctions Network (GSIN) was also a major advantage for interviewing and knowledge-building on how sanctions operate from the perspectives of

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government and the private sector. I also found that the palpable connections between the Institute and Geneva's many multilateral agencies give the institution a special character of academic rigour combined with practical policy expertise.

Overall, the Oxford-Geneva bursary gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in an environment conducive to building momentum on my dissertation research and getting to know a host of kind and open people working on a range of interesting projects in a city at the heart of global multilateralism — I recommend it to anyone interested in doing the same, and hope to return to Geneva in the future!

