

Final Report For The Helsingin Sanomat Foundation

I studied at the Freie Universität Berlin for the academic year of 2016-2017. I attended the Europäische Journalisten Fellowships (EJV) program. During my scholarship I conducted a research project on problematic relationship between media and terrorism focusing especially on media strategies of global jihadi groups Isis and al-Qaida. My scholarship helped me to deepen my understanding on this complex topic, increased my knowledge on German society and German language and also gave me an opportunity to take a break from intense and some times wearing journalistic career. During the year I also managed to connect with interesting people from around the world, other journalists and academic experts from different fields. The other 11 participants of the EJV-program came from many different countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Netherlands, Britain, Canada, Palestine, Israel and Germany.

The program of EJV consists basically of only one "Jour Fixe" lecture in a week and of visits to various media or political institutions in Germany. In addition to this the participants can attend courses provided by the Freie Universität according to their own interests and needs. The weekly Jour Fixe lectures were varying in their content and quality. During winter term we had lectures on for example German taxation and legal system, Stasi archives and the code of ethics of journalism in Germany. We visited the Bundesrat and the weekly press conference of the Parliament. We also made a three-day-trip to Essen and visited the office of Presse-Haus NRZ and many interesting museums. During the summer term we had lectures on for example crisis communication of Berlin police, the demographic development of Germany and the future challenges of journalism (by the president of Axel Springer Akademie). We also visited for example the editorial office of German public broadcasting corporation, newspaper TAZ and NRZ's Berlin's headquarter.

During the winter term I studied German language six hours per week at the university and attended following courses: Debatten in Deutschland, which was about the current political /social debates in German media, a course on history of the conflict between Israel and Palestinians, and a course on the cultural history of food in Germany. I also started my individual research project reading books about terrorism and the media and analyses of Salafi-Jihadism ideology. The library and the databases of Freie Universität turned out to be very useful for my project.

During the summer term I continued with my German studies and went deeper into my research project. I connected with German and Finnish terrorism analysts and journalists who are experts on this complicated field. I conducted interviews in English and in German and read more studies about my subject. In addition, I attended a course on history of protest movements in Germany, which came close to my research project, because one of the main topics was about the terrorist group Baader-Meinhof and the role of the media. I also

attended a two-day workshop organized by the German network of terrorism researchers in Berlin.

Finally, I wrote a 54-pages report on the relationship between media and terrorism with a topic *Dont Play Into Their Hands. What Every Journalist Should Know About The Media Strategies of Isis and Al-Qaida*. I believe this paper and especially the conclusions can help other journalists as well to deepen their understanding on troublesome symbiosis between media and terrorism.

My scholarship year in Berlin culminated in 11th of July, when all the scholars presented their research projects in Schwanenwerder, an island close to Berlin. It was the very first time in my life to give an academic presentation in German. I definitely would not have been able to do that a year before.

Some of my colleagues criticized the program of not giving enough support to their personal research projects. I had technical problems to enroll in some courses, and I know that some of my colleagues had the same problem. I also heard criticism of Jour Fixe lectures not being "topical" enough. I agree with this criticism. On the other hand, I am very used to work and connect with people independently, and this is what I managed to do during my scholarship and research project.

All in all, my scholarship was a unique opportunity for me to deepen into one specific subject, to learn more German language, to explore the German society and especially to network with very interesting people from all around the world. I am deeply grateful to The Helsingin Sanomat Foundation for providing me this opportunity.

In Helsinki, 12th of August 2017

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