

CASE
Center for Social and Economic Affairs
General overview and my experiences

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Over the past two months I had the pleasure of working with CASE, an esteemed organization based in Warsaw which works world wide as an independent economic research center. The work done by this organization has been used for the benefit of nations, the EU, as well as large international businesses. Although outside of the governmental sphere CASE often informs the governments to a better extent than their own governmental offices do.

In September 1991, shortly after the fall of Communism, several highly regarded economists, including Leszek Balcerowicz, understood the need to found an independent research center which could help the newly reforming Central European countries help leap forward from communist central planning to free market economy. (...)

Today CASE serves the purpose of aiding both nations as well as the European Union by providing accurate and detailed accounts on social and economic areas in nations all across the globe, but especially in transition nations; many of which lag behind Poland in their adjustment to capitalism. CASE has set up networks across the developing world to help aide in this process; some of these networks are CASE Belarus, CASE Trans-caucuses, CASE Moldova, and CASE Ukraine. This network uses experts from around the world to help these nations in both economic and social policy.

But a vast majority of CASE's activities are carried out through grants tendered by the European Commission. These grants are given to CASE for the performance of specific research on selected topics by the European Commission. The results are disseminated by the commission to the European Union as a whole; therefore the work that CASE performs is of great importance and is done in an extremely serious manner. Most grants have to do with projects on economic or social issues in the EU countries, or

neighbor states. Such examples of current projects are that involving the re-industrialization of post communist Ukraine and Russia after the takeover of factories from the military industrial complex, as well as a study on the shadow economy for the EU. These projects were all coordinated by the department I worked closely with. The researchers sought out grants and set up teams to conduct the research itself, but the selection of what topic to choose was in their hands.

My experience at CASE was very unique and taught me many valuable lessons for the future. I was specifically given the task of helping the Public Relations department during my two month period there. In this department my main tasks involved searching for reporters to whom we could disseminate our work. This involved searching vast amounts of daily online newspapers from around the globe reading English, Spanish, and Italian. When a reporter had done several stories related to things CASE also worked on, I added them to a contact list which I set up in order to facilitate the contacting process. Also I established a journalist brief which is to be sent to these individuals to explain CASE and its research to them. Besides these tasks I worked on other things such as writing articles after seminars held at CASE for our website, including the seminar on Inequality in Poland, the presentation on the Global Food Crisis, and the lecture on Moldova and the Transnistrian Conflict. All of these articles can be found on CASE's website at www.case-research.eu. Another more mundane task was correcting papers and briefs, being that I was the only native English speaker in the department I would check over the work and correct minor errors common in those with English as a second language. Also I helped fill out briefs about projects to be presented to experts who would be possibly interested in the project.

But an internship is more than completing tasks, it is learning. Several of the topics CASE worked on or held seminars on greatly augmented my knowledge. (My work) on the presentation on Moldova and Transnistria taught me vast amounts of information on the small European country. He enlightened me on this area which I had before had perhaps only heard in passing. Working also taught me about the many administrative processes that go on in the EU, and even the difference between the EC and the EU. Also I built a strong understanding of how to work with people in an office atmosphere, especially those who come from different countries. In my office alone I worked with a Belgian, a Dutch woman, three Poles, and an American; not to mention the vast amounts of experts who I had contact with who were from all around the EU and beyond. Getting to understand the very many cultures and the free flow of people throughout the EU was a remarkable experience and has helped to teach me what the EU was truly set up to do. When one can work in Warsaw with a Belgian, on a project that is focusing on Ukraine and Russia to be disseminated to people from the twenty seven member states of the European Union, you truly see how this supranational organization works.

My experience at CASE was remarkable and taught me so many things. I truly thank them for teaching me and allowing me to help, in even such a miniscule way, work on projects and public relations for this prestigious organization. They are well known and continue to do good work to help aide and disseminate knowledge throughout the world. I plan on my return home to sign up for their newsletter and e-briefs. The information I receive will undoubtedly help me in my future studies in the Politics Department of The Catholic University of America. Their work has taught me so much

already that will be useful for future classes in world politics. I only wish that I had had more time to work in the organization for both my benefit and for theirs. In the future I hope other interns from the United States will be allowed the privilege of working at CASE so they too can learn from their own experiences.