

NEW FELLOWSHIP AT CECOB.

Last December 15, professor Viachaslau Yarashevich has started his visiting fellowship at our Center for East Central and Balkan Europe at the School of Political Science of the University of Bologna, Forlì Campus. Here below professor Yarashevich is introducing himself and the research project he is going to develop while in Forlì.

Born 12 years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, I grew up in extraordinary environment of political, economic and social change in my native Belarus and neighbouring countries.

For my undergraduate degree I studied international relations at Belarusian State University with a focus on European politics, and then in 2001 I won a Chevening/Open Society Institute scholarship to continue my study of Europe on the master's programme at Sussex University in Britain. After successfully defending my PhD in 2006 at Kingston University in London, I returned home to start an academic career at my alma mater BSU in Minsk, at the department of international relations.

Never quite content with my level of academic intelligence, I have constantly looked for ways to expand it, and foreign postdoc fellowships offered wonderful opportunities in this regard. First, it was Fulbright at the University of Pittsburgh in the US, 2011-2012, and now it is Erasmus-Mundus WEBB at the University of Bologna. These research opportunities recharge me with fresh ideas and result in publications for globally acknowledged academic journals on various topics related to post-communist transformation which began 25 years ago. Specifically, during my 6-month stay in Italy I am going to focus on the political economy of European and Eurasian integration in comparative perspective, also continuing to develop my expertise in macroeconomic competitiveness which I have been teaching for the last three years in Belarus, as well as in wider post-communist transformation discourse.

As Adam Smith said nearly two and a half centuries ago, to be a researcher is a great privilege, and to have it at a young age is even more so. However, you appreciate it only switching to a different, more bureaucratic even if better remunerated occupation. That is exactly what I felt after taking on the post of the Council of Europe Information Point director

in Minsk one and a half year ago. It was a valuable practical experience, but in no way as mind-invigorating as my current fellow role at the School of Political Science here in Forli. I have very high expectations about my contribution to the team of Professor Stefano Bianchini, and no doubt in excellent facilities and comprehensive support from the University of Bologna. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone!