

## **Erasmus Mundus WEBB postdoc**

### **FINAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Two weeks before Christmas and the end of my Erasmus Mundus WEBB mobility at the Alma Mater's Forlì campus, the time has come to reflect on the progress and further course. As envisaged by the original research activity plan, the focus of my investigation was on the comparative political economy of European and Eurasian integration projects. The results of this research were summarized in the article titled 'Eurasian and European integration in comparative post-communist perspective', which was submitted to the *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, a peer-reviewed international journal managed by Elsevier and edited by a board closely linked to the Center for European and Eurasian Studies of the University of California in US.

On kind suggestion by my supervising Professor Stefano Bianchini, I also made a number of contributions to the Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe (PECOB). One of them, titled 'Political economy of reforms in Eastern Europe', was published in PECOБ's Papers Series No. 50 (<http://www.pecob.eu/Political-Economy-Reforms-Eastern-Europe>), and the other, titled 'EU competitiveness in a globalized world', was set in the Economics section of the Occasional and Working Papers (<http://www.pecob.eu/EU-competitiveness-globalized-world>). There is a third one coming, on the political economy of Eurasian integration, which will hopefully get published in one of the forthcoming PECOБ's Papers Series.

Eager to be in direct contact with the Alma Mater's student community, I shared the intermediate results of my postdoc research through open lectures and seminars. Notably, two open lectures on the political economy of Eurasian integration for the students of MIREES (MA in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe) were delivered in March and November 2015, which attracted a lot of interest judging by the feedback from both students and professors. A series of research seminars for the UniBo's PhD programme in Globalization and International Relations was also conducted in the last weeks of March. The seminars touched upon such themes as 'Globalisation from the other side: a view from ex-USSR', 'Contemporary European geopolitics: Cold War II?', 'Interdependence in Europe: European vs. Eurasian integration', and 'War or peace: uncertain future of globalisation'. As with the MIREES lectures, the seminars received very positive feedback from both students and Prof. Bianchini, and a new series was scheduled for the end of December 2015.

In the middle of April 2015, I gave my Erasmus Mundus WEBB postdoc some international outreach by attending a seminar on European and Eurasian integration in Austria. Organised by the Joint Vienna Institute in cooperation with the Austrian authorities, it brought together officials from a number of post-socialist countries who heard presentations from various European institutions, as well as Austrian scholars. I was too invited to make a presentation on Belarus' standing in the European Economic Union, which was well received by the audience.

Last, but not least, I feel obliged to share my very positive appraisal of conducting research in Italy at the UniBo's School of Political Sciences in Forlì under scientific supervision by Professor Bianchini – the attitude, the atmosphere, and all the facilities have not just met but exceeded my expectations, for which I will always remain grateful to the Alma Mater and Erasmus Mundus WEBB.

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