

A Young Bulgarian Lawyer's Experience of Scientific Research in Berlin

Elena Todorova, Sofia

As a scholar of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and participant of the Fritz Thyssen Special Programme for South-Eastern Europe I got the chance to visit Germany for the purpose of scientific research. During the five months of my stay in Berlin (from April to September 2003) I have been working on „Special features of the European Court of Justice as an international jurisdiction“. Due to the rich documentation and literature I found in the German libraries and with the helpful scientific advice of my mentors Prof. Herwig Roggemann (Centre for German, Croatian, European and Comparative Law at the Institute for East European Studies, Free University of Berlin) and Prof. Emil Konstantinov (Institute for Legal Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia) I achieved a considerable progress in my work. In the course of my research I analysed the special features in legal nature, jurisdiction, and procedure of the European Court of Justice (using primarily the method of comparison) and compared the European Court of Justice to other international courts such as the European Court of Human Rights, the International Court of Justice, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The goal of these comparative studies is to prove the thesis that the Court of Justice of the European Union is not an ordinary judicial body, but an institution *sui generis*.

Prof. Herwig Roggemann was my German host at the Free University. He provided me with excellent facilities for my work. I was given free access to the office of the Centre for German, Croatian, European and Comparative Law at the Institute for East European Studies which was supplied with all necessary equipment for scientific work. Prof. Roggemann and Prof. Konstantinov have always been open to my questions and provided me with academic advice regarding the technical and methodological aspects of my work. Both my advisers also contributed to the establishment of contacts with a lot of colleagues from the Free University. For all these reasons I wish to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Roggemann and Prof. Konstantinov.

As a result of the contacts made by my advisers I had the chance to discuss interesting opportunities for collaboration with my German colleagues from the Institute for East European studies (particularly from the Centre for German, Croatian, European and Comparative Law), primarily concerning the participation in seminars and conferences. I was invited to a conference about the problems of South-Eastern Europe and cooperation under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (DAAD-Tagung „Hochschulkooperation und Krisenbewältigung“, September 26–28th, 2003).

The time spent in Germany was also very useful for the improvement of my proficiency in German language. Thanks to the Fritz Thyssen Special Programme for South-Eastern Europe I was given the opportunity to attend an extensive German language course at the Goethe Institut, Berlin. The participation in this course facilitated my everyday life in Germany and helped me to gain a greater benefit from my research trip to Berlin. Part of the German language course was also a cultural excursion programme.

In the Berlin libraries (State Library, Free University's Central Library, libraries of the following institutions: Humboldt University's Law faculty, Free University's Law faculty, Free University's Institute for East European Studies, and Institute for Political Sciences) I found many useful books and journals providing me with abundant information about my topic. The Fritz Thyssen Special Programme for South-Eastern Europe gave me access to the newest books and articles regarding the Court of Justice of the European Union, the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This circumstance strongly upgraded the conduct of my research work since a lot of the contemporary literature on these judicial institutions is not available at the Bulgarian libraries at present (because of the lack of funds).

It was an honour and a pleasure for me to get in contact with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I am sure that the Fritz Thyssen Special Programme for South-Eastern Europe will have a very positive impact on my future development as a young researcher at the Institute for Legal Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The Programme gave me the chance to visit Germany which was in fact my first contact with Germany and with German culture. I would like to thank also Mrs. Gülay Sağırılı for providing me with useful information before my travel to Germany as well as for her support during my stay in Germany.

Elena Todorova, Dipl.-Jur. (Bulgarien) ist Doktorandin und wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Institut für Rechtsstudien der Bulgarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Sofia. Im Jahr 2003 hielt sie sich als Stipendiatin der Alexander-von-Humboldt-Stiftung zu Forschungszwecken am Interuniversitären Rechtszentrum Split/Berlin auf.