

Julia-Nadine Internship Report

From 16 March 2009 till 12 June 2009 I did an internship at the National Office of the Australian Institute of International Affairs in Canberra. The internship is part of my studies in Magdeburg, Germany where I study Peace and Conflict Studies, a master program. I had chosen the AIIA because the office is pretty small and I had hoped for close supervision and better involvement than in a large institute or Think Tank.

Already during my first week these expectations were met. I could do research for the annual National President's Forum, where the presidents of the seven branches of the institute and invited experts meet and discuss one topic for a day. This year's topic was "Great Expectations: Obama's New Foreign Policy" and so I did research for some background notes, including a focus on the Asian-Pacific region as well as Australia. This was pretty new and interesting for me, for my own focus in Germany was more on African countries and Latin America. It was interesting to see that the focus in Australia is logically more on Asia in general. Also I was lucky enough to hear a lecture on "Australia's role in International Relations" at the beginning of my internship, showing me some insights on the new surrounding conditions of my work.

During April I also concentrated on the organisation of the event, sending invitations, keeping an always updated RSVP list and organising my own flight – in the end, the involved interns were also needed in Adelaide where the Forum was held! A special task was calling several MP offices, getting the diary secretary on the phone and ask if the MPs were likely to join us in the event. So many variations of "We cannot say something yet ..."

During the Easter weekend I took some time off and enjoyed the wonderful small coastal city of Broulee and achieved other useful skills: I learned how to surf! That was definitely one of the advantages of doing the internship in Australia; although it was autumn already it was still pretty warm and almost always sunny, not like the gray German autumns.

After this weekend we organised the last things for the forum and finally my colleague and I went to Adelaide on 1 May. For many stuff from the National Office was needed in Adelaide we used a big suitcase for all of this and we took care of it and staunchly defended it against the security stuff at the airport. We concentrated so much on this bag; after all we had paid AU\$ 90 for its overweight, that we left the AIIA banner on the luggage carousel at the Airport! So after we rescued it the next day we enjoyed our weekend in Adelaide and were fresh for the forum on tuesday. The event was a full success, people were discussing very actively and the speakers did a very good job. It was a great feeling having contributed to this. Also the feedback by the supervisors was what I had wished for. Unfortunately it is not common that unpaid, but good work by interns is being appreciated, at the AIIA I always felt valuable.

After the event we finished everything up, wrote a final report and informed about the event on our website. During the last weeks of my internship I concentrated on an AIIA publication: the new policy commentary on Pakistan. This was also a task I appreciated a lot, for I could join almost the whole process of the publication. Moreover I was able to gain a

very helpful insight in events management as well as project planning and I was satisfied with my internship and think the AIAA internship program is a very good one.