

My stay at EEGA ScienceCampus and my scientific question

My name is Anna Zheltoukhova and I was one of the PhD Fellows at EEGA ScienceCampus. During my Bachelor I have studied Sociology and for my master I switched to the programme which was connected with the Comparative Politics. Since I was interested in electoral behaviour of people and studying the motives of the voters to choose a certain candidate or party affiliation, I have decided to study the topic of populism. My master thesis is concerned with studying nationalistic views among citizens of post-communist countries, specifically looking at the examples of Hungary and Poland. As this problem is increasingly prevalent in West European countries, but hasn't yet resulted in considerable policy changes, it is interesting to learn from East European countries perspective where nationalism had a critical influence on immigration policy. Many European countries have faced the swings among the voters towards radical right wing parties which represent populist ideologies. So, the research project that I was elaborating during my stay is focused on the case of the Visegrad group and will be later expanded towards Eastern Europe. In the era of Europeanization, my research topic may represent the greatest interest, since on the one hand, countries are interested in membership of the European Union, but at the same time, some of their residents worry about the loss of their own identity. Therefore, it is very important to consider the problem of voting for radical ideologies not only from the description of the voters, but also from the context in which the vote was made to understand the main reasons for choosing people. This research will allow people to study current processes in the present tense, which makes it possible to better understand modern situation in the world, share this data, as well as the ability to predict the future development of countries.

My stay on this programme allowed me to expand my social capital through interaction with different professors. I had the opportunity to get closer to the relevant studies, which were useful for identifying hypotheses. In addition, since a large number of professors at this university were familiar with Eastern Europe cases and connected with the study of populism and post-communist countries, learning about their thinking first-hand was useful to advance the arguments of my thesis.