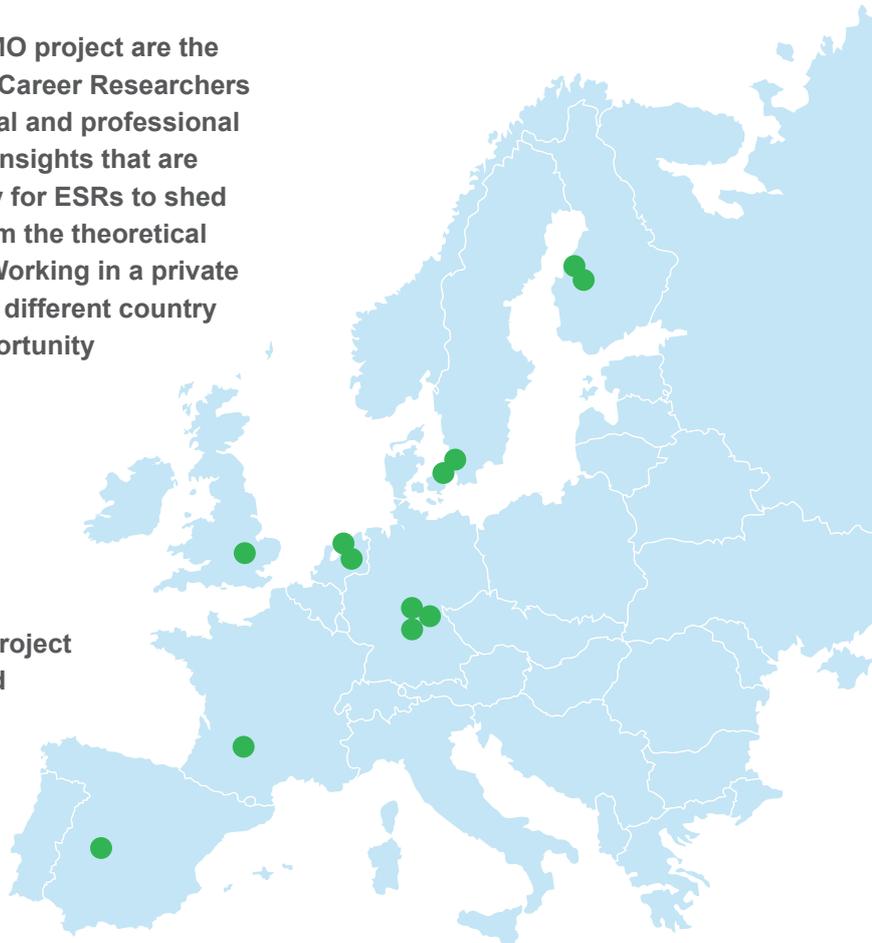


GLOMO Newsletter

We do what we research! News from the GLOMO Network on Global Mobility Issues

ESRs Secondments amidst COVID-19

Some of the most exciting things about our GLOMO project are the academic and corporate secondments. The Early Career Researchers (ESRs) of GLOMO set out to explore a new national and professional environment and had some good global mobility insights that are outlined below. Secondments provide opportunity for ESRs to shed light on global mobility of employees not only from the theoretical perspective but also to experience it personally. Working in a private company, public institution or university based in different country from the original residency, each ESR has an opportunity to have unique enriched academic experience. Secondments in academic institutions give ESRs access to international, interdisciplinary research environments, while private or public partner organisation provide the researchers with intersectoral research opportunities and work experience. By doing that secondments advance the academic relevancy of the GLOMO research project and enhance the synergy of academic and applied research. The ESRs managed to move to another country and institution, taking full advantage of their secondments – and then coronavirus struck. Below, some of their learning pre-COVID-19 is outlined and a number of emotions and considerations for life during and after the pandemic are explored.



Experiences of doctoral researchers on a University exchange in Bamberg

Below, two of our PhD candidates share their experience of their secondment at the University of Bamberg

Acil Abdul Hadi (ESR 08), based at Toulouse Business School

Getting prepared! I got to Bamberg in Bavaria, Germany early January. I had already been in touch with the Welcome Center for International Researchers at the University of Bamberg almost a year before my planned exchange. After filling a form about my expectations during my stay, I got their support to find an accommodation as per my expressed criterion. By July of the previous year, I was lucky enough to have my studio in Central Bamberg already booked.

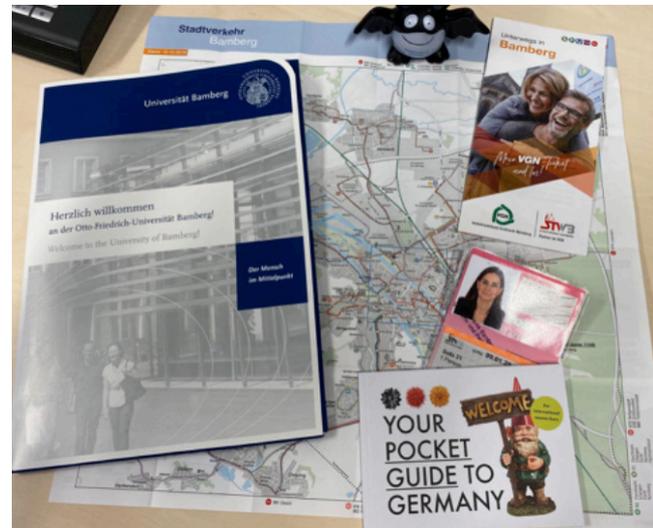
To make the smoothest possible arrival, I started learning German last September at the Goethe Institute in Toulouse where I am based. In a few months, I was able to shortly introduce myself and learn the very basics. To be honest, every single person in Bamberg speaks English and locals were all keen on talking to me in English so in the end I practiced my German much more in France during the German classes than in Germany.

As an EU resident, I really didn't get to worry much about some practical details such as currency exchange or social security. I kept using my French bank account and I just had to issue a European Health Insurance Card prior to my departure from Toulouse.

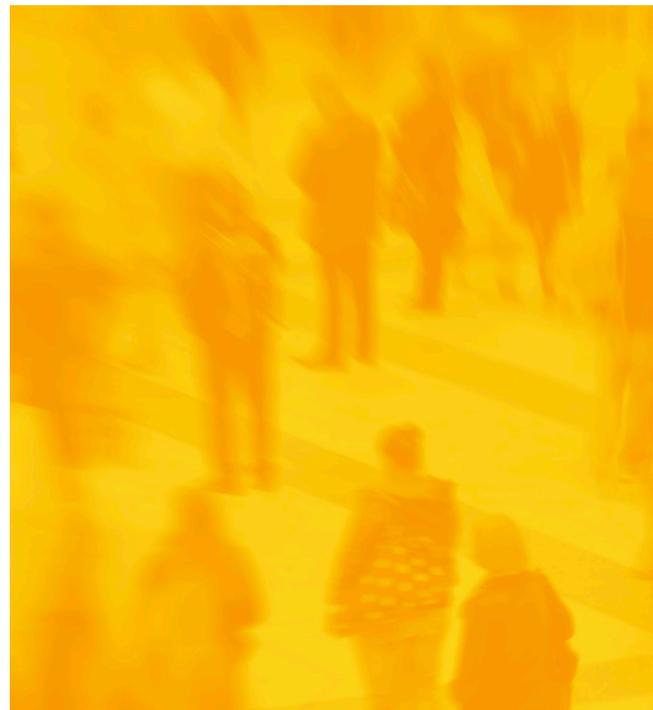
Getting there! As soon as arrived, the taxi driver advised me to use the 'Google translate' mobile application and that was an actual life saver. Not only can you get instantaneous translation of live discussions, but you can also get live translations of any text you scan. It became my go-to-app in supermarkets when shopping for groceries. From the taxi car window, I directly realized how cute and peaceful the city is. You might think I am exaggerating but it reminded me a bit of Euro Disney with all the colorful and neat 2-3 floor buildings across the city.

One of my first stops in Bamberg was at the City Hall, as all new residents have to declare their arrival to Bamberg and register themselves. It is thanks to the registration that I was invited to vote (as an EU citizen residing in Bamberg) in the municipal elections, which really made me feel part of the community.

The second stop was at the university campus, it has all the resources a researcher would need ranging from several university libraries (one has a unique view by the river) across the city to an office space and a Mensa (Cafeteria) so you can free up some cooking time, and last but not least supportive professors who would give you the time you



Acil Abdul Hadi's toolkit for her secondment start in Bamberg.



need to guide you in your research work. It came to my attention that the university seemed very spacious to me compared to my French standards, in the sense that the number of students in a given space is much smaller than what I am used to.

Academic Life: I loved being in the Bamberg school of social sciences (BAGSS) because it gave me a new perspective on my topic. I started considering my research from totally different angles taking more educational and social perspectives of migration into account.

I also enrolled in the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) Winter School that was hosted for the last year in Bamberg University. A wide variety of research methods courses were offered and there were around 400 attendees all over the world, a great networking opportunity. I also got the chance to attend a course on Longitudinal Data in Stata given at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories (Lfi).

Integration: I was lucky to have two researchers from GLOMO doing their secondments at the University of Bamberg at the same time as I am, so I was not completely alone. Nevertheless, I tried to meet new people whether at university or through the expatriate network. Based on my previous experience in other cities, it takes around 3 months to start forming a new circle of friends so unfortunately, by the time I started settling and finding my social circle, it was about time to leave. I tried to acculturate through food as well and started integrating German food into my meals by exchanging baguette for spetzl, charcuteries for sausages and croissants for pretzels or bambergers depending on the mood!

City life: Bamberg is a small town true but it will surprise you because it has a lot of things: cuisines from all over the world, in addition to Franconian cuisine, very cozy coffee shops, lots of cultural activities (plays and concerts), beautiful sceneries and green spaces, impressive modern pieces of art scattered in the city. My favorites are "Lady with fruit" by Fernando Botero and "Centurione I" by Igor Mitoraj. One thing I deeply missed though was the French sense of fashion and the multitude of fashion stores you get to have in bigger cities. In February, it was Carnival time therefore I got to experience this local tradition.

In conclusion, I loved my experience on both personal and professional levels and my final advice to anyone going on a short-term international mission is to act quick as and benefit from your presence abroad from day 1 because time will run and your mission could end sooner than you think and this is exactly what happened to me! The COVID19 pandemic had already started in China when I got to Germany but little did we know that we would end up self-isolating 2 months later and that Europe would have to lockdown. I decided to go back home when university shut its doors mid-March but at least I would only remember Bamberg as a lively, cute and peaceful positive town rather than as a deserted quarantined city.



Acil, Emilija and Tania during their secondment in Bamberg, tasting some German beer.

Emilija Oleskeviciute (ESR 02), based at Cranfield University

My first academic secondment in Bamberg (DE) was from January 2020 until end of April 2020. Staying in Bamberg and working at the University of Bamberg has met and even exceeded my expectations. Several aspects made this secondment enriching in both professional and personal ways.

First, I have never lived in Germany before and I have enjoyed this experience greatly. Opportunity to live in Germany for four months and see the country from “inside” helped me to learn that German culture is actually much closer to my ideas of living than I could have imagined before. I have also experienced the great beauty and charm of Bamberg and Bavaria region in general.

Second, it was an amazing opportunity to experience academic environment and different ways of learning at the University of Bamberg. Being a visiting scholar at the University of Bamberg opened doors for meeting other local and international academics, introduced me to German academic structures and rules, and showed me other creative and highly useful ways of learning. I was especially impressed by the rooms for good ideas as well as the technique of using blackboards with colourful cards as a way to generalise ideas and make mind maps explicit.

Finally, I have had a great chance to work closely with my second supervisor (Prof. Dr. Maike Andresen) and two other early stage researchers (Tania Biswas and Acil Abdul Hadi) from the GLOMO project. Having face-to-face meetings with Prof. Dr. Maike Andresen was a great inspiration that enhanced my academic progress and helped developing great ideas for my future academic papers. Moreover, I have also greatly enjoyed giving career talks in a local school in Bamberg and working on other project ideas together with Tania and Acil.

In early spring 2020 COVID-19 started to ravage through the world and Europe was affected in a major way. My impressions are summarized below:

“Working under the extreme circumstances in the context of the coronavirus pandemic was and still is a big highlight of this academic secondment. If you had asked me in the beginning of January 2020 what challenges I expect during the coming four months I would have not guessed this turn of events. Even though most of the scholars are familiar with the concept of working from home, this experience developed a completely new context of challenges. Being far from my loved ones, not being able to meet my friends for coffee, having to cancel my holiday travels, and spending most of my time indoors made me think and re-think my priorities in life as both academic and individual. Considering COVID-19 outbreak, I had to choose between suspending my academic secondment and coming back to UK or staying in Germany until the end of my secondment. I have chosen the second option. In these times of high uncertainty, I am happy to say that my family and I are healthy. I wish everyone else the same and I hope we can overcome these global challenges with a positive, supporting, end encouraging attitude!”



Global mobility in time of the COVID crisis (Kerstin Martel, ESR 5 based at Copenhagen Business School)

The GLOMO ESRs were seconded into many different universities in Europe and moved towards virtual working when the pandemic started. Among the many consequences this crisis caused, closed borders and travel restrictions significantly affected global mobility. How are our researchers who not just studying global mobility but also experiencing themselves are affected by this crisis and what does it mean for them to be “stuck in mobility”?

“These days business travelers and many other hyper-mobile individuals, like us GLOMO researchers, have gotten a glimpse on what it means to get stuck at national borders. Many of us just start apprehending what it feels like to be denied access to a territory where our beloved ones live... We are about to realize that many places, which are part of our unbridled sense of home have become inaccessible for us within a few hours, within a couple of days. Airlines are grounding their fleets and have cancelled most passenger flights, and even over-land travel has become a challenge: it is a most uncommon experience for most of us to be refused permission to pass an EU internal border, just because we do not hold the right EU passport, or we are not employed at destination. The freedom to travel and to study beyond national boundaries, to settle within the Union, wherever you find work, friends or love seems like a law of nature - thanks to Schengen, Bologna and Maastricht. But political reality just caught up with our emblematic generation-XY nonchalance. Sanitary states of emergency and martial laws emerge. All of a sudden, borders of which we thought that they had dissolved in the previous century are getting re-erected in the speed of light, seemingly throwing ahead the shadows of a new era. Today we keep on nurturing hopes that this cozy illusion of freedom will be ours again in the nearest possible future. This hope might be the little sister of our fear that geographical mobility will stay a mirage for some time. Will we be back to mobility or stuck in mobility? - Tomorrow will show.”



Monique Raupp in her new office in Vaasa (Finland), where she spent her secondment.



Some of the ESRs during a meeting on Zoom.

Other ESRs also commented on their impressions about COVID-19 and the impact it has had on their work.

Jacopo Bassetto (ESR 12; Institute for Employment Research, Germany)

“Many aspects of doing research have been affected by the COVID19 epidemic. Research stays were abruptly interrupted, conferences got cancelled and many data collections were stopped or had to be rescheduled. All these facts hinder research in several ways. Research stays and conferences do not only provide the chance for researchers to talk about their current research and collect feedbacks. They are also valuable moments of exchange on the broader field of study and discipline, as well as occasions to increase and improve the network of researchers with which one has exchanges and possibly future collaborations. Conferences and research stays are particularly crucial for young researchers who, at the beginning of their career, have to make a larger investment in building reputation and networks. The data collection processes were also heavily affected. For qualitative researchers interviews had to be postponed or moved online, with a possible quality loss, ethnographic investigations could not take place, sometimes losing the opportunity to reschedule it. Quantitative research may be perceived as sheltered from the switch from offline to online. However, this is often not the case. Many databases are accessible only in restricted-access servers and in specific locations, with the former often overcrowded and the latter shut down for days. While some solutions have been found, such as successfully conducting conferences online and managing to expand the capacity of servers, numerous challenges and losses persist. If the Covid19 consequences made researchers think about new ways of doing and exchanging research, we should not forget a fundamental aspect, human interaction. This should be preserved and valued also in times of lock-downs and smart-working.”

Monika Bozhinoska Lazarova (ESR 15, University of Bamberg)

“Covid19 crisis brought many challenges for all of us. From fear for our health and health of our loved ones to adapting to new way of work and life in general. Closed borders and travel restrictions affected many and in particular highly mobile citizens as us GLOMO researchers. Some of the most important experience in being a GLOMO researcher and doing PhD is visiting and collaborating with partner institutions from different countries, exchanging ideas and networking on conferences, learning from international trainings and seminars. All these integral aspects of our work had to be cancelled and adapted to an online version. Technological tools and online events helped us continue with our work but for sure these cannot fully replace the “real” in-person experience. Along with the changes in our work, this pandemic brought many challenges in our private lives too. Being an expat and living abroad extends the network of closed and loved ones bound national borders. We all had for granted the freedom to travel, visit and be visited by our friends and family. Now, closed to national borders for many means being away from the loved ones with uncertainty when again will meet. We are living the Covid19 consequences with hope that soon we will come back to new normality that looks a bit more like the old one we had.”



The beautiful street of Nyhavn in Copenhagen, where Jacopo and Yustika spent their secondment.



Achievements

Almost all ESRs were accepted for paper presentation at the EURAM 2020 Conference which will take place (after being rescheduled due to the lockdown) in December 2020.

In this occasion, the ESRs will also have a dedicated session, a GLOMO Symposium, in which they will present that state-of-the-art of their research, beyond the EURAM paper.

Kerstin Martel (ESR 5) was also accepted at SCOS, taking place later in 2020 in Copenhagen and at EGOS, which takes place virtually.

Jacopo Bassetto (ESR 12)'s paper was accepted at the Society for Labor Economists' Conference in Berlin in June 2020 (rescheduled online).

Tania Biswas' paper was accepted for presentation at the Academy of Management (AOM) Conference 2020.

Monika Bozhinoska Lazarova (ESR 15) was accepted for presentation at ECPR General Conference 2020 that will take place in August

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