Final internship report

During my internship I supported the work of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), located in the city of Stadtschlaining in Eastern Austria, from 12 September 2016 to 20 December 2016. The Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) was established in 1982 to promote and develop civil strategies for the peaceful resolution of conflicts on a local, national and international level. Its major activities include:

- Strengthening capacity and training in international peacebuilding to prepare practitioners for deployment in crisis and conflict regions.
- Undertaking and promoting peace and conflict research.
- Promoting peace education for students and teachers through the Peace Weeks in training them in conflict management, prevention of violence, harmonious integration and team-building.
- Supporting peace processes and initiatives by proving a neutral meeting place for negotiations and consultations between parties in conflict.

As the Assistant of the Director, Dr. Blanka Bellak, and working with my supervisor Ms. Theresa Breitmaier, I gained detailed insight into the various programmes of the ASPR. My work portfolio included:

- Assistance to the Director of the ASPR in planning and advertising the Women’s Leadership Master Course and in preparing lectures for conferences.
- Assistance in the preparation and organization of the training course International Civilian Peacekeeping Training Core Course for Peacebuilders (IPT) certified by Europe’s New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management (ENTRi) and the training course on Security Sector Reform (SSR) certified by the European Security and Defence
College (ESDC). His tasks included the communication with lecturers, public relations and event management

- On-site support and supervision of international course participants and liaison and support to external experts and trainers.
- Support in drafting the concept for the Schlaining Summer Academy in 2017, a forum for the dialogue on current global political issues held annually in Schlaining Castle
- Preparing various written materials such as inputs for ASPR Activities and Programme, press releases and invitations to conferences
- Translation and editing in English and German
- Assistance in the preparation and organization of the State of Peace Conference, which facilitates dialogue between researchers and practitioners from the field of International Relations
- Preparation of correspondence in German and English on behalf of the Director of the ASPR
- Maintaining the website of the ASPR
- Taking of minutes during internal meetings and panel discussions
- Drafting conference proceedings of academic conferences
- Support of public relations activities and administrative tasks

By way of my work portfolio and through participating in the International Civilian Peacekeeping Training Core Course for Peacebuilders (IPT) I had the possibility to expand my knowledge in:

- Project Management
- Analysis and Reporting
- Electronic data processing
- Concepts and strategies for peacebuilding and related processes such as transitional justice, international humanitarian law and human rights, Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)
- Security awareness and safety behaviour in complex risk situations
- First aid in hostile environments
- Role and structure of international actors and civil-military cooperation in peacebuilding and disaster relief.
By and large this internship met my expectations. I gained a good overview of international organisations and NGOs in the field of peace building, conflict resolution and international security policy. One of the highlights of this internship was doubtlessly the participation in the International Civilian Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Core Course in October, organizing and documenting the *State of Peace Conference* and the assistance in organizing the training course on Security Sector Reform (SSR). However, although I was well aware that would not only assigned interesting tasks since I already did an internship in 2014, there were times where I found it extremely hard to cope with this reality. The internship was thus yet another good learning experience as far as the daily work routine is concerned.

I had the possibility to work with virtually all of the other employees. Not only had I the opportunity to get a glimpse of the work of the ASPR’s administration and accounting staff, I could also gain experience in working on a very academic level with the ASPR’s researcher. Moreover, I assisted the Director with numerous tasks and assisted employees that are in charge of organizing events and conferences and that are in charge of coordinating the training programmes, which that form an essential pillar of the ASPR’s work.

At the end of my internship I received a very detailed and very helpful feedback on my overall performance. The feedback was carried out in a rather informal, yet not inappropriately informal, manner by way of a one-on-one conversation.

As far as I can tell I tried my best to reach the learning goals that I had set for myself before the internship started. Accordingly, I was able to gain a good overview of international organisations and NGOs in the field of peace building, conflict resolution and international security policy. Besides that I made good use of networking opportunities. As a matter of fact, I got acquainted with an employee of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) who pointed me to an internship in her department at the OSCE.

As mentioned above, I was tasked with documenting the proceedings of the *State of Peace Conference*, with providing the Director on issues concerning the relationship between security and migration flows. Besides that I was in charge of compiling the results of questionnaires on the quality of the aforementioned training courses.