

PH.D. LEGAL RESEARCHES AT STRASBOURG, FRANCE

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I would like to share my experience in conducting legal research in Strasbourg, France. I hold a Doctorate in law, which includes a ‘candidate’ Ph.D. and a ‘doctorate’ one. I also possess a Professor certificate. I’m a Professor of Constitutional Law. Due to the war, I made the decision to relocate to the EU to work with European law within the Council of Europe.

I aim to share my personal experience of settling in Strasbourg, France. To begin, it is crucial to consider the resources needed to conduct Ph.D. research or any other research project.

One should bear in mind that scientific research demands a substantial amount of time and effort. It is challenging to balance a job alongside research, even if it is not a full-time position. This is because libraries operate during specific hours, conferences are typically held on weekdays, and you will need to communicate with your supervisor and colleagues during the workweek, among other commitments.

Securing a research grant is highly advisable. In my case, I applied for several grants. I am particularly grateful for the support provided by the program funded under the EU’s *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, known as «MSCA4Ukraine»*³, for my project.

I take great pride in being part of this project, and I am immensely grateful for the support and assistance it provides. The program encompasses both Ph.D. studies and post-doctoral research. One of its most valuable aspects is that it offers two plans: a scientific research plan and a career development plan. These plans are instrumental in facilitating integration into the European scientific community and acquiring skills that Ukrainian researchers may not have had the opportunity to develop thus far.

My project, planned for 2023–2025, is ‘The role of local authorities in the implementation of the judgments of the European court of human rights’. It is hosted by the *SAGE Laboratory, University of Strasbourg*, with the

² Funded under the EU’s Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions «MSCA4Ukraine» (individual project ‘The role of local authorities in the implementation of the judgments of the European court of human rights’).

³ See <https://eua.eu/resources/projects/842-msca4ukraine-fellowship-scheme.html>

secondments hosted by the *Nantes University*⁴. My academic mentors are Professor Élisabeth Lambert and Professor Wiebke Keim. I am very grateful to my mentors, and for each and every one at these university for the immense help and support.

I also applied for the *PAUSE* grant, which is specifically designed for researchers interested in staying in France as part of the national program for urgent assistance and reception of scientists in exile⁵. It's important to note that this program is not exclusive to Ukrainian scientists. Your application is evaluated in comparison to others, and the university you are aiming for plays a crucial role in the decision-making process. They consider factors such as who else has applied, why your situation is particularly urgent, and whether there are any existing *PAUSE* beneficiaries at the university. These and other questions are taken into account during the evaluation.

You might also consider approaching foundations that can provide support for your short stay in France and assist you in case of emergencies. I am deeply grateful to the *Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme* for the assistance they provided me during my initial weeks in France⁶.

I'm certain there are numerous ways to seek help and support for your research, and I want to emphasize that I'm sharing my own experiences.

Secondly, consider your research topic. If you intend to base your research solely on Ukrainian experience, it may not be necessary to seek foreign affiliation. Planning research in Europe makes sense if you aim to incorporate best practices from Council of Europe and European Union member countries.

Thirdly, conduct thorough research to identify scientists who are already researching your topic in Europe. It can be a strategic move to read as much of their work as possible and then contact them. In your initial communication, specify your area of interest and the question or problem you would like to research.

This search will also help you decide on your relocation destination, such as the university or laboratory you would like to be affiliated with. For Ph.D. studies, it's essential to check the requirements for Ph.D. applicants, including terms, conditions, fees, and required documents. Often it takes long – so start as soon as it is possible.

Last but not least, consider your language proficiency. Nowadays, the primary languages for European lawyers are English and French. Similar to having a job (see my 'firstly' about the resources), you may not have ample time or resources to intensively learn a new language, so keep this in mind when planning your relocation.

⁴ See <https://dcs.univ-nantes.fr/fr/recherches-scientifiques/project%C2%A0the-role-of-local-authorities-and-the-implementation-of-the-european-convention-of-human-rights>

⁵ See <https://www.campusfrance.org/en/pause-program-urgent-aid-scientists-exile>

⁶ See <https://www.fmsh.fr/>