

## **A note about the visiting professor experiences**

*Daniel Pommier*

During the Academic Year 2017-2018 I have been hosting three visiting professors at the Department of Communication and Social research. Given the common interests of field I had the opportunity to host my valiant colleagues within my course on democratic transition and political development which is mostly focused on Southern Caucasus and Azerbaijan but is also widely open to other case studies.

In detailed I guested in my course prof. Yaser Ahmadov from Beu university of Baku who lectured about *The Role of the US in the Turkey's Southern Caucasus policy and The Position of Turkey in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*. Of course, Yaser's topic was strictly related to my major and was helpful to the students for understanding the complicate variable underpinning the NK conflict.

Then, I guested prof. Menachem Hofnung, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who gave a class on State building and democracy in Israel from early XX century till now. The class was thought-provoking and stirred many questions from students.

Finally, I had the opportunity to guest prof. Lucia Ballesteros from Sevilla University. She is an expert of the Spanish public sphere and media sphere and gave a lecture about Spanish populism and its connections to the Franco regime. All these visiting professors arrived in my course through the framework of Erasmus + program.

I did use the same program to finalize a visit to Baku State university last year. That was an amazing and exciting experience. The Erasmus + program is extremely flexible and easy to adapt to a university professor needs. Speaking frankly all of us are overwhelmed by bureaucracy, assessments, meetings in addition to our institutional commitment to teach and research. Going abroad for a long period of time has become extremely difficult, since we are all requested daily in faculty. Eramsus + offers the possibility of a one week stay in the partner university and the proper time is arranged between you and your inviting colleague. The program is flexible, requesting a small amount of paperwork and requests only a certification from the host university. The financial conditions are discrete, and the sending university buys the flight ticket. The administrative staffs from Sapienza and Baku State University were receptive and effective to implement my visit. In Baku State University I had the opportunity to stay and teach in a vital and vibrant academic environment, the largest and most important university of a young and dynamic country. I gave lectures on the Italian-Azerbaijani relations in XX century, which is the subject of one of my books.

As for the visiting professor invited by myself trough a specific Sapienza financial support – prof. Luis Tome form Autonomous University of Lisbon – I leave a testimony in his own word, praising professionalism of Sapienza staff:

“Dear Daniel and to whom may concern.

I come to testify and thank you for all the support you gave me during the month (March-April 2018) I spent in Rome as a visiting professor at La Sapienza University, following a proposal submitted by

Prof. Daniel Pommier Vincelli and the Department of Communication and Social Research (CORIS). In fact, I was welcome by the Department's Board and the Director Bruno Mazzara himself, and I also had the opportunity to meet and appreciate the professionalism and kindness of all the administrative staff coordinated by Michele Mazzola. My teaching program was very rich, giving a diverse series of classes to the courses of my colleagues Daniel Pommier, and other Sapienza professors like Edoardo Boria, Andrea Carteny and Gabriele Natalizia from Link Campus university. Throughout the various classes, I had the opportunity to prove the excellent relationship between scholars and students and the high level of interest and internationalization of Sapienza students.

My program also included several meetings with other professors and researchers, namely from CEMAS, taking advantage of the occasion to strengthen the cooperation links with my *Autónoma University of Lisbon* and my OBSERVARE research center. In sum, it was a particularly enriching month for me both from a professional and personal point of view, so I hope to be able to repeat this experience at Sapienza again as I warmly recommend the “Sapienza Visiting Teacher Program” and CoRis Department to all my colleagues in Portugal and abroad.

Yours sincerely,

Luis Tomé

*Associate Professor at Autónoma University of Lisbon*  
*Scientific Coordinator of OBSERVARE-Observatory of Foreign Relations*  
*Director of Doctorate in International Relations: Geopolitics and Geoeconomics”*