

# Women in international peace negotiations: Swedish experience

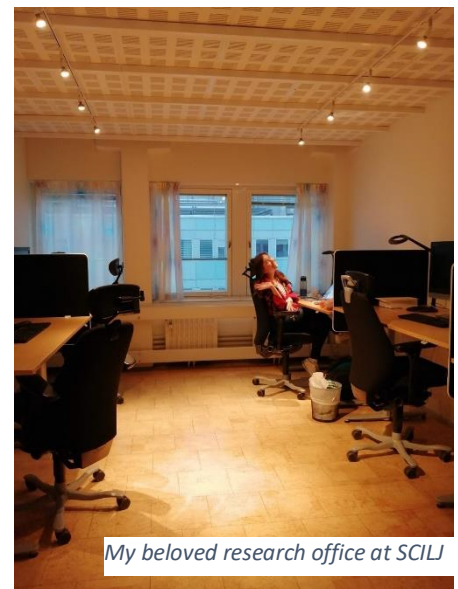
By Liliia Khasanova  
(2018 - 2019 fellow)

Current report aims to highlight research results achieved during my fellowship with Stockholm Center for International law and Justice in Stockholm University, reflect on my cultural experience in Sweden and express my gratitude to Sverker Åström Foundation for such unique opportunity given to me.

Sweden, in a relatively short time, became very special for my professional and personal development. I am incredibly grateful to the Sverker Åström Foundation and Center for International Law and Justice for an opportunity given to work on my project in Stockholm. There is no other place on Earth that better fits research on gender equality and women rights.

Center for International Law and Justice (CILJ) in Stockholm University provided incredible facilities for me to feel comfortable and to work on my research project. Center provided personal working space, making me an integral part of the law faculty community with access to SU library funds and mentorship by Prof. Said Mahmoudi. Center for International Law and Justice is also an extremely vibrant place with several events every week and incredible community of people who are passionate about international law. Indeed, I keep warm relations with other PhD students, visiting fellows and some faculty members. With one of the PhD students, we have even discussed our possible collaboration on co-authoring a book on negotiations in international law in the upcoming future.

As a visiting fellow, I was invited to all major events in international law which helped me to establish needed connections for my research. In October 2018, I participated in *International law day*, where I had an opportunity to speak to legal advisers of Swedish ministry of Foreign Affairs to





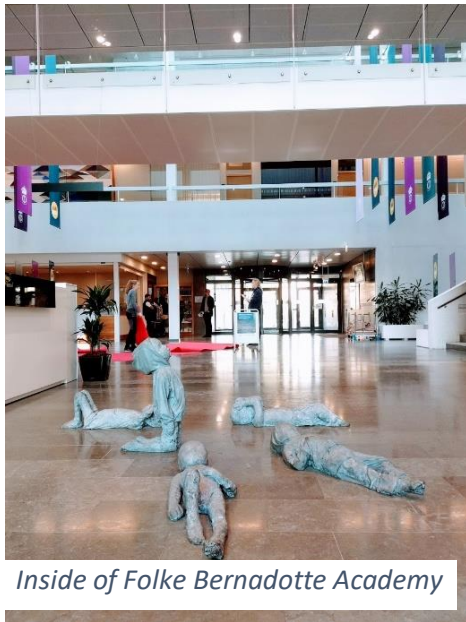
Swedish Forum for Human Rights 2018

the Security Council (Ola Engahl and others) and discuss insights/ results on lobbying of women, peace and security agenda during the presidency of Sweden in the UN Security Council. In November 2019 together with colleagues, we visited Swedish Forum for Human Rights which had extremely interesting sessions on women empowerment with incredible speakers from all around the world. There I had a chance to interview representatives of international and Swedish institutions that work in women's rights and gender equality. Among those were representatives of *UN Women* and *FemWise* from different regions of the world who gave such an insightful unique perspective on inclusion of women in political processes around the world, including peace negotiations. Highlight of that Forum was meeting and talking with Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström, who is a leading force behind Swedish feminist foreign policy. One of the most surprising facts for me during conducting my research was how open and easy it was to schedule or talk with high-ranking officials or governmental representatives in Sweden.

Through the course of my research, I had very fruitful and insightful semi-structured interview with the coordinator (Anna Möller Loswick) and some of the members of the *Swedish Women's Mediation Network* (Birgitta Holst Alani, Margareta Wahlström). The Network is located at the Folke Bernadotte Academy which is a governmental agency for peace, security and development. An experience of communicating with governmental and non-governmental development agencies in Sweden, showed me the



Meeting Margot Wallström



Inside of Folke Bernadotte Academy

tremendous amount of work and commitment of Sweden to issues of *international* peace and security. Experienced women diplomats not only assist peace negotiations in other countries, but also engaged in numerous capacity building programs for women around the world.

I presented my intermediate research results twice at the Center for International Law and Justice in November 2018 and September 2019. I received valuable feedback and it was noted that my research project is characterized with high interdisciplinarity that is so important in solving modern problems. Indeed, it was quite challenging at the

beginning to make such project inclusive enough because it touches upon many facets of the problem: equality in political participation and women rights; peace sustainability; UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda; Gender studies (feminist theories of international relations etc.); Swedish experience with feminist foreign policy and personal experiences of women negotiators. I decided to take Sweden as a positive case study in women empowerment internally and more importantly – internationally, through lobbying for inclusion of women in peace negotiations and capacity building around the world. I focused on the role of Sweden in promoting Women, Peace and Security Agenda worldwide, Swedish feminist foreign policy, institutional framework that exists today and personal experiences. I submitted an *article* in English named *Women in international peace negotiations: Swedish experience* that is expected to come out by 2020. I was also awarded a yearly membership to Women in International Security (WIIS) platform for an essay on women inclusion in peace negotiations. Therefore, I feel that my research experience was incredibly fruitful and I fulfilled proposed research plan, gained valuable empirical information and long-lasting academic collaborations.



Session with Amalkher Djibrine Souleymane (Chad) on political participation of women in Chad



This report would not be complete without reflecting on my experience of living in Sweden. I had other experiences of living abroad, however Sweden has its special place in my heart. As I mentioned before, I felt extremely welcomed in this country. Of course, for every Sverker Åström fellow, Disa is the first person who always makes sure that we have a place to



live and our research needs are met. Dinner gatherings at Disa's house were always special with interesting people and discussions around the table. I was also lucky to be in Stockholm at the time for the annual Tea Party organized by Benedicte and Örjan Berner, which was such a unique experience itself. As an

international fellow at Stockholm University, I was invited to gala dinner that gathered international researchers at the City Hall one week before Nobel Peace Prize dinner. To make sure to have full experience, I adhered to a saying: When in Sweden – do as Swedish do. My favorite part of being “swedish” were fika breaks every Thursday at 15.00 at the faculty where everybody was gathering to chat about latests news in international law. When I came to Sweden, I realized I want to take Swedish language courses to be able to have basic conversation with locals. Midsommar was another memorable experience that I will keep forever with me.

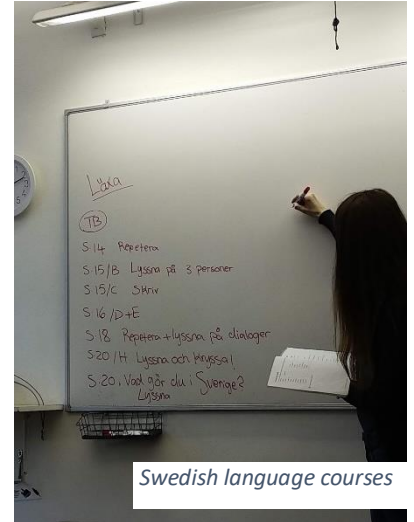
To conclude, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity of a lifetime as well as honor of being a Sverker Åström fellow.



Reception at Stockholm City Hall for SU researchers



Fika breaks at the faculty



Swedish language courses



Midsommar celebrations

