

One year ago I would not have imagined winning a scholarship and conducting research for one of the best institutions in the world. However, Professor Ashford and the Hellenic Institute for Advanced Studies believed in me, my capabilities and potential. And for that, I will be forever indebted to them. Words are not enough to describe this three-month experience. This whole journey has left its unique mark in both my brain and my “heart”.

This scholarship has not only expanded my academic horizons but also taught me invaluable life lessons in resilience, adaptability, and curiosity. Each day presented a new challenge, a new discovery, and a new connection that added to my growth, both intellectually and personally. From navigating the rigorous demands of research to the simple joys of exploring Boston’s rich history and culture, every moment has contributed to shaping who I am three months after I left my home. I am sure that I will return to live permanently in this beautiful city sometime in the future.

Through my research and interactions with the vibrant academic community here, I have gained insights that will be foundational as I continue to pursue my studies and career. I am inspired to contribute positively to my field, much like the mentors and peers who have left such a strong impression on me. This experience has underscored the value of knowledge and mentorship, and I hope one day to support and inspire young scholars in the same way.

Mr. Ashford included me in a group of outstanding scholars, Mr. Kyriakos Metaxas, Mr. Ralph Hall, Mr. Tommaso Luzzati, and Miss Irene Cresci. Our research topic was the phenomenon of brain drain in Southern Europe, in other words, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Portugal, its connection with several “push” factors, such as unemployment and especially youth unemployment, investment in R&D (both in private and public sector), job satisfaction, and mean/median wages, as well as with the North-South EU Conundrum and the need for emigration and industrial policy/labor market reforms.

I was assigned the cases of Greece, Cyprus and Spain. After extensive research of the existing materials, I collected them and produced for each country a full report of the writings and a literature review. At the same time, I made summaries for lengthy texts, assembled statistics about the emigration numbers, the destination countries, and the sectors of education or employment and then incorporated them into tables.

I am honored to continue being a part of this team even after I leave MIT and continue my last year of undergraduate studies at Panteion until the project is finished. I hope I lived up to

the expectations of both Mr. Ashford, who was so kind as to donate his money and be my supervisor, and the Hellenic Institute for Advanced Studies, which chose me as one of the four recipients of this scholarship and channeled the funds. I will be forever grateful to them and strive to make them proud as I move forward with my studies and academic career.

I look forward to carrying these lessons and memories with me, as a testament to what this incredible opportunity has meant to me.

With sincere appreciation,

Spyridoula Giannopoulou