

Scientific report

Short Term Scientific Mission

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Topic of PhD: “Municipal Enterprises in Greece , UK and Germany : A comparative analysis”

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In the framework of COST-Action IS1207, I went on a “Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM)” to Queen Mary University in London from 21 to 31 of March 2014. The hosting Professor was Professor Martin Laffin, School of Business and Management.

Given the fact that my dissertation is a comparative analysis of three European countries (Greece, Germany and UK) and one of them is United Kingdom, it was of great importance to me to conduct a part of my research in “Queen Mary University of London”. My main aim was not only to further enhance my theoretical background concerning municipal enterprises by studying related English bibliography, but also to study and thoroughly examine the running local government reform in the UK – especially the legal and the institutional aspects of the English reform concerning the municipal enterprises. To be more precise, my main goal was to study and examine the following themes – questions:

- A snapshot of the territorial and demographic format of municipal enterprises (the number of the existing municipal enterprises in the UK , their existing legal forms , their capital structure , facts and figures about their turnover such as yearly loans Progress, Loans/ Liabilities , Loans to Capital , Profit/loss)
- The functions and the powers of municipal enterprises in UK- Body of legal regulations or legally equivalent provisions for municipal enterprises in UK
- Task and performance indicators , functionality etc
- How and if the last local government reform in UK affected the regime of municipal enterprises

All the above mentioned topics should be examined in the context of comparison between the three countries (Greece, UK and Germany) given the fact that the topic of my dissertation is the comparative analysis of the regime of the municipal enterprises.

During the two working weeks of my STSM mission, I had the opportunity to make a first comparison, through the examination of English regime of municipal enterprises, between Greek and English regime and I drew some first conclusions. After consulting the libraries in London and special British think tanks concerning local governance in UK, I became more familiar with the British case of municipal enterprises at a theoretical and a more practical level. At that stage, I also found a huge bulk of literature review about the local government in UK that will be very useful throughout my whole scientific research.

Of very high importance was the opportunity I had to consult and exchange views on the research topic with experts from Mary University of London, namely Professor Martin Laffin . After that, I was able to write a first chapter of my dissertation concerning UK and entitled “Municipal enterprises: The British case” which was also the main purpose of the STSM. The chapter I have already written, will be improved further more.

The central conclusion that arose from my STSM is that the two regimes of municipal enterprises are quite different since the relative local government systems are quite different, too.

In Greek local government, the foundation and function of municipal enterprises was and still is widespread while in UK, the municipal enterprises are not the rule (one could claim that municipal enterprises in UK were discouraged by legislation from 1970 onwards due to many and multifaceted factors) in the provision of local public services, since the existing mechanism is based on quite different public private partnerships.

Overall, it can be said that this STSM was very valuable for my scientific work and for networking with scientists of the host institution and I am very grateful for this experience.