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International Policy Fellow, 2005-2006*

**Regulating Lobbying in the Czech Republic and the
Visegrad Four**

**Interim Activity Report
(April 2005 - October 2005)**

This report outlines the activities that I have carried during the period from April to October 2005.

1. IPF Seminar in Budapest

This one-week seminar served to introduce fellows to their group mentors, other members of their respective focus groups, other in-coming fellows and also the outgoing fellows for the year 2004/2005. During group discussions and activities, workshop training sessions, and individual sessions with mentors, individual research and policy proposals were debated and substantially improved upon. Discussions with and presentations of the out-going fellows served as examples of policy work and gave guidance as to what the results of the fellowship projects should look like. Initial web pages for individual research projects were set up during training sessions with Merrill Oates. Dmitrii Vitaliev instructed on IT safety. The research design training with Leslie Pal was especially helpful.

2. Web-page developed

Following the Budapest seminar, I have further developed the project's website. The web-page provides a general overview of the project, outlines the specific steps to be taken and the stages of both research and advocacy. It also provides some links related to the project.

3. Research Timetable, Initial Issue Paper, and Advocacy Paper

Research Timetable

Upon the discussion with the group mentor and other members of the group I have updated the Research Timetable, which was made available on the project's website. The Research Timetable identified four major periods of the research project focusing on:

- 1) Conceptualization and analytical framework development;
- 2) Data gathering
- 3) Data analysis
- 4) Writing of policy paper and policy study

Initial Issue Paper

The Initial Issue Paper identified the main focus of the research, project objectives, and expected project outcomes. The Paper is available on the project's website.

Advocacy Plan

Based on the initial round of interviews and fieldwork, the Advocacy Plan (available on the web-page) outlined three possible ways of regulating lobbying in the Czech Republic:

- 1) Legal regulation of lobbying
- 2) Ethical codex
- 3) Amendments to the rules of proceeding

4. Data gathering, Interviews, Research trips

I have gathered data on lobbying and related issues (when relevant to the subject of the research) from newspapers, journals, books and websites. This activity was most dense in the Czech Republic, but I have also conducted quite extensive activities in Slovakia. Slovakia has been especially useful case because a bill regulating lobbying (modeled much on the US example) came to the Parliament in July 2005. Regarding the possibility of regulating lobbying through amendments in the statutes and rules of proceedings, I have also gathered and analyzed these. I have conducted more than 30 interviews with lobbyists, politicians, activists from NGOs, scholars and policy analysts, journalists, and lawyers (the list of interviewees is available upon request; some of the sources expressed the wish of confidentiality). Naturally, most of the interviews were conducted in the Czech Republic, which is the main focus of the project, but I have also interviewed relatively widely in Slovakia. I have undertaken several research trips to Slovakia and Hungary.

5. Research network

One of the goals of the project has been to establish and maintain contacts with/among researchers devoted to the issue of lobbying throughout the Visegrad countries. Again, the contacts have been most intense in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Transparency International, ISE, NROS, Slovenske zdruzeni pre vyzkum politickych ved, among others). A student writing a Master's thesis on lobbying in the Czech Republic has consulted me. Recently, I began to plan a workshop about lobbying and university curriculum development with a former CPS fellow Jiri Schneider, who has done his research on think tanks in the Visegrad four (see www.policy.hu/schneider)

6. Participation in public seminars

I have participated in public seminars focusing on the issued of lobbying, corruption, public trust. Most recently, I raised the issue of lobbying during a workshop organized by Transparency International in the House of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic ("Crisis of trust in politics and its repercussions for parliamentary democracy). This workshop included MPs, senators, journalists, NGO activists, and also interested public.

7. Advocacy

Advocacy phase of the research is yet come into a full-swing with the completion of the Policy Study. Nevertheless, in September [The Prague Post](#) - the Czech Republic's long-established English-speaking weekly - carried an article on lobbying in the Czech Republic for which I was extensively interviewed - [Secretive lobbyists still wield influence](#).