

OBSERVANT

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Alumni organise award for best thesis on 'European integration'

'A waste if theses remain unread'

A thesis is usually read by only two people: the supervisor and the student. A number of alumni from Maastricht University felt that this was a waste. They wrote to all universities in Europe and invited students to take part in the competition for the best Masters thesis on European integration. This afternoon, the winner - former UM student Alexander Kadow - will receive a certificate and five hundred euros in the auditorium of the Faculty of Economics.

A year ago, a number of alumni, including Stephan Kampelmann from Germany, a graduate from the Faculty of Economics, received a subsidy from the European Union (EU Youth in Action program) to organise the European Masters' thesis award. The former students set up the Internationalist Review foundation and are carrying out a research project on immigration in the EU. "Students often have good ideas on this topic but their theses usually remain unread. We are now giving them the chance to present their work to a wider audience."

The members of the foundation - a total of seven and almost all PhD students from various universities in Europe - wrote to all the universities in Europe asking them to participate. Kampelmann: "I am doing part of my PhD research in Brussels, so I took on Belgium, for example. My colleague is from Berlin and did the same for Germany." Eventually the foundation selected 21 theses that met their criteria: a fitting subject, no sign of plagiarism and a sound theoretical basis. The entries came from Krakow to Bruges, from Maastricht to London.

"We selected two academics to assess each thesis. For example, we asked researchers whose theories had been used and discussed." These assessors also came from all over Europe. Eventually, their (anonymous) evaluations led to a final judgement by a 'Maastricht' jury committee consisting of professor of macroeconomics Joan Muysken, associate professor at politics Sophie Vanhoonacker, and Roberta Haar, associate professor and lecturer at University College.

The thesis by Alexander Kadow, graduate of Financial Economics and currently a PhD student in Glasgow, came out as the best. Kadow studied the financial integration of new EU Member States: these former Eastern European countries had to switch to the euro. Were their financial markets (e.g. interest rate fluctuations) already affected during their preparations for the switch to the euro market?

He received an 8.5 for his final work. The assessors and the jury committee of the Masters' thesis award were full of praise: innovative, well-written, correct use of literature, appropriate subject, et cetera. The five hundred euros are very welcome: rents are high in Glasgow and a meal in the student cafeteria without a drink or any extras, easily sets you back six euros.

Irene Smeets

This afternoon 15:30 hrs, Auditorium, Tongersestraat 53. For more information:
www.internationalistreview.com