

## IIR INTERN GETS NEW INSIGHTS INTO GLOBAL ISSUES, RESEARCH ADVISE

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Thomas Kennedy was working on his bachelor's degree in political science and history from McGill University when he applied for an internship at the Institute of International Relations in Prague.



**THOMAS KENNEDY**

*"I applied to IIR to broaden my knowledge of international relations of the whole of Europe, see the Prague European Summit and witness how a research institution functions,"*

Although he had previously interned at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the French Embassy in Spain, he had limited experience of how a research institution actually works in practice. This coupled with IIR's impressive research on European issues—from security to climate change—is what attracted Thomas to our organization.

What Thomas got at the end of his internship was a new look at international issues and inspiration to go into the research field.

*"My first day was very welcoming," he remembers. "People were nice and explained things clearly, which released most of the tension of the first day."*

Thomas became an instrumental member of the team, helping out with organization and planning for events. During the three-day Prague European Summit, which features high-level ministers and European Union experts from all over, Thomas assisted in writing reports for the journalists attending the conference. *"This means you meet experienced and interesting new people,"* he says.

This also meant that Thomas got a more indepth perspective on issues that we see in the news everyday, including Russian aggression, the Iran nuclear deal, Brexit and much more. Originally from Montreal, Thomas wanted to expand his understanding of European issues and access to some of the top researchers in the field helped him achieve just that.

*"The most surprising thing for me about interning at IIR involved specific discussions with researchers about policies that get a lot of attention in the media."*



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While he was at IIR, Thomas made the most of his interactions with researchers. He was able to learn more about different methodologies employed in political research, and even got professional advise on a research paper he was writing on factors that lead to internal conflict and civil war. *"That's a talk you rarely get in university,"* he says.

After his experience, he is considering continuing his studies and possibly going down the path to a Ph.D. *"I was scared it would be too difficult and that it was not for me before,"* he says.

*"Now I realize that if the subject matters to you, eventually it will become second nature."*

For the time being, he is focusing on the last year of his bachelor's program. His advise for incoming interns to IIR: *"Be pro-active! There are no limits to what you can accomplish within these three months if you decide to go for it."*