**Internship Report**

**Organisation:** Ministry for Foreign Affairs, International Trade Policy Department / Utrikesdepartementet, Enheten för Internationell Handelspolitik (UD-IH)
Gustav Adolfs Torg 1
103 39 Stockholm

**Supervisor:** Ambassador Birgitta Nygren
tel: 08-405 36 05
e-mail: birgitta.nygren@foreign.ministry.se

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**General**

The International Trade Policy Department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the central expert section on trade policy in the Government Offices and is responsible for issues concerning trade policy, international trade and investment, and the EU's common trade policy legislation. The department is also responsible for multilateral trade policy in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

International customs cooperation, customs and rules of origin, trade-related support to developing countries and issues of corporate social responsibility (the Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility) also lie within the department's area of responsibility.

**My work during the internship**

I was placed in the group "Globalt Ansvar" (Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility), which is responsible for issues relating to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and anti-corruption.

A lot of time is spent keeping up to date with subject developments and processes in your area, to be able to quickly respond to requests ("beställningar") from the political level or other departments/ministries for information or input. This could be for example providing background information or speaking points on a specific issue to prepare for trips, meetings etc. Some examples of other work I did include:

**Global Compact**

Sweden is one of the largest donors to the Global Compact – the UN:s initiative for corporate social responsibility. In addition to getting a thorough understanding of the workings of the initiative, I was able to accompany my two colleagues to the Global Compact donor meeting in Bern, Switzerland, for which I later completed the official report. I also prepared the decision paper on granting funds to cover the expenses for a Swedish member to take place in the Global Compact board.
The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the National Contact Point (NCP)

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises were introduced in 1976, but have been updated several times. The National Contact Point for the guidelines is a tripartite structure, with representatives from business, employee organisations and the government ministries, and is chaired by one of the officials at Globalt Ansvar. During my internship period, work started on updating the guidelines in order for a new version to be finished in June 2011. I analysed the first text proposals from a Swedish standpoint and briefed the Director-General for Trade in preparation for the first negotiations. I also helped organise, and followed up on, consultations with the members of the NCP in order to negotiate and consolidate Swedish input into the negotiations.

I also answered a number of queries from the general public sent by e-mail, most of them relating to the NCP and the implementation of the guidelines.

CSR in EU Free Trade and Partnership Agreements

Sweden is working actively to promote CSR within the context of international trade agreements. I monitored the trade agreements that were being negotiated or were going to be negotiated between the EU and third parties, and provided input into the Swedish position that would then contribute to the EU-line in the negotiations. Specifically, I provided input/suggested wording on CSR to be included in free trade or partnership agreements with Singapore, Canada, Mongolia, Malaysia and MERCOSUR.

The UN Framework for Business and Human Rights

Sweden has supported the work of John Ruggie (Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN) in developing and operationalising a framework for business and human rights. I analysed the Ruggie’s proposals for implementing the framework and its impact on other processes, guidelines etc., and also administered the prolongation of the grant from the ministry for foreign affairs that partly funds his work.

Anti-corruption

Globalt Ansvar is responsible for Sweden’s international anti-corruption work, both in the context of CSR and in engagements with international organisations and policy formation.

I spent quite a lot of time working with the implementation review of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). The review of implementation takes the form of a peer review, and during my internship, Sweden (together with Albania) started its review of Bulgaria’s implementation. My work consisted in preparing background reports based on previous evaluations by the OECD, the Council of Europe (GRECO), the EU and others. I also, together with my supervisor, evaluated Bulgaria’s submission of a self-assessment, and prepared a Swedish response with comments and requests for clarifications. This involved liaising both with the UNODC secretariat in Vienna, and with the Ministry of Justice for expert opinions.

I also prepared a report on the current state of corruption in Russia, to be used as a background document when discussing Russia’s application to join the OECD anti-bribery convention, as well as a background report on corruption in Norway in preparation for another peer-review
that we were going to participate in. I also updated the internal guidelines and the pages on the UD website for anti-corruption work.

**Briefing papers for the new secretary of state**

Since parliamentary elections took place at the beginning of my internship period, preparations quickly got underway for the possible arrival of a new minister and/or secretary of state. The department prepared briefing papers on the current status and the Swedish position in all issue areas, and I wrote the briefing papers on the OECD guidelines, and on Swedish-Sino cooperation in CSR. Although the minister of trade remained the same, a new secretary of state for trade was appointed, and so the briefing papers did come into use.

**Interdepartmental/Interagency Working Group on CSR**

It was decided to re-launch and enlarge an interdepartmental working group for CSR issues. In preparation for the meeting, I did extensive research to find out what relevant people should be invited from other departments and state agencies. After the meeting, I prepared a paper comparing the various departments’, agencies’ and organisations’ definitions of and work with CSR. This was then shared with all the participants, and intended as a starting point towards finding a common position.

**My experiences from the internship.**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has long experience of receiving interns, many departments have more than one each term, but I was the only one in my department (in total there were about 40 interns in the ministry for foreign affairs). An introductory course for all interns was offered at the beginning of the period, and several social events were also organised.

I was allowed to work quite independently and take responsibility for various tasks, and I experienced that my work was valued and made a contribution to the work of the group. The “Globalt Ansvar” group is very small, with only three full-time staff, which meant that I worked closely not only with my supervisor, but will all members of the group. Despite the necessarily bureaucratic nature of the organisation as such, in the department and group I was working in, initiatives and creativity was welcomed. I was also fully involved in all department planning days and other events.

Working at Globalt Ansvar was a great opportunity to establish contact with other ministries, state agencies and companies as well as civil society (trade unions, business associations and NGOs) with an interest in CSR – this will be very valuable to me if I decide to pursue a career within that field.

I participated in meetings on many levels, both within and outside the ministry, and also abroad (Global Compact donor meeting in Bern). It was in very interesting to get an insight into the whole process, from getting input from Swedish stakeholders and anchoring policies with the political leadership, to formulating policy, communicating and negotiating it in the international arena, and then following up and reporting back on results.
Throughout my internship, I also had the opportunity to attend seminars arranged by external actors (such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, Svenska Institutet etc.) on issues related to CSR and corruption.

Although all my practical work assignments were related to the work of Globalt Ansvar, I also, through meetings and day-to-day contact gained an insight into the work of the other groups in the department, and on more “traditional” trade policy issues.

**Reflections from a political science perspective.**

An internship in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is very obviously interesting from a political science perspective since it gives an insight into the workings of the government offices, both in terms of the bureaucratic process and the political nature of the organisation. It gives an understanding both of the policy-making process, and of how policy is implemented in practice via the state agencies.

Working with CSR questions was interesting in many ways, and theoretically especially from a governance perspective. CSR and other global ‘soft law’ norms and codes of conducts are usually seen as a response to the governance gaps created by globalization, where the state is increasingly powerless to influence global business by national regulation. Within the foreign ministry, CSR was discussed as being important to Swedish foreign policy in terms of (1) being a competitive advantage for Sweden/Swedish companies, and promoting an “image” of Sweden as socially and environmentally conscious, and (2) as an argument to promote free trade. Trade policy in general was discussed very much in protectionist/mercantilist vs. free trade terms, with Sweden taking a clear position to promote free trade.

Before working at the ministry for foreign affairs, I had not realised to what extent Swedish policy is determined by what happens in Brussels, or the “Europeanisation” of policies and processes. With trade policy being an exclusive EU competency, this is perhaps especially visible in the department I was working in, but it was interesting to see also how the effects of the Lisbon treaty were starting to come into effect in practice, e.g. with the European Parliament being a new force to reckon with, and the structures and communication channels that had to be changed or created within the government offices in order to deal with this new reality.