

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Academic Year FLAS Statement of Purpose: [REDACTED]

I am applying for a [REDACTED] European Union Center FLAS Fellowship to continue my advanced studies of the [REDACTED] language. I have been a student of [REDACTED] language and culture for eight years thus far, including high school and collegiate instruction and have earned a B.A. in [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] as of [REDACTED]. I coupled my [REDACTED] program with a degree in [REDACTED], where I concentrated my interests within the region of western Europe and concerning the themes of global governance and security. During my time as an undergrad, I established a great relationship with [REDACTED] and excited at the prospect of being able to continue learning in advanced seminars as I work to advance my bilingual profile as it benefits my forthcoming research and career path. Earning a bachelor's degree in [REDACTED] allowed me to establish a great foundation for myself with the language in terms of grasping grammar structures, intermediate reading comprehension, and the culture, yet there is so much more I want to achieve with this language that I do not yet have the skills to comfortably set out to do with my future plans within academia and professional goals in mind.

As a [REDACTED] candidate in the [REDACTED] program at UIUC, I feel that I will be able to incorporate the [REDACTED] and area studies seminars in which I would be enrolling with ease and that they would complement my [REDACTED] courses exceptionally well. [REDACTED], as one of the founding member-states of the European Union (EU) [REDACTED], has a voice that is loud and valued within EU affairs as well as on the world stage. Its domestic politics, therefore, are often put in the spotlight from a historical perspective, as well as within current events. Changing political trends have been emerging in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], in response to events such as the EU sovereign debt crisis and the recent refugee crisis, which are factors that have led to the resurgence in nationalist and populist attitudes in these countries. Points of interest for my research lie within, for example, dissecting the activity of European politicians and political parties, such as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which have gained ground [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in their nationalistic messages. These parties, as well as many others from neighboring EU member-states, have been gaining in the polls of their respective national elections. I hope to research further into how the trends of national political parties' narratives that they create plays a role in the overall operations of the EU institutions, such as the European Parliament, whose [REDACTED] elections are predicted to be impacted by the resurgence of European populism.

I have found my proficiency in [REDACTED] useful thus far for utilizing national [REDACTED] news source reports about inter and intra-member-state affairs, such as the examples given above, though I currently primarily rely on English sources to produce my research. I am intrigued to dig deeper within studies of these political parties and within the political histories of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as a means of drawing comparisons and differences between, for example, the toxic ultranationalism that plagued [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the trends of

nationalism and the various forms of populism that have been growing currently in the EU. I believe I will be able to produce much stronger and more valuable research within this idea if I am able to do so in the language of origin for the narratives I hope to dissect. Without this opportunity to grow in my fluency, I am afraid I will not be able to utilize the resources I would like to have at my disposal and would benefit from greatly. With the guidance of a research cluster I am involved with on the University of Illinois campus focused on dissecting narratives in European populism, I intend to invest myself in this research to have a better understanding of the emerging political trends within the EU. I aim to identify trends with contemporary European populism with case studies by dissecting the narratives used by specific political parties' manifestos, speeches, and other rhetoric, as well as gather the response of the general populous, all of which would require me to have advanced competency of the [REDACTED] language. Beyond that though, I would like to delve into what [REDACTED] scholars have published on the matter and utilize their work as a part of a more robust literature review. While valuable academia and scholarly journals are available in English as well, that will naturally be utilized, I believe the addition of [REDACTED] academic literature will provide a great deal of substance to my research as well as my own professional growth. Looking ahead, I will be able to truly get to the place in my fluency I would need to be at to achieve these goals by working with my professors and advisors even in independent study seminars that would be most beneficial for the research I want to complete.

Advancing my [REDACTED] fluency for the purpose of supplementing my research will, in turn, support my additional goals of utilizing my second language even more seriously as I soon step on the path towards my professional career. I am looking toward capitalizing upon what I have learned in my academic programs at UIUC and apply my knowledge of global governance, the EU, and international relations, and [REDACTED] studies toward my career goals. As it stands, I feel that my [REDACTED] comprehension would not allow the competitive edge needed in today's job market within international relations and diplomacy to truly stand out in my field. In some capacity, I hope to be able to be a part of the mechanisms that keep healthy relations between the U.S. and the EU and its member-states and am therefore looking toward applying for internships for the EU delegation and liaison offices in the United States as a means of starting down that pathway for myself. While English is an official language of the EU and the modern-day lingua franca, as an American seeking to establish and maintain good transatlantic relationships, having advanced skills to read, write, and speak another official EU language with confidence would allow even better practices of diplomacy towards the [REDACTED] EU member-states and their people.

Overall, advancing my [REDACTED] studies would make me all that much more confident while embarking on my thesis research, as well as going into the realm of an international relations career. I whole heartedly believe that, with the goals I have set out for myself that I hope to achieve in the near future, I would greatly benefit with the advancement of my [REDACTED] language skills and would be honored to represent the European Union Center through this FLAS Fellowship as the means to do so. Thank you for your time and consideration.