

DANDRITE Alumni Feature

Kathrine Hennings

Read former Research Group Coordinator and Communications Officer at DANDRITE, Kathrine Hennings, tell about her time at DANDRITE and her transition from working at Aarhus University to the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science.



Kathrine Hennings. Photo: Flemming Leitorp.

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HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK AT DANDRITE?

I started my job at DANDRITE, while I was studying my Bachelor's degree in International Business Communication in English and European Studies. I was looking for a student job that would allow me to work in an international and fast-paced environment, where I could use the things I was learning at university in real life. I decided to apply for the student position in the DANDRITE Administration Team and luckily, I got it. I was late for the job interview because I got lost. Anybody who has visited or worked at DANDRITE knows that there are a lot of buildings to keep track of.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER PATH? WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I did not have a career when I started working at DANDRITE but it marked the beginning of mine. I worked as a student assistant in the DANDRITE Administration for two years until I unfortunately had to resign, as I was going to do a university internship at the Danish Embassy in Hungary during my Master studies. As soon as I handed in my Master thesis, a position opened up and I got the opportunity to return to the DANDRITE Administration full-time as Research Group Coordinator and Communications Officer, a position I possessed for two years. Today I work as an EU Advisor at the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science.

CAN YOU TELL ABOUT YOUR CURRENT JOB IN A NUTSHELL? WHAT EXCITES YOU THE MOST?

I am based at the office for EU Research and Innovation, where I work as a National Contact Point for the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Innovation Council (EIC). This means that I advise researchers, companies, and universities on how to apply for grants within these two programs. ERC and EIC are both highly competitive so I work to ensure the best results for Danish institutions. Also, I am a national delegate to both program committees, which means that I represent Denmark in the negotiations of the yearly work programs with the European Commission. It is as such a job that allows me to contribute to the framework of the programs but also lets me see it in full effect via the people and institutions I advise – and that excites me.

HOW HAS THE TRANSITION BEEN FROM DANDRITE IN AARHUS TO THE DANISH MINISTRY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN COPENHAGEN?

The transition from DANDRITE to the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science actually felt very natural, as my time at DANDRITE has provided me with a great foundation for the tasks that I undertake now. I think that my new job was a logical next step for me. Of course, I had to leave my beloved Aarhus but I am sure that Copenhagen will grow on me. I really appreciate my new colleagues, who have made the transition easier for me.

HOW HAVE YOU USED YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES GAINED AT DANDRITE IN YOUR NEW POSITION?

I think that my time at DANDRITE has made a huge difference in my current work, because I have a certain knowledge of how researchers work and the problems that they face. This makes it possible for me to relate to the researchers that I advise.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT YOUR TIME AT DANDRITE? WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS AND WHY?

I truly enjoyed being part of the DANDRITE community, which I believe is quite unique. When I think back on my time at DANDRITE a lot of great moments come to mind. DANDRITE Encounters, Spring Parties and Summer Hangouts... However, I really enjoyed our internal meetings on Thursday mornings, as it was an opportunity for everyone to gather and an opportunity for me to hear about specific research projects. Also, I have always had a soft spot for Young DANDRITE (YoDA), the PhD and Postdoc Association at DANDRITE, where I had the pleasure of being administrative representative. I think it is great that DANDRITE encourages its young researchers to engage themselves in their own career development and that there are young, passionate researchers that are willing to take on that responsibility.

WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS? WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS?

I have no idea where I will be in 5 years, but I hope and believe that it will be somewhere exciting!