



Cengiz Bereket

- **Current Role:** Regulatory Affairs Intern at AESGP
- **STAR Programme:** Regulatory Affairs
- **Programme Year:** September 2024

How Cengiz Bereket Launched His Regulatory Affairs Career with ECCRT's STAR Programme



Before the STAR Programme

What were you doing before the STAR Programme?

Before joining the STAR Programme, I was pursuing my PhD in Pharmaceutical Toxicology at Hacettepe University. Alongside my doctoral studies, I worked as a Senior Instructor at Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus for over eight years. In this role, I was responsible for delivering laboratory-based courses in pharmaceutical toxicology and related disciplines.

What challenges were you facing (e.g. struggling to break into the industry, recent graduate, career changer)?

As a pharmacist with a Master's degree in Pharmaceutical Toxicology, I was highly motivated to transition into regulatory affairs. However, I faced significant challenges in breaking into the industry due to a lack of prior industry experience. Despite my academic background and relevant knowledge, most entry-level roles required 1-2 years of experience, creating a barrier for someone like me trying to make the shift. This gap between academic qualifications and practical industry experience was the main challenge I was facing before joining the ECCRT STAR Programme.

What were your goals?

My short-term goal was to get an entry-level position where I could apply my academic background, develop practical skills, and gain hands-on experience in regulatory affairs. In the long term, my goal is to continuously grow within the regulatory field, deepen my expertise, and eventually become a trusted expert in the area.



Why ECCRT?

What attracted you to ECCRT?

I was attracted to ECCRT because it is a well-recognized and unique training provider dedicated to bridging the gap between academic education and industry requirements. In particular, stood out as a valuable opportunity for early-career professionals like myself to gain both theoretical knowledge and practical, hands-on experience tailored to specific job functions.

What aspects of the STAR Programme seemed most helpful?

What I found most helpful about the Regulatory affairs STAR Programme was its comprehensive approach, combining targeted training sessions with practical, hands-on experience. The programme is designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for a specific job function in regulatory affairs. For me, the most valuable aspect was the opportunity to gain practical experience through the 6-month internship. It provided a solid entry point into the industry and gave me the confidence and practical foundation to kick-start my career in regulatory affairs.

Any decision-making factors (e.g. expert trainers, practical learning, internship opportunities, coach support, etc.)?

6 months of internship opportunity in a pharmaceutical company was the only decision factor for me.



Experience During the Programme

What did you learn and what activities did you do?

- I've monitored regulatory, policy, and legislative developments under EU Pharmaceutical Legislation to support the global implementation and harmonization of electronic product information (ePI).
- I've coordinated and conducted interviews with Bayer representatives across globe to get insight on different national authority approaches in regard to ePI implementation.
- I've prepared briefing notes, Excel tables, and presentations based on global insights gathered from interviews, and presented them in internal meetings.
- I've supported labelling activities to develop user-friendly, patient-centric package leaflets by engaging with Bayer's Patient Labelling Council.
- I've supported communication activities by disseminating generated data.



Where Are You Now?

How would you summarize your outcome and where you are today?

Reflecting on my entire journey, I can confidently say that the most impactful aspect of the ECCRT was the opportunity it provided for professional growth, which in turn, also led to significant personal development.

Coming from an academic background with over eight years of experience, I made a bold decision to shift my career into the field of regulatory affairs and policy, despite having no prior experience. The ECCRT and Bayer enabled me to undertake a 6-month internship, which was essential for acquiring the practical skills and competencies I needed to make this transition. This hands-on experience opened the door to a new job opportunity and marked a pivotal turning point in my career journey. I currently work as a Regulatory Affairs Intern at the Association of the European Self-Care Industry (AESGP).

I started my new role the same day I completed my graduation.



Final Word of Advice

What would you like to say to prospective STAR students?

First and foremost, I encourage future students to truly appreciate the opportunity provided by the ECCRT as it's a valuable gateway for both personal and professional growth, and ultimately helping to acquire the essential competencies needed for a specific job function.

For those aiming to find job opportunities while pursuing their studies or vocational training, persistence is key. The EU job market can be competitive, and it's completely normal to face challenges along the way. There may be moments of frustration or uncertainty, but it's important to stay motivated and keep applying. Trust the process—job searching is a temporary phase, and with consistency and determination, the right opportunity will come.