

## **The student's perspective – Willem C. Vis Moot Court 2015-2016 – Radboud University Nijmegen**

Our team members heard about the moot through various information channels. We all attended the course of International Arbitration, which just confirmed our initial curiosity about the moot, and each of us applied for the interview. The interview was understandably nerve-wracking, but the friendly coaches made it a pleasant talk. Next, we wait for the phone call.

A few days later, Radboud's most diverse Moot team to date was established. It was composed of four members – Isla Neil (Scotland), Valentina Pavušek (Croatia), Gal Šumak Pečenko (Slovenia) and Štěpán Sojka (Czech Republic). Soon after we got to know each other, the problem was published and we got to work. We divided the issues and started researching and writing the first memo, which was due in December – right in the middle of our exams!

Admittedly, progress is slow. The biggest challenge is to actually start writing, because it's everyone's preference to keep researching until you feel like you know enough. However, the regular meetings with our great coaches and enthusiastic team meant the memo quickly began to take shape, it was so exciting to see our hard work paying off! After a particularly informative course in effective legal writing at Greenberg Traurig, we had learned so much that we couldn't wait to completely rewrite the words we had carefully chosen over the last few weeks.

However, at this point we had 2 weeks until the memo was due. It was intense! We were working on the memo till the last minute which coincides with the closing time of the library and Sport centre, which was open only half an hour longer, but enough to make some final improvements.

We spent our time over the winter break putting together our Memorandum for Respondent, which goes much faster because you learn so much from the first one that you don't even realise: the second one is really an opportunity to use all the acquired skills! We couldn't believe how quickly and eloquently we could now form an argument. Learning from experience, we also started much earlier with the formatting and everything went more smoothly.

After the written phase comes the oral pleading sessions in preparation for Vienna. We had many sessions with our coaches, some of them recorded to better reflect on our performance. We participated in the Amsterdam pre-moot, which was an eye opening experience. We plead for the first time against other teams, made many new friends and experienced the true international atmosphere of the moot.

In the following weeks, we had the opportunity to adapt our pleading notes according to the feedback we got in Amsterdam and try our new arguments in front of various tribunals arranged by the coaches. To perfect our submissions, we were kindly invited to plead at Greenberg Traurig, Allen & Overy and Van Doorne, where

we received extremely helpful advice from experienced lawyers in the field of litigation and arbitration.

The last stop before Vienna was the Edinburgh pre-moot, where we once again met people from around the world and plead in front of various tribunals, who provided us with a useful advice on how to make our pleadings better for the finals in Vienna. Particularly, we learned how different it was to plead in front of the arbitrators with various legal backgrounds.

The grand finale of the moot took place in Vindobona, Danubia. We plead against the teams from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil), the Florida International University (USA), the National Law University of Jodhpur (India) and the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). We had a great time and enjoyed the best version of our argumentation.

During the last few months, we met dozens of people from around the world, made new friendships, improved our legal skills and gained a ton of immeasurable experience in the field of international commercial arbitration. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Willem Vis International Commercial Moot Court was definitely one of the most challenging but rewarding experiences of our studies. We would sincerely like to thank everyone involved in enabling us to take part in the moot: the law faculty, our coaches and last but certainly not least the sponsors of the team.