

8th ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition in Paris, France



Team of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. From left to right: Andreas Ehram, Stefanie Debrunner (coach), Alejandro Maniewicz Wins, Elisa Pantazopoulos, Gregory Pauli and Jonas Vetter (coach, missing).

The International Chamber of Commerce's 8th International Commercial Mediation Competition was held from the 8th to the 13th of February 2013 in Paris, France. It was attended by students, mediation practitioners from across the world, as well as representatives from law firms and corporations. It featured mediation sessions as well as social events during the entire duration, with 65 universities having participated.

The University of Fribourg was represented by four students from the Law Faculty (Elisa Pantazopoulos, Alejandro Maniewicz Wins, Gregory Pauli, and Andreas Ehram), who were accompanied by their two coaches (Stefanie Debrunner and Jonas Vetter). The aim was to introduce students to the process of commercial mediation and give them a realistic experience of the technique applied to international commercial cases. They had to learn how to negotiate through complex cases with several intertwining interests and relationships, with the addition of experiencing the influence of the Mediator in the resolution of such disputes under the ICC Amicable Dispute Resolution (ADR) Rules. The

students prepared for over a semester, becoming accustomed to new methods and strategies of negotiation in their roles of “Client” and “Counsel”. Apart from benefiting from the help of several past contestants, the team benefited from the advice of two mediation practitioners: Birgit Sambeth Glasner and Isabelle Hering.

Upon arrival at the competition, the students had to quickly adjust to new expectations regarding several aspects of the mediation and negotiation techniques, with the feedback from the judges (mediation practitioners) at the end of each session providing a priceless opportunity to improve. Despite the extensive preparation, being confronted with different negotiating styles and cultural habits proved to be an unexpected opportunity to test their adaptation skills and their ability to think quickly and efficiently while working together to advance their interests.

The team competed against four universities in the initial rounds: Leibniz University of Hanover (Germany), KU Leuven (Belgium), Jagiellonian University (Poland), Institute of Law Nirma University (India). Unfortunately and despite extremely positive remarks from the judges as well as several award nominations, the team did not make it to the final rounds of the competition (in which 16 out of the 65 universities participated). However disappointed by this, the participants are extremely grateful to have gained some unique experiences in the field of mediation and negotiation, acquiring skills and advice that will undoubtedly be useful in the future. Furthermore, the competition provided a fantastic opportunity to meet with students and mediation professionals from around the globe, as well as enjoying the hospitality of the Maison du Barreau along with several prestigious firms such as Gide Loyrette Nouel, KPMG, etc.

The winning team of the Competition was Jagiellonian University (Poland), so it was a pleasure to have competed against them during the initial rounds in what turned out to be a tight match that was greatly appreciated by the judges. They provided an excellent example of different tactics and methods that helped the participants to improve their mediation skills for the future.

Many thanks to the coaches Stefanie Debrunner and Jonas Vetter, as well as to Professor M. Amstutz, the Peter Jäggi Foundation and the Alumni Association of the University of Fribourg. The participants truly appreciate their efforts that allowed them to enjoy an extremely enriching experience.

Elisa Pantazopoulos, Alejandro Maniewicz Wins, Gregory Pauly, and Andreas Ehram
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