

9th ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition in Paris (F)

- Special Award for Best Team Work and rank 17 -



Team of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. From left to right: Stefan Diezig (coach), Julia Senti, Natalie Schwager, Marie-Hélène Dubler, Gaëlle Waeber, Jonas Vetter (coach).

Once again the University of Fribourg sent a team to the 9th edition of the International Commercial Mediation Competition organized by the International Chamber of Commerce. It took place from the 7th to the 12th of February 2014 in Paris. There were around 600 participants from all over the world, including students, mediation practitioners and representatives from law firms and corporations. The event provides a platform for students to become familiar with commercial mediation and get an insight to techniques used in this field.

The University of Fribourg was represented by a team of four law students enrolled in the Masters program and two coaches. The team spent a semester preparing for the competition, starting out by learning the basics of negotiation. During the first two months, cases from previous years were practiced in order to become familiar with the mediation techniques and the role sharing of “Client” and “Counsel”. These cases were either played within the team in groups of two or with former ICC Competition participants of the University of Fribourg. At this point, the team would like to thank the former participants for their support, as well as Isabelle Hering, a professional mediator who mediated some of the practice sessions and gave the team valuable tips for the

competition based on her experience from the professional world and from mediating previous ICC competitions in Paris. The second half of the semester was used to prepare the four cases for the competition in Paris. This included fully understanding the case and finding the interests and best and worst alternatives to a negotiated agreement. Based on this information, the mediation plan was created, a point-by-point strategy developed and opening statements written.

After arriving in Paris, little time was left for the final preparations. The team of Fribourg competed against four Universities in the preliminary rounds: Faculdade de Direito de Vitoria (Brazil), Fordham University School of Law (USA), Hugh Wooding Law School (Trinidad and Tobago), Hamline University School of Law (USA). During the cases the team members experienced very different mediation styles, depending on the other team, the mediator, cultural differences and various negotiation techniques. Each mediation session lasted for 85 minutes and started off with the opening statements of Client and Counsel of both parties. The mediation continued with information gathering and clarifications and sometimes by the end both parties had developed a variety of creative solutions together. After each session, the judges and the mediator (all professional mediation practitioners) gave both teams valuable feedback, providing the necessary information and excellent motivation to improve. During the competition the participants enjoyed the hospitality of several prestigious firms such as Clifford Chance, Linklaters, Eversheds and KPMG.



The highlight of the week was when Fribourg won the special award for the “Best Team Work”. The team was very proud that the University of Fribourg won an award and happy that the great work together and team spirit had been acknowledged. Despite the hard work and preparation as well as the great teamwork, the team did not make it

to the final rounds of the competition (in which 16 out of the 65 universities participated).

Only about two weeks after the Competition, a ranking of the first 33 universities was published: Fribourg finished 17th, being the first University (after the finalists) not making it to the final

rounds. The team and its coaches are very proud of this achievement, although a little bit disappointed as well, because it was so close...

However, it was still worth all the time invested in preparing for the competition in Paris. The experience is undoubtedly something one usually does not acquire during regular university classes and is a priceless opportunity that will certainly be of use in the future. Perhaps some of the team members will even work in the mediation field later on! The competition also provided an ideal platform to network with other students and mediation professionals from around the world and exchanging ideas (and business cards). The winning team of the competition was the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany). The final round was definitely of high quality and very interesting to watch.

The team appreciates the dedication and valuable input of the coaches Jonas Vetter and Stefan Diezig. Many thanks to them, as well as to Professor M. Amstutz, the Peter Jäggi Foundation and the Alumni Association of the University of Fribourg.

Marie-Hélène Dubler, Julia Senti, Gaëlle Waeber, Natalie Schwager
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