

Erfahrungsbericht European Law Moot Court Competition 2021/2022

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I had the privilege of participating in the 2021/2022 European Law Moot Court Competition (ELMC) as part of my exchange year at the University of Luzern - an opportunity that last saw an exchange student partake 5 years ago. Alongside Moira Müller and Mirjam Aeschbach we represented the University of Luzern in a once in a lifetime opportunity for law students interested in European Law and, that saw us travel to Barcelona, Spain, to compete in the regional finals.

The ELMC is essentially an international competition open to law students from all over the world completing their master's degrees. The students draft written pleadings based on a fictitious case influenced by real-life events that are later advocated before a panel of judges chosen by organizers of the ELMC competition. The winners of the regional finals obtain the opportunity to plead in front of real European Court of Justice judges in Luxembourg.

Our classes formally began in September. From the onset, we were expected to dedicate hours into research and understanding the elements of the case including: the laws and legal arguments implicated, the problems founded in the areas presented in the case, what other case law has established and so on. With the help of our coach Alessia Jeker and Professor Sebastian Heselhaus, we brainstormed and formulated written pleadings which successfully took us into the next stages of the competition.

The process was not without its challenges. As an exchange student from the UK, I found it hard to find my metaphorical feet the first few months due to having no previous awareness of civil law structures; and I had not been mentally prepared for the workload involved since I am still in the process of completing my bachelor's degree in England. However, I was able to approach the professor and Alessia whenever I felt insecure, and they were reassuring and supportive of me. This included allocating one to one session and encouraging me not to take the backseat in class discussions.

My favorite phase of the module was when we began the oral speaking sessions. Here we were tasked with composing speeches in line with our chosen roles of Commission Agent, Defendant and Applicant. Once our speeches were drafted, we were taught how to present ourselves, speaking and memorizing techniques and given tips for confidence improvement. We continued to meet every Wednesday but with less intensity as that in the September to December period.

It is noteworthy that when I first arrived from the UK none of my class could understand me clearly due to my somewhat strong British accent – but also due to my longstanding problems with 'mumbling' according to my mother. I soon came to the realization that I had to at least try to get the class to understand me, let alone judges of the ELMC. On that basis, I began actively working on my enunciation. Professor Heselhaus offered some background information into why people mumble, and I listened to podcasts that helped with points raised that resonated with me. With time, the class and I could see improvement in my speech, and this participated more without second guessing my contributions due to having previously been asked to repeat myself.

The University of Luzern team practiced their pleadings with the University of Fribourg to learn of other ideas that may arise and for assessment purposes. I personally found this practice session helpful because it reminded

us not to concentrate too much on our own ideas and be open for others. Additionally, it was nice to receive different questions from different coaches.

Competing in Barcelona was the first time I had been in Spain and I am glad it was alongside my team members and our coach. It was not only a chance to step up to the challenge we had been preparing for 6 months, but to better know each other in a new environment before saying our goodbyes. This made the events arranged by the ELMC organisers enjoyable because we had built rapport. We supported each other by attending pleadings as guests for our team members and by overall offering each other words of encouragement.

I thoroughly enjoyed acting as Commission Agent when it was my turn. We had been taught so well how to overcome nerves that after a shaky twenty seconds I quickly adopted a steady stride. I was able to answer and deflect questions put to me and was extremely happy when coaches from other teams sang my praises after – so much hard work had gone into getting me to a stage where I spoke confidently and clearly.

Overall, the ELMC was a great opportunity that I am forever grateful to have been selected for; especially seeing as such opportunity is currently unavailable at my home university. Not only was I able to make connections working within the EU government, but I came to know of more potential career options within the EU. The module itself taught me diligence, confidence and perseverance which will be useful attributes for my final year of university in September. Not to mention that representing the University of Luzern made me feel more than just an exchange student because I was working closely with local students who exposed me to German and taught me about Swiss culture at times.