



FINAL REPORT

EUROPEAN HUMAN
RIGHTS MOOT COURT
COMPETITION
8TH EDITION, 2019/2020



The European Law Students' Association

EUROPEAN
HUMAN RIGHTS
MOOT COURT
COMPETITION

FOREWORD

Dear participants,

First of all, we would like to express our congratulations to all of you for all your efforts, hard work, and dedication you have invested in this year's edition of the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition. Not everybody was able to leave with a prize, however, this does not minimize the importance of your participation and every single contribution. Well done!

We have been involved in this competition since its early years and it has been a pleasure to see it grow and meet motivated and engaged students. Every year brings its own challenges and modifications - the 8th edition has been different in some yet very similar in other ways in comparison with previous years.

The current Covid-19 world-wide pandemic has influenced many aspects of our private and professional lives and we are still trying to learn and adapt to the new ways of living, studying, and working. Unfortunately, this moot court has not been an exception. As many hearings before national or international courts moved to the virtual world, so has the moot court competition.

We would like to especially highlight how impressed we were by the quality of your written submissions as well as your advocacy skills during the oral pleadings. In this sense, there was truly no difference between listening to you inside a hearing room of the European Court of Human Rights or in a virtual courtroom.

We also hope that with this year's introduction of the regional oral rounds you were still able to enjoy the experience of challenging yourselves while pleading, in person, in front of your peers and members of the jury.

We would like to believe that your experience with this moot court has reinforced your dedication to the protection of human rights. Perhaps not all of you will become human rights lawyers in the future. Nevertheless, no matter where your professional lives take you, be it international law, diplomacy, environmental, finance, or any other area of law, we do hope that you will take your commitment to human rights and the skills you learnt during the moot court with you. We strongly believe that human rights should be at the core of everything we, lawyers, do. In this way, we can all contribute to a stronger protection of human rights for all.

Finally, our great appreciation goes to the Council of Europe and ELSA International for making the final oral rounds possible and for the great organization!

Good luck with your future studies and careers!

Zuzana Kovalova and Slavica Cubric*

Case authors of the 8th EHRMCC

* Zuzana Kovalova is Legal Officer at the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The views expressed herein are hers personally and do not reflect those of the United Nations. Slavica Cubric is the case co-author. The views expressed herein are her own and do not reflect those of her employer.

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I. ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The European Human Rights Moot Court Competition was founded in 2012 by ELSA and the Council of Europe. The Competition holds great importance for ELSA, due to the strong human rights focus of the association which is cemented in ELSA's vision: 'A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity'. The Competition simulates the procedures of complaint for the European Court of Human Rights and allows law students to experience first-hand the work of a human rights lawyers. The Competition is open to teams of two to four law students from European universities.

In 2019/2020, ELSA and the Council of Europe organised the 8th edition of the EHRMCC. The Competition was launched on 22 September 2019 with an exciting case written by Zuzana Kovalova and Slavica Cubric and concerning the role of the European Convention on Human Rights in international armed conflicts. This edition also brought several new aspects. Firstly, and most importantly, the 8th edition introduced mandatory Regional Rounds. There were introduced to heighten the quality of Competition, allow for all participants to practice and hone their oral advocacy and further cultural exchange throughout the Competition. Moreover, a consistent problem throughout the first seven edition of the Competition has been dropout between registration to the Competition and submission of Written Submission. In the 7th edition approximately 40% of the registered teams never participated by submitting Written Submissions. To address this issue, the 8th edition featured a registration fee of € 100 to ensure that teams signing up were motivated and committed. ELSA expected that these new changes would result in around 40 teams registering.

By the registration deadline on 3 November 2019, 68 teams from 33 countries had signed up, and 64 of those passed the eligibility criteria. Thus, the numbers far exceeded the expectations. Each team had the opportunity to submit up to three clarification questions each before sending their Written Submissions on behalf of both the Applicant and the Respondent Government by 15 December 2019. Each Written Submission was scored by two independent judges.

Following, the Written Submissions, each team participated in their assigned Regional Round. The first Regional Round took place in Nottingham, United Kingdom, at the University of Nottingham. During a meeting in Nottingham in 1995, ELSA decided that human rights shall be included in all activities of the association, and hence, it seemed only fitting that the first Regional Round of the EHRMCC should take place in this city 25 years later. The second Regional Round took place in the centre of Europe, more precisely in Göttingen, Germany, and welcomed teams from 13 different countries. The final Regional Round was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, with the pleadings taking place in the Supreme Court of Lithuania thus giving the teams a very realistic experience.

In each Regional Round, teams were given the chance to plead twice; once as applicant and once as the respondent state. Additionally, all rounds featured a rich cultural and social programme with the aim of encouraging networking amongst the teams. This is a particularly important aspect of the Competition, as it is an aim of ELSA to stimulate mutual understanding and friendship between law students across Europe. In furthering socialisation between the participants, each Regional Round also extended a prize for the most ELSA spirited team. Such prize was awarded a team showcasing good sportsmanship, adherence to the philosophy of ELSA and a genuine interest in establishing connections across Europe.

Based on their scores of the Written Submissions and their performance in Regional Rounds, the 18 best teams qualified for the Final Oral Round. This round was scheduled to take place in Strasbourg, France, from 5 to 9 April 2020. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in Europe, it became clear to ELSA and the Council of Europe that such physical round would not be possible. Initially, the Final Oral Round was postponed by 2 months in the hope that the situation would improve. When this did not happen, however, it was decided to move the Competition online. Therefore, from 2 to 4 June 2020, 16 teams met on the BlueJeans platform to plead in front of human rights experts from all over Europe.



II. SUPPORTERS OF THE 8TH EHRMCC

We extend our sincerest gratitude to the supporters of the EHRMCC without whom the 8th edition would have not been possible.

Council of Europe

Due to our vision “a just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”, ELSA has a strong commitment to Human Rights and to promoting social responsibility of law students and young lawyers. Together with our Human Rights Partner, the Council of Europe, ELSA has, in addition to the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition, taken several initiatives to promote Human Rights awareness among our target audience. Furthermore, ELSA aims at bringing forward the point of view of Human Rights in conjunction with other legal topics in all of our activities.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



The European Court of Human Rights

The European Court of Human Rights is an international court set up in 1959. It rules on individual or State applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Since 1998 it has sat as a full-time court and individuals can apply to it directly.

In almost fifty years the Court has delivered more than 10,000 judgments. These are binding on the countries concerned and have led governments to alter their legislation and administrative practice in a wide range of areas. The Court's case-law makes the Convention a powerful living instrument for meeting new challenges and consolidating the rule of law and democracy in Europe.

The Permanent Representation of Greece

Greece is currently holding the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. Traditionally, therefore, Greece would host the Closing Ceremony of the EHRMCC. Due to the online format of the Competition this year, that was not possible. However, ELSA is still proud to have the Greek Chairmanship as a partner of the 8th EHRMCC.



Greek Chairmanship
Council of Europe
May - November 2020

Présidence de la Grèce
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai - Novembre 2020



The Permanent Representation of Turkey

The Permanent Representation of Turkey has been a continuous supporter of the EHRMCC for many years. For the 8th EHRMCC, their valued contribution goes towards the monetary support of the winners of the Competition while undertaking their respective traineeships.

The City of Strasbourg

The City of Strasbourg is a strong supporter of the EHRMCC. In addition to providing a grant for the Competition, the city also hosts the Mid-Ceremony of the Competition at their stunning venues in the Hotel de Ville. Despite not being able to do so for the 8th edition, ELSA still values the support of the City of Strasbourg.



United Kingdom
Delegation to the
Council of Europe

The Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom

It is a tradition in the EHRMCC, that the country of the latest winning team will host the Opening Ceremony of the next edition of the EHRMCC. As the University of Oxford won the 7th EHRMCC therefore, the Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom was excited to host the teams of the 8th EHRMCC. Due to the circumstances, this could not happen. We remain grateful for their support nevertheless.



III. WRITTEN ROUNDS

Description

The first phase of the EHRMCC is the drafting of two Written Submissions; one on behalf of the Applicant and one on behalf of the Respondent Government. The quality of the Written Submissions is assessed by two independent human rights experts from December 2019 – February 2020.

Scores

Each Written Submission was blinded upon receipt and sent to two independent human rights experts for scoring to ensure a fair procedure. The Written Submissions were scored on four criteria each weighing 25% of the written submission score. These criteria were:

- i. **Identification of legal issues and relevant legal framework:** This ground sought to assess the team's general understanding of the case and the issues it raises.
- ii. **Knowledge of ECHR and relevant caselaw:** This ground sought to judge the extent of the team's technical ECHR knowledge.
- iii. **Quality of legal analysis and persuasiveness of arguments:** This ground concerned the overall persuasiveness of the team's pleadings and legal analysis.
- iv. **Style:** This ground addressed issues of presentation and accessibility.

In addition to fulfilling the criteria set out above, teams also had to format the Written Submissions to comply with the criteria set out in the Rules. When not complying, penalty scores were deducted from the written submission score as illustrated below.

Based on the scores, **Team 9 from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”**, Faculty of Law (Bulgaria) was awarded the prizes for the Best Written Submission for Applicant and for Respondent.

Please find all scores for the Written Submissions in [this table](#).

Winner's Report

By Team 9 from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

The European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC) provides a one of a kind opportunity – it allows you to build up knowledge, and it gifts you the pleasure of teamwork and the utter satisfaction of seeing the results from your strenuous effort. In the moot court, students plead before renowned professionals in the human rights sphere, and not only get to develop their

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presentational skills, but also have the opportunity to learn from each other and from the judges in a uniquely suitable environment.

The current 8th edition has been one of the most challenging and at the same time rewarding years in our lives. Our journey as a team began in July 2019 when, with the help of our coaches, we gradually started gaining knowledge of the Convention system, and hone our professional skills. When the case was released, we were surprised by the symbiosis of Human rights law and Humanitarian law which the authors had set. During the following months we only became more and more passionate about it, and continued our research and development to the very end. We saw not only how our arguments evolved, but also how we, ourselves, grew up and matured as defenders of human rights. The unusual circumstances in which we had to participate in the final rounds motivated us to be flexible, and demonstrated to us once again that even the practicing of the legal profession is an ever-changing variable.

To be rewarded the prize for both Best Applicant and Best Respondent submissions was one of the most valuable moments of the competition to us. All those sleepless nights spent in rigorous preparation proved to be more than worth it in the end. This recognition was evidence to each one of us that we had made the right choice in competing, and in doing so together.

Judges

Each Written Submission was scored by two independent human rights experts, to whom the organisers owe immense gratitude. These judges were Christina Gonta, Anna Maralyan, Maria-Andriani Kostopoulou, Mihail Stojanoski, Daria Sartori, Jan Kratochvil, Elisabeth Lambert, Gaiane Nuridzhanian, Hasan Bakirci, Ana Medarska-Lazova, Rimante Tamulyte, Michelle Lafferty, Guenter Schirmer, Emiliya Ramazanova, Irina Chepaykina, Katerina Todorovska-Hummeler, Daniel Andras Karsai, Diana Lupu, Aleksandra Mezykowska, Andrzej Mancewicz, Stéphanie Bourgeois, Bianca Boji-Tahvanainen Amrei Müller and Andreea Maria Rosu.





IV. REGIONAL ROUNDS

INTRODUCTION

This year for the first time in history, the EHRMCC featured mandatory Regional Rounds. The Regional Rounds were introduced with a twofold purpose. Firstly, to ensure the educational aspects of the Competition by allowing all participating teams to showcase their oral pleading skills (whereas this had been reserved to teams qualifying for the Final Oral Round in the past). It is in the purpose of ELSA to contribute to legal education, hence, the introduction of Regional Rounds was vital to the association. Secondly, the Regional Rounds served to improve the quality of oral pleadings at the Final Oral Round. Given the high quality showcased during this round, the Regional Rounds surely served that purpose.

Each Regional Round was three days long and featured an academic programme and Opening Ceremony on the first day with the drawing of the pleading order. On the second and third day, the teams had the chance to plead on behalf of both Applicant and Respondent, and each Regional Round was ended with an Awards Ceremony during which we handed out the prizes for the Best Orator and the most ELSA spirited team.

WESTERN REGIONAL ROUND IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The first ever Regional Round of the EHRMCC took place in Nottingham, United Kingdom from 24 to 26 January 2020. The round was attended by 9 teams from the University of Lucerne (Switzerland), Kingston University (United Kingdom), the University College London (United Kingdom), the University of Oxford (United Kingdom), University of Aberdeen (United Kingdom), Yerevan State University (Armenia), the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), City, University of London (United Kingdom) and the University of Nottingham (United Kingdom). As can be seen, this round was dominated by teams from the United Kingdom which seems logical given the high number of British teams participating each year and the location of the round.

An Organisers' Perspective

By Laura Cestaro, Vice President in Charge of Moot Court Competitions ELSA United Kingdom 2019/2020 and Head of the Organising Committee of the Nottingham Regional Round

Between the 24th and 26th of January 2020, ELSA UK had the pleasure of hosting the first-ever Regional Round of the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC) at the University of Nottingham.

The three-day event saw the participation of 9 Teams as well as an illustrious panel of judges.

On Friday 24th January following registration, participants were welcomed at the University of Nottingham by Dr. Edward Goodwin, Co-director for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Nottingham and Agata Daszko, President of ELSA UK 2019/2020. Following the welcome addresses, Sarah Ikast Kristoffersen, the Vice President in charge of Academic Activities of ELSA International 2019/2020, spoke to participants about the history and development of the EHRMCC and explained more broadly how Human Rights education and implementation inform all of ELSA projects. Finally, Laura Cestaro, Vice President in charge of Moot Court Competitions of ELSA UK 2019/2020 and Head of the Organising Committee, led the long-awaited 'drawing of lots' for the Regional Round.

The evening saw dinner on a cruise on the river Trent, where among the beautiful scenery of the city of Nottingham, everyone had a chance to network, dance and unwind.

On Saturday 25th, the first day of pleading rounds began. Timekeepers ensured the smooth running of each round while participating teams delivered their Oral Submissions in front of three-judge benches. Judges, a carefully selected mix of academics and practitioners with experience and expertise in European Human Rights, graded the submissions and provided teams with feedback in terms of style and technique. The experts in Human Rights that deserve once more a great 'thank you' for their invaluable contributions are Prof. Marko Milanovic, Prof. James Sweeney, Mr. Piers Gardner, Dr. Rachel Ita, Prof. Stefanos Xenofontos, Ms. Deirdre Sheahan, Ms. Karolina Rychlicka, Dr. George Ellison, Dr. Kanstantsin Dzehtsiarou, and ELSA UK President Agata Daszko.

After a long day of pleading, participants had the opportunity to relax and network in the Nottingham City Centre, accompanied by dinner and drinks.

Sunday 26th was the second and last day of pleadings. Each team took on the opposite role to that which they pleaded for on the previous day. Afterwards, everyone was invited to attend the Closing Ceremony held in the beautiful Senate Chamber of the University of Nottingham's Trent Building. Amongst dinner and a few "thank you" speeches, participants, coaches, and the Organising Committee were recognised for their efforts. Prizes were also awarded to the Best Oralist – Umaar Kazmi of team 66, and to team 55 as the most ELSA Spirited Team.

ELSA UK could not be prouder of having brought one of the Flagship Projects of ELSA to the United Kingdom. The cooperation between ELSA International, ELSA UK, and ELSA Nottingham was excellent and allowed the delivery of an event that participants, judges and the Organising Committee thoroughly enjoyed. Moreover, all three Local, National, and International levels of ELSA collided in an unprecedented way within the Competition. Indeed, the months of hard work of the Organising Committee were very much worth the success of the Regional Round.

Results

Each team had the chance of pleading twice and were scored on four criteria, namely:

1. **Identification of legal issues and relevant legal framework:** This ground sought to assess the team's general understanding of the case and the issues it raises.
2. **Knowledge of ECHR and relevant caselaw:** This ground sought to judge the extent of the team's technical ECHR knowledge.
3. **Quality of legal analysis and persuasiveness of arguments:** This ground concerned the overall persuasiveness of the team's pleadings and legal analysis.
4. **Style:** This ground addressed issues of presentation and accessibility.

Each criterium is abbreviated as "crit." below.

Team Scores

The teams got the chance to plead twice; once as Applicant and once as Respondent. They were scored on their overall performance as a team. This team score was determinant for whether the team would qualify for the Final Oral Round.

As this round had an uneven number of teams, one team had to plead twice each day. This applied to team 43 as Applicant and team 66 as Respondent. Their score was determined as an average of the scores from all six judges as displayed in [this table](#).

Individual Scores

In addition to being scored, each pleader was scored individually under the same criteria as referenced above. Only pleaders who plead as both Applicant and Respondent had the chance to compete for the prize as Best Orator. 16 pleaders did that and their ranking may be found below. Based on these scores, **Umaar Kazmi** from team 66 (University of Nottingham) was awarded the prize for the Best Orator.

Team	Orator	Orator Score
66	Umaar Kazmi	31.250
39	Rahul Sunil Bajaj	31.167
66	Dave Barnard	30.917
66	Joseph Harpur	30.542
66	Jakub Milkuski	30.375
52	Igor Mirzakhanyan	29.958
39	Mohamed Ameer Ismail	29.917
11	Nina Stupan	29.000
11	Ramona Kleiner	28.708
43	Wilma Tiippana	22.480
43	Ennis McCreddie	20.833
43	Heather Webster	20.375
18	Meera Ahmadi	19.625
52	Seda Stepanyan	18.667
52	Viktorya Martirosyan	18.250
43	Lucas Adrian Brauns	16.250

The breakdown of all individual pleader scores may be found in [this table](#).



Judges

This Regional round was judged by Stefanos Xenofontos, Deirdre Sheahan, Karolina Rychlicka, George Ellison, Dr Kanstantsin Dzehtsiarou, Professor Marko Milanovic, Professor James Sweeney, Dr Rachael Ita, Agata Daszko and Piers Gardner.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN REGIONAL ROUND IN GERMANY

The second Regional Round took place at the centre of Europe in Göttingen, Germany. The Round featured no less than 19 teams from Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (Germany), University of Freiburg, University College Freiburg (Germany), EBS Universität für Wirtschaft und Recht, Law School (Germany), Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne (France), University of Graz (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz), Faculty of Law (Austria), Comillas Pontifical University (Spain), Faculdade de Direito, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal), University of Trieste, Faculty of Law (Italy), University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Law (Slovenia), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), Maastricht University, Faculty of Law (the Netherlands), ESADE (Spain), İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University Faculty of Law (Turkey), Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles, Faculté de Droit (Belgium), University of Warsaw, Faculty of Law and Administration (Poland), Galatasaray University (Turkey), University of Groningen, Faculty of Law (the Netherlands), IE University, Law School (Spain) and Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Law (Hungary). The teams were scored by a total of 17 judges.

An Organisers' Perspective

By Victoria Kautzner and Cederic Meier, co-Heads of Organising Committee of the Central European Regional Round

On Friday, 11 February 2020, 150 law students from 12 European countries gathered in Göttingen for the start of the first-ever Central European Regional Round of the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition. Ahead of everyone lied a wonderful weekend full of pleadings and networking. But for us, the organisers, the Regional Round had already begun back in September, when we started preparing this first-time event. For five months, our Organising Committee of eight had met up regularly with the aspiration to set a precedent for future EHRMCC Regional Rounds and create a Moot Court worth remembering.

Hundreds of emails and countless hours of printing materials later, we finally found ourselves waiting for the cornerstone of the Regional Round: The participants.

Once the teams had arrived and were equipped with their badges, the weekend commenced with a presentation on the topic “Bridging the Access to Justice Gap with Legal Tech” by the former Chief Executive of the German Bar Association, Cord Brüggmann, and the Head of Business Development at the legal tech start-up BRYTER, Johannes Maurer. In accordance with the topics of the EHRMCC, the speakers engaged in a discussion on how legal tech can be used to speed up visa procedures.

After this topical, yet informal opening event, the Regional Round officially started with the Opening Ceremony at the Restaurant “Bullerjahn” in the centre of Göttingen. During this Ceremony, not only



This pleading agenda was set to work over the following two days. Starting from Saturday morning, several benches of three judges each carefully listened to the pleadings of the teams and questioned their arguments for both the position as Applicant and Respondent. The teams had prepared their presentations over the course of several months. During their pleadings, they would need to convince the judges of their knowledge of the relevant legal frameworks and case law as well as the quality of their legal analysis in order to reach their goal: Qualifying for the Final Oral Round at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (which, of course, ultimately took place online, but who would've anticipated a global pandemic).

Aside from daily pleading sessions, the participants were able to participate in a sightseeing tour around the university town Göttingen and get to know each other during the social program in the evenings. All three evenings were spent at the Bullerjahn Restaurant, with the guests listening to a variety of speeches over delicious dinner and an unlimited supply of wine and beer. Later in the evening, those who were still in the mood for cultural exchange over drinks were taken to a bar. Judges, participants, and helpers alike enjoyed the informal setting and utilised the opportunity to network across borders.

The Central European Regional Round of the EHRMCC came to an end on Sunday evening with the Awards Ceremony. The award for best individual oralist went to Athanasios Christou

and the award for Most ELSA-spirited Team to the ESADE Business School Barcelona. Congratulations! The Regional Round showed us that effort pays off, not only for the participants of a Moot Court, but also for us as hosts. Successfully organising a meeting of such a scale was a truly enriching experience and to receive positive responses for the hard work put into it made every obstacle worth it. We want to sincerely thank our participants for being such wonderful guests and our judges for giving their time and energy for this project as well as ELSA International for supporting us along the way.

Results

The teams were scored under the same criteria as listed above, each abbreviated as "crit.". Teams received both team scores and individual orator scores.

Team Scores

The teams got the chance to plead twice; once as Applicant and once as Respondent. They were scored on their overall performance as a team. This team score was determinant for whether the team would qualify for the Final Oral Round.

As this round had an uneven number of teams, one team had to plead twice each day. This applied to team 52 as Applicant and team 47 as Respondent. Their score was determined as an average of the scores from all six judges as displayed in [this table](#).

Individual Scores

In addition to being scored, each pleader was scored individually under the same criteria as referenced above. Only pleaders who plead as both Applicant and Respondent had the chance to compete for the prize as Best Orator. 21 pleaders did that and their ranking may be found below. Based on these scores, **Athanasios Christou** from team 33 (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) was awarded the prize for the Best Orator.

Team	Orator	Orator Score
33	Athanasios Christou	36.412
33	Ioanna Macia Varra	35.667
16	Selin Esen	34.333
16	Loana Benjamin	33.167
33	Eirini Aikaterini Vossika	32.750
31	Sergeja Hrvatič	31.125
31	Ajda Petek	29.750
31	Tina Pirnovar	28.912
31	Matej Padar	28.125
29	Francisca Marques de França	27.083
29	Rodrigo Pacheco Bettencourt	25.083
42	Léopold Hannequart	25.042
23	Isabel García de Paredes Sánchez	24.667
23	Montserrat Pardo Iglesias	24.265
29	Maria Joana Alegria Faria	23.042
29	António Maria Lacerda e Megre de Abreu Novais	22.250
30	Bianca Almacolle	21.375
62	János Nagy	20.667
6	Nina Kühn	20.500
30	Sofia Faggionato	17.583
30	Constanza Pappalardo	17.042
30	Silvia Pellicani	12.250

A breakdown of all individual orator scores may be [found here](#).

Judges

This Regional round was scored by Professor Dr. Peter-Tobias Stoll, Dr. Alexander Thiele, Dr. Roman Lehner, Dr. Johann Ruben Leiß, Professor Dr. Thomas Groß, Professor Dr. Lars Viellechner, Professor Dr. Stefan Oeter, Dr. Christian Johann, Dr. Roland Giebenrath, Holger Hembach, Dr. Ferdinand Weber, Professor Dr. Oliver Dörr, Professor Dr. Christina Binder, Tobias Kiwitt, Nicholas Degen, Dr. Kathrin Mellech and Jan Kratochvil.



EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONAL ROUND IN LITHUANIA

For the third and final Regional Round, we moved to the east of Europe in the beautiful capital of Lithuania, Vilnius. The round was attended by 19 teams from Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland), University of Malta (Malta), Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine), Sofia University St. "Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria), Bahçeşehir University (Turkey), Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia), University of Helsinki (Finland), University of Latvia (Latvia), West University of Timișoara (Romania), Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (Bulgaria), Belarusian State University (Belarus), National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (Russia), Universität Passau (Germany), University of Oslo (Norway), University of Zagreb (Croatia), National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" (Ukraine), Università degli Studi di Macerata (Italy), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) and Human Rights of Law School of the Ukrainian Catholic University (Ukraine).

At the last Regional Round, we already felt the impact of the outbreak of Covid-19 in Europe. One team was not able to make it to Lithuania and instead had to plead online. This was handled smoothly by the organisers, however, and the team appeared on great screens in the pleading room.

An Organisers' Perspective

By Andra Mažrimaitė, Aušra Abraitytė and Laura Dičiūnaitė, co-Heads of Organising Committee of the Western European Regional Round

The third Regional Round of EHRMCC took place between the 28th of February to the 2nd of March in Vilnius, Lithuania. A few years ago the idea that such a small national group of ELSA, particularly ELSA Lithuania, could host the largest English-language human rights moot court competition in Europe seemed impossible and infeasible. When last summer the discussion had started with the ELSA International Board 2019/2020 about organizing one of the first regional rounds of EHRMCC in history, endless doubts arose as to whether we would be able to lead such a high-level moot court competition. This was followed by long and consistent discussions with the National Board of ELSA Lithuania, various plans regarding most unexpected scenarios and finally so - we decided that we should use the given opportunity and prove what we are capable of.

The organization of this event was very diverse - from the most unexpected ideas to very stressful nights. Preparations started as early as September 2019 and initial work showed us that many challenges and surprises await us. ELSA Lithuania had never encountered an event of this magnitude, let alone organized it. Everything was new and no one knew where should we begin. Even though, we did not know that the most challenging aspect will arise in the upcoming future.

After a few months of organizing, contacting judges and participants, we finally reached the main event itself and it was an event to remember. The weekend of the competition gave us a lot of surprises, but thanks to the very reliable Organizing Committee, everything was manageable. In the end, seeing smiles of all the participants redeemed all the difficulties faced. It certainly was not easy, but unequivocally – the result was overwhelming.

Speaking of the challenges and surprises, at the start of the year 2020 COVID-19 spread from Asia to Europe and it was confirmed in Italy on 31st January. This information was especially alarming to us as we had one team from this particular country. We were not aware of whether the participants would be allowed to arrive in Lithuania, whether the events would be banned due to inevitable nationwide quarantine. On the last week before the competition, the Italian team decided to stay in Italy due to the outbreak of the virus. Therefore, on such short notice, we had to prepare for online pleadings, which were never implemented in the EHRMCC before. Even though there were some issues with the arrangement, the impossible was made possible. Despite receiving news of the first case of COVID-19 in Lithuania on the 29th of February and arising of the real risk that we would be forced to cancel the event, we have taken all the precautionary measures to ensure the safety of all the participants, judges, spectators, and organizers.

On the first day, we welcomed the participants in the Opening Ceremony, which took place in the pride of our capital city - Vilnius University Aula Parva. During the ceremony Prof. Dr. Tomas Davulis, the Dean of Vilnius University Faculty of Law, Doc. Dr. Dalia Vasarienė, the judge of the Supreme Court of Lithuania and Aušra Abraitytė, the President of ELSA Lithuania gave inspiring welcome speeches. Participants learned the order of their pleadings through the drawing ceremony and had an opportunity to learn more about arbitration and moot courts from competent legal professionals - Vilija Vaitkutė Pavan, Partner at law firm “Ellex Valiunas”, Honorary Consul of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and Dr. Tadas Varapnickas, Senior Associate at law firm TGS Baltic.

On the course of the next two days, the participants had an extraordinary opportunity to plead in the Supreme court of Lithuania as real lawyers do. The Regional round in Vilnius was judged by the strongest specialists in international and human rights law, such as former judge of the European Court of Human Rights, judges from Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania, and other lawyers affiliated with international and human rights law.

During the Closing Ceremony, participants were able to take a break and enjoy a lovely dinner in the city center. They shared impressions of the pleadings among themselves, enjoyed live music and received congratulatory words from Dainius Žalimas, President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania. Participants also had a short quiz about ELSA, found out who was the best speaker in this Regional Round and which team had the strongest ELSA spirit.

On behalf of the whole ELSA Lithuania, we are extremely grateful for the opportunity and trust. This regional round has been a wonderful adventure and a big international step in the history of ELSA Lithuania over many years and we hope that this is just the beginning!

Results

The teams were scored under the same criteria as listed above, each abbreviated as “crit.”. Teams received both team scores and individual orator scores.



Team Scores

Each team plead twice during the Regional Round; once as Applicant and once as Respondent. They were scored on their overall performance as a team. This team score was determinant for whether the team would qualify for the Final Oral Round.

As this round had an uneven number of teams, one team had to plead twice each day. This applied to team 20 as Applicant and team 7 as Respondent. Their score was determined as an average of the scores from all six judges as [displayed here](#).

Individual Scores

As in all Regional Rounds, the individual orators also received scores. The orators had to plead twice for their scores to count towards the prize for the Best Orator. 22 pleaders did that and their ranking may be found below. Based on these scores, **Anna Liudva** from team 44 (National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”) was awarded the prize for the Best Orator.

Team	Orator	Orator Score
44	Anna Liudva	33.708
7	Therese Lia	32.104
8	Anna Madei	31.917
44	Oksana Ihnatenko	30.583
32	Polina Kurakina	30.417
40	Luka Gubić	29.958
22	Alexandra Sofran	28.792
12	Lenka Miklóssyová	28.542
7	Roberta Spiteri	27.646
26	Viktoria Stoyanova	27.208
50	Pelagia Tsalabouni	27.125
10	Mehmethan Orhan	26.375
50	Christos Marios Stergioulas	25.292
50	Nikoleta Stavroula Tsakaleri	24.583
10	İlayda Akça	23.958
46	Giovanna Paola Mazzieri	23.750
50	Vasiliki Fasfali	23.667
46	Debora De Carolis	23.333
35	Tabea Stammberger	21.875
10	Esra Atar	21.833
10	İpek Bozbura	18.125
26	Ivanka Nikolova	18.000
35	Marine Borot	17.125

A breakdown of all individual orator scores may be [found here](#).

Judges

This Regional Round was judged by Inga Abramavičiūtė, Aistė Augustauskaitė-Keršienė, Laurynas Biekša, Nika Bruskina, Dovilė Gailiūtė-Janušonė, Gabija Grigaitė-Daugirdė, Indrė Isokaitė-Valužė, Danutė Jočienė, Erika Leonaitė, Marius Liatukas, Gintarė Makauskaitė-Samuolė, Kamilė Michailoskytė, Katažyna Mikša, Vygantė Milašiūtė, Inga Motuzienė, Asta Pikelienė, Rimantė Tamulytė, Lina Urbaitė, Dainius Žalimas and Sigita Zubavičiūtė-Montvilienė.

V. QUALIFYING TEAMS

Based on their scores in the Written Submissions and the Regional Rounds, the teams were ranked, and the teams with the 18 highest qualification scores qualified for the Final Oral Round. The qualification score was based 50% on the Regional Round score and 50% on the Written Submission score.

Due to the change in the dates of the Final Oral Round team 63 from City University of London and team 11 from the University of Lucerne had to withdraw from the Competition. These teams were replaced by team 8 from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and team 16 from Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne who ranked as 19 and 20 respectively.

All qualification scores may be found in the [table here](#).



VI. VIRTUAL FINAL ORAL ROUND

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Final Oral Round of the EHRMCC takes place over five days in Strasbourg with pleadings being held in the Palais de l'Europe of the Council of Europe as well as in the European Court of Human Rights. In 2020, however, Covid-19 broke out in Europe making cross border travels and physical events impossible. Instead of cancelling the Final Oral Round, ELSA moved it online, and the Virtual Final Oral Round was created. This meant that teams could conduct pleadings from the comfort of their home. All pleadings took place on the platform BlueJeans which accommodated pleaders, coaches, judges and timekeepers professionally. On the first two days of pleadings, the Preliminary Rounds took place with each team pleading once as the Applicant and once as the Respondent.

Based on their scores in the Preliminary Rounds, the best eight teams qualified for the Quarter Finals which were held on the third day. Shortly after these rounds, the Semi Finals and Grand Final were held. The winners were announced at the online awards ceremony.

PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

In the Preliminary Rounds, the teams were scored by three judge benches based on the same scoring criteria as applied in the Written and Regional Rounds. The teams received overall scores, and each Orator was scored individually.

Team scores

All team scores may be found in the table [linked here](#).

Orator scores

Each orator received individual scores based on the same scoring criteria as used for the team score. In order to compete for the "Best Orator of the Preliminary Rounds" award, the orator had to plead for both Applicant and Respondent. 15 orators did so, please find them ranked below:

Team	Orator	Orator Score
16	Loana Benjamin	33.042
16	Selin Esen	32.917
33	Athanasios Christou	32.625
39	Petra Stojnic	32.250
33	Ioanna Maria Varra	31.833
39	Claire Gerrand	31.833
39	Rahul Bajaj	31.625
55	Ilsu Erdem Ari	30.625
54	Ecab Amor Vázquez	29.875
55	Clinton Wee Yuan	28.792
34	Aleyna Ünalán	27.333
34	Ulrike Koch	27.292
7	Therese Lia	26.208



7	Roberta Spiteri	25.708
22	Alexandra Sofran	25.167

This meant that **Loana Benjamin from Team 16** (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne) was the Best Orator of the Preliminary Rounds. Please find all orator scores in [this table](#).

QUARTER FINAL ROUNDS

Based on their scores in the Preliminary Rounds, the best eight teams qualified for the Quarter Final Rounds. These teams were:

Ranking	Team Number	University	TOTAL
1	39	The University of Oxford	32.417
1	16	Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne	32.417
3	20	University of Latvia Faculty of Law	32.375
4	33	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	31.417
5	17	University of Graz (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz), Faculty of Law	30.917
6	27	Belarusian State University, Faculty of International Relations	30.875
7	9	Sofia University St. "Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of law	30.792
8	53	University of Groningen, Faculty of Law	30.000

According to the Rules of the 8th EHRMCC, the teams were assigned to the Quarter Final Rounds as follows:

- In Quarter Final 1, the Team with the highest overall score will plead against the Team with the eighth highest overall score.
- In Quarter Final 2, the Team with the second highest overall score will plead against the Team with the seventh highest overall score.
- In Quarter Final 3, the Team with the third highest overall score will plead against the Team with the sixth highest overall score.
- In Quarter Final 4, the Team with the fourth highest overall score will plead against the Team with the fifth highest overall score.

As Teams 39 and 16 received the same Preliminary Round score, their rank was decided by their Qualification Scores, meaning that Team 39 ranked highest. Hence, Team 39 from the University of

Oxford met Team 53 from the University of Groningen in Quarter Final 1, Team 16 from Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne plead against Team 9 from Sofia University St. "Kliment Ohridski" in Quarter Final 2, Team 20 from the University of Latvia met Team 27 from the Belarusian State University in Quarter Final 3, and Team 33 from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens met with team 17 from the University of Graz in Quarter Final 4.

The team roles (Applicant or Respondent) was determined by a random draw. Each team and orator were scored by a four member bench under the same scoring criteria as outlined above. Please find the scores inserted below.

Team scores

The team scores from the Quarter Final Rounds may be found [here](#).

Orator scores

The Best Orator of the Quarter Final Rounds was **Rahul Bajaj from Team 39** (University of Oxford). All individual orator scores may be [found here](#).

SEMI FINAL ROUNDS

In the Semi Final Rounds, the winners of each Quarter Final met. The first Semi Final featured the winner of Quarter Final 1 (Team 39 from the University of Oxford) and the winner of Quarter Final 4 (Team 33 from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), while the second Semi Final featured the winner of Quarter Final 2 (Team 16 from Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne) and the winner of Quarter Final 3 (Team 20 from the University of Oxford).

Judge's Report

Mark Clough, a representative of ELSA's partner, the European Law Institute, and a judge of the Semi Final Rounds described the Competition as follows.

On behalf of the European Law Institute (ELI), based in Vienna, I would like to congratulate the European Law Students Association (ELSA) and all the over 100 participants in the Eighth European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC, 2019/2020) on the quality of their oral pleadings ending with the Final being won by the Latvian University team on Thursday 4 June 2020. In particular, Sarah Ikast Kristoffersen, the Vice President for Academic Activities ELSA International, together with the ELSA timekeepers, deserve special mention for their helpful and efficient organisation and management of the virtual oral hearings required to replace the normal face to face Moot hearings because of Covid-19.

The key word to describe my experience of the quality of the oral pleadings at the Moot hearings is professionalism. All teams from all the universities who pleaded in the hearings where I was one of the judges had clearly prepared well which is the key to a lawyer being successful in practice. This was demonstrated, for example, by the well-tailored answers to judges' questions. Again being able to respond accurately to a judge's interventions with citation of relevant case law is an essential way to convince the judge of one's arguments.

Finally, as a member of the Council, I would like to invite all those ELSA students who are not already members, to join ELI. It is one of the most diverse and open European Law institutes or “thought leaders” with judges, academics, practising lawyers and students from every Member State of the EU and the neighbouring countries of Europe. It’s Statements and conferences address future developments in all areas of European law including a particular focus on fundamental human rights and the ECHR. If you contact the ELI secretariat through the website you can receive information on membership and the local ELI hubs established for members your country.

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Team scores

In the Semi Final rounds each team was scored by a five person bench, the scores of which may be found [here](#).

Orator scores

The Best Orator of the Semi Final Rounds was Rahul Bajaj from Team 39, the University of Oxford. All individual orator scores may be found in [this table](#).

GRAND FINAL

The Grand Final featured the winners of each Semi Final Round, those being **Team 39 from the University of Oxford** as Applicant and **Team 20 from the University of Latvia** of Respondent. The Grand Final was judged by a five judge bench and livestreamed by the Council of Europe.



Judge's Reports

Vicki Prais, Independent Human Rights Consultant, www.vickiprais.com

I was invited to be a Judge at the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition, 8th Edition, 2020. It is always my great pleasure to be involved in the competition and have been a Judge for the past 7 years.

The competition was of an exceptionally high quality this year. The written submissions were well drafted and referenced and it was clear that student teams had invested a lot of time and effort into drafting the pleadings. Similarly, the oral pleadings (Semi Final and Grand Final) were of a very high calibre and I was impressed by the quality of advocacy by all participants. This year was particularly challenging for teams who had to cope with the vagaries of technology in addition to the general pressures of being an advocate at the final stages of the competition.

I believe that the EHRMCC can be of immense value to students looking to build a career in the human rights sector. It provides them with an invaluable understanding and command of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights as well as helping them develop their soft skills including advocacy, drafting, negotiation and teamwork all of which are critical as a human rights professional.

I feel very privileged to be part of the competition and helping, in some small way, the new generation of human rights professionals as they embark on their human rights careers.

Team scores

The team scores from the Grand Final may be [found here](#).

Orator scores

Based on the orator scores below, the prize for the Best Orator of the Grand Final was awarded to **Rahul Bajaj from Team 39** (University of Oxford). Please find all orator scores in [this table](#).

Prizes

The award winners of the 8th EHRMCC were the following:

- The Winner - "The Council of Europe Award": Team 20 from the **University of Latvia**
- The Runner up: Team 39 from the **University of Oxford**
- The Best Applicant's Written Submission: Team 9 from **Sofia University** St. "Kliment Ohridski"
- The Best Respondent's Written Submission: Team 9 from **Sofia University** St. "Kliment Ohridski"
- The Best Orator of the Preliminary Rounds: **Loana Benjamin** from Team 16 (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne)
- The Best Orator of the Quarter Finals: **Rahul Bajaj** from Team 39 (the University of Oxford)
- The Best Orator of the Semi Final: **Rahul Bajaj** from Team 39 (the University of Oxford)
- The Best Orator of the Grand Final - "The Liaison Office of the Council of Europe Award": **Rahul Bajaj** from Team 39 (the University of Oxford)



Winner's Report

By Samanta Lidere, Lelde Elīna Liepiņa, Kristiāna Pētersone and Natālija Knipše, winners of the 8th EHRMCC

Our team, consisting of four members participated in the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition organised by the Council of Europe and European Law Students Association (ELSA).

With the support of our trainers – Artūrs Kučs and Eva Viksna – as well as several other guest trainers we began to prepare for pleadings on October 2019 right after the team member selection rounds took place and the team was established.

Right after the selection rounds our team immediately began preparing the written submission for both parts as it was due early in December. In this time our team faced several challenges from seeking financial support to cover the expenses of the Moot Court as well as meeting the requirements established for the written submissions. Nevertheless, we successfully submitted our written parts and immediately proceeded with the preparation for the oral rounds.

In February 2020 our team travelled to Vilnius for the Regional Rounds. We faced great anxiety during the process. Not only the months of training all came down to this very moment, but also because of the odd number of teams that had arrived to the Regional Rounds, our team had to plead three rather than two. Thus, this experience came in value later on in the Final Rounds.

With the joyful news of our team qualifying for the Preliminary Rounds, along also came the concern of the further management of the pleadings as the world was facing a global pandemic. Our team decided to carry on the training remotely in hopes that the Moot Court will not be cancelled. Fortunately for us the further oral pleadings were conducted online and for that we would like to thank all parties who contributed their time and energy for the Moot Court to proceed!

Our team carried on with the pleadings remotely from the premises of our University. On the first day of the online oral rounds, our team was surprised by a pigeon trapped in the lecture hall where our online pleadings were supposed to be conducted. We successfully captured and released it and because of this adventure the pigeon became an unofficial lucky charm for our team.

In the Preliminary Rounds, Quarter Finals and Semi Finals our team competed against the teams from the Belarusian State University, University of Cambridge, Sorbonne Law School and ultimately from the University of Oxford. Every time we received the announcement of qualification for the next round, our team was astonished by the news, thus kept pleading with great focus and determination. The finals were

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The European Law Students' Association



unforgettable as we could barely comprehend us reaching the finals in the first place, nevertheless the desire to win reached its peak. We look back at the last day of the pleadings with such fond memories as our team went through full spectre of emotions including the anticipation for the results and the joy of accomplishment, we worked so hard for.

We would like to acknowledge each and every person that devoted their time and support to prepare us for this competition. Without their harsh yet accurate criticism, as well as motivating words of wisdom we would not be in this position. Our achievement was a result of teamwork, cooperation and devotion to late nights of hard work. Therefore, we hope that our achievement will inspire participants in the future!

JUDGES

The Virtual Final Oral Round was scored by 23 esteemed human rights experts, namely Ada Paprocka, Aleksandra Mezykowska, Alexander Thiele, Alexandra Suchkova, Anna Maralyan, Dániel Karsai, Dmytro Tretyakov, Dovile Gailiūtė-Janušonė, Gaiane Nuridzhanian, Geanina Munteanu, Inga Abramavičiūtė, James Sweeney, Jan Kratochvil, Julia Münzenmaier, Kamilė Michailovskytė, Marc-Oliver Heidkamp, Mark Clough, Marko Milanovic, Mihail Stojanoski, Piers Gardner, Slavica Chubric, Vicki Prais and Zuzana Kovalova.



VII. THE ORGANISING TEAM

The organisation would not have been possible without immense support and hard work by the Organising team of the 8th EHRMCC, including:

- **Berin Günay**, Director for the EHRMCC
- **Mathieu Verhelst**, Assistant for Judges in the EHRMCC
- **Tinatın Oboladze**, Assistant for Teams in the EHRMCC
- **Yana Lysak**, Assistant for Regional Rounds in the EHRMCC

They worked tirelessly to make the 8th EHRMCC a success despite the very unprecedented circumstances, and you may find their reports below. In addition to the team, we were assisted by timekeepers during the Virtual Final Oral Round, and we wish to thank Nikola Ciric, Maja Rajic, Laura Cestaro, Edwin Morris John, Diomidis Afentoulis, Pauline Amice, Matea Golem and Sophie Arias for their efforts.

Director's Report

By **Berin Günay**, Director for the 8th EHRMCC

As the Director of the 8th EHRMCC, I can confidently say that the competition was such a valuable experience in many ways. From the organising point of view, there have been challenging times for our EHRMCC team, but it showed us that excellent teamwork and motivation has made everything go smoothly at the end.

I also had the chance of attending the Vilnius Regional Round this year and the highlight of the competition for me was seeing opposing teams congratulating each other after a round and talking about academic cooperation in the future. This alone showed the competition did not only help participants enhance their academic skills and gain knowledge on the ECHR but also ensured that participants had a fruitful experience, gained friendship and network. I hope the competition continues to prove to be an excellent platform in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity for those interested in humanitarian law.

Assistant's Report

By **Yana Lysak**, Assistant for Regional Rounds in the 8th EHRMCC

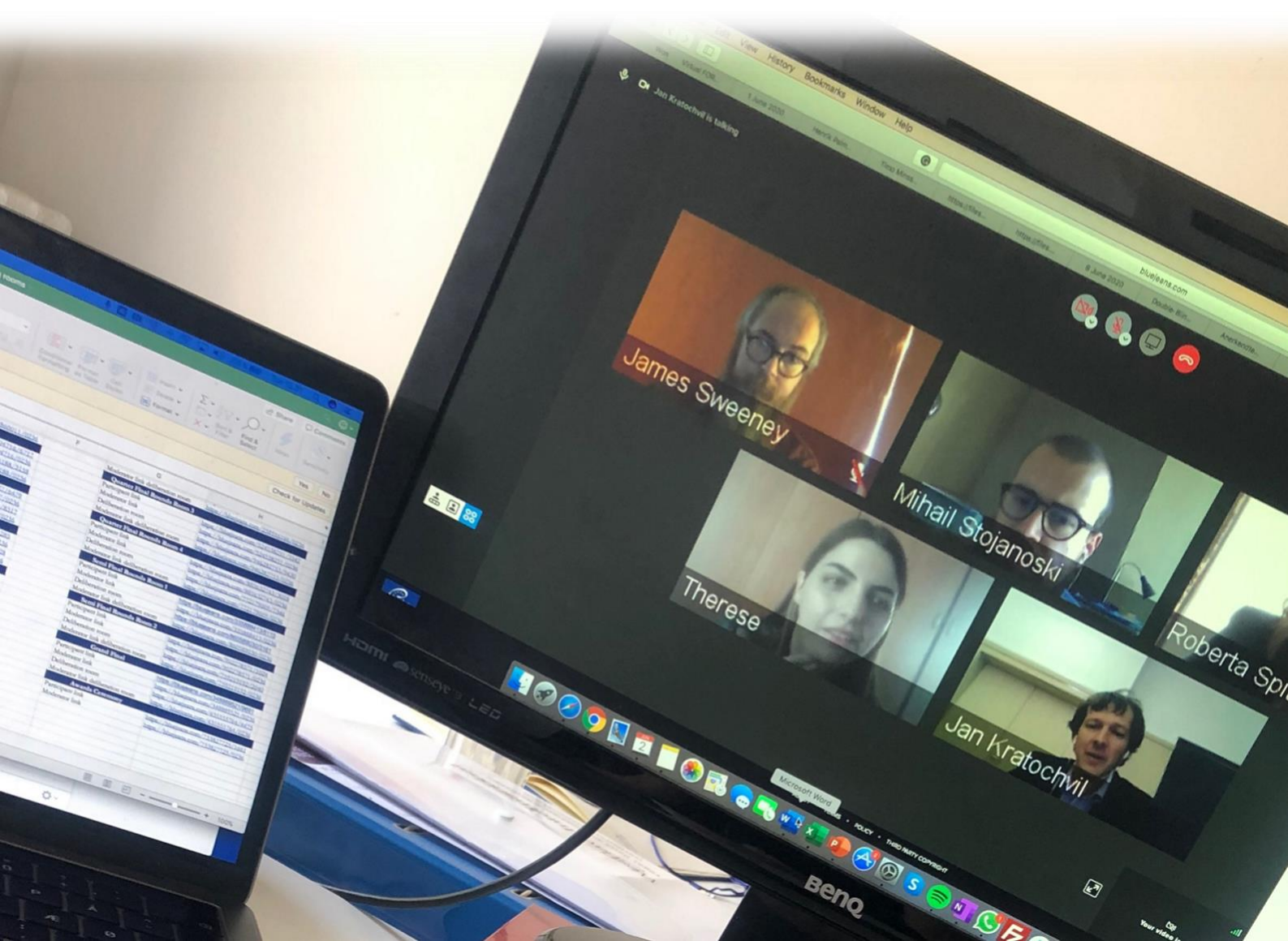
This year I was given the honour to join the EHRMCC Team as the Assistant for Regional Rounds and, later, as the Head of Timekeeping during the Virtual Final Oral Round. The 8th Edition of the EHRMCC introduced the mandatory qualification rounds. The responsibility of organising which has been granted to the Regional Round Organisers in Nottingham, Göttingen and Vilnius. My job as the Assistant for Regional Rounds was to act as a coach and provide support and guidance to the organisers. Together we have shared the ups and downs of the organisational process. The greatest feeling was definitely to see how all the plans and visions came to life during the Regional Rounds. Being the first ones in the history of the EHRMCC to host the qualification rounds is a challenging task. I can say with confidence that the outcome has exceeded our expectations and set a high bar for the following years.

I would like to thank Laura, Victoria, Cederic, Laura, Andra and Aušra for their commitment and hard work during the process. It has been truly a pleasure to work with all of you. The EHRMCC has been a big part of my life this year and the experience will forever remain in my memory.

Assistant's Report

By Tinatin Oboladze, Assistant for Teams in the 8th EHRMCC

The organising the 8th edition of the EHRMCC has been a true roller coaster and amazing experience. As an assistant of teams, it was a pleasure to communicate with the teams for almost 10 months. The teams' passion for human rights motivated me to become the best assistant and a supporter of them during all stages of the competition. From the very beginning, I have assisted more than 70 teams and almost 200 people involved in the competition. Even though we held Final Rounds virtually due to the unexpected and unplanned situations of the global pandemic, everything went with minor technical problems and a huge success. After my experience as a competitor, it was an honor to join EHRMCC as an organizer. With these two years of experience in the EHRMCC, I want to highlight the fact that organizing teams of the competition are well-structured and stable each year and they provide the highest standards in organizing which ensures competitors, coaches, and their faculties to feel comfortable during each stage of the competition. The EHRMCC embodies the values of ELSA and European Human Rights in the best possible way!



VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

While I did not expect for the 8th EHRMCC to be conducted the way it was, I am immensely proud that despite all difficulties, the 8th edition of the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition has come to a satisfactory conclusion. This Competition has a special place in my heart; since I first organised a Local Round in 2018, I have appreciated how the Competition gathers law students from all over Europe in their joint admiration and passion for human rights.

ELSA has been organising the EHRMCC for 8 years now, and the commitment to human rights is deeply rooted in the association as demonstrated in the vision created in 1992: “A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”. Through almost 30 years, ELSA has worked on raising awareness on the importance of human rights protection through the education of not only law students, but also civil society. The EHRMCC is an essential part of our human rights commitment, and I am therefore proud to see the support towards the competition increasing every year.

This has truly been an unprecedented year for the EHRMCC. For the first time in its history, the Competition featured mandatory Regional Rounds. This meant that 45 teams travelled to Nottingham, Göttingen and Vilnius respectively to hone their oral pleadings skills, expand their cultural awareness and network with fellow colleagues. I wish to thank the Regional Round Organisers for supporting the Competition in this way, especially Laura, Cedric, Victoria, Andra, Ausra and Laura. I believe that it is evident in the high level of pleadings demonstrated this week, that the regional rounds are an important and valuable addition to the competition.

Furthermore, the Competition was noticeably and unavoidably affected by the world-wide pandemic. I am proud, however, that the competition has continued, and that judges, participants and supporters have still joined us this week. Especially, I am proud that ELSA in collaboration with the Council of Europe has been able to showcase our support of human rights protection in a time where this is incredibly important. The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered arbitrary use of power that poses a threat to the enjoyment and protection of human rights across the continent. We need to come together in such times to stand up for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

There are many people without whom the organisation of the 8th edition of the EHRMCC would not have been possible, and to those, I owe my sincerest gratitude.

Firstly, the Council of Europe which has supported ELSA since 2008 and this competition since its beginning. The collaboration between ELSA and the Council of Europe is truly invaluable, and I wish to thank the Council of Europe for their continued and unwavering support during these difficult times.

It is also important for ELSA that our esteemed partners have continued their support of the Competition! I therefore wish to thank the Permanent Representation of Greece, the Permanent Representation of Turkey, the Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom and the City of Strasbourg for their support.

Throughout the organisation, I have received immense support from the Academic Board of the EHRMCC, whose knowledge seems endless. I wish to thank the entire Academic Board and especially Michelle Lafferty and Simon Palmer who have always answered even the most plain of my questions and

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met with me in Strasbourg whenever needed. I moreover wish to thank Slavica Chubric and Zuzana Kovalova who, in addition to being judges this week, also have written the case of the 8th EHRMCC and offered many valuable pieces of advice as regards the organisation of this Virtual Final Oral Round.

We received the support of many esteemed judges in scoring the Written Submissions, Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round. I wish to thank each of you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to lend your expertise and knowledge to this competition.

Finally, I wish to thank the participants, as without you there would be no EHRMCC. I know how much time goes into writing written submissions, how hard you work to get every argument right, how much you prepare your oral advocacy and how nervous you must have been. Every participant of the 8th EHRMCC should be incredibly proud of themselves – you have contributed to the furtherance of human rights education. I warmly welcome you to our EHRMCC community – you are now part of an ever growing family, and I hope you will always look back at this experience with great joy!

While this year has brought many unique challenges, I hope that every organiser, participant, supporter and judge sees this as a chance to learn and explore new solutions – this week, we have shown what can be done in challenging times with minimal resources, and I hope that this sets great precedents for the future.

With the kindest regards,



Sarah Ikast Kristoffersen

Vice President in charge of Academic Activities
Head of the international Organising Committee
International Board of ELSA 2019/2020

