



## **Best Speaker CEEMC 2021 (Online)**

**Sára Tichá (Charles University, Prague)**



In May of 2021, I had the opportunity to participate in the Central and Eastern European Moot Competition as part of the team representing Charles University. Although due to the Covid-19 situation at the time, the competition unfortunately had to take place online, the organizers nevertheless did a wonderful job in making the experience enjoyable for the participants. My team and I took part in several rounds of oral arguments, each judicial panel and opposing team challenging us in a different way. The CEEMC organizers and judges often refer to the competition as a 'friendly moot' and emphasise that their aim is to create a valuable learning experience for upcoming legal professionals. These statements I can wholly confirm (but do not be fooled – this does not mean that the judges will not give you a hard time and try to push you to perform to the best of your abilities).

As the winner of the Best Speaker award, I had the amazing opportunity to undergo a two-week-long internship at the Court of Justice of the European Union. I was welcomed in the chambers of Judge Jan Passer, the Czech judge at the Court and one of the judges of the CEEMC. Both Judge Passer and his team were greatly kind and welcoming and made sure that I made the most of my stay at the Court.

During the two weeks, I had a very exciting schedule which allowed me to get acquainted as much as possible with the functioning of the Court. I visited various court hearings, both of the Grand Chamber and of smaller chambers of which Judge Passer is a member. I also visited a hearing before the General

Court regarding a case which was a follow-up dispute to a judgement that played a large role in the 2021 CEEMC case, and which my team and I spent a very long time analysing, so it was very interesting to see how the issues are living on.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to glimpse into the work of a full-time intern at the Court, as I was given an open preliminary ruling case to conduct research on and come up with possible answers to the legal questions at hand. Members of the judge's team also took the time to explain to me the inner workings of the Court, the practical side of the judicial procedure, and their work at the Court. Over lunch, Judge Passer kindly not only answered all of my questions and shared his experience in both the Czech and European judiciary, but genuinely expressed interest in my views and future plans.

I was also introduced to other professionals working in other cabinets and got to spend time with some of the interns, all of which gave me even more insight into the Court's exciting world. The timing of my internship could not have been better – I was lucky to be there for the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, a very important Czech national holiday for which the Czech judges organized a gathering for all Czech employees of the Court. It was a lovely evening during which I got to have conversations with everybody from the judges, assistants and interns, to interpreters, translators and library workers.

All in all, my two weeks at the CJEU were a truly unforgettable and enriching experience, by the end of which I could even somewhat navigate the at times very confusing golden hallways of the Court.

My CEEMC path did not end with my internship. A year after our Zoom-edition moot, me and my teammates had the chance to witness the magic of the competition in person as part of the organisational team of the 2022 CEEMC held in Budapest. There, it was made clear to me why the atmosphere of the moot is so wonderful and why many ex-participants come back some years after to become judges – the CEEMC team is truly a family composed of people who love being part of the competition.

I very much recommend participating in the CEEMC to anyone who is looking to advance their law studies and have a memorable experience which you will look back at for a long time. Not only did the moot court teach me indispensable skills in legal writing, research and oral advocacy and opened up many doors to me, as well as furthering my interest in EU law. It also gave me close friendships and some of the most delightful memories of my studies.

