

ARTICLE

AUGUST DEBOUZY ASSISTS IRANIAN STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE BIGGEST INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION COMPETITION FOR THE SECOND TIME

| 18/12/17 | Marie Danis

The Willem C. Vis Moot, commonly known as “Vis Moot”, is the biggest and the most renowned student competition in the field of international arbitration. Last year, the 24th edition of the Vis Moot attracted more than 350 teams representing law schools from all over the world, including an Iranian team representing the Shahid Beheshti University from Teheran that was assisted by August Debouzay lawyers. The success of the last year’s coaching propelled the firm to assist this year another Iranian team in the scope of the 25th edition of the competition.

The underlying idea of the Vis Moot is to confront students from all over the world with a fictitious legal problem whose facts are based on real situations regularly encountered in international commerce. As such, students work on the case as if they were lawyers acting for the clients in a real arbitration proceeding. Once the problem is published, they analyze the exhibits and develop their legal arguments in order to draft memoranda for claimant and respondent. As soon as the written part is over, they start preparing oral pleadings ahead of the final hearings that traditionally take place in Vienna in March or April. In order to develop their advocacy skills, students often participate in informal trainings called “pre-moots” that are organized by many leading universities and law firms.

In light of Iran’s growing interest in arbitration, August Debouzay, which set up a local office in Tehran in 2016, decided the same year to assist a group of Iranian law students consisting of Sahar Alaviani, Nilofar Massihi, Sara Moayedi, Nika Baghestani, Arash Shahrokhi, Parham Zahedi, Sajad Oladi, Alireza Panahiyan and representing the Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran in their participation in the Vis Moot. Marie Danis (partner in international arbitration) and Karol Bucki (associate) from August Debouzay’s Paris office as well as Hassan Razavi, the head of the Tehran office, helped the students understand legal problems underlying their case, assisted them in drafting their memoranda and prepared them for the hearings in Vienna. Concerning this last point, the students participated in several on-line coaching sessions in order to improve their pleadings and handle the questions from the arbitral tribunal. The team also spent a week in Paris, during which the Iranian students had the opportunity to build up their advocacy skills while enjoying face-to-face coaching sessions at the firm and plead against nine other international teams before some of the leading arbitration practitioners in Paris at the annual pre-moot competition organized by August Debouzay. Finally, Karol Bucki accompanied the team during the oral hearings in Vienna.

Following the last year’s very fruitful experience that resulted in recruitment of one of the students by the firm, August Debouzay decided to assist a new group of Iranian students in the 25th edition of the Vis Moot. Following a preselection process held in September, the firm decided to coach this year a team representing the Allameh Tabatabaei University of Tehran and consisting of Hamid Allahyari, Sima Ghaffari, Zahra Mohajeri, Sadegh Mohammadian and Aisan Naderi.

Supervised by Marie Danis and Karol Bucki, the Iranian students are currently working on a fictitious *ad hoc* commercial arbitration case under UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules arising from an international sales contract governed by the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG). In the scope of their written memoranda and future pleadings, the students have to develop arguments on several procedural and substantive issues concerning, *inter alia*, third-party funding of the arbitration and termination of contract for seller’s non-compliance with its code of conduct on sustainable production of goods. The team will also participate in the seventh edition of the August Debouzay pre-moot that will be held in Paris on 18th March 2018 before heading to Vienna for the oral hearings.

