

Report from the 2021 Nicolas Bratza Scholar

As the Nicolas Bratza Scholar, I spent three last months of 2021 at the European Court of Human Rights. I am immensely grateful to Lincoln's Inn for the placement and support. There could not be a better way of spending my time right after completion of the Bar Course and I especially advise everyone on the Bar Course to consider applying for international scholarships.



The traineeship was significant both for my legal career and personal development. I had an opportunity to advance my skills such as drafting and legal research. As someone with international experience, I believe that time spent abroad, let alone placements at the pivotal centres of international and human rights law, shapes one's personality. Strasbourg is a beautiful European city that is rightfully called "the Christmas Capital". I hope that the memories from Strasbourg will stay with me for life.

Due to the nature of my scholarship, I mostly spent time at the Office of the President assisting my supervisor and worked on occasion for the Research Division. The tasks at the President's Office varied from conducting legal research and drafting speeches on topics such as asset recovery, cybercrime, human rights and human duties to preparing the President's speech at a swearing-in ceremony for a judge. I also learnt a lot by taking notes at high-profile meetings with NGOs, National Bar Associations and Government Agents.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the work of the Court and, thus, my traineeship, both in terms of life in Strasbourg and the tasks given. After studying the entirety of the Bar Course online, the in-person traineeship was a breath of fresh air to me. During my final month at the Court, the restrictions were tightened, and social events were cancelled but work meetings remained unaffected. Regarding the tasks, I helped prepare an extensive document that concerned the impact of Covid-19 on human rights for the Superior Courts Network. Additionally, I contributed to a Judicial Seminar Background Paper on a similar matter.

My cohort of stagiaires benefited from newly introduced “Meet the Judge” events that allowed us to speak to the Court’s judges in small groups. I had the privilege to ask questions and learn from the experiences of the judges from Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Switzerland, and Georgia. Robert Spano, the President of the Court, also spoke to



stagiaires at the Court’s Grand Chamber Room. It was fascinating to get to know the differences and similarities between the judges’ opinions on the same issues and their career paths. I was additionally able to meet assistant lawyers and a UK filtering lawyer and learn about early careers at the Court and practical information about the filtering process.

Lastly, my time at the Court would not have been as great without the people who surrounded me. The staff at the Court was friendly and welcoming; it was a pleasure to work with the Court’s lawyers and assist my supervisor with the tasks. The stagiaires came from all over Europe, and we soon became a close-knit group that spent much time together.