

I would like to share my thoughts on our participation in the Final Oral Rounds of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition 2025–2026, held in Strasbourg.

After months of preparation, our team had the honour of qualifying among the final 18 teams following the Regional Round held in Birmingham, United Kingdom, and representing Mykolas Romeris University and Lithuania in one of the most prestigious human rights moot court competitions in Europe. The Final Oral Rounds took place at the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, making this experience even more meaningful.

Throughout the competition, we pleaded both as Applicant and Respondent before distinguished judges, practitioners, and academics. The experience challenged us to think critically, respond to demanding questions under pressure, and adapt our arguments in real time. It strengthened our legal reasoning, advocacy skills, teamwork, and confidence in a way that no classroom experience could fully replicate.

One of the highlights of our visit was the incredible opportunity to meet Judge of the European Court of Human Rights from Lithuania, Gediminas Sagatys, in person. We were able to ask questions, discuss legal topics, and gain valuable insights into how the Court functions in practice. Learning about the responsibilities of the ECHR judge, the path to becoming one, the challenges faced by the Court, and the importance of sound legal reasoning was truly inspiring and gave us a deeper appreciation of the human dimension behind international justice. Our meeting with Mr. Gediminas Sagatys reminded us that behind every judgment are individuals committed to upholding human rights, integrity, and the rule of law.

We also had the privilege of meeting Ambassador Andrius Krivas, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the Council of Europe. His encouragement and genuine interest in students engaging in international legal activities reminded us of the importance of representing Lithuania with dedication and professionalism.

Another particularly valuable aspect of this experience was the opportunity to engage with participants from universities across Europe. Beyond the competition, we exchanged ideas, discussed different perspectives on human rights issues, and learned from one another's academic and cultural backgrounds. These encounters reminded us that today's fellow competitors may become tomorrow's colleagues, advocates, judges, diplomats, or leaders in the international legal community. Building these connections and friendships across borders was one of the most inspiring parts of our journey in Strasbourg.

We would also like to express our appreciation to our coach for the continuous support and the countless hours of preparation, which helped us to develop as advocates and as a team.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mykolas Romeris University and everyone who contributed to making this opportunity possible. Thank you for believing in us and supporting us throughout this journey. Participating in the Final Oral Rounds in Strasbourg is an experience I will never forget. Beyond the competition itself, it allowed us to learn, grow, build meaningful connections, and represent our University and Lithuania on an international stage. It is a memory that will remain with us throughout our academic and professional lives.