

Report on the Overseas Internship Programme

Name : Daichi Ito

Place : McDermott Will & Emery Brussels office

Term : 7 July - 1st August 2014

1, Office

I have been to the office of McDermott Will & Emery (MWE) in Brussels. The MWE Brussels office is specialized in competition law. Therefore, I was mainly engaged in duties which relates to competition law. MWE does not have an office in Japan. However, MWE Brussels office seems to have many Japanese cases because there are many cases which Japanese company is concerned with in Europe.

There were 7 partners, 2 to 3 associates, 5 to 6 stagiaires, and 5 to 6 clerks in the office. The nationalities of the members were varied, like The United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Jordan, and Japan. But all the members could speak English well. Therefore, we spoke English in the meeting which all the members attend. But they were divided into some language groups weakly, like English, French, and Germany. They talked each other in each language in each language group.

MWE has many branch offices globally, and it was impressive for me that the members handle duties collectively without being conscious of border between countries using an email and a telephone. I learned how to use office PC first from an office worker of London, and worked with the lawyers in Paris and Washington D.C. In the video conference, members of New York, Chicago, Shanghai, and Brussels were gathered.

2, Duties

a, Document Review

I reviewed some documents to identify the competition problem in Japanese company. I did this duty for approximately 3 weeks. I could understand the daily tasks of the Japanese company which has branch offices in all parts of the world, and I could see how company activity violates the competition law.

b, Fab Lab support

I supported the foundation of Fab Lab in Uganda. A Fab Lab is a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication. Fab Labs exist all over the world, and there are Fab Labs in Kamakura, Tsukuba, and Shibuya.

Specifically, I summarized and translated Japanese client's consultation contents into English for lawyer in another office, compared whether the client should make a contract with the Uganda government or make a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) which does not have legal binding power, made an article which the client should include in the contract, and provided advice when the client should open negotiations.

I learned the contract custom greatly varying according to each country, the difficulty to contract between individual and government, the importance of the applicable law choice.

c, Power Point Translation

I made a translation for Power Point which made for Tokyo University's summer school. The Power Point explained about Treaty on the Functioning of EU (TFEU) Article 101, 102 in detail, so I could study the EU competition law at the same time.

I realized that not only English skill but also Japanese skill is important for good translation while translating legal documents into Japanese for the first time.

In addition, there were a lot of concepts which were not translated in Japanese, so I learned that there is an occasion that I can understand the documents better in an original language.

d, Meetings

There were meetings which we reported the work situation of each lawyer in the office, and meetings which stagiaires reported recent judicial precedents or law revisions to other stagiaires, associates, and partners.

In addition, we had the video meetings which MWE competition law team of each place exchanged information about the trends of each country competition authorities.

I attended some meetings in the office, and I had an opportunity to perform a presentation. In the presentation, I made a summary of Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker's speech who was elected a chairperson of EU commission by European Union Parliament. I learned the basic skills for presentation.

e, Visit to European Commission

I got to know a staff of European Commission through the kind introduction of my colleague, and I could observe the European Commission. The staff of European Commission engaged mainly in merger control. He told me about his work contents concretely, so I could understand the European Commission vividly.

f, Visit to Den Haag

My colleague's friend introduced Den Haag to me. I visited The Peace Palace and International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Particularly I observed The Peace Palace closely, and I could learn International Court of Justice and Permanent Court of Arbitration much.

3, Brussels

I stayed Brussels for 1 month and I was able to realize the internationality of the city. There are many international organizations including European Commission, European Parliament, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and accompanied with the international organization, there are many law firms. Therefore, I met persons from various nationalities, principally from European Union member nation by drinking sessions. In addition, there were many people other than the European Union member nation. Especially, the emigrants from the Middle East are increasing. I met a person from Morocco when I was playing soccer with my colleagues.

The people whom I met in Brussels were both the nationality and the native language varied, but most people not only a lawyer were accomplished at English, and it was natural to speak 3 to 4 languages. I got strong impatient in not being able to speak even second language. I want to continue valuing an opportunity to raise English ability.

4, What I learned

I felt strongly in this training that it is not easy to play an important role abroad as a lawyer.

First, there is a problem of the language. If I want to work in foreign country, I must be able to work at least in English. But much high ability is required

to work as a lawyer because lawyers must use language crucially precisely. I keenly felt the difficulty to work in English as a lawyer while I was engaged in duties.

Second, I felt difficulty in communication with other people having different cultural backgrounds because I did not have experience to stay abroad for a long term until I participated in this training. For example, I sometimes supposed the words that I could not understand in a conversation from context and was wrong. I became afraid whether my way of speaking and behavior was decent.

However, I also learned the pleasantness to communicate with people having different cultural backgrounds and work in foreign country. So I continue making an effort to be able to become a good international lawyer.

Finally I would like to thank Mr. Masahiko Iwamura, Mr. Hideki Kanda, Mr. Tomotaka Fujita, Ms. Noriko Koaze, Ms. Mai Muto who have supported me so much.

