



ANNUAL WILLEM C. VIS INTERNATIONAL
COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION MOOT

Vienna, February 28, 2020

Dear Vis Moot Community,

We, like you, have been closely following the spread of the Covid-19 Virus. We extend our concern and thoughts for all those who have been affected.

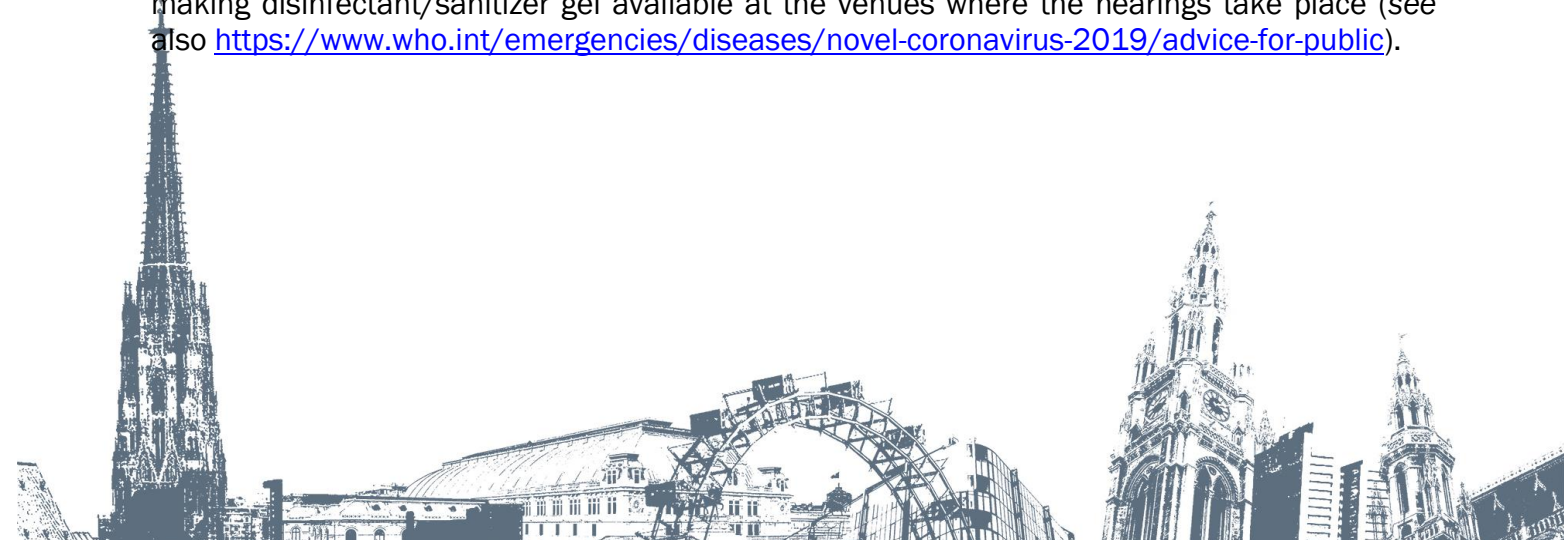
As many of you would know, the virus has already had a significant impact on the Moot. It was necessary to postpone the Vis East oral hearings until a date later in the year, with a plan to run online hearings in their place.

Due to the size of the Vis Moot in Vienna and the complex logistics involved it is impossible to simply postpone the orals in Vienna or to hold the hearings involving nearly 400 teams via videoconference. Being aware of the serious health concerns associated with the spread of the virus worldwide, we are facing the unique and difficult situation to either run the 27th Vis Moot in April 2020 or to cancel. **We have carefully evaluated the situation and as at the present date decided to run the Vis Moot as scheduled.** However, the ongoing Covid-19 virus crisis may develop to an extent that it may yet become necessary to cancel the oral hearings in Vienna.

At the time of writing this letter, there are no official directions or advice from the Austrian government to cancel large events like the Moot. The authorities in Austria indicated that – to date – there were five single confirmed cases of the virus in Austria. Of course, this does not provide security if an international event gathers people coming from several regions in the world. However, we are carefully monitoring the advice given by health officials here in Vienna and we are aware that the situation is fluid. The City of Vienna is well prepared and has set up pandemic plans for the case that the virus should spread.

All individuals coming to the Moot also bear a personal responsibility to determine whether it is appropriate for them to attend. We will be regularly reminding participants that they should ensure they follow the travel advice issued by their respective governments. Some governments have recommended against travel to particular places. To the best of our knowledge it appears to be the advice of all governments around that world, that if you have come into contact with someone with the virus, you should quarantine yourself for 14 days. **Whilst it may not be necessary to say, if you have the virus, suspect you have the virus, or should be quarantined in accordance with government advice, you should **not** come to the Moot.**

The Moot will take precautions and provide hygiene instructions to the participants as well as making disinfectant/sanitizer gel available at the venues where the hearings take place (see also <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>).



We would like to emphasize that the decision to participate in this year's Vis Moot in Vienna has to be taken by each person individually at its own risk. We recognise that many student participants, coaches and arbitrators will have their own feelings on whether it is appropriate to travel to, and participate in, the oral hearings. Whilst normally, teams would forfeit their registration fee if they pull out of the competition at this late stage, this is an extraordinary situation and accordingly we are varying that rule. Our intention is that teams who choose not to compete in the oral hearings will receive a 500 Euro credit towards their participation next year. The remaining 200 Euro fee will cover administrative costs of the Moot already incurred in the writing part of the Moot, and enable the team to remain in the Memoranda competition. Teams will receive certificate of participation for the memoranda stages and honourable mentions.

Teams or Arbitrators who wish to withdraw from the oral hearings part of competition are asked to do so by 12 noon 6 March 2020 (Vienna time). Teams should indicate their withdrawal via their team accounts. Arbitrators should use the "no longer attending Vienna" red button in their arbitrator account.

There have been a number of teams who have already had to withdraw, and some teams transferred registration from Hong Kong to Vienna, and this is why we have delayed scheduling thus far. We will need to undertake the scheduling on the weekend of 7 March. Teams can still withdraw after this date, however it will make the logistics of the competition much easier to manage if decisions can be made by 6 March 2020. We know that many pre-moots have already gone ahead, and that teams may be concerned about accidentally competing against teams who they will meet in the oral hearings. There are no penalties associated teams practicing against each other prior to the release of the schedule, and any instances of breaches after date time will be considered within the context of the impacted circumstances.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation and will keep the Moot Community apprised of the situation as best we can. This unique situation requires the cooperation of all participants involved to help us to hold the event to the extent possible whilst taking all appropriate measures to ensure your safety.

In light of the responsibility towards your co-participants we strongly encourage participants to take all precautionary measures to prevent the further spread of the Covid-19 Virus such as closely monitoring your own health conditions, monitoring your contacts and extra hygiene measures.

We plan to see you all healthy in Vienna in a few weeks.

Kind regards,
The Vis Moot Directors



Prof. Dr. Christopher Kee



Prof. Dr. Stefan Kröll



Mag. Patrizia Netal