

ICCA International Advocacy Training – Poland 2022

In late October 2022 seven trainers from ICCA travelled to Krakow, Poland. The group was led by Chris Melton KC, head of ICCA's international committee, and the group of trainers included criminal and civil practitioners, both silks and juniors (Benjamin Aina KC; Jo Sidhu KC; Sibby Salter; Alan Robertshaw; Helen Mulholland; James Gray). The trip was ICCA's second international trip since the COVID pandemic and the first in-person European trip since Brexit was effected.

Our training visit coincided with, and was made a part of, the 1st International Advocacy Forum in Krakow: an event which ran from 20 – 22 October and which involved advocates from Europe and beyond. We arrived in Krakow on Friday and that evening we attended the conference's gala dinner – a huge event, where we met and exchanged ideas with advocates and judges from a wide number of different jurisdictions including Poland, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Turkey and Japan.

On Saturday morning we headed from our hotel into the centre of Krakow and to the headquarters of the Krakow Bar. There, we were introduced to the Polish advocates we were going to train and, after an opening plenary session by Chris Melton KC, we split into smaller groups – 2 trainers to 6 trainees.

The training was intense – for both the trainers and trainees. The Polish advocates ranged from those who had only just started their training to others who had twenty years or so of experience. They tackled a civil case concerning an assault in a bar and successfully undertook witness examination entirely in English (there were also some excellent – and sometimes highly entertaining – performances by the 'witnesses', also played by the Polish advocates). The trainers provided individual, tailored feedback to the trainees on their advocacy performance using the Hampel method. Each trainee had the opportunity to undertake

examination in chief (particularly important under the Polish system, which is judge-led and largely inquisitorial) and cross-examination. The training in cross-examination led to interesting and lively discussions about the differences in advocacy between our two systems, and we were fortunate to have input from members of the European judiciary on the formulation of questions and how cross-examination tactics might be adapted and successfully deployed in the Polish system. These ideas were further developed in an excellent plenary session from Jo Sidhu KC in the afternoon.

In addition to training the advocates, the more senior advocacy trainers were involved in teaching the Hampel method to two senior Polish advocates (and our hosts for the weekend) - Piotr Gołędzinowski and Izabela Konopacka, so that they can continue to train in Poland using the same method.

Our day's training concluded with a round table discussion, where delegates and trainers exchanged views on the day's training and how it could be developed in the future – the Polish advocates were keen to undertake further training; a Polish judge who had been observing the training day commented that the improvement and development of the advocacy, even over the course of just 8 hours, had been remarkable.

On Saturday evening Tomasz Wardynski and our other warm and welcoming Polish hosts took us for dinner in Krakow's spectacular central square, Rynek Główny, and we spent a delightful evening in their company and also in the company of French advocates from the European Bars Federation (Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe).

We said our farewells on the Sunday morning, after a truly memorable and affirming visit; at a time when there is significant political uncertainty in Europe and war in Ukraine, Poland's neighbour, to foster close relations and exchange of ideas with our European colleagues is more important than ever.

Helen Mulholland