

Dear Madam President! Dear GEMME Board Members!
Dear country representatives of GEMME! Dear judges from near and far!

As Vice-President of the Vienna Bar Association, I would like to heartily welcome you all to Vienna! Especially the participants from the Ukraine: Ласкаво просимо до Відня!

You may be surprised that a lawyer, a civil litigator that I am, welcomes you as judges interested in alternative dispute resolution methods and united at the European level in GEMME.

First of all, this is due to the fact that your Austria representative and local host, Mrs. Mag. Konstanze THAU, asked me to do so. I therefore thank you for this great honor and your invitation!

Second, civil litigators, at least in my view, are not opponents of alternative dispute resolution methods, provided that we lawyers are also involved, as it happens, for example, in Austria in the so called "*gerichtlichen Einigungsverfahren*", a voluntary judicial procedure with methods of mediation.

Our clients who are in civil litigation and agree to try alternative dispute resolution also want the assistance of their trusted attorney in doing so.

It is the professional duty of lawyers to put the client's interest before their own. This also entails helping the clients to reach a self-responsible solution with the opposing party with our support and advice. At the end of the day, we lawyer live from one single person: that is the satisfied client.

My very diverse areas of expertise include family and inheritance law. In legal disputes in these areas of law, I have had the best experience with this "Austrian judicial settlement procedure". You do not meet just once in life, they say. Therefore, when legal disputes are conducted among family or friends, I think it is important as a lawyer to make sure that you do not leave scorched earth behind.

Since I also teach mainly trainee lawyers at the Austrian Bar Academy, I never get tired of advertising this alternative dispute resolution method.

Perhaps all this was also a reason why Mrs. Mag. THAU asked me to welcome you here.

In any case, I wish you now a constructive board meeting, an entertaining social program and an unforgettable stay in Vienna. Perhaps you will come back soon, for example to the Ball of all Legal Professions at the Vienna Hofburg on February 18, 2023? Vienna is famous for its waltz. So why not dance one here? Then, please do not forget to pack a floor-length evening dress, a tailcoat with white bow tie, a tuxedo with black or colored bow tie or the gala uniform, because we in Vienna keep our tradition high also with the dress code. A small addition to this: I was allowed to come to you today without a tie.

With this in mind, I say to you a heartily "Servus" and "Auf Wiedersehen!"

Vienna, November 26th, 2022

Dr. Eric HEINKE, Attorney at Law
and Vice President of the Vienna Bar Association