

Newsletter January 2007

Exchange focus

Malmö Associate on Exchange in London and Dublin offices



Rebecka sharing a glass of wine with some colleagues at Reddy Charlton McKnight, Dublin

Rebecka Ekberg has been working as an associate at Delphi & Co in Malmö, Sweden, for just over four years now. She has recently spent a month with our London and Dublin member firms on Exchange, and wrote the following about her experience:

Without having to change employer, I have had the great opportunity to go abroad for a total of eight weeks and experience working at another law firm.

I have been working as an associate at the law firm Delphi & Co in Malmö, Sweden, for just over four years now and prior to that I served one and a half years at one of the County Courts in Sweden. It has been an ambition of mine for the past years to work at a law firm in an English speaking country for a short period and I was therefore delighted when both Royds and Reddy Charlton McKnight ("RCMCK") offered me the chance to come over for

four weeks to each of their firms, and when the partners at Delphi & Co agreed to this.

During my stay in London and Dublin, I have mainly been working with my own Swedish clients. The rest of the time I have been sitting in at mediations, hearings and meetings and I have also been drafting various legal documents for Royds and RCMCK.

Sitting in at mediations was a very interesting experience for me, since mediation is only rarely used as a private institution in Sweden. However, mediation is a hot-topic in Sweden and I do believe that it will become more and more common in Sweden, a fact which I welcome.

Another difference between Sweden on one side and Great Britain and Ireland on the other side is that the agreements in both Great Britain and Ireland are very detailed, while we in Sweden write shorter agreements. I believe that we in Sweden are more backed up by statutes, which will fill in the gaps in an agreement for parties who have not agreed anything about a specific "what if- situation". Due to the internalization of law, more detailed agreements are becoming more and more common in Sweden as well, even if they are not really needed.

There are differences in how you work and how you are organized at Delphi & Co, Royds and RCMCK. I however do not think that this mainly has to do with the fact that the law firms are situated in different countries, but more due to differences in the size of the law firms, the size of the cities in which they are located, and the structure of the workforce (number of partners, associates, trainees and secretaries and the age and gender of these).

Another interesting thing I have been thinking of is how the structural design of the offices influence how you organize your work and what contact you have with your colleagues. This really has a great impact!

A related topic is how effective it is to have joint coffee breaks. I have now experienced an office with joint coffee breaks twice a day, once a day and not at all and I am of the opinion that it is effective taking coffee breaks together with your colleagues.

It has also been interesting to learn about how Royds and RCMCK work with templates and organizes its documents in its computer systems and to compare this with Delphi & Co.

Hopefully I have also improved my English during these eight weeks.

However, when I am back in Sweden and look back at my visit at Royds and RCMCK it is not the differences in law, practice and organization I will mainly be thinking of. I will be thinking of my colleagues at Royds and RCMCK who have given me a great time in London and in Dublin. I have been taken to many social events and have had the opportunity to get to know many nice people. I think that this is the main purpose of going away to another firm – to get to know people! In the future, when we need some help at Delphi & Co with regard to English or Irish law, I know to whom we shall direct our questions, and I will know personally who I will be speaking to over the phone. This means a lot!

Rebecka Ekberg

Advokatfirman Delphi & Co

Mexico City Associate on Exchange in Rotterdam office



Elena and Guy, on Guy's arrival in Mexico City, before Elena left for her exchange in Rotterdam

Elena Rodriguez works with Roberto Marquez at Marquez Alonso Abogados in Mexico City, and recently swapped locations with Guy Weski, nephew of our member in Rotterdam, Miriam Weski, for a month-long exchange. This allowed them both the chance of working in a different language and learning about a different legal system. She wrote the following about her experience:

Having the opportunity of living and working in a foreign country is a unique experience. It not only provides you with an insight into the legal procedures and institutions of another country but also gives you the general understanding of the culture and the way other countries do business.

Throughout the Interleges cross-internship program that is being developed in collaboration with other member law firms, I was able to experience for one month what it is like to work in a foreign country in which a foreign language is spoken. That alone is a very enriching experience. However, and more importantly to me, I also became acquainted with the ways legal systems are structured in other parts of the world and the principles that sustain such legal systems.

My particular work experience was developed in Weski Heinrici Advocaten, the member law firm located in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The personnel of this law firm made me feel at home and helped me to understand the Dutch idiosyncrasy. Given the fact that all the lawyers working there are highly qualified, it was easy for me to learn from them the particularities of the Dutch legal system and the way it interacts with the community law of the European Union. It was particularly interesting for me to understand the way in which two different legal jurisdictions, one international and one national, co-exist without impairing the sovereignty of the member countries, as well as the advantages and inconveniences that such type of organisation implicates.

Regarding the local law, my Dutch colleagues kindly gave me a general introduction and an overview of the local legal institutions and the way a judicial procedure is conducted.

One of my most memorable experiences was attending a hearing in an international court: the Criminal Court for the Ex-Yugoslavia situated in The Hague. It was really amazing to see the procedure conducted in such a perfectly ordered manner. The expertise of the judges was evident in each one of their interventions, whether to receive clarification on the points raised by the prosecutor, or to allow interventions from the attorney of the prosecuted. I couldn't help to compare the highly developed structure of the criminal procedure of this court and the technological support provided by the equipment of the court house with the Mexican criminal procedure, which is far away from that level of development.

Besides the legal experience acquired in this trip, I also had the opportunity to hold meetings with some

important private and public institutions related to commerce and foreign trade in order to build reciprocal collaboration relationships and to learn the particularities of the way business is conducted in The Netherlands as well as the stronger sectors of the economy and the areas in which Mexican companies participate in the Dutch economy.

In addition to professional activities, I also had time to learn about culture, food, history and other aspects of the country, which gave me a very complete experience.

Elena Rodriguez

Marquez Alonso Abogados



Elena with Miriam Weski, the Interleges member in Rotterdam

Describe in 5 lines one thing you would change in your jurisdiction's civil procedure...

From António Leitão e Carlos Serafim, Portugal:

"The change that we deem necessary in the present Portuguese civil procedure concerns the modification of the rules for the executive judicial proceeding due to the inaction of the execution agents. It should be submitted to lawyers and Law enforcers the control of the execution

proceedings so that a greater efficiency would be reached.”

From Badri & Salim El Meouchi, Lebanon:

“Our main aim would be the acceleration of the lawsuit proceedings by limiting the exchange of the submissions between the parties at the Court clerk’s office, and such in order to restrict the procedures before the Court to examinations and pleadings. This obligation towards the parties should be confronted with the obligation towards the judges to respect the legal delays in the rendering of their decisions, any delay being allowed only exceptionally and for a short period. In such a case any delay by the judge in rendering his decision would be sanctioned on the basis of harmful misconduct.

Another suggestion in this respect would be to review and simplify the notification procedures in case of impossibility of notifying any party to the proceedings.”

We would like to include your answers to the following in our next Newsletter; **describe in 5 lines the time-frame for homologating a foreign judgment (subject to complications).**

Please submit your answers to our Administrator, Annalisa Gordon, at administrator@interleges.com by 1st March 2007.

Please also e-mail Annalisa with any other pieces of News you would like to see in the next edition of the Interleges Newsletter.