

Sofia – Elena Cozac

Attorney-at-Law and Arbitrator



My name is Sofia-Elena Cozac and I am an arbitrator and attorney-at-law, qualified in Romanian and international law, with fifteen (15) years of experience, specialized in both arbitration and litigation.

I am currently an arbitrator with the European Commission for the settlement of EU trade disputes with third countries, with the Bucharest International Court of Arbitration, specialized in construction law, an arbitrator with the European Commission for EU trade disputes, with the Vienna International Arbitral Centre, an arbitrator with the Court of Arbitration attached to the German Chamber of Commerce ("AHK"), an arbitrator with the Iasi local court of arbitration and the President of the Dolj Court of Arbitration. I have acted in over 10 cases as arbitrator or chairman in cases pending before the Bucharest Court of Arbitration or other courts of arbitration.

I speak very well German, having studied in Hamburg and having worked in Vienna, for both Wolf Theiss and Schönherr for more than nine (9) years. I am very familiar with the Austrian environment and educated in this spirit and culture.

Career:

- **May 2021 – present – Head of the Arbitration Practice of Stratulat Albuлесcu Law Firm**
- **September 2020 – May 2021 – Senior Arbitration Attorney with Zamfirescu, Racoti, Vasile & Partners;**
- **May 2015 – February 2020 – Counsel with LDDP – working on ICSID and ICC arbitration cases with Crenguta Leaua and Lalive Advocats (Switzerland);**
- **April 2011 – April 2015 – Senior Associate Schoehnerr Rechtsanwälte (Bucharest Office), working on projects with Herbert Smith Freehills (London & Paris offices);**
- **February 2007 – March 2011 – Senior Associate Wolf Theiss Rechtsanwälte, both in the Vienna office and Bucharest office, in the team of Dr. Christoph Liebscher and Florian Haugeneder.**

I am currently a PhD student in the field of arbitration, with the Faculty of Law, under the coordination of Dr. Crenguta Leaua and I am currently involved in several international arbitration organizations (ICCA, Arbitral Women, Rising Arbitrators Initiative).

Personal Information

Born in Craiova in 1982,
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CITIZENSHIP: ROMANIAN ONLY

Bars and Courts

Romanian Bar Association, 2007
Bucharest Bar Association, 2007

Education

FIDIC Training Course (Module 2) – Dispute resolution (arbitration) on construction projects – January 2018

Queen Mary University of London, LLM in International Commercial Arbitration and ICSID Arbitration – 2011-2013

Institute for Preparation of Attorneys-at-Law – 2008- definitive attorney-at-law

Bachelor's degree. – Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, Faculty of Economic Studies in German Language, Bucharest, Romania, 2007

University of Hamburg, Faculty of European Law, Hamburg, Germany, Post-graduate Studies in European Law, Competition Law Transport Law and International Trade Law, 2006

LL.B. – State University of Bucharest, Faculty of Law, Bucharest, Romania, 2005

"Carol I" High School in Craiova, 2001

Trainings and Courses

Acting as Coach for the 2023 and 2019 Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot Competition, for the team of University of Craiova (my hometown)

Training on Emotional Intelligence and Efficient Interrelationships - May 2015

Courses on Legal English in April 2015

Training on Business Development Skills – Vienna, April 2013;

Courses in Legal German for Advanced German – Level C1 – 2011-

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My experience has been closely connected with construction works, construction disputes (especially FIDIC) and with the administration and management of lease agreements for the developers. I also hold an economy degree in German language, being very familiar with the Austrian environment and culture.

The companies and entities I have advised include: the Romanian State (Ministry of Public Finances, the National Company for Roads Infrastructure Administration SA, other Romanian public institutions), OMV Petrom SA, OMV Aktiengesellschaft, Auchan Romania SA, Prime Kapital, SECOL Societa Edile Construzioni, Real Romania SA, Nordcapital Investment Fund, Rompetrol SA Bucharest, Erste Bank, Volksbank SA, Deutsche Bahn, LIDL Romania, DEGI - Aberdeen (Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Immobilienfonds GmbH), LBBW Immobilien GmbH, Tarmac International, DIMRI Group, Nova Imobiliare SRL, Bog'Art SA, Hypo-Alpe Adria Bank International AG.

Specific projects include:

Arbitration

- Acting as Romanian local counsel in an ICSID arbitration **Sukyias Brothers v. Romania** – pending before the Permanent Court of Arbitration.
- Advising the **Romanian National Company for Roads Infrastructure Administration SA** within more than 12 arbitration disputes concerning motorway rehabilitation projects, based on FIDIC contracts, before the ICC Court of Arbitration, for claims of over EURO 50 million.
- Advising the Romanian State as Counsel in the **Alpiq v. Romania** arbitration case before the International Centre for Settlement of International Disputes in Washington. The claim value was of USD 450 million.
- Advising the Romanian State as counsel in a EURO 2 billion ICSID arbitration claim concerning the Romanian alcohol market and excise duties, filed the **Micula brothers (II)** before the International Centre for Settlement of International Disputes in Washington. The case involved complex fiscal regulations and complex legal matters, also in respect of enforcement of provisional measures ordered by the Arbitral Tribunal.
- Advising the **Water Company of the Pitesti City** in a complex arbitration case before the Bucharest Court of Arbitration in respect of a sewage construction project based on a FIDIC Red Book agreement. The dispute involved legal issues related to the filing of FIDIC claims and substantiating such claims.
- Assisting **EDF Services Ltd** as Counsel in an arbitration case in which EDF claimed damages of more than EURO 100 million for being unlawfully expropriated and eliminated from the Otopeni Bucharest airport, after investing for more than 10 years in the duty-free shops retail business.
- Advising the Austrian company **OMV Petrom SA** in several complex investment arbitration cases filed with the ICC Court of Arbitration with respect to the Privatization Agreement of the National Oil Company Petrom SA (EUR 50 Mio claim). The

2012

September 2012 – Training on Handling with Difficult Situations

March 2012 – Training on Presentation Skills

March 2011 – Stress Management Training

October 2011 – Client Negotiations Training

June 2011 – Soft Skills Training

17 December 2010 – Seminar on "Mica Reforma in Justitie"

July 2010 – Training on Advanced Legal English and Soft Skills Training;

March 2010 – Vienna Arbitration Days – Guerrilla Tactics in Arbitration

June 2009 – Training on banking law with Ms. Andrea Poenaru

May 2009 – Training on Mergers and Acquisitions under Romanian Law with Ms. Ancuta Leach

June 2008 – Training on Due Diligence – Practical and Legal Aspects with Ms. Eva Fischer Partner in WT Vienna office

May 2008 – Training on cross-examination of the witnesses held in Vienna office in view of preparing the ICSID hearing with Ms. Maryam Bigdelli, specialist on linguistic psychology

July 2008 – Soft Skills Training on development of personal abilities and communication with Ms Maryam Bigdelli

June 2007 – Training on Legal English and Accountancy basis in WT Vienna office

October 2006 – Conference "The Foundations of Culture" Conference held by the Neuwaldegg Institute in Vienna

Citizenship

Romanian

Languages

-Romanian – native speaker

-English very good speaking and drafting abilities (Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English and Legal English Trainings, TOEFL Certificate with 104 score and 28 in writing)

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claims concerned environmental damages related to the decontamination of several sites.

- Advising Real Romania SA in several ICC and CICA arbitration cases in relation with the termination of the lease agreements or trade mark obligations;
- Advising DEGI Deutsche Gesellschaft für Immobilien Fonds (“**DEGI**” – currently Aberdeen Group) in filing a EUR 42 million arbitration claim (FIDIC construction agreement) with the Bucharest Court of Arbitration, against the general contractor of one of their buildings in Bucharest, which was involved in a fire event.
- Advising DEGI in filing a EUR 4 million arbitration claim with the ICC Paris Court of Arbitration, related to the release of the escrow amounts following a Share Purchase Agreement having as object three office buildings.
- Advising Nova Imobiliare in an ICC Arbitration of EUR 7.5 million in relation with the development of the Colloseum Mall Bucharest. The dispute had as basis a FIDIC 1999 Yellow Book construction agreement.
- Advising BOG’ART in a EUR 4.2 million arbitration claim with the Bucharest Court of Arbitration in relation with the construction deficiencies of a residential unit developed by BOG’ART Bucharest.
- Advising DEGI in a EUR 270,000 arbitration claim with the Bucharest Court of Arbitration against the general contractor of one of their office buildings, in relation with the construction deficiencies of an office building.

Litigation

- Advising OMV Romania and Petrom Romania in complex litigation claims with respect to the trade-mark infringements by their competitors (oil industry). Successful administrative contentious claims related to the illegality of certain legal provisions.
- Advising Real Romania SA in the due diligence process for the sale towards Auchan Romania SA (EUR 260 million project) - legal advice on litigation issues.
- Legal advice and successful court representation on labour law disputes for clients such as: CSMB, PK Development, Intesa Sao Paolo, Bank of Cyprus Romania, MKB Romexterra Bank, Trelleborg Automotive, Alitalia Romania, Geberit.
- Advising Prime Kapital Group in relation with various court disputes concerning the termination of the lease agreements.
- Various administrative contentious court litigations, real estate disputes, sports litigations, civil law claims, commercial claims.

-German very good speaking and drafting abilities (DAF-Deutsch als Fremdsprache - Certificate in Advanced German issued by the Hamburg Institute for Foreign Languages), Trainings on Legal German

-French –advanced level

-Spanish – beginner

Personal Abilities

- Logical thinking and fast understanding, fast learner
- Ability to work in teams and individually, capable of managing multitasks simultaneously
- Desire and willingness to improve the actual knowledge, ability to think and act “out of the box”
- Excellent communication and negotiation skills, ability to work well under pressure
- Ability to manage complicated multiple tasks and assignments concurrently, set priorities, immediately adapt to changing conditions and work assignment needs
- Ability to assess a situation and identify key issues that need to be addressed
- Ability to work with minimum supervision and to make effective and appropriate decisions independently of others but also coordinate / work as part of a team
- Very good analytical and organizational skills, Proactive attitude and focus on finding adequate solutions