



**Law Office & Mediation Office
CIKAČ
Zagreb - Graz - Wien**

The interview with attorney-at-law, Mag. Vlatka Cikač!



Can you tell us something about you?

Well, I can say in short that I have been an attorney for 10 years and before that I was a trainee lawyer for 5 years after my one year traineeship at the Commercial Court in Zagreb.

Did you dream about being an attorney?

Honestly, not really at first, but later on for sure! That is, when I was in the primary school I wanted to study economy. In my secondary school I wanted to be a successful business woman, such as a manager or small entrepreneur. When I enrolled at the Faculty of Law by a touch of destiny, I gradually began to realise that law practice is the right choice for me.

And then at one moment I have decided - *if law, than law practice!* And that was it! Since then my life has got a new meaning :)

What were your beginnings as attorney?

Rather challenging. Maybe that was caused by my feeling a "manager/entrepreneur" in my heart for a long time, and I had to act as a "lawyer"....

But persistence and tough work had made their contribution and result. I am glad today that I made so much effort, because I would not change the profession of an attorney for any other in the world.

Besides, apart from lovely domestic examples, I always had rolemodels in law offices in Austria and Germany. I had a chance to spent sometime in German offices myself; thus through that experience I have also defined my understanding of law practice and acquired practical experience in international environment! The knowledge of German and English languages additionally contributed to my success in international engagements.



And what is that something that pleases you so much in a profession of an attorney?

The law practice for me is the crown of the legal profession. It is the area where you as the attorney can freely chose your clients, as well as the strategy and tactics in leading a particular matter. With the use of a certain dose of law practice creativity, the success and clients' satisfaction are guaranteed.

And what is the most important to me personally and what brings me the most pleasure is the possibility of direct cooperation with clients (personal/individual approach), the recognition of their needs and interests, and taking all legal actions that bring success to my clients.

The success of my client, client's prosperity and satisfaction, as the result of my efforts, is my greatest pleasure!

In other words, to be at service and disposal to my clients, to provide them with additional value, assist them in solving their legal problems and make them grow, improve, develop and become successful is my greatest pleasure and my real success! I am the happiest when late at evening I close the door of my office and feel I have helped my clients.

Would you like to say that you have managed to successfully link the entrepreneurship and law?

Yes, exactly! I think that through my law office and work with clients in the realm of **family business** (especially regarding resolution of misunderstandings and conflicts with family companies, by *mediation* method - **family business mediation**), I have managed to link my two largest life passions: living full life in the world of family businesses and the wish to serve my clients and resolve their legal issues!

Thus I often use to say that the attorney dealing with companies especially family businesses should ***think like an entrepreneur and act as a lawyer.***

Today when I look back, I think that before I enrolled the Faculty of Law and learn about the law practice, I could not have imagined how challenging and interesting the law practice could be!

Does it mean that with your representation the other party in the dispute will always be fiercely defeated?

It need not be necessarily like that:) That is, my work and life principle is that the disputes and legal complications should be solved in a civilised manner if possible, thus in a way to find compromise solution or to make a settlement.

I always start from the assumption that my client might have a hidden wish/need to continue to communicate/do business with other party in the future, after the resolution of the current dispute, therefore I find it is always required if not even necessary to resolve the conflicts in a manner to leave as much space as possible for future continuation of successful business cooperation and/or mutual communication.

Of course, there are cases in practice when such outcome is not possible and when it is necessary to protect the clients interests in a legal dispute by all means; in such cases I use special approach and find the satisfactory solution for the client.

Is that the reason you deal with mediation too?

It might be one of the reasons, though I am not of those who think that all disputes can be solved by settlement.



I personally think that there are disputes that should or must be solved (or at least started) first in court procedure, though I also know that counterparties sooner or later take such legal positions that peaceful way of solving the dispute is in their interest.

But I also preserve the right to say here that it need not be like that, that some conflicts and disputes really must be solved in a court procedure.

Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. Through individual interviews with clients and detailed analysis of the situation, it is possible to suggest and find the optimal way - mediation or court proceeding.

And who are your clients?

We have two types of clients in the office, though I would like to say that their legal issues are mutually connected and sometimes narrowly intermingled, but in principle they pertain to family

relations and their legal resolutions. As I like to say : *marriage - divorce - property - inheritance*. Thus I like to say that we are a *family oriented office!*

The first group of clients are private persons, **Croatian, Austrian and German clients**, encountering different legal issues regarding conclusion of marriage, divorce, inheritance, acquisition of real estates in Croatia etc (*Marriage - Divorce - Property - Inheritance*).

The second group of clients are **family companies** that through **mediation** (*family business mediation*) try to solve misunderstandings and conflicts among the members of family company caused by changes in generations, disagreement in vision and mission of the company between the members of the family or due to the disbalance between the private and business life (p.ex. due to divorce etc.).

Lately You are intensive present in Austria, more accurate Graz?

Since in my law practice I had a chance to perfect the knowledge of German legal language and work a lot with foreign clients from the German speaking areas, the clients in our office have always mostly been **private persons from Austria, Germany and Croatia** solving their legal issues.

Due the fact that in the meantime I have more clients in Austria, which previously came to Croatia/Zagreb in order to meet with me, I decide to use legal possibility to become **EIRAG odvjetnica*** (translated*: **attorney-at-law**) with the office in Graz, at the address Mohsgasse 10/4 and in Vienna, at the address Billrothstr 86/2.



Regarding the fact that in the Office we use 3 working languages, hence **German, English and Croatian**, the Office can be actually characterised as: *"small international office, for big legal issues!"*

What kind of „international“ cases do we speak about?

These so called international cases are those where we have to use different Conventions, EU-Directives and EU-Regulations, which give us answers to the question of the **jurisdiction**, as well as the question of **applicable law** for the certain case.

Cases that we in the Office work on are usually from the family and inheritance sector, for example divorce, split of the marriage property in divorce, alimony, contact with children, illegal children abduction, as well as inheritance processes (succession).

In the Office we concentrate on the cases that refers to the **legal relationships of the people** which live in **Austria, Germany and Croatia**, especially regarding people who have the **citizenship** of these lands, as well as people who have in these lands their **habitual residence**.

Due the fact that the connecting criterion **citizenship** today not any more primary is, whereas today's primary connecting criterion is **habitual residence**, solving of the legal questions in the European Union became very complex. Therefore it is suggested for people who live in more countries, as for example **Austria, Germany and Croatia**, to inform themselves about their rights and obligations on time.

What kind of literature do you read, managerial or legal?

Though I used to read the managerial literature a lot more, today I read more legal literature, though I intensively keep up every day with what happens in the world of entrepreneurship, and what is actually necessary with respect to my clients - **family companies**.

Of course there is also a literature on business communication, ethics, psychology, finance, economy, spiritual literature... The success nowadays requires multidisciplinary knowledge and continuous learning!

What do you do in your free time?

I do everything except sport, I am not really a born athlete.

But I am a member of several business associations, domestic and foreign, where I intensively engage in a socially useful work. As the member of the Rotary club I am actively involved in the work of my club and the work of Croatian Rotary District 1913.

I like to attend receptions and business parties, lectures and conferences abroad (mostly in Austria and Germany); I also like meeting entrepreneurs and ordinary "small" people, and listen about their challenges, efforts and of course, legal ambiguities and challenges.



All these are the elements meaning a lot to me in performance of law practice, because they keep me in continuous contact with business and life reality.

So far we have been talking only about work, do you have time for private life as well?

I think my private life is quite of quality and personally satisfactory.

I try to spend a lot of time every day with my son, I always find time for my family and friends and I never separate private and business, because I don't see point in that, and my job enables me to freely create my day anyway.

Since I was born in Varaždin, this city still has a special place in my heart and I like to go there, where my family still lives. Regarding the seaside, my favourite island is Krk! If you call me on weekends, these are the locations where I can be most likely found :)

Or you might meet me in a visit to the cinema, theater or museum, or simply at a private or business coffee.

And at the end, is there any thought you personally like and that you would like to share with the readers?

Well, I have quite a fund of thoughts that have led me through life and that mean a lot to me.

But if I have to chose one, that would be the following:

*„Strict persistence, harsh and perseverent can serve to even the smallest of us.
It seldom misses its target.
It is because its silent strenght grows unrestrainably over time.“*

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