

Report of President

Association actions and governance

01.01 - 31.12. 2019



**ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES AVOCATS
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF LAWYERS**

**AEA-EAL General Assembly
June 25th, 2020**



Dear Colleagues,
Dear Friends,

I have a pleasure to present to you the Report of the President on activities and governance of the European Association of Lawyers /AEA-EAL/ in 2019.

Our network is growing year by year, new lawyers, law firms and other entities (bar associations) join us, which allows to enhance activities and to acquire valuable partners for our doings. I wish to thank all our members and friends, who contributed to Association's works last year and made our plans successful. Thank you!

Our activities aim on strengthening networking between members, promoting European concept of a lawyer as independent, self-governing profession, acting for benefit of people and societies, promoting continuing development to

maintain quality of legal services as well as promoting protection of human rights. We expanded our scope of actions outside of Europe by initiating co-operation with organization of lawyers and legal professionals in Central Asia, Hong Kong and mainland China as well as in South America.

We pay attention to facilitate access to our events for lawyers from those countries, where economic situation of our colleagues is sometimes difficult. Therefore we keep conference fees on low level and seeking for sponsorship opportunities from European institutions and other organizations. Therefore our Association does not benefit financially from conferences and membership fees, at the very reasonable level, are our primary source of income. Thanks to our members we may be active and visible.

All of that is possible due to the team work of members of the Board of Directors who are very much engaged in AEA-EAL governance. Special thanks to our Secretary General, Treasurer, Past Presidents, Chairs of the Committees and Office Manager who contribute a lot to keep us on the right track!

Maria Ślęzak
President

Overview



**Twinning of Lawyers
Gdańsk, July 2019**

- Amendments to the Statutes made in 2017 opened membership for lawyers and entities from jurisdictions out of the European Union.
- We increased visibility of the AEA-EAL by updating layout and content of the newsletter (3 editions were issued in the previous year in **four languages each: French, English, Russian and Polish**), website as well as enhancing our presence on Facebook.
- We launched new section on AEA-EAL website: **Papers**. It consists of interesting materials, analyses and articles prepared by AEA-EAL members and our friends since December 2017.
- **Six conferences and seminars** were organized – in Chisinau (Moldova) in April 2019 (partnership) on the **“harmonization and appropriation of the national legislation with the European Community Acquis”**, in Edinburgh (UK) in June 2019 on **challenges connected with use of Artificial Intelligence**, in Gdańsk (Poland) in July 2019 – **Twinning of Lawyers**, in Tbilisi (Georgia) in Sep-



**Presidents' Conference in Vienna
February 2019**

tember 2019 – **“Tbilisi Legal Forum”**, in Łódź (Poland) in October 2019 **“Legal Business Forum”** and in Bern (Switzerland) in November 2019 on **Market Access and Market Fragmentation**. Works on further events has been initiated, however COVID-19 pandemic strongly affected our plans and forms of activity. We had to cancel the conference on **“Legal language in practice of lawyers and courts”** foreseen for June this year in Białystok (Poland); we also had to switch into online event the second edition of **Twinning of Lawyers** in Odessa on September 11. In May of this year we organized **two online events on COVID-19 and justice, human rights and law** – one for Russian-speaking audience in cooperation with the Human Rights Institute from Kazakhstan focusing on human rights and second one in English on access to justice. We are planning next webinars for Spanish and Polish-speaking participants in coming months



**Meeting of the Board
Warsaw, January 2019**

- As every year AEA-EAL was represented on European Presidents Conference in Vienna.
- AEA-EAL President participated as an invited expert in a hearing organized by the Council of Europe on the principles and guarantees of advocates.
- The AEA-EAL is a member of the “Defence of Defenders Network” – an important initiative of international legal community aiming to protect lawyers fighting for human rights.

Events (I)

Harmonization and appropriation of the national legislation with the European Community Acquis

Chisinau (Moldova), April 4 - 7, 2019



Vladimir Palamarciuc, Past President of the Moldovan Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), AEA-EAL member and **Guillaume Tatoueix**, President of the European Young Bar Association (EYBA)

The European Association of Lawyers (AEA-EAL) was a partner of the conference, organized by the European Young Bar Association (EYBA) and Moldavian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA); our speakers were: Ph. D. Iwona Wrońska from Poland, who participated in the session "Policy making, strategic planning and implementation of the goals on harmonization and appropriation of the national laws with European Community Acquis. Regional and national experience" and Pierre Philippe Hendrickx, the Belgian advocate who was speaking in the session "Reforms on harmonization and appropriation of the civil and commercial legislation. Regional and national experience". The event was co-financed by the Embassy of the United States in Chisinau and the Eastern Partnership Program of the European Union.

AI Beyond the Hype – Benefits, Challenges and Liabilities

Edinburgh (Scotland - UK), May 20 - June 1, 2019

The conference has been organized with a huge efforts of our Scottish member Iain Mitchell QC. The topic of the event was "AI Beyond the Hype – Benefits, Challenges and Liabilities". Our partners and sponsors were the Scottish Society for Computers and Law (SSCL), the British Computer Society and the SCRIPT Centre at Edinburgh University. Topics discussed included: What is AI and why should I care? AI and Legal Liability; AI and Fundamental Rights; Towards an Ethical use of AI and AI and licensing issues. The speakers were leading experts, both legal practitioners and academics: Professor Timo Minssen, Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in Biomedical Innovation Law at the University of Copenhagen; Professor Burkhard Schafer, Professor of Computational Legal Theory and Director of the SCRIPT Centre at Edinburgh University and Katharina Miller, President of the European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA). Andrew Katz, joint editor of the International Free and



Iain Mitchell QC

Chairman of the Scottish Society for Computers and Law, AEA-EAL member

Events (II)

Open Source Law Review and a leading expert on software licensing, Chris Rees, the immediate Past President of the British Computer Society, Karmen Turk, advisor to the Estonian Government on AI issues and of course Iain Mitchell QC, who is also Honorary Lecturer in IT Law at Münster University and a Chair of the SSCL. A video contribution was provided by Wojciech Wiewiórowski, current European Data Protection Supervisor.

Very interesting presentations, panels and speeches elicited lively discussions and questions from participants who were truly involved or interested in this fast-moving field. Special interest of the participants aroused in discussions on legal and ethical issues, i.e. in medical AI ("smart pillow") as well as in the question whether AI is a subject of fundamental rights. The Conference was a great opportunity to share information and knowledge about AI as hugely important topic, as well as an excellent chance to build an effective platform for communication and cooperation among stakeholders: lawyers, IT professionals and academics. The AEA-EAL Board was represented by the President Maria Ślęzak, Vice-president Christoph von Wilcken, Secretary General Aleksandra Siewicka Marszałek and Board Member Paolo Sguotti. It has to be mentioned that Iain Mitchell offered an amazing brunch at his home and visiting of surroundings. On our website www.aea-eal.eu you can find conference presentations and video recordings of speeches.



Chris Rees, Immediate Past President of the British Computer Society, AEA-EAL member

Twining of Lawyers: where East meets West

Gdańsk (Poland), July 4-7, 2019

There were intensive days in Gdańsk when representatives of 12 countries from Europe and Asia took part in scientific, networking and social activities. On the first day lawyers from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan, accommodated in homes of their Polish colleagues, discussed issues of cross-border use of GDPR rules. Interesting speeches and active participation of the audience proved the importance of the chosen topic for legal community and citizens. On the margin of the conference many current issues re. legal systems in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia were raised. On initia-



Tina Fernandez, UK, IT law specialist, AEA-EAL member with participants from Belarus and Moldova in Gdańsk

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Events (III)



Jarosław Niesiołowski, Chair of Foreign Affairs Commission, **Maria Ślęzak**, AEA-EAL President and **Jerzy Mosek**, Dean of the Gdańsk Bar of Attorneys at-Law with participants from **Kazakhstan**

tive of the AEA-EAL, delegates from “Twinning Bars” **signed the memorandum** on setting up regular yearly meetings within the scheme of “Twinning of Lawyers. The day was finished with the wonderful dinner where all nations presented their songs and dances. A lot of fun and unforgettable memories! . On the second day our colleagues participated in celebrations of the Day of Attorney-at-law in less formal atmosphere – at the picnic with many local lawyers as well as visited the Old Town of Gdańsk with its 1000 years history and the well-known resort - City of Sopot. Photos from the event are available on our Facebook.

Tbilisi Legal Forum,

Tbilisi (Georgia), September 6 – 7, 2019

The Forum was organized on the initiative of AEA-EAL in cooperation with our collective member Georgian Bar Association. We also invited Hong Kong Law Society, our highly respected partner at many international events. With more than 100 participants (Georgia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, China, Poland), this conference was devoted to issues connecting lawyers and entrepreneurs: business climate and investment regulations in Hong-Kong, China and Georgia, One Belt One Road Initiative and its legal aspects, setting up the procedure between participating parties to assist business community in their countries, to find a proper lawyer when investing/trading, information on principles of performing legal services by foreign lawyers, etc. This conference brought us new members, among the others, lawyers from China. Apart of the high-level scientific program our Georgian friends, prepared nice social events, including sighting of Tbilisi’s surroundings and the meals in traditional Georgian style with famous wines.



David Asatiani (in the middle)
President of the Georgian Bar Association,
member of the AEA-EAL Board of Directors

Events (IV)

Legal Business Forum

Łódź (Poland), October 17 – 19, 2019



Grzegorz Jerzy Wyszogrodzki, Dean of the Łódź Bar of Attorneys-at-law (AEA-EAL collective member)

We organized Legal Business Forum in the “Polish Manchester” as the industrial Łódź of XIX century was called. The Forum aimed to show a practical implementation of new technologies in lawyers’ daily work. We focused on such topics as digital transformation in law offices, impact and making use of concrete IT tools like blockchain, smart contracts, etc. in the light of changing professional practice, predictive justice or Artificial Intelligence and robotics in law and regulations. Our priority was to discuss conference topics from more practical

perspective. Therefore, speakers were legal practitioners dealing with new technologies on daily basis, representatives of bar associations, who showed how the IT influences professional ethics and regulations of the lawyers’ practice as well as founders of legal-tech start-ups, who presented how their ideas were transformed into useful tools for law offices. The audience was not only listening to the speakers but discussed lively the topics of sessions during breaks. Success of the conference may be measured in various ways. One of them is how many participants stay till the end. And in Łódź conference room was full till the closing speech! We cannot forget about a wonderful evening a day before the conference that took place in the beautiful premises of the Łódź Bar of Attorneys-at-law with presence of speakers and foreign guests as well as about the gala dinner in amazing industrial Museum of City of Łódź. Our thanks go to Grzegorz Wyszogrodzki, Dean of the Łódź Bar of Attorneys-at-law, Aleksandra Grocholska - Jankowska, Vice-Dean of the Łódź Bar, Anna Kaczyńska, member of the AEA-EAL Young Lawyers Committee and speakers, especially those who came from afar e.g. Hong Kong, UK, France as well as participants from Georgia, lawyers of our collective member Georgian Bar Association.



Amirali Nasir (speaking)

Vice-President of the Law Society of Hong Kong

Events (V)

Market Access and Market Fragmentation

Bern (Switzerland), November 7, 2019



Participants of the Seminar in Bern

Thanks to Professor Philipp Zurkinden, AEA-EAL Past President and Professor Michael Hahn, Director of the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, we organised for the second time a successful conference on the legal parameters of market access and market fragmentation including international and unilateral standards. The conference brought together high-level speakers representing perspectives of various states and non-state actors. Discussion panels were devoted to certain sectors of industry/ economy: financial services, investment banking as well as pharmaceutical and med-tech market. All presentations referred to issues related to the Switzerland – UK Agreement that will replace existing EU regulations. It has to be mentioned that shadow of Brexit touched all conference discussions. The uncertainty on how future relations between the UK and the EU will look like makes all scenarios on future economic development unpredictable. Prager Dreifuss Law Firm funded very nice lunch for participants, and at the evening farewell dinner for speakers and foreign guests. Very special thanks to prof. Philip Zurkinden for this kind hosting.



Professor **Philipp Zurkinden**, AEA-EAL Past President and Professor **Michael Hahn**, Director of the World Trade Institute

Governance



Maria Ślęzak
President



Aleksandra Siewicka
Secretary General



Monique Stengel
Immediate
Past President



Dariusz Gibasiewicz
Board member



Thomas Simons
Board member

The Structure of the AEA-EAL governance, is following:
General Assembly is the supreme body of the Association and gathers at least once a year.

Board of Directors executes all powers that are not vested by the law or Statutes to other bodies. This spring we suffered a huge loss. Andrzej Kaliński, Member of the Board from Białystok (Poland) passed away.

Management Committee is responsible for day-to-day management of the AEA-EAL and is composed of the President, the Vice-President, the Immediate Past-President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer.



Andrzej Kaliński +
Member of the Board
deceased in March 2020



Jean-Pierre van Cutsem
Chair
Marketing Committee



Paolo Sguotti
Board member



Paweł Szczepniński
Board member



Philipp Zurkinden
Chair
Scientific Committee



Elisabeth Hoffmann
Board member



Kurt Weil
Board member



Christoph von Wilcken
Vice-President



Sabine Perquy Forke
Treasurer



Juan Nunez
Chair Networking C.



Magdalena Witkowska
Chair Human Rights C.



David Asatiani
Board member