

NEWSLETTER



Association Européenne des Avocats
European Association of Lawyers

Autumn / Winter 2023

Merry Christmas



Foreword of the President

Dear Colleagues,
Dear Friends,

The year 2023 is slowly coming to the end. It shall be remembered as a time of great unrests in various parts of our world. It shall be a reminder of the need to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way and to defend human rights. It was also a busy year for our Association. AEA-EAL was organizing and co-organizing numerous conferences and webinars, continued the Mentoring Program, our representatives attended various events as speakers or guests.

Please let me mention some of our activities which took place in the Autumn (we wrote about earlier ones in our previous Newsletters):

- our traditional conference in Bern (Switzerland), on September 7-8, 2023, "(Open) Strategic Autonomy – foundations and tools", co-organized by AEA-EAL Director, Philipp Zurkinder with the University of Bern.

- Sabine Perquy-Forque, the Board member, represented our Association at the First Exchange of Views with the Civil Society, organized by the Council of Europe Secretary General on September 15, 2023. You may find Sabine's summary of this event below.

- I represented AEA-EAL as the speaker at the international conference, organized by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Turkmenistan on "Fostering access to justice in Turkmenistan: the role of a lawyer in international and european law and practice". The AEA-EAL was present at this event at the invitation of the Council of Europe. The conference took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

- our Mediation Committee, under leadership of prof. Irakli Khandashvili, organized the online webinar "Mediation in digitalization era, forms and practice of mediation".

- the conference on business and human rights in Tbilisi (Georgia), in cooperation with the Georgian Bar Association.

- the second conference (the first one was last year) on artificial intelligence and cybersecurity in Gdynia, Poland, organized in cooperation with Gdańsk Bar of Attorneys-at-Law.

You will find more information on these successful events in the Newsletter below.

I would like to invite you to our upcoming events. On January 18, 2024 the Study Visit to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna will take place. On March 6-8, 2024 the international conference "Legal professions in the environment of modern digital transformations. Challenges and dilemmas" shall be held in Lublin, Poland. Please find the details on both events in the Newsletter below. We hope that these events will be interesting and useful for your professional and personal development.

We established the Sustainable Development Law Committee under the leadership of our member Giorgi Tshekhiani. This Committee aims to mobilize legal professionals from Europe and beyond around the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We invite all our members to join the Committee. We also encourage our members to join other AEA-EAL Committees, especially the Human Rights Committee.

The Mentoring Program, organized by AEA-EAL and the European Young Bar Association is unfolding and below you will find testimonials of young lawyers and mentors on their experience in this program.

I am very pleased to let you know that new members have joined our Association, among others from Kazakhstan, Latvia and Poland.

Please let me wish you and your families Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May the upcoming year 2024 bring you good health, peace and many professional and personal achievements.

Maria Ślązak
President

COUNCIL OF EUROPE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

On September 15, 2023, in the Council of Europe premises in Strasbourg, the Council of Europe Secretary General's first Exchange of Views with the Civil Society took place. I had the honor of representing AEA-EAL among approximately a hundred other smaller and larger NGO's. Representatives of the member states and of Council of Europe institutions were also invited to participate in the opening and closing sessions.

The initiative of the Secretary-General, who opened the meeting, was based especially on the Reykjavik Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in the 4th Summit on May 17, 2023, that reconfirmed the need to step up the Council of Europe's engagement with civil society. The exchange of views with civil society is part of the Secretary General's proposals for the implementation of the Helsinki decisions and has the vocation to become a regular feature of the Organisation's interaction with civil society.

Therefore the Secretary General stressed-out more than once the following statement: **"Today is not an event but the process"**.

The objective of the meeting was to get a return, input, observations through the participants, who are directly or indirectly concerned by human rights problems in their day-to-day life, on the realisation of one of the aims of the Council of Europe to implement the standards of the Council of Europe. The starting point and main theme of the debates was the observation that human rights, democracy and the rule of law were seriously decreasing in all member states of the Council of Europe and the question was how to fight together the retreat of democracy.

Therefore, the meeting had been organised in various workshops:

A/ the participation of civil society in the elaboration and monitoring of Council of Europe standards,
B/ democracy in action: working together to strengthen implementation of Council of Europe standards for democracy and good governance,
C/ freedom of association in Europe: protecting and strengthening civic space and the role of the Council of Europe.

Our Association participated in workshop B. During the workshops the moderator sincerely tried to get the most valuable feedback from the NGOs who participated in a very active and constructive way. The results of all the workshops were presented during the closing session with the Secretary General. This 'First exchange' has been considered a success and we'll be watching with great interest the evolution of the process set in motion.

Sabine Perquy-Forque
AEA-EAL Director



CONFERENCES IN NOVEMBER 2023

International Conference on Business and Human Rights - Tbilisi, Georgia

On November 10, 2023, the International Conference – Business and Human Rights for Legal Practitioners took place in Tbilisi, Georgia. This event, organized by AEA-EAL in partnership with the Georgian Bar Association, received support from various entities, including the UN Global Compact Network Georgia, the UN OHCHR, the Council of Europe, the USAID Rule of Law Program, and the Solidarity Center.

The conference drew participation from more than 170 individuals, including lawyers, members of the Executive Board of the Georgian Bar Association, Ethics Commission representatives, and legal professionals from various countries, such as Austria, Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Italy. Delegations from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also attended the conference. We had the honor of hosting Georgia's Minister of Justice, who addressed the participants, underscoring the increasing significance of acknowledging the intersection between business and human rights as a crucial element of professional competence. The opening remarks by the representatives of the donor organizations were followed by welcoming speeches from the Bar Presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, respectively.

The conference featured sessions that delved into critical aspects of business and human rights. The first session, focusing on the International Legal Framework and Emerging Case-Law Regarding Business and Human Rights, featured distinguished panelists such as Salome Zurabishvili, Executive Director of Global Compact Network Georgia, Alex Frank-Thomasser, Member of the Managing Board of the Vienna Bar and Besarion Bokhashvili, Human Rights Officer at UN OHCHR, Giorgi Tshekhiani, Executive Director of the Georgian Bar Association, moderated the session.

The second session concentrated on environmental law, with discussions centering on recent developments in environmental case law and legal challenges encountered in environmental litigation. Esteemed experts such as Jean Marc-Gollier, Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee of the CCBE, Tamar Alania, Judge at the Tbilisi Court of Appeal and Ketevan Vardosanidze, Climate Law and Policy Researcher, led the discussions. Giorgi Chkheidze, Chief of Party of the USAID Rule of Law Program, moderated the session.

The third session explored labor rights concerning the intersection of business and human rights, providing a comprehensive review of international standards and the challenges faced by labor rights in this context. Speakers for the session included Lara Douvartzidis, Lawyer at the International Bar Association, Nato Natenadze, First Deputy Head of the Labour Inspection Office of Georgia, Tamir Gabisona, Regional Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia at Solidarity Center and Sharaf Mammadova, Lawyer of the Azerbaijani Bar Association.

The fourth session involved the presentation of the Council of Europe HELP Platform and an introduction to the HCLP Business and Human Rights Course, led by Levon Maskhoradze, Senior Project Officer at the Council of Europe.

In conclusion, the conference served as a valuable platform for promotion the issue of business and human rights among legal professionals as well as knowledge exchange and the reinforcement of a network dedicated to advancing professional values, upholding the rule of law, and protecting human rights.



International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity - Business. Algorithm. Law. - Gdynia-Gdańsk, Poland

On November 16-18, 2023, the second edition of the International Conference was held in Gdynia, organized by AEA-EAL and the Legal Tech Committee of the Gdańsk Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law. This event became an arena for inspiring discussions on artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, opening new horizons for lawyers and business.

The first panel, dedicated to the ethical challenges of AI, brought together experts such as Iain G. Mitchell KC (AEA-EAL Board member and Chair of our IT Committee), who reflected on potential unethical actions in law. Przemysław Polanski from the Kozminski University addressed the topic of AI in the context of unemployment, and Riccardo Campa from the Jagiellonian University considered the impact of AI regulation on business.

The second panel focused on the positive social impact of Metaverse using the example of two projects. Grzegorz Leśniewski from the Polish Chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications dealt with the regulations of the Metaverse, and Tomasz Jaworski from the Kozminski University presented seven rules governing this virtual world.

The third panel focused on cybersecurity, where Jacek Figula presented the use of blockchain in data protection. Roman Bieda from AI LAW TECH raised new challenges for cybersecurity resulting from quantum technology. Sharon Shi from AllBright Law Offices, a member of AEA-EAL, presented the development of cybersecurity law in China. Wojciech Wołoszyk from IURIDICO – Legal & Financial Translations discussed the threats in AI tools from the perspective of a legal linguist, and Riccardo Vecellio Segate from The Alan Turing Institute highlighted the contributions of China, Japan and India to global cybersecurity standards.

The fourth panel focused on AI regulations and their impact on business. Winghin Chung, Head of Investment and Promotion in Invest Hong Kong discussed attracting business and talent in Hong Kong, and our next member from China – Zhengrong Guan from Wuhan Lotus Technology Ltd. discussed the use of AI in business and cybersecurity regulations in China. Maria Dymitruk from the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe discussed the integration of generative AI in business, and Ajar Rebi from ANR LAW LLP discussed the topic of AI regulation in the context of legal risk and business efficiency in India. Michael Baumert from Baumert LLC presented legislative activities regarding AI regulation in the United States.

The fifth panel was devoted to European digital innovations. Anto Pecio from the Extremadura Science and Technology Park presented technology as an efficiency tool, and Yan Zhenjun from the Global Smart Incubation Network discussed AI and business technology incubation.

The sixth panel, LegalTech, began with Gabriela Bar's presentation on AI as a legal assistant. Iain G. Mitchell KC discussed AI tools for lawyers in Europe, and Michał Olszewski from Vicarius e-kancelaria presented a data-driven approach to generating revenue for lawyers.

The end of the second edition of the International Conference in Gdynia resulted in reflections on the future of law in the context of AI and cybersecurity, emphasizing the need for adaptation and continuous education in the face of rapidly changing technologies. Saturday enriched the event with an interactive Q&A session, giving participants the opportunity to directly exchange views and resolve doubts. These discussions highlighted that intelligent data management and a responsible approach to innovation are key to creating laws that support progress while maintaining ethics and security. The conference conclusions indicate that the future of law will be closely intertwined with evolving technologies, and cooperation between different disciplines and cultures is becoming essential in the global legal landscape. This event not only provided important guidance for practicing lawyers, but also paved the way for future legal and technology initiatives.



UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2024

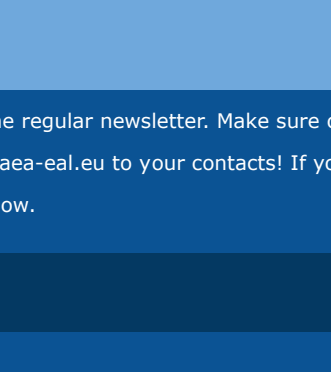
Vienna, Austria, January 18, 2024

AEA-EAL and the Białystok Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law organize the Study Visit to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), that will take place on January 18, 2024, in Vienna, Austria. The meeting is dedicated to cross-border judicial cooperation in criminal matters and the protection of the environment. This is a wonderful time of the year in Vienna as the carnival season is in its peak. The tradition of Carnival balls dates back over 100 years and is still alive in the city. Our colleagues from OTRP Białystok organize an colloquial attraction – a guided tour in Vienna. The tour will take place the next day after the visit. The tour, on January 19, 2024 (Friday) between 10:00 and 14:00 CET. The meeting point for starting the tour will be Hotel Bellevue at 10:00 CET. The Study Visit to FRA as well as the guided tour are free of charge.



Lublin, Poland, March 6-8, 2024

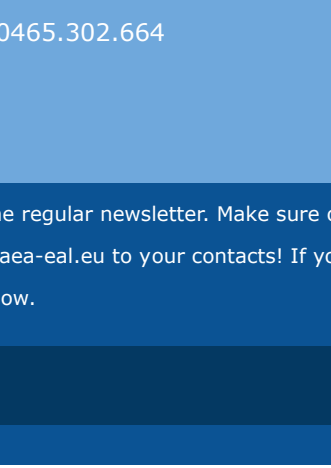
AEA-EAL and the UMCS – Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin organize the International Conference on Legal Professions in the Environment of Modern Digital Transformations, which will take place on March 6-8, 2024 in Lublin, Poland. The research objectives of the conference are to answer not only the question about the general shape of digital transformations in the social sphere, but also about:



- 1) to carry out a diagnosis and identification of the current digital challenges faced by practitioners of the diverse legal professions (also in the context of emerging – and likely to emerge – threats).
- 2) to assess the level (also with regard to the criterion of completeness and quality) of normative regulation in the face of dynamic digital changes in the world.

NEW COMMITTEE

Sustainable Development Law Committee aims to mobilize legal professionals from Europe and beyond around the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Legal professionals, as human rights actors, have a significant role in promoting and protecting sustainable development goals, especially in such areas as: gender equality, labor rights and economic development, reduced inequality, and socially responsible business operations as well as ensuring justice and strong institutions. To promote the area of sustainable development law among legal professionals, the Committee organizes workshops, seminars, conferences and other professional capacity-building activities. In addition, the Committee conducts research concerning the issues under the scope of its findings among legal professionals. The Chair of the Committee is **Giorgi Tshekhiani**. We invite all our members to join the Committee.



MENTORING PROGRAM

What our participants say about the Mentoring Program?

"I am very happy to be a part of this mentoring program. We have already had 4 online meetings with my mentor Kinga. She is wonderful and I am very grateful for her advice and guidance".
Alona Levchuk, Ukraine, mentee

"Thank you very much for the opportunity to be part of the Mentoring Program. I have positive impressions from our online meetings with Katarzyna. It would be really great to meet Mentor not only online, but in real life as well. Also, it would be helpful to have the joint meetings with other Mentees and Mentors of similar professional qualifications, experience, interests. Keep up the good works!".
Sofia Kulitska, Ukraine, mentee

"As a mentee in the European Young Bar Association (EYBA) and European Association of Lawyers - Association Européenne des Avocats (AEA-EAL) Mentorship Program, I have been fortunate to experience firsthand the tremendous impact of having a dedicated mentor by my side. Alina Dłużniewska, LL.M. has not only shared her wealth of knowledge but has also shown immense patience in identifying my career aspirations and challenges".
Igor Serotila, Moldova, mentee

"I very much welcome this initiative, which gives us the opportunity, as lawyers with some experience, to establish contacts across borders with younger conferees".
Alex Tailon, Belgium, mentor