



ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES AVOCATS  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF LAWYERS

## 2024 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

### European Presidents Conference

Vienna, February-March 2025

Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

This year brought about the election of new authorities in our association. It is a great honor to address you as the newly elected President of the European Association of Lawyers (AEA-EAL). I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Immediate Past President, Mrs. Maria Ślęzak, and the board members for their unwavering trust and efforts, which have greatly contributed to the professional advancement of lawyers worldwide.

I have the pleasure to present to you the Report on the activities of the AEA-EAL in 2024.

The AEA-EAL was co-organizer of two large international conferences – one in Lublin, Poland on artificial intelligence and the Polish-German Legal Forum in Opole, Poland. We also organized various events, and engaged in joint initiatives as well as continuing ongoing projects.

Hereby I would like to thank all our members and friends for their contribution in the works of our organization.



David Asatiani

President

### Election of new authorities

On 13 June 2024 the Annual General Assembly of the European Association of Lawyers was held, which, among other things, established the new Board of Directors. Then the Board of Directors elected the new authorities of the AEA-EAL. David Asatiani, the former Vice-President was elected the President of the European Association of Lawyers. Maria Ślęzak became the Immediate Past President. Also, the Board of Directors elected two new Vice-Presidents – Nielson Sanchez-Stewart (Spain) and Michel Forges (Belgium), who joined the remaining Vice-President – Christoph von Wilcken (Germany).

### Study Visit to FRA [18.01.2024]

Following the online meeting on learning about the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and using it effectively in practice, the AEA-EAL, the Białystok Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) organized the study visit at the FRA's seat in **Vienna, Austria** on 18 January 2024. The delegation of the Polish lawyers listens to the lectures on procedural rights of cooperation in criminal matters between member States, and on the Agency's researches, sources and methods of obtaining knowledge on use of the Charter's provisions. The visit also included a joint sightseeing tour of Vienna.



### Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year [21-22.01.2024]

On 21-22 January 2024 the AEA-EAL was represented by its President Maria Ślęzak at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year in **Hong Kong**. The first Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year after COVID-19 was attended by more than 100 guests representing associations of lawyers from around 20 jurisdictions. Maria Ślęzak was one of the speakers at the Presidents' Roundtable on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Legal Profession.



#### **CJ-AV 7th meeting [31.01.2024 – 01.02.2024]**

#### **CJ-AV 8th meeting [13-15.05.2024]**

#### **CJ-AV 9th meeting [09-11.09.2024]**

The AEA-EAL, having the status of observer, participated in the consecutive meetings of the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Lawyers (CJ-AV) held by the Council of Europe in **Strasbourg, France**. The Committee works on drafting the Convention for the protection of the profession of lawyer.

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#### **1st International Scientific Conference “Legal professions in the environment of modern digital transformations. Challenges and dilemmas” [06-08.03.2024]**

This conference took place in **Lublin, Poland** on 6-8 March 2024. The event was co-organized by the Law and Administration Faculty of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) and the European Association of Lawyers (AEA-EAL). The substantive panel discussions in the hybrid mode were held at the University Hall. The simultaneous interpretation (Polish-English) was provided. The panel topics included research problems such as: a) the use of IT systems by legal professionals and their impact on the security of the provision of legal services, b) cybersecurity issues, c) the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the provision of legal assistance, d) modern algorithmic solutions and their impact on the legal services market. Aspects related to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and its impact on the indicated issues as well as elements of diversification of individual legal systems were also taken into account. AEA-EAL ensured the participation of experts from various legal cultures (the USA, Hong Kong, South Korea, India, Argentina, France, Spain, Italy, Georgia, Azerbaijan) in order to achieve the highest possible level of internationalization and diversification. The speakers included, among others, the President of the Bar of India and legal counsels of such corporations as Mitsubishi Electric US, Inc. and Fujitsu Korea Limited.



#### **Webinar „Lawyers: Communication, Publicity and Advertising. The Experience in Azerbaijan and Europe” [05.04.2024]**

On 5 April 2024 the **online** webinar was held, organized by the AEA-EAL Deontology Committee and the Azerbaijani Bar Association (ABA). The speakers from AEA-EAL and ABA discussed the problems of communication, publicity and advertising of lawyers in Azerbaijan as well as in the European countries.

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#### **Guidelines for Lawyers in Mediation [15.04.2024]**

The AEA-EAL Mediation Committee has developed the Guidelines for Lawyers in Mediation for the members of the Association. The Guidelines were published on 15 April 2024.



#### **Guidelines for Lawyers in Mediation**



#### **Webinar „Mediation for Cross-Border Business Disputes” [18.04.2024]**

On 18 April 2024 the **online** webinar was held, organized by the AEA-EAL Mediation Committee and the International Online Dispute Resolution Centre (eBRAM) from Hong Kong. During the first part of the webinar speakers from AEA-EAL and eBRAM shared their experiences in managing mediation for cross-border disputes. The second part of the webinar included the live demo of eBRAM mediation platform and its application in cross-border mediation. It was highlighted that the institutions will continue further cooperation and work on joint activities.

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#### **International Conference „Development of the human rights lawyers’ community: theory and practice” [19-20.04.2024]**

On 19-20 April 2024 an international conference was held in **Vilnius, Lithuania**. AEA-EAL collective member – the Białystok Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law – representative, Helena Janczylik participated as a speaker with the presentation „On the Role of Polish Lawyers’ Associations in Supporting „Defendants of Justice” and „Human Rights Lawyers” in the current Europe”. The objectives of the Conference were: to strengthen the legal community of the Eastern European region based on common values, competencies and approaches for increasing access to justice and promoting and protecting human rights, to identify

opportunities to increase access to justice through the activities of human rights lawyers, to discuss issues of in-service training of human rights lawyers and strengthening educational outcomes. The Conference was dedicated to the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers, registered in Vilnius, Lithuania, bringing together Belarusian lawyers in exile, deprived of the status of a lawyer in their country for political reasons, forced to leave their country, and to present and discuss best practices and support for human rights lawyers who have already started implementing these methods in their activities.

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#### **Friendship Agreement between AEA-EAL, CLA and UMCS [21.05.2024]**

On 21 May 2024 in **Lublin, Poland** there was a ceremony to sign the friendship agreement. The three parties to this agreement were the European Association of Lawyers (AEA-EAL), the California Lawyers Association (CLA) and the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (UMCS). The meeting was held at the premises of the UMCS Law and Administration Faculty. The friendship agreement was signed by AEA-EAL President – Maria Ślęzak, CLA President – Betty Williams, CLA International Law & Immigration Section Chair – Margaret Francisco, UMCS Vice-Rector – Arkadiusz Bereza, UMCS Director of the Institute of Legal Sciences – Leszek Leszczyński, and UMCS Dean of the Law and Administration Faculty – Anna Przyborowska-Klimczak. This friendship agreement is a result of previous cooperation related to the international conference organized by UMCS and AEA-EAL in Lublin in March 2024 and attended by the speaker from CLA. Signing of the agreement was accepted by all the parties as a basis of even more intense future cooperation in scientific and professional fields.



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#### **Webinar „Legal Situation of Mothers in Countries from the East to the West” [23.05.2024]**

On 23 May 2024 the **online** webinar was held on the occasion of the Mother’s Day, organized by AEA-EAL and the Opole Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law. The webinar hosted the human rights lawyer from Kazakhstan, Aiman Umarova (AEA-EAL member) as well as the solicitor from the UK, Dorota Beange, speaking

about the legal situation of women and mothers in different jurisdictions.

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#### **14th Polish-German Legal Forum [05-07.09.2024]**

The 14th Polish-German Legal Forum was held on 5-7 September 2024 in **Opole, Poland**. It was organized by the Opole Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law. The co-organizers were: the AEA-EAL, Rechtsanwaltskammer Sachsen, Polish National Bar Association of Attorneys-at-Law (KIRP), Regional Bar Associations of Attorneys-at-Law in Wałbrzych, Katowice, Zielona Góra, Toruń, Łódź, Wrocław, Fundacja Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej and Opolskie Centrum Rozwoju Gospodarki, OCRG – a body of the local government of Opole Province. The Forum was also granted the patronage from the European Commission. The forum included three days of intensive discussions, networking and integration which resulted in the immersion of topics of AML, international family law and lawyer communication. Our Association was represented at the event by AEA-EAL Secretary General, Aleksandra Siewicka-Marszałek.



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#### **Conference „Liberal Market Order and Zeitenwende” [12.09.2024]**

On 12 September 2024 another edition of the traditional conference on market access was held at the University of Bern, at **Bern, Switzerland**. The problems discussed at the conference included the relationship between Switzerland and the EU and various aspects of the liberal market. The organizers of the event were Prof. Dr. Michael Hahn (University of Bern), Prof. Dr. Marc Bungenberg (Saarland University) and Prof. Dr. Philipp Zurkinder (University of Basel, the Member of AEA-EAL Board of Directors).

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#### **5th International Women in Law Conference „Making Law Attractive Again” [12-14.09.2024]**

The International Conference „Making Law Attractive Again” was held in **Vienna, Austria** on 12-14 September 2024. It was organized by the Women in Law Initiative. The conference covered two main topics: Young Voices: The Future of Law (How can we create a more diverse and welcoming future for law) and Unlocking Equal Pay (How to promote pay transparency and combat the gender pay gap in Europe). The AEA-EAL was

represented at the conference by the Immediate Past President, Maria Ślężak.

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### **Joint Statement calling for the universal abolition of the death penalty [10.10.2024]**

AEA-EAL was the signatory of the joint statement published on 10 October 2024. "As representatives of the profession of lawyer in various parts of the world, committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law, the undersigned organisations joined voices in a unified call for the universal abolition of the death penalty, recognising the inherent dignity of every individual and the fundamental right to life". Additionally, the undersigned organisations encouraged authorities and all relevant actors of society to engage in constructive dialogues, share best practices, and support one another in the pursuit of alternative, humane, and effective measures to address crime and protect society in a manner consistent with the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

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### **Webinar „Professional Secrecy and Legal Professional Privilege. An International View” [28.10.2024]**

On 28 October 2024 AEA-EAL Deontology Committee under its Chair and AEA-EAL Vice-President Nielson Sánchez-Stewart, organized the **online** webinar dedicated to the problems of professional secrecy and legal professional privilege. The event attracted more than 120 registered participants from various countries and jurisdictions. The webinar was opened by AEA-EAL President David Asatiani, who welcomed all the participants and addressed the importance of the topics to be discussed. The webinar speakers made very interesting interventions, which were then followed by a vivid discussion which concluded with the announcement of another webinar to be held by the Deontology Committee. The speakers were AEA-EAL members: Iain G. Mitchell KC, Jędrzej Klatka, Jean-Louis Collart, Alex Tallon, Vladimir Palamarciuc and Nielson Sanchez-Stewart.



### **Cooperation Agreement between AEA-EAL, MCSU and KIIT [25.11.2024]**

On 25 November 2024 in **Lublin, Poland** the cooperation agreement was signed between the AEA-EAL, the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (MCSU) in Lublin and the

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar, India. The agreement was signed by Maria Ślężak (AEA-EAL Immediate Past President), Prof. Dr. Arkadiusz Bereza (MCSU Vice-Rector of General Affairs) and Dr. Varun Suthra (KIIT Director of International Relations). The Parties agreed to support the development of mutual contacts and cooperation in scientific activity, research and development, and in teaching.



### **Mentoring Program**

The very 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Mentoring Program, organized by the European Association of Lawyers (AEA-EAL) and the European Young Bar Association (EYBA), has been completed. All the mentors and mentees participating in this program were congratulated and awarded with special certificates. They were also asked to share their feedback to encourage others to apply for the next edition of the program. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Mentoring Program has been launched at the end of the 2024.

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