



Press Release

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AIJA appoints Swiss Lawyer as new President at Buenos Aires Annual Congress

AIJA (International Association of Young Lawyers / Association Internationale des Jeunes Avocats)

Anita Schläpfer, Partner of Schellenberg Wittmer AG in Zurich, has been appointed the new President of AIJA, the leading global association for young lawyers.

The 51st Annual Congress brought together over 380 lawyers from around the world in Buenos Aires. It is only the second time in over 50 years an AIJA congress has taken place in South America, a continent where lawyers are increasingly internationalising their own practices. The attendance list included over 100 lawyers from the Americas as well as representatives from an additional 50 countries worldwide, with Argentina, Brazil and Switzerland showing the greatest level of support.

Newly appointed President, Anita Schläpfer, expressed her thanks at the close of the Congress:

“On behalf of AIJA’s Bureau and all participants, I would like to personally thank the members of the O.C. and everyone else involved in making this wonderful Congress happen, for their commitment and hard work and for the exceptionally high level of quality input to the scientific programme. A warm thank you also goes to our Argentinian hosts. If there were any doubts that Buenos Aires moves to the rhythm of the tango these have surely been quashed.”

The 2013 Annual Congress was marked by the elections of a number of the members of the worldwide Bureau and Executive Committee, a comprehensive scientific programme as well as a diverse social schedule.

The pre-congress seminar on ‘Dos and don’ts when doing business in Latin America’ launched the event and received the highest levels of positive feedback from participants. Other popular sessions within the scientific programme included ‘Latin America in Global M&A Transactions – a mouse that roars?’, the football workshop on ‘Funding and re-structuring clubs in today’s markets’ and a working session entitled ‘The Lawyer as Entrepreneur?! The challenges of new business models in an ever-changing legal environment’. More information can be found here: www.aijabuenosaires2013.org/scientific-program-2/

This Congress facilitated the arrival of a number of new members to the senior management team of the organisation, including the election of Anita Schläpfer as the new President, new Vice President (Dirk Nuyts, Fragomen Global LLP, Brussels) and new Secretary General (Nicolas Thieltgen, Brucher & Thieltgen, Luxembourg), reflecting both the ethos of enabling younger members to take responsibility sooner and the practicalities of AIJA being the only global association devoted to lawyers and in-house counsel aged 45 and under.

Outgoing President, Thierry Aballéa of Cabinet Artus Wise in Paris, was full of hope and positivity for AIJA's future.

"We are experiencing a steady growth of Latin American lawyers in the organisation and the success of this Congress promises further participation. The Congress in Buenos Aires and next year's Half Year November Conference in Chile serve as a very good opportunity for lawyers in the region to get to know AIJA better. It is an organisation with European roots and is not as well known in the region as we wish. Latin America is a great example to our members on other continents. A few Argentinians decided to bid for Buenos Aires two years ago and then managed to gather a team coming from many countries in Latin America to promote this Congress. They set new standards in terms of quality, marketing and promotion for AIJA and we are so grateful to them."

This optimism was echoed by Cristian Elbert, Head of the BA Organising Committee:

"The congress was a tremendous success both from an academic and experience point of view. We felt that it was a true celebration, a fusion of cultures and an extremely positive exchange. This has without question been an interesting contribution in constructing bridges between South America and the rest of the world."

"We have received great feedback reporting the success of the congress. With so many people from around the world joining in, sharing and participating, the atmosphere was akin to that of the Olympic Games - a truly wonderful experience."

Looking ahead, Giuseppe Marletta, Association Manager, commented,

"We embrace the challenges ahead, to welcoming new members to dynamic and inspiring seminars and conferences, to advancing their knowledge of the ever-changing legal world and preparing them for their future as high-achieving lawyers."

Reflecting on the success of the Congress and AIJA's growth, Anita Schläpfer remarked,

"This conference has been a wonderful example of AIJA's commitment to consolidating our ties with South America thus further expanding our global family beyond its European roots."

The association's next major event is the bi-annual conference on 21-23 November in Luxembourg City.