



NEWSLETTER

FOREWORD OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE IAJ

Dear Colleagues,

It is a personal privilege for me to be writing as the new elected President of the IAJ.

I follow in that role from Tony Pagone whose work as President occurred at a time of immense difficulties caused, namely, by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, those times are still not over adding worrisome indications in several regions of the world on the decay of judicial independence and Rule of Law.

Democracies are in crisis now aggravated by the dystopian temptations emulated by digital technology.

In these challenging times, regarding our activities, IAJ managed to successfully organize our General Assembly, in Rome, participated by a large majority of our members.

It was possible to vote on several capital issues and particularly on the renovation of our internal bodies, including the election of members of Presidential Committee and the new boards for the four Study Commissions.

In the acceptance speech I pointed out the main priorities for my mandate.

Having the protection of an independent judiciary as the most important commitment, other priorities were listed in a world in rapid change.

Sustainable development in the terms of the United Nations 2030 Agenda implies a particular attention to gender issues, with the recent terrible example of the Afghan women judges, to diversity, to the environment - there is no Planet B - and to the protection of minorities. Being IAJ, by far, the largest judicial association run by judges is fundamental to pursue the recognized pillars for rule of law and just societies. For this purpose, IAJ counts, like always before, on the continuous dynamism and efforts provided by our 94 national associations of judges that are the "heart and soul" of IAJ.

The IAJ has two new associations that joined us - Philippines and Gabon. A special word of welcome to them; let's work together for our common goals.

Employing the seminal concept of Alexis de Tocqueville, associations have the fundamental role of enabling social integration through the values of cooperation and solidarity.

The recent torment of the judges of Afghanistan, in particular of the women Afghan judges, was a particular priority for IAJ's President.

It must be recognized that the work of many of us probed to be successful - a significative percentage of women judges managed to be repatriated. These women and their families are now in safe environment, protected by the friendly countries that received them.

However, this crucial work must continue. The issuing of visas is essential to help us save more lives. In fact, at this very moment, it must be underlined the extreme danger suffered by men judges in particular those belong to the minorities Hazara and Shia.

International community must focus also on these Colleagues now a main target for the Taliban.

On another front, the economic and social crisis caused by the pandemic, in societies that remain unequal, is a serious challenge to each and every one of us. In the times we are living with the rise of populist and autocratic regimes, this is the right period to proclaim, with serene rationality, that governmental responses can no longer forget the main difficulties of today's societies: without rule of law as an instrument for the development of nations, without the separation of powers, without independent justice, without judicial careers based on merit and never on the favours of the ruling politicians, there is no point in talking about a better common future.

Despite the weariness of democracy, despite the indifference of too many politicians towards our values as defenders of human rights, our commitment remains, with determination, always the same. Because, after all, everything rests on the warning of a US president, Andrew Jackson, underlined two centuries ago: "All the rights secured to citizens by the Constitution are worthless, and a mere bubble, if they are not guaranteed by an independent and virtuous judiciary".

Therefore, in the coming years, IAJ counts on you all on helping us to create a better world for the generations to come. Be sure that we will continue to do our part. A clear sign of our strength and resilience can be found on the number of national associations that already present their willingness in organizing the next General Assemblies.

We all are looking forward for the 2022 World Meeting in Tel Aviv, Israel, also aiming to 2023 meeting in Taiwan and 2024 assembly in South Africa.

Other important events and initiatives are now highlighted in the present newsletter giving the opportunity to know more about our organization.

In the meantime, on a personal basis, may I wish you the very best in terms of wealth and happiness for all of you for this New Year.



*José Igreja Matos
President of the IAJ*

INDEX

MEETINGS BY VIDEO LINK OF THE PRESIDENCY COMMITTEE IN MARCH, JUNE AND NOVEMBER 2021.....	3
MEETING BY VIDEO LINK OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL IN ROME ON 11-12 SEPTEMBER 2021.....	5
RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE EAJ-EUROPEAN R.G. OF THE IAJ.....	8
RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE AFRICAN, IB.A. and A.N.A.O. R.Gs. OF THE IAJ.....	12
AFGHANISTAN: SOLIDARITY, NEWS AND DOCUMENTS.....	13
RECENT CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES.....	15
INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENCY COMMITTEE.....	17

MEETINGS BY VIDEO LINK OF THE PRESIDENCY COMMITTEE IN MARCH, JUNE AND NOVEMBER 2021

Meeting of the Presidency Committee by video link, on 20th and 21st March, 2021

On March 2021 the IAJ Presidency Committee met online.

The President of the EAJ, Mr. Igreja Matos informed the Presidency Committee about his meeting with the EU Parliament the day before. He spoke about the situation of the judiciaries in Poland and Hungary and was “attacked” by a Polish parliamentarian. The EU Parliament was aware of the problems concerning judicial independence in those countries though it seemed inclined to delay finding a solution. The Parliament has a committee for justice affairs which is drafting a report and asked Mr. Igreja Matos to contribute to its works.

President Pagone proposed to issue a formal resolution, stating that the Central Council cannot be held in person neither in Costa Rica nor anywhere else.

The Presidency Committee decided that the Central Council will be informed of the postponement of the meeting venues by one year and of the fact that the 2021 meeting also proved impossible to be held in presence, therefore the planning will continue with the 2022 meeting in Israel and the 2023 meeting in Taiwan.

The Secretary-General then informed the Committee on the state of preparations, the choice of the interpreting company and the adaptation of the IAJ website to ensure the ability to vote.

President Pagone recommended the President of the Regional Groups to practice the voting system on the IAJ website and make sure that their respective member associations understand it.

The IAJ Secretariat-General informed the PC that, the proposal for amendment of the Constitution and Regulations of the International Association of Judges, had been translated in all of the official languages and had been sent to the IAJ members, in due compliance with the statutory provisions.

The amendments apply to cases when force majeure or other events prevent the regular running of IAJ’s activities. The proposal intervenes on Articles 7, 8 and 12 of the Statutes and on Articles 3, 5, 7 and 13 of the Regulations to discipline the frequency of meetings of the Central Council, the extension of mandates conferred by elections, the suspension of the monitoring procedure that might be affected, and in fact were affected, by situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendment would also retrospectively cover the decision to prolongate the mandate of the Presidency Committee and of the Secretariat-General of one year, until next meeting of the Central Council. It would also change the rules on the quorum for votes of the Central Council and sets out rules for the conduct of meetings by videoconference.

Meeting of the Presidency Committee by video link, on 26th and 27th June, 2021

On June 2021 the Presidency Committee met online.

The main theme of the meeting was the organization of the next PC and CC meeting in September. Mr. Oberto informed the Presidency Committee about the locations visited together with President Pagone to find a place that could host the members of the Presidency Committee as well as a small number of others in Rome for the meeting. After balancing the various options and the technical arrangements for the video-call, the Secretary-General and the President proposed to the Presidency Committee Palazzo Rospigliosi, where there is also the possibility to have technical support with a single zoom connection for the whole Committee, cameras and microphone that pick up who speaks. The Presidency Committee agreed on the proposal and authorized the President and the Secretary-General to arrange the technical features.

The President asked whether the members of the PC were planning to come to Rome for the meeting.

All of them confirmed their willingness depending on possible restrictions to travels imposed by their respective countries.

President Pagone stressed that the agenda was meant to deal with the absolute minimum procedural matters that the IAJ must achieve, i.e. the elections, the admission of new members, the approval of the amendments to IAJ Constitution and Regulations. It must be noted that two items might prove to be potentially controversial, such as the 2022 meeting in Israel.

Letters and communiq  s by the President and the Secretary-General to all Member Associations

In view of the next Central Council meeting of September, on 14th July 2021, a letter signed by Secretary-General, Giacomo Oberto and President Pagone in English, French and Spanish was disseminated among the IAJ members together with the agenda, the timetable and the decisions of the PC to be ratified (in the 5 official languages).



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES MAGISTRATS
UNIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE MAGISTRADOS
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG DER RICHTER
UNIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI MAGISTRATI

PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA - PIAZZA CAURO - 00199 ROMA - ITALY

Rome, 14 of July 2021

Dear Colleagues,

We write formally to invite you to participate in the meeting of central council scheduled for September 11, 12 and (if necessary) 13.

Article 7.7 of our constitution requires the President to convene a meeting of central council at least once every 2 years. It last met in Nur Sultan in 2019 but it has not been able to meet in 2020 or 2021. Article 7.7 also requires that the meeting of central council take place at the seat of the different members but the global pandemic made it impossible for central council to meet as planned in Costa Rica in 2020 or in 2021 as rescheduled.

The president, in consultation and in agreement with the Presidency Committee, has decided to discharge the obligation imposed by article 7.7 by convening a meeting in Rome but with attendance via zoom. The current travel and domestic restrictions do not make it feasible for an in-person meeting. We have inspected several possible convention locations but have not found any that will permit any significant physical presence because of the obligation to maintain social distance other than for the members of the presidency committee, the secretariat, some assistants and at most a small handful of people.

It will therefore be necessary for this next meeting to take place in Rome by zoom. The secretariat has worked closely with technical advisers to permit a meeting at which all associations can be present by video and to cast votes on essential resolutions. This has not been easy technically and it is not easy logically because of the different time zones we are in. We have selected a time frame of 2 hours that will permit the greatest number of participants; however, we will need to be efficient and rigorous with our timing.

We propose that we commence our meeting at 15.00 sharp on each day but ask please that you log on 30 minutes before; please log in at 14.30 (Rome time) for a 15.00 formal start. The extra 30 minutes is to ensure that all can log on and be able to participate from 15.00. We hope that all will be able to sign on without difficulty but the extra 30 minutes will help us resolve any problem without interfering with the meeting itself. This is especially important because we will have only 2 hours each day to accommodate the different time zones.

Your attendance at this meeting is crucial. There will be elections for the presidency committee positions, the secretariat, and approval of the accounts. However, it is crucial that you be present also to vote on the amendments to the constitution and regulation, and also to approve the measures the presidency committee needed to take because of the pandemic. We attach the agenda and proposed resolutions from which you will see the importance of your presence at the meeting albeit by video.

Please remember that there are different quorum requirements for the different votes (see article 7 para 6 and article 12 para 2 and 3) and that a valid amendment can only be achieved if we have the appropriate quorum required by the provisions. We therefore ask associations which will not be attending please to give a valid proxy so that the association may be counted as present by proxy.

We particularly urge any association who has not yet appointed their delegates please to ensure that a valid proxy has been appointed. We also ask that you give a proxy if for whatever reason you are not able to be in attendance during the voting part of the meeting. We realise that the different time zones, and the time that may be taken during the zoom meeting, may make it difficult for some delegates to present for the whole of the time.

We remind you however that Art 6 of the regulations require that proxies be given in writing. Please send any proxy also to the general secretariat by 5 September; that is necessary because we will need to generate a different user id and password for each association - the proxy must vote as proxy using the user id and password of the association giving the proxy. The proxy cannot use its own id and password to vote for the association giving the proxy.

This year it will not be possible to hold the usual meetings of the regional groups or of the study commissions during the same period as the meeting of central council. However, there will be a short meeting of the European Regional Group immediately after the session at which the vice presidents of the IAJ are elected by central council. The study commissions will be holding their meetings this year electronically and will have elected their office bearers and decided their future topics before central council meets in September.

Please feel free to contact either of us if you need further information. These have been difficult times but we hope that you will understand why it has become necessary to hold the next meeting like this.



G Tony Pagone
President



Giacomo Oberto
Secretary General

The message was sent also to the dedicated distribution list including the delegates appointed by the member associations. Invitation letters were sent to the following:

- NGOs: IAP, International Commission of Jurist (ICJ), UINL; International Association of Clerks (UIHJ), Judge's Forum of the International Bar Association, International Association of Lawyers (UIA), Adenauer Stiftung, International Bar Association Human Rights Foundation (IBAHRI), Global Judicial Institute on the Environment, Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association, International Association of Women Judges, International Union of Portuguese Speaking Judges, World Jurist Association;
- International institutions: CEPEJ (Mr. Gurbanov), UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, UNODC.

Meeting of the Presidency Committee by video link, on 27th November, 2021

The meeting started with the introduction of the booklet on the creation of new associations. Mr. Oberto explained that it would be composed of a foreword by the President, then the guidelines and a model statute, and then, as an appendix, some concrete examples of national statutes in force. The result would be a truly new instrument, never done before, interesting not only from a theoretical perspective but mostly from a pragmatic point of view. The intention was to publish it on the website and to send it to IAJ member associations with a letter co-signed by the President and the Secretary-General inviting them to circulate the document through their channels and bilateral relations with judges in other countries. The President and the Secretary-General already started looking for possible entry points in several countries. Afterwards, after having contacted interested judges in countries where an association does not exist, the IAJ would organize an official presentation. Although the idea of a surprise presentation is fascinating, there would be a risk of having an unprepared audience and, therefore, little outcome. The main point would be not only to find interested colleagues, but colleagues who may act as a magnet to their fellow judges in order to coagulate the efforts.

Next meetings. First Vice-President Sessa informed the PC that the springtime meeting of the EAJ would take place on 28-30 April in Porto and Gaia and Guimar  es. Before, there would be an on-line meeting on 3 December, to present the new Board of the EAJ and discuss some urgent national issues.

Vice-President Barone said that the Costa Rican association was evaluating the possibility of hosting the IBA Group springtime meeting and the final answer was due to arrive in December.

Vice-President Duncan announced that the ANAO Group would convene virtually on May 26, 2022, and that she hoped to organise a meeting in presence in 2023, in the same premises as for the IAJ meeting in 2012.

Vice-President Kouassi informed about the options for the African Group meeting. There was the willingness of the Tunisian Association, but the period was to be still chosen, taking into account the Ramadan and the uncertainties due to the pandemic crisis and the vaccination campaign.

MEETING BY VIDEO LINK OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL IN ROME ON 11-12 SEPTEMBER 2021



On 11th and 12th September 2021, the online meeting of the **Central Council** took place. In attendance (by video link or in presence in Rome) were:

- the President, Mr. Tony Pagone;
- the First Vice-President, Mr. José Manuel Igreja Matos;
- the Vice-Presidents, Mr. Djamel Aidouni, Ms. Allyson Duncan, Mr. Duro Sessa and Mr. Mikael Sjoberg;
- the Honorary Presidents, Mr. Christophe Régnard, Mr. Sidnei Beneti, Mr. José Maria Bento Company, Ms. Cristina Crespo, Mr. Antonio Mura, Mrs. Maja Tratnik, Mr. Gerhard Reissner and Mr. Günter Woratsch;
- the Secretary-General, Mr. Giacomo Oberto;
- the Deputy Secretaries-General, Mr. Lucio Aschettino, Mr. Galileo D'Agostino and Mr. Raffaele Gargiulo;
- the IAJ representative at the UN seat in New York, Ms. Louise Mailhot;
- the delegates of 68 national associations.

President Pagone opened the meeting of the Central Council, by welcoming all present, thanking them all for attending remotely this very special on-line meeting of the IAJ and expressing apologies for some unexpected technical difficulties in logging in. He informed the Assembly that some members of the Presidency Committee were able to travel to Rome and were therefore attending the meeting from the same hall which included himself, the Honorary President Mr. Régnard, the First Vice President Mr. Igreja Matos, the Vice-Presidents Mr. Sessa and Mr. Sjoberg, as well as all the members of the General Secretariat. The Vice-Presidents Mr. Aidouni and Ms. Duncan and the acting representative of the Ibero-American Group, Mr. Barone, were connected via video link. President Pagone then referred to the difficulties experienced at this time by judges, and especially women judges, in Afghanistan.

Secretary-General Oberto announced the candidatures received according to art. 3 of the Regulations under the Constitution. There was a candidature for the post of President of the IAJ, submitted by the First Vice-President José Igreja Matos, and six candidatures for the six available posts of Vice-President, submitted by (in alphabetical order) Mr. Walter Barone (Brazil), Ms. Allyson Duncan (USA), Ms. Marcelle Kouassi (Ivory Coast), Ms. Sabine Matejka (Austria), Mr. Duro Sessa (Croatia) and Mr. Mikael Sjoberg (Denmark). As to the General Secretariat, there were the candidatures of the present members, i.e. Mr. Giacomo Oberto as Secretary-General and Mr. Lucio Aschettino, Galileo D'Agostino and Raffaele Gargiulo ad Deputy Secretaries-General.

-Election of the President.

President Pagone noted that there was only a candidate to the post of IAJ President and therefore declared that **Mr. José Igreja Matos was the new President of the International Association of Judges**. Delegates greeted him via zoom chat Mr. Igreja Matos took on the chair of the session and thanked the Assembly for the election. He then delivered a [speech](#), acknowledging the Portuguese Association, the members of the Presidency Committee and the Board of the European Association of Judges for the work done together. He addressed a special salutation to the judiciary of Costa Rica and in particular to the members of ACOJUD, who made enormous efforts to host the annual meeting and were prevented to do it because of the pandemic. He expressed the hope to meet soon in person again and reaffirmed the IAJ commitment for the independence of the judiciary. He dedicated his election to Afghan judges, facing an ordeal those very days because of the independent exercise of their function. President Igreja Matos then designated the former President, Mr. Tony Pagone, as Honorary President of the IAJ and member of the Presidency Committee. The Assembly unanimously acclaimed the proposal. He then awarded Honorary President Pagone, on behalf of the entire International Association of Judges, with a silver plate acknowledging his guidance and leadership during the difficult times of the pandemic. Honorary President Pagone thanked all for the touching gift. President Igreja Matos then gave the floor to Honorary President Antonio Mura, who was attending the meeting in person in Rome. Mr. Mura congratulated him for the election and greeted all delegates who managed to participate in the meeting, even if in virtual form. This attitude shown the strength of the links creates with and thanks to the IAJ.

***-Election of the 6 Vice Presidents.***

President Igreja Matos recalled the names of the candidates (in alphabetical order): **Mr. Walter Barone** (IBA Group), **Ms. Allyson Duncan** (ANAO Group), **Ms. Marcelle Kouassi** (African Group), **Ms. Sabine Matejka** (EAJ), **Mr. Duro Sessa** (EAJ) and **Mr. Mikael Sjoberg** (EAJ). He then proposed to elect them by acclamation. There were no objections and he formally stated all the candidates as Vice-Presidents of the International Association of Judges. Delegates greeted them via zoom chat.

-Election of First Vice-President.

President Igreja Matos noted that the only candidature to the post of First Vice-President was that of Mr. Sessa and proposed to elect him by acclamation. There were no objections and he formally stated **Mr. Sessa as First Vice-President** of the International Association of Judges. Mr. Sessa took the floor to greet the Assembly and delivered a speech, recalling his long-standing commitment to the IAJ since 1998 when he first attended a meeting of the IAJ. Delegates greeted him via zoom chat.

-Election of Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General.

President Igreja Matos called for an acclamation on the candidatures for the posts of Secretary General and Deputy Secretaries-General. Mr. Oberto was re-elected by acclamation Secretary General of the IAJ. Mr. D'Agostino, Mr. Gargiulo and Mr. Aschettino were unanimously re-elected Deputy Secretaries-General. Mr. Oberto thanked the Assembly for the confidence shown in him and the team of the Secretariat. Delegates greeted them via zoom chat.

-Vote on the admission of the associations of Gabon and of Philippines.

Secretary-General Oberto asked the technician to move into a breakout room the delegates of the two applicant associations.

Gabon. President Pagone announced upon certification by the certifiers that there were 68 Member Associations on line at that moment and eligible to vote and that there had been 60 votes in favor of the admission and 1 abstention. The Constitution required the acceptance by 2/3 of the votes cast and, even if not all the association had completed the voting procedure, the result was unequivocally in favor of the admission of the Gabonese Association. The President therefore officially closed the voting and formally declared the Gabonese Association member of the IAJ. Delegates greeted the Gabonese Association via zoom chat.

Philippines. Secretary-General Oberto opened the vote recalling that the specific link was sent via the zoom chat. President Pagone announced upon certification by the certifiers that there were 68 Member Associations on line at that moment and eligible to vote and that there had been 60 votes in favor of the admission and 2 contrary votes. Philippines delegates were re-admitted to the main conference call and President Pagone congratulated them upon joining the IAJ. President Anne Beatrice Balmaceda thanked the rapporteurs and the IAJ Central Council and expressed the joy of her association for having been admitted in the IAJ. Delegates greeted the Philippine Association via zoom chat.

-Vote on the proposed amendment of Constitution and Regulations.

President Igreja Matos announced that there was the necessary quorum to proceed to this voting. Secretary-General Oberto took the floor to briefly illustrate the content of the proposed amendment and explain again the voting procedure, that will need two different ballot papers because of the different quorums requested to amend the Constitution and the Regulations. Mr. Oberto then declared open the vote on the amendments to the Constitution. President Igreja Matos announced that out of 60 associations logged in to vote, 59 were in favor of the amendment to the Constitution and 1 was against and therefore stated the amendments as approved. President Igreja Matos then opened the vote on the amendments of the Regulations. President Igreja Matos announced that there were 58 votes in favor and therefore stated the amendments as approved.

-Reports by the Presidents of the Study-Commissions.

1. Selection of the new subjects.

President Igreja Matos highlighted the sad situation that prevented the Study Commissions from gathering in presence, acknowledging the special role of the Commissions for the vitality of the IAJ. The Study Commissions worked throughout the year, nevertheless, and managed also to renovate their boards. President Igreja Matos called on the Presidents of the four Study Commissions to report on the conclusions of the Commissions on their respective subjects:

- 1st Study Commission - Mr. Walter Barone: “Access to justice during the Covid-19 pandemic”;
 - 2nd Study Commission - Mr. Thomas Cyr: “How data protection rules are impacting on civil litigation”;
 - 3rd Study Commission – Vice-President Ms. Lene Sigvard: “Communication in the criminal courtrooms”;
 - 4th Study Commission - Mrs. Julie Dutil: “Fraud and Corruption in the workplace: How does it affect employees?”
- The Presidents proposed the subjects to be dealt with by the Study Commissions in 2022:
- 1st Study Commission: “Disciplinary proceedings and judicial independence”;
 - 2nd Study Commission: “How data protection rules are impacting on civil litigation”;
 - 3rd Study Commission: “Restrictions by the criminal law of the freedom of speech”;
 - 4th Study Commission: “What is the impact of the judicial workplace (including appointment, independence of decision making, governance, assignments, funding and other resources) on judicial independence?”.

2. announcement of composition of the Boards of the Study Commissions.

The Presidents announced the new compositions of the Boards:

- 1st Study Commission: Mrs. Marilyn Huff (USA) as President, Mr. Roland Kempfle (Germany) and Mr. Mohamed Khadraoui (Morocco) as Vice-Presidents, Ms. Graciela Gatti (Uruguay) as Secretary;
- 2nd Study Commission: Mr. John Edwards (Ireland) as President, Mrs. Kristine Eidsvik (Canada), Mrs. Mette Soegaard Vammen (Denmark) and Mrs. Flávia da Costa Viana (Brazil) as Vice-Presidents;
- 3rd Study Commission: Mrs. Lene Sigvardt (Denmark) and Mrs. Sally Cahill (UK) as coPresident, Mr. Clayton Conlan (Canada) as Vice-President;
- 4th Study Commission: Mrs. Margaret McKeown (USA) as President, Mr. Josh Wilson (Australia), Mr. Paulo Dornelles (Brazil) and Mr. Dario Scaletta (Italy) as Vice-Presidents.

The Central Council approved the conclusions as well as the proposed topics for 2022.

Meeting of the Presidency Committee by video link, on 12th September 2021

On the occasion of the Central Council, the Presidency Committee also met, by video link.

President Igreja Matos gave the floor to the newly elected members of the Presidency Committee, Ms. Sabine Matejka, Ms. Marcelle Kouassi. Mr. Sjoberg greeted the colleagues, followed by Mr. Sessa and Mr. Pagone who also congratulated Mr. Barone for officially joining the Committee after having been an informal member of the PC since the resignation of Mr. De Menezes. Mr. Barone presented himself.

President Igreja Matos noted that it was decisive for the future of the IAJ to enhance cooperation with other international organizations. IAJ had at present 17 partnership with various institutions and organisations, dealing with training, rule of law, judicial independence, security issues etc.

When Vice-president Duncan proposed to establish a WG the Presidency Committee agreed and it was now the moment to deal with practical issues to make the WG work.

The President of the WG would be Ms. Duncan and it was to be decided how to appoint the other members. A possibility would have been to ask the Central Council to create the WG in its today session, but this was very difficult in practical terms because there had had no time to look for possible members in previous months. Another possibility was to start the WG organising its work and choosing its members and then ask the Central Council's approval.

President Igreja Matos therefore asked Ms. Duncan to proceed this way, asking the Presidents of the Regional Groups to propose the names of the members.

President Igreja Matos then spent some words on the situation in Afghanistan. He would release a statement of the IAJ making an appeal to save judges and underlining the importance of issuing them humanitarian visas. While there were several organisations engaged in financial support to help these people leave the country, the true problem was the unwillingness of State to host them on humanitarian grounds. The Presidency Committee agreed to empower itself with an extended mandate to do whatever it could to help Afghan judges, in particular women judges. Whoever within the PC would receive an email asking support for an Afghan judge, should forward it to the IAJ President, who set up a sort of task force that will include these people in special official lists for the evacuation from Afghanistan.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE EAJ-EUROPEAN R.G. OF THE IAJ

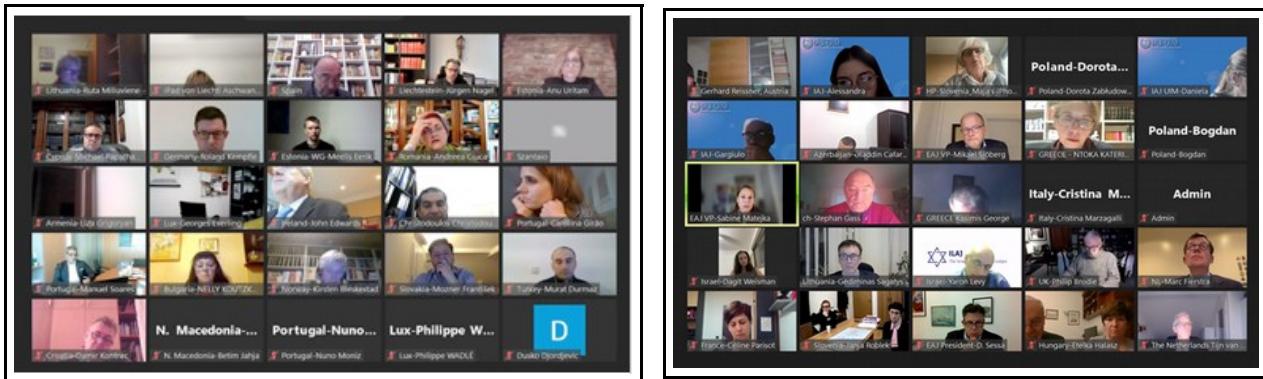
Meeting of the EAJ on 28th May, 2021

On 28th May 2021 an online meeting of the EAJ (European Association of Judges, Regional Group of the IAJ) took place under the presidency of the IAJ First Vice President and President of the EAJ Mr. José Igreja Matos. In attendance were the IAJ President Tony Pagone, Vice Presidents Duro Sessa and Mikael Sjoberg, as well as the IAJ Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto. Honorary Presidents Guenter Wortsch, Maja Tratnik and Gerhard Reissner were also in attendance, as well as the Representatives of 33 EAJ member associations. Special guest, Mr. Filippo Donati, President of ENCJ (European Network of Councils for the Judiciary).

The Assembly discussed current problems of the Judiciary in Europe, such as the situation of Justice in Poland, Greece, Croatia, Slovakia and Portugal. President Igreja Matos related about his activities whereas Secretary-General Oberto explained the plans and technical solutions for next EAJ and IAJ meetings and activities, in particular with reference to the 63rd IAJ annual meeting of the Central Council, due to take place this Autumn online.

The EAJ adopted Resolutions on [Greece](#), [Poland](#) and [Slovakia](#).

Meeting of the EAJ on 3rd December, 2021



On 3rd December an online meeting of the EAJ (European Association of Judges, Regional Group of the IAJ) took place under the presidency of the IAJ First Vice President and President of the EAJ Mr. Duro Sessa. In attendance were Vice Presidents Mikael Sjoberg and Sabine Mateika, as well as the IAJ Deputy Secretary-General, Raffaele Gargiulo. Honorary Presidents Maja Tratnik and Gerhard Reissner were also in attendance, as well as the Representatives of 35 EAJ member associations.

The Assembly discussed current problems of the Judiciary in Europe, such as the situation of Justice in Poland, Greece and Lithuania. President Sessa related about his activities whereas the Chairman of the WG on the situation of member Associations, Mr. Stephan Gass, summarized the content of his report.

The President of the Portuguese association announced the will to host the **next EAJ meeting in Porto on 28-30 April, 2022.**

Other issues discussed: the Provident Fund and Afghanistan.

Other activities of the EAJ

International Conference on Justice, Equality and Gender



Following the cancellation of the EAJ meeting in Porto, the Portuguese Association, member of the IAJ, decided to hold an International Conference on the 8th of March, the International Women's Day, on the subject JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND GENDER. The Conference had national and international speakers.

50th Anniversary of the Slovenian Association of Judges

On 4th June, the Slovenian Association of Judges, held a special ceremony to commemorate its 50th Anniversary. The event was presential and took place in Ljubljana for an audience of several dozens of judges and some international invited guests.

Having in mind the difficult long months experienced by all organizations of judges due to the total absence of presential activities, this ceremony held on Ljubljana in June 4th marked a symbolical and historical moment that should be much welcomed.

The speakers of the event were Andrej Ekart, President of the Slovenian Association, and José Igreja Matos, President of the European Association of Judges.

During the ceremony, a special and moving tribute has been made to prominent Slovenian judges, members of the national association, including Honorary President of IAJ, Maja Tratnik, and Janja Roblek, distinguished member of several commissions within EAJ.

Adding to the presence of national judicial authorities – President of Supreme Court, President of Constitutional Court – attended the activities some foreign invited colleagues including the Vice President of IAJ, Duro Sessa, and the presidents of the Croatian and Austrian Associations.

Congress of the Greek Association of Judges

The President of the International Association of Judges, **Mr. José Igreja Matos**, participated in the Congress of the Greek Association of Judges that took place in Athens from 29th to 31th October.

Mr. Matos delivered the [closing speech](#) of the ceremony named "*Fair Trial and Judicial Independence – Can one live without the other?*".

During the event a public welcome ceremony to Afghan women judges was held. These women arrived to Greece escaping from the country due to the persecution by Talibans.

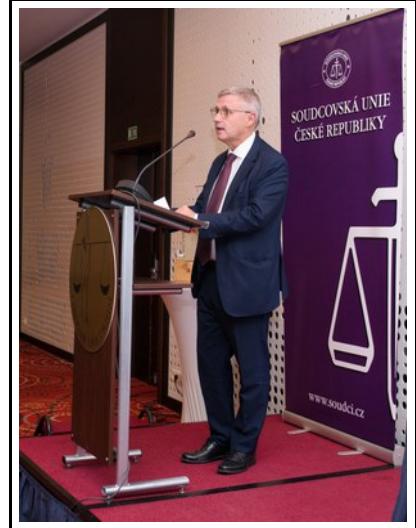
The President of IAJ shared a message with the participants in the following terms:

"On behalf of the International Association of Judges (IAJ), the largest organization of judges in the world composed by national association from 94 countries, I warmly welcome the Afghan Judges, now arriving in Greece. I would like also, as president of IAJ, to express my deepest gratitude to the Greek authorities for this gesture of solidarity regarding our Colleagues. The Greek association of judges, our national member, has been totally committed in helping the judiciary of Afghanistan, particularly the women judges, and their efforts proved to be fruitful. It would be crucial that other associations and countries could follow your outstanding example.

I am certain that our colleagues and respective families will have a swift and successful adjustment to the new circumstances of their lives. Wish you all the best with the treasured support of our Greek Colleagues and Friends! Καλός ήρθατε"

Congress of the Czech Union of Judges

On 22th October 2021, the 31st Congress of the Judicial Union of the Czech Republic took place in Prague. Its President Libor Vávra and Mr. José Matos ([speech](#)), President of the International Association of Judges, took the floor. Libor Vávra focused mainly on the current state of the Czech judiciary and the burning problems of the courts. At the same time, he emphasized the full readiness of the Judicial Union of the Czech Republic to significantly contribute to their resolution. The President of the International Association of Judges, Mr. Matos, stated that the Judicial Union promotes the rule of law and judicial independence in a region where there are many difficulties in the field of justice. He expressed the belief that the Czech judiciary would remain independent in the years to come. In the final resolution, the Assembly pointed out the unsatisfactory state of digitization of justice, which does not meet the standards and needs of the 21st century. The Judicial Union offers the necessary cooperation in the implementation of digitization projects.



Poland

On 31st March 2021, the European Commission decided to refer Poland to the Court of Justice of the European Union regarding the law on the judiciary of 20 December 2019, which entered into force on 14 February 2020. The Commission also decided to ask the Court of Justice to order interim measures until it has issued a final judgment in the case. See the press release here: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1524.

On 5th July 2021, three former prosecutors Małgorzata Bednarek, Jarosław Duś and Adam Roch, appointed by the politicized National Council of the Judiciary and the President of the Republic of Poland to the Disciplinary Chamber located in the Supreme Court building, have made an unlawful decision to waive the immunity and suspend Józef Iwulski the President of the Supreme Court.

Statement of Polish Supreme Court Judges

In connection with the adoption of a "resolution" by the Disciplinary Chamber on July 2, 2021, on the consent to prosecute Józef Iwulski the Supreme Court Judge, we hereby declare:

1 / pursuant to the resolution of the three joint Chambers of the Supreme Court of 23 January 2020 and the broad legal argumentation presented therein, the Disciplinary Chamber is not a court within the meaning of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Treaty on European Union;

2 / according to art. 181 of the Polish Constitution, the waiver of the immunity of any judge may take place only with the consent of an independent and impartial court.

As a consequence, we are convinced that as long as the prosecutor's motion to waive the immunity of a judge is not examined by an independent court, there is no legal decision in the matter which is the subject of this motion.

Warsaw, July 2, 2021

On 20th July 2021, the four European most important judicial associations, namely the European Association of Judges–EAJ, Judges for Judges, the European Association of Administrative Judges and MEDEL, drafted a letter as regards the recent developments in Poland related with the judiciary. The [Letter](#) was sent to Ms. Ursula Von Der Leyen, President of the European Commission, to Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council and to Mr. David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament.

On 17th and 19th September 2021, IUSTITIA, the Polish member of the IAJ, held its anniversary celebrations in Gdańsk. The President of the IAJ, Mr. Igreja Matos, together with Honorary President Pagone attended the event. [Speech](#) of the President.

On 8th October 2021, The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded. CNN reported that one of the possible candidates was Polish Judges Association Iustitia (member of the IAJ). For more information: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-03-01/329-candidates-for-2021-nobel-peace-prize>

On 11th October 2021, different Polish judges' associations issued a [Statement](#) entitled „Common position of judges and prosecutors“, while the President of the European Judges Association (EAJ), Mr. Duro Sessa, sent a [Letter](#) of support to „Iustitia“, the Polish member association of the IAJ.

On 14th October 2021, the European Commissioner of Justice, Mr. Reynders, sent a [reply](#) to the letter from the 4 European Associations of Judges and Prosecutors about the recent developments in Poland.

On 27th October 2021, EU court fines Poland 1 mln euros per day in rule of law row. Further information available in the following web site: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-top-court-orders-poland-pay-1-million-euros-day-rule-law-row-2021-10-27/>

On 13th November 2021 (the International Day of Kindness), judges from the Polish Judges Association "IUSTITIA" and prosecutors from Prosecutors' Association Lex Super Omnia started their unique action: the Polish National Hybrid Run of Support for Afghan Lawyers.

On 6th December 2021, the Polish Senior Judge's Home Foundation established an [Aid Fund](#) to provide support for judges who have been suspended from adjudicating for defending the rule of law in Poland.

Turkey

The European Association of Judges, through its President, received periodically letters with relevant information about the updating of the situation of ongoing trials on Turkey courts. February: [Letter](#)
June: [Letter](#)

On 12th February 2021, the Platform (which gathers the four European most important judicial organizations, namely the European Association of Judges–EAJ, Judges for Judges, the European Association of Administrative Judges and MEDEL) issued an



important [Statement](#) on the rejection decision of the President of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) of 28 January 2021 concerning the application as third-party intervenor.

On 25th February 2021, a [joint initiative](#) has been taken by several prominent international bar associations and lawyers' organizations in recognition of the struggle of a Turkish lawyer Ebru Timtik for the right to a fair trial. The associations involved: Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH), European Bars Federation (FBE), European Democratic Lawyers (EDL-AED), French National Bar Council (CNB), International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), International Association of Lawyers (UIA), International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), Italian National Bar Council (CNF), Law Society of England and Wales, and Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L).

An International Fair Trial Day (IFTD) will be observed every year on 14 June.

Every year a focus country will be decided and events will take place on and around the day to draw attention to the situation in the country concerned.

An annual Ebru Timtik Award will also be designated around the IFTD to recognize and support the struggle of others for the same purpose.

On 28th July 2021, the four European most important judicial associations, namely the European Association of Judges, Judges for Judges, the European Association of Administrative Judges and MEDEL, drafted a [statement](#) on Turkey.

The letter was sent to the Council of Europe and to the European Commission (DG Justice and DG Enlargement).

On 25th December 2021, we received special greetings from our colleague Mehmet Tank. After 100 months in prison, he returned to his family.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE AFRICAN, I.B.A. and A.N.A.O. R.Gs. OF THE IAJ

As far as the other three Regional Groups of the IAJ are concerned, we may mention following activities:

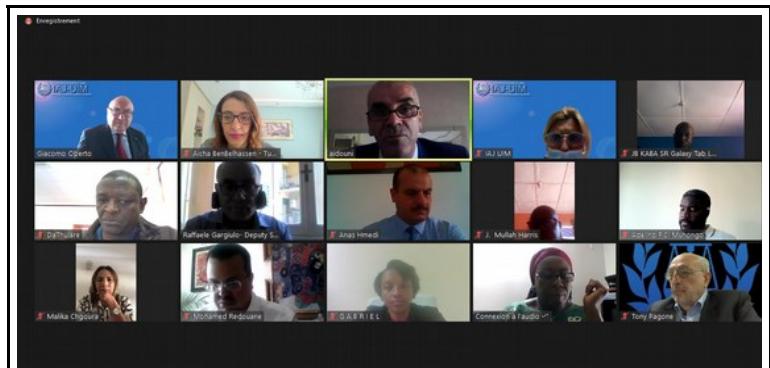


African Regional Group

On 27th and 28th March 2021, the **Association of Tunisian Judges**, member of the IAJ, organised, in cooperation with Euromed Rights, a conference entitled: «Judicial communication and media relations: stakes and challenges for an independent judiciary» and a training course for judges on: “Communication and Judicial Information”.

On **29th May 2021**, an **online meeting** of the African Group took place under the presidency of the IAJ Vice President and President of the AFR, Mr. Djamel Aidouni. In attendance were the IAJ President Toni Pagone, the IAJ Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto and IAJ Deputy Secretary-General Raffaele Gargiulo, as well as the Representatives of 14 African member associations. The Assembly discussed current problems of the Judiciary in Africa.

Secretary-General Oberto explained the plans and technical solutions for next AFR and IAJ meetings and activities, in particular with reference to the 63rd IAJ annual meeting of the Central Council, due to take place this Autumn online. Other issues were discussed such as the appointment of delegates for the next annual meeting as well as the representatives for the IAJ Study Commissions.



On **14th July 2021** the **National Association of Democratic Lawyers of South Africa** (Nadel) issued a [Statement](#) which sums up the situation in the country. The organized profession in the Republic, including the Black Lawyers Association, the Pan Africanist Bar Association and the Legal Practice Council have all issued statements condemning the violence, as well as the statements which tended to threaten the courts and members of the Judiciary of the Republic. The Executive and Government in general have all supported the independence of the Judiciary and upholding the Rule of Law.

On **20th October 2021**, at 3pm. (Angolan time), the **Angolan Judges Association (AJA)**, member of the African group of the IAJ, held a seminar about the **organization and function of Judiciary**, through a video conference on the Zoom Platform. The President of the African group, **Ms. Marcelle Kouassi**, was invited to make the [opening speech](#). This Seminar theme was **the consolidation and (un) consolidation of the Rule of Law** and was divided in the following sub-themes: The Independence of Courts and the Consolidation of the Rule of Law; Angola Building a Rule of Law.



Ibero-American Group

On **19th April 2021**, the Ibero American Group (IBA) issued a [Statement](#) concerning a bill on public sector in **Costa Rica**.

On **4th May 2021**, the Ibero American Group, Regional Group of the IAJ, adopted a [declaration](#) on the dismissal of judges of the Supreme Court of **El Salvador** without due process.

On **9th June 2021**, an **online meeting** of the IBA (Ibero American Group, Regional Group of the IAJ) took place under the presidency of Mr. Walter Barone (Brazil), acting representative of the Group. In attendance were the IAJ President Mr. Tony Pagone and the Deputy Secretary General Mr. D'Agostino as well as Representatives of 15 IBA Group member associations (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Perú, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay). The Assembly discussed current problems of the Judiciary in Latin America. Mr. Barone related about his activities and the 63rd IAJ annual meeting of the Central Council due to take place this Autumn online.

On **2nd September 2021**, the Ibero American Group of the IAJ released a [declaration](#) on the reform of the judicial career approved in **El Salvador**.

On **3rd November 2021**, a webinar on the Challenges of Judicial Independence in **Guatemala** took place. The event was organised by the Ibero American Group (IBA) of the International Association of Judges (IAJ), together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. In attendance: Mr. José Igreja Matos, President of the IAJ, Mr. Diego García-Sayán, UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Ms. Erika Aifan, criminal judge in Guatemala, Ms. Adriana Orocu, Vice president of FLAM. Mr Hartmut Rank took the floor, as well, on behalf of Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Mr. Walter Barone, Vice President of the IAJ was moderator.



ANAO Group

On 11th March 2021, the IAJ Presidency Committee and Secretariat-General express their deepest condolences to the US Judiciary and to the Family of US Federal Judge Peter Hall, who passed one week after announcing he would step back from the region's federal appellate court. Hall, 72, was the lone Vermonter on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit, which is based in New York City.

Tribute of the Federal Judges Association.

All IAJ Officials and Delegates appreciated very much the high level commitment of Peter's work at the IAJ, both in the ANAO Regional Group, and as Member and President of the First Study Commission. We shall always remember his great humanity and his very lively empathy.

On 16th August 2021, the President of the ANAO group, Ms. Allyson Duncan, issued a [Statement](#) on Afghanistan.

On 15th October 2021, the ANAO drafted a [Statement](#) to call upon the **Lebanese government** to adopt the standards of Judicial Independence recognized by the International Association of Judges (IAJ), Minimum Standards of Judicial Independence of the International Bar Association, and the International Standards of Independence of Judges and Lawyers articulated by the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

On 16th October 2021, the [Bloch Judicial Institute](#), which featured the [article](#) to which IAJ President Matos and Vice President Duncan contributed, has an issue with a round table on threats to judicial independence foreign and domestic, in which Vice President Duncan participated.

AFGHANISTAN: SOLIDARITY, NEWS AND DOCUMENTS

On 23rd February 2021, the **International Association of Women Judges** drafted a [statement](#) about the dangerous situation being faced by women judges in Afghanistan. This is the leading edge of an attack on women in prominent roles, human rights and, ultimately, the integrity of courts and the rule of law and an extreme form of gender-based hostility against women judges. Moreover, threats to individual judges are not isolated issues and can be part of a broader offensive to undermine the independence of the judicial function more generally.



On 16th August 2021, the International Association of Judges has issued today an official and public **Call for International Support on Afghanistan**.



CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT IN AFGHANISTAN

The International Association of Judges (the IAJ) joins the many others calling for urgent, sustained and meaningful support for those in Afghanistan now likely to be adversely affected by current events. The world community has a clear duty to support those who will now find themselves on the wrong side of the new regime. We have some responsibility for having created expectations of rights and liberties in that country that may no longer be available. Many in Afghanistan have in recent years tried to create a system based upon freedoms and liberties that we take for granted but which may no longer be available to them. Promises were made and expectations were created that may now no longer be given but they must not be left without support. Women judges in Afghanistan have already expressed genuine fear in an uncertain and evolving situation. They are one of many groups that have tried to implement the values which many of us take for granted and which the west has actively encouraged. They cannot be left without support.

The IAJ supports the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. We believe that these are fundamental to a free and ordered society in which people can live in peace and safety. We believe also that it our duty to support those who also support these principles and whose life and freedom may be at risk for seeking to apply them or live by them. The situation now evolving in Afghanistan will leave many at risk and the international community must not leave them to an uncertain fate. We must do all we can to help those who have sought to implement those principles which we hold dear and which we believe to be fundamental to a free and safe life.

The Hon G. Tony Pagone QC
President

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On **17th August 2021**, the two main “syndicats de magistrats français” (Syndacat de la Magistrature and USM) addressed a [Letter](#) to the French President of the Republic to support the Afghan judges.

On **18th August 2021**, The Global Judicial Integrity Network issued a [Statement](#), while the Executive Board of the ENCJ endorsed the recent call for international support in Afghanistan by the International Association of Judges (IAJ).

On **21st August 2021**, Hon. Tony Pagone, President of the IAJ, addressed a [Letter](#) to all the IAJ members requesting support for women judges in Afghanistan following a call of the IAWJ.

On **27th August 2021**, the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) published a public [Statement](#) on the current situation in Afghanistan.

On **18th September 2021**, the Presidents of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) and the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) issued a [joint Statement](#) on the situation of the judges in Afghanistan

On **27th September 2021**, the UN Special Rapporteur, Mr. Diego Garcia-Sayan submitted a [letter](#) to Madame Ursula von Der Leyen. The letter addresses the situation of women judges, lawyers, and prosecutors in Afghanistan.

On **20th December 2021**, a [joint Statement](#) has been drafted by the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union, the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary, the European Association of Judges and the Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions. The Statement is aimed at expressing solidarity with particular regard for the rights of female judges in Afghanistan for the brutal violation of human rights, as well as the ongoing destruction of judicial structures and the abolition of any independent approach to justice.

On **21st December 2021**, the Association of European Administrative Judges (AEAJ), the European Association of Judges (EAJ), Judges for Judges and Magistrates Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés (MEDEL), signed a [Letter](#) concerning the precarious situation - with specific risk of death - of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and human rights activists in **Afghanistan**.

The letter was sent to the **German Federal Minister of Justice, Dr. Marco Buschmann**.

RECENT CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES



UN

In resolution [44/8](#), as in previous ones, the Human Rights Council requested the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers to submit annual thematic reports to the General Assembly and Human Rights Council.

For 2021 the topic concerned the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the impact and challenges for independent justice.

Full [report here](#).

United Nations A/HRC/47/35

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 April 2021
English
Original: Spanish

Human Rights Council
Forty-seventh session
21 June–9 July 2021
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: impact and challenges for independent justice

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Diego García-Sayán

Summary

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has severely undermined the functioning of judicial systems, increasing the risk that States will be left without a functioning, accessible and independent system of justice. Its impact has been uneven, differing from country to country, but has tended to be disproportionately severe for vulnerable groups. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers examines the effects of this new situation and the main challenges that it raises for the administration of justice.

In the report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 44/8, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on judicial systems and their independence and on access to justice, and makes a number of recommendations intended to help State authorities to guarantee access to justice and a functioning and independent system that is open to the people.

The United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is the world's largest and most diverse gathering of policy-makers, practitioners, academia, intergovernmental organizations and civil society in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

The Congresses have been held every five years since 1955 in different parts of the world, dealing with a vast array of topics.



The 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held from **7 to 12 March 2021 in Kyoto, Japan.**

The IAJ participated by video link and was represented by President Pagone, First Vice president Igreja Matos, Vice President Sessa and Honorary President Reissner.

ENCJ

On **28th October 2021**, the ENCJ General Assembly gathered in Vilnius to discuss the position of the Polish National Judicial Council, the KRS, in the ENCJ.

The ENCJ General Assembly voted to expel the KRS. Here the [Speech](#) of the President of the European Association of Judges (EAJ), Mr. Duro Sessa.

UNODC

From 8th to 10th December 2021, Mr. Gerhard Reissner, Honorary President of the IAJ participated in the 30th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal. The prominent theme for the session was "Effective measures to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants, particularly women and children, and those of unaccompanied migrant children". As a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the thematic discussion was postponed to the thirtieth session of the Commission.

EU

In a [letter](#) of **2nd February 2021**, the EU Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Didier Reynders, officially invited the European Association of Judges to take part again to the Rule of Law Report.

On **15th March 2021**, the European Association of Judges presented its [second contribution](#) to the European Commission for the Rule of Law Report.

On **20th July 2021**, the **2021 Rule of Law Report** was adopted by the European Commission (Directorate-General Justice and Consumers). The European Commission expressed its gratitude to the EAJ (European Association of Judges) for the valuable contribution which helped the Commission in preparing the Report. The press release is available [here](#) and the Report and all relevant materials related to the Report are available on [this website](#). In particular, a summary of the outcome of the stakeholders consultation and all stakeholder contributions can be found on [this website](#).

On **25th October 2021**, EU Commissioner Reynders [replied](#) to the [Resolution](#) adopted by the European Association of Judges (EAJ), about judiciary in **Slovakia**.

On **7th December 2021**, Mr. Stephan Gass, Chairman of the EAJ *Working Group On the Situation of National Member Associations*, sent a [Letter](#) to the EAJ member associations (addressed only to the members of the European Union) asking them to answer a [Questionnaire](#), in order to prepare a report for the EU- Commission's Rule of Law Report.

CEPEJ

The 37th plenary meeting of the CEPEJ took place on 8 and 9 December in Strasbourg and online. An action plan for the next four years has been adopted on the theme "digitalization for a better justice", aiming at reconciling the efficiency of new technologies and the respect of fundamental rights which will also guide decisions on the practical follow-up to the [European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems and their environment](#). The Guidelines on the digitalization of court files and the digitalization of courts has also been adopted. Judicial professionals are at the heart of the new revised SATURN Guidelines for judicial time management, in which the means at their disposal to reduce the length of proceedings are envisaged. Finally, the adoption of the CEPEJ activity programme 2022-2023 allowed the renewal of the mandate of the CEPEJ working groups on evaluation, quality, judicial time management and cyberjustice and artificial intelligence for the next two years.

CCJE

Mr. Gerhard Reissner, Honorary President of the IAJ and Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto were the EAJ representative at the Plenary CCJE session which was held from the 3rd to the 5th of November. The CCJE adopted a landmark [Opinion No. 24 \(2021\)](#) on the evolution of the Councils for the Judiciary and their role in independent and impartial judicial systems.

While reaffirming the principles set out in its Opinion No. 10 (2007) on the Council for the Judiciary at the service of society, the CCJE considered that it was necessary to take stock of developments both at international and domestic levels and provide further guidance to policy-makers, legislators and judges, on essential aspects covering the key bodies of judicial self-governance called upon to safeguard judicial independence and impartiality.

Opinion No. 24 highlights the competence, tasks, organization and composition as well as resources at the disposal of the Councils for the Judiciary, their legitimacy and accountability, their relations with other actors including civil society, mass media, anti-corruption bodies, and other issues pertinent to their mandate and operation and provides a set of clear recommendations.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENCY COMMITTEE

22nd International Conference of Chief Justices of the World

The 22nd online International Conference of Chief Justices of the World was held on November 19-22, 2021. Around 270 persons attended.

The Hon G.T. Pagone QC, Honorary President of the International Association of Judges took the floor on the following topic: "[Global Governance for a Sustainable World Order](#)".

World Law Congress

The **World Jurist Association**, NGO with special consultative status to the **United Nations**, celebrated its biennial congress this year in Barranquilla, Colombia. More than 200 high-level speakers from all around the world gathered in Barranquilla to discuss about the Rule of Law and how it affects the development of Nations. The **President of the IAJ, Mr. José Igreja Matos (speech)**, and **Vice President Mr. Walter Barone (speech)**, attended the event. Mr. Matos was awarded for his work in the Presidency of the International Association of Judges with the Medal of the World Jurist Association.



The congregation of the world's leading jurists during the **World Law Congress Colombia 2021** aimed to be recognition of the international legal community to Colombia's unwavering commitment to the defense, strengthening and promotion of the rule of law.

Likewise, on the occasion of this international congress, the WJA made special recognition to outstanding personalities committed to Peace through Law.

The program focused on the promotion of the Rule of Law as Instrument for the Development of the Nations, offering an integral vision of the great issues that concern humanity and on which the world of Law and Justice must respond. These are topics that converge with the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and



prosperity through sustainable development. The program integrated the vision of notorious jurists, companies, and institutions, Colombian and international, which support the progress of humanity, the coexistence in democracy and freedom.

2nd IUCN WCEL World Environmental Law Congress: Environmental Law 2030 and Beyond

From **8 December to 10 December 2021**, the High-Level Judicial Segment on the “**The Role of Judges: Environmental Law 2030 and Beyond**”, took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The President of the IAJ, **Mr. José Igreja Matos** and the Vice President **Walter Barone**, attended the event:

[Speech of Mr. Matos](#) (in English and Portuguese)

[Speech of Mr. Barone](#) (in English)

The International Association of Judges was present in this High-Level event reaffirming the commitment of judges regarding the crucial topic of protection of our Planet.

The event reaffirmed, further develop, and advance the 2016 IUCN World Declaration on the Environmental Rule of Law and the 2018 Brasilia Judicial Declaration on Water Justice, in light of the Marseille Manifesto and outcomes of the 2021 IUCN World Conservation Congress (September 2021), the recognition of a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment by the United Nations Human Rights Council (October 2021), the Kunming Declaration of CBD COP 15 (October 2021), and the outcomes of UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow (November 2021).



The High-Level Judicial Event discussed the following topics:

1. Climate Change, Biodiversity and the Environmental Rule of Law
2. The Water Crisis and the 2018 Brasília Declaration of Judges on Water Justice
3. Judicial Education on Climate Change and Biodiversity Law

The importance of judicial independence in the context of Protection of Nature was also a key topic during this World Congress. IUCN WCEL organized the judicial segment in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment (GJIE), the International Association of Judges (IAJ), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as well as several other international and national institutions. Over 350 people, mostly judges and academics, have registered to watch the event.