

Dear Lay Judges,

Some of you might be wondering what has been happening since our meeting in Berlin in August 2012. The presidency would therefore like now to give you an overview of interesting developments that concern us. The presidency would also ask all organisations to inform us about interesting events and developments for our next newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Hasso Lieber, Gerard Chambard, John Fassenfelt

Organisations interested in joining the network please write to the presidency!
hasso.lieber@t-online.de
john@fassenfelt.wanadoo.co.uk
gerard@chambard.net
We are looking forward to your application!

+++ News from our Network +++

Status quo of our Association

On 21 August 2012, representatives of 8 European lay judges' associations founded the European Network of Associations of Lay Judges at the European Academy in Berlin.

For matters of practicality, the association was founded on the basis of German law (Vereinsrecht). Since then, the presidency has been working on ensuring formal acceptance of the statutes by the courts. There are still some minor editorial corrections to be done, but also a bigger problem needs to be solved: The German court insists that the original statutes signed by the member associations are written in German! This is the reason why the association has not been officially registered yet.

➡ Proposal: For our meeting in Belfast on 11 May, EAB will prepare the statutes in German, accompanied by a certificate from an official translator, confirming that they are translated correctly. These English-German statutes can be signed by those who are present in Belfast. In order for you to know what we would like you to sign, Mechthild Baumann and Claudia Rehrs will send out the English version of the statutes by the end of March.

European Funding

Bad news: Our proposal to further promote cooperation of lay judge associations within the framework of the European Commission Civil Justice programme was rejected. Lay participation was not within the scope of the programme. We will continue looking for funding.

➡ Who has further ideas on what??

Please mail to Hasso! (hasso.lieber@t-online.de)

The European Day of Lay Judges 2013

For the first time since its inauguration, the European Day of Lay Judges will be celebrated. We thank Deirdre for organising an event in **Belfast on 11 May 2013** and Maria Paola for assisting her. THANK YOU!

Provisional Programme

Friday 10 May

15.30 – 17.00 Welcome to Belfast in Lord Mayor's Parlour with afternoon tea and tour of City Hall

Evening Free time

Saturday 11 May

10.00 – 12.00 Tour of murals and progress of historical peace process

Afternoon Free time

18.30 – late Reception and dinner, Parliament Buildings

Sunday 12 May

Morning Free time

12.00 – 14.00 Farewell lunch and depart

➡ For further information, please contact Deirdre (jeanbrodie34@hotmail.co.uk)

European Citizens' Initiative

Francisco Lasheras and his Spanish colleagues have launched an idea for a European Citizens' Initiative on lay participation in Europe. The objective of this initiative is to propose legislation to the European Commission to include promotion of lay participation in Article 81 TFEU. There are many formal things to be considered. The Presidency has put the Official Guide to

the European Citizens' Initiative in various languages in the Dropbox Information System for your information.

A citizens' initiative has to be an invitation to the European Commission to propose a law in a field where it has the power to do so. So we have to find out in what legal and political field(s) the initiative to develop people participation in the judiciary might be placed. The most important hurdle is 'subsidiarity'.

In order to advance the idea of a citizens' initiative, the Presidency would like to propose the following:

We are currently considering **organising a seminar** on these issues in cooperation with the European Academy Berlin. As we no longer have any funding from the Commission, we would have to ask for participation fees (similar to those in Berlin 2010 or London 2011). Furthermore, you would have to cover your own travel expenses. The European Academy Berlin will also ask the German Federal Foreign Office for support.

➔ Would you be interested in a seminar like this? Please mail your answer to Hasso. (hasso.lieber@t-online.de)

Planned date: **11 – 13 Aug. 2013**

➔ Who would like to join us in planning the European Citizens' Initiative? Please mail to Francisco (fedejupa@gmail.com)

+++ News from Europe +++

France

Good news! Elimination of the « jurisdiction de proximité » as first level of jurisdiction, which was intended to take effect from January 1, 2013 has been postponed to January 1, 2015.

As a result, the "juges de proximité" are allowed to judge minor civil litigation for two more years.

In the meantime, the French government will review various existing courts in order to set up a simpler way for citizens to apply for minor civil cases i.e. to a unique court. Consequently, participation of *juges de proximité* in a new court like this will need to be redefined. This does not affect 'criminal' attributions of juges de proximité which are still in force.

Germany

The German 'Schöffen' Award was given to Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth, former President (Speaker) in the German Parliament (Bundestag). She is currently President of the German Association of adult education centres (Volkshochschulen). For many years, the Association of Honorary Judges and local adult education centres have been organising information sessions for citizens who are interested in becoming honorary judges, and instruction for newly appointed honorary judges.

Because of her unique support for this cooperation, Professor Rita Süßmuth was honoured with the Schöffen Award. The presentation ceremony took place in the German Parliament on February 22nd. The laudatory speech was given by Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert, the current President in the German Parliament. The picture below shows Hasso Lieber, Chairman of the German association of lay and honorary judges, handing the prize to Professor Rita Süßmuth.



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Legal information

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