

International Association of Young Lawyers

1996 Conference MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND

Many hundred enthusiastic young lawyers from all over the world descended on Montreux, Switzerland for the 34th annual congress of the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) held over the week of 25-30 August 1996.

More than 630 delegates from over 44 countries met at the magnificent Montreux Palace overlooking LacLeman for an exciting week packed with substantive legal discussion on some very topical issues and of course, some fabulous social events. The comments of people during the congress and since have indicated that the meeting was a great success.

The business program provided a good balance of issues relevant to all our members. Sponsorship and Sport Law, a very topical issue with major sporting events really big business and the sponsorship industry coming under close scrutiny, provided the subject for an exciting debate at a day long session held in the premises of the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

We also spent a day with many distinguished Swiss and international experts discussing Swiss Banking Secrecy and various issues confronting corruption in the international banking industry. Other working sessions covered topics such as cross border business crime, electronic banking, powers of antitrust authorities, business and marriage breakdown, international trade and environment, the changing role of the lawyer and legal costs.

No AIJA congress is complete without the social activities. We enjoyed a sunset cruise on the beautiful lake, spent a night at the Casino entertained by an amazing group of classical musicians -cum-comedians, and hiked through the mountains to the village of Gruyeres where the whole town put on a real fondue feast.

In traditional young lawyers style all over the world, the 1996 congress ended with a giant gala function at the magnificently decked out Montreux Palace.

The Montreux congress was a memorable experience for all who were able to attend and hopefully, more Australian young lawyers will be encouraged to participate in future AIJA events and initiatives.

What is the International Association of Young Lawyers?

For those of you that don't yet know us, the International Association of Young Lawyers is a non political association made up of over 2,500 young lawyer members from all around the world. The Association is widely known by its acronym AIJA which comes from its French name, l'Association Internationale des Jeunes Avocats. English and French are the two official languages. "Young lawyers" is given a very wide

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meaning to include all lawyers under 45. The Association has expanded far beyond its original European borders and is extending its membership in the Asia-Pacific region, looking to Australian young lawyers to assist in that endeavour.

AIJA is active in many areas. AIJA acts to ensure freedom of practice and the rule of law in countries where these ideals are threatened. It sponsors high level courses and seminars for young practitioners around the world.

Most importantly, AIJA provides a unique meeting place for young lawyers from all countries and continents, across borders and across race, religion and culture. Probably the most important part of attending an AIJA event is the opportunity to meet representatives from other jurisdictions and to discuss with them issues of concern to the profession in those jurisdictions.

Members can participate in the Association's working commissions which are currently:

- banking law
- corporate acquisitions and joint ventures
- environmental law
- European law
- civil procedure
- family and estate law
- future of the profession
- human rights
- insolvency
- intellectual property and new technologies
- international business law (franchising, labour law and white collar crime)
- international arbitration
- tax; and
- transport law

The Association often consults as a non-government organisation with the United Nations and Council of Europe on a range of issues which impact on the law and legal practice.

One of the exciting opportunities offered by AIJA membership is participation in the trainee exchange program (SPES). The SPES actively organises foreign work placements for young lawyers who wish to gain professional experience abroad.

Future congresses

The Association's 1997 congress will be held in Florence, Italy, a city which needs no introduction. The congress will be held 1-6 September 1997 and the working sessions will be devoted to one of the most stimulating legal topics of our time: "New Technologies and the Law".

The major working sessions will cover issues such as Bioethics, Cyber law—*are you on line?*, The Impact of New Technology on the Employment Relationship, New Technologies and Data Protection, Acquisitions of New Technology Companies, Liability for High Technology Goods and Moving towards a Universal System of Registration of Security over Goods.

The opening ceremony of the congress will be held at the historic Palazzo Vecchio, the Florence town hall, in the Salone dei Cinquecento, the vast elaborately decorated council chamber built in 1495.

There will also be a reception at the Pitti Palace and a very special evening is planned to take place on the Ponte Vecchio, the magnificent bridge spanning the Arno.

Among the other social activities will be a trip through the Chianti region to explore some of the magnificent Tuscan villas and taste the special wines.

The great news for young lawyers in Australia is that Sydney will host the 1998 AIJA congress from 20 to 25 September 1998. We are very excited about the prospect of hosting an international event for hundreds of young lawyers from all over the world. We would be happy to hear from anyone who is interested in being involved.



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