President’s Message

“Swiss Arbitration” –
The New One-Stop Shop And Other Good News

In February 2020, in long forgotten pre-Corona times, I held my first and so far last address as President of ASA before a physical audience. To ram home the point that the ASA Board would be working hard that year and the next one, I started to dress down: dropped the jacket; threw away the bowtie (few thought I would ever be able to do THAT!); rolled up my sleeves. I stopped there. Still, some in the audience were SHOCKED. And afterwards, I was politely asked to dress up again; and that was of course what I did.

Little did I know how prophetic I was. First, home office and Zoom meetings did to sharp suits and ties what some asteroid did to the dinosaurs, and second, the ASA Board worked even harder than probably anybody expected at the time.

By now, the fruits of all these efforts have started to become tangible. The Board hit their stride in the implementation of the Five Pillar Strategy that I explained in one of my latest Messages.1

We even went beyond that. With the “Swiss Arbitration” platform we raised ASA’s already bold strategy to an even higher level. By the time you will be reading this, the new “Swiss Arbitration” website will have gone online, at www.swissarbitration.org. What was before the web address of the Swiss Chambers’ Arbitration Institution SCAI is now the entry portal for everything Swiss in commercial and investment arbitration and mediation – a unique platform for practitioners and users. A whole jurisdiction can thus be accessed through one simple link. It is intrinsically a work in progress. From day one it includes a tremendous amount of information about anything Swiss in international arbitration and mediation, and – not least with your help – it will contain ever more over time. If you are not yet familiar with it, check it out now!

By the time you will be reading this, you will also have noticed the new branding of ASA. To keep things simple and punchy, we focus on one language, English, together with the traditional and widely recognized acronym ASA. New colour coding emphasizes Swissness and clarity. All ASA products and presentations are being adapted to the new concept – also this Bulletin, although not in mid-year.

1 ASA Bulletin 3/2020, pp. 539 et seq.
For ASA, this all means a great stride forward, made possible by the constantly increased professionalization of ASA by my predecessors and by Alex McLin, ASA’s first Executive Director who did a tremendous job in setting up a secretariat and developing ASA. Our new Executive Director, Korinna von Trotha, and I are harvesting what they sowed and that harvest allows implementing the expanded strategy adopted by the Board.

Obviously, a major milestone in the implementation of the Five Pillar Strategy was the joining of forces with the Swiss Chambers’ Arbitration Institution SCAI, thereby eliminating a constant source of confusion abroad about the distinction between ASA and SCAI. It is now clear: ASA is the majority shareholder of the preeminent Swiss commercial arbitration institution: the Swiss Arbitration Centre, formerly known as SCAI. ASA controls the Centre in close cooperation with the cantonal chambers of commerce, which continue to fully support and promote the institution that they had successfully developed over more than a 100 years.

At the same time, ASA remains an independent and influential arbitration think tank and will continue to advance arbitration and ADR not just in Switzerland but also globally for the benefit of users worldwide. Educational offers are increased, not least through new webinar concepts. And last fall, a new user council with eminent in-house counsel from various jurisdictions was constituted, which has since then already advised ASA on several issues, including the recent revision of the Swiss Rules.

Sleeves will remain rolled up at ASA! Don’t be shocked by that, be happy!

FELIX DASSER

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