

*Dear Lay Judges,
In Belfast we celebrated our first European Day of Lay Judges. It was wonderful to see so many of you in Northern Ireland. Our special thanks to Deirdre who organised this solemn and happy ceremony. Our next meeting will take place in August in Berlin, when we'll elect the new president. Looking forward to seeing all of you!*

*Warm regards,
Hasso Lieber, Gérard 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 +++

The European Day of Lay Judges 2013

On 11 May 2103 we celebrated the first European Day of Lay Judges in Belfast. Thanks to Deirdre and colleagues for organising it.

In a solemn ceremony held in Stormont, the seat of the Northern Ireland Parliament and government, a number of senior representatives in the fields of politics and jurisdiction highlighted the importance of lay judges who act in an honorary capacity.



Both the Northern Ireland Justice Minister *David Ford* (2nd from left) and Lord Chief Justice *Sir Declan Morgan* (r.) emphasised the need for members of the public (lay persons) to be involved in jurisdiction. *Hasso Lieber*, President of the European Network (3rd from left), stressed in particular the comprehensibility of court procedure and judgements which can be achieved through lay persons acting in an honorary capacity. Delegations from Belgium, Northern Ireland, England and Wales (Chairman *John Fassenfelt*, left) and Germany took this opportunity to intensify their mutual contacts and exchange of information.

On the previous day, delegations were welcomed by the Lord Mayor, *Gavin Robinson*, at Belfast Town Hall.



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

➔ The speech by Hasso Lieber can be read at www.schoeffen.de



Network now registered!

On the occasion of celebrating the European Day of Lay Judges in Belfast we organised a General Assembly. During this gathering we decided on some editing of the statutes (the draft had been worked out by John Thornhill and Jouni Elomaa) and signed them afterwards in English and German. This was a pre-requisite from the

German courts in order to officially register. Now the court has accepted the revised statutes and the ENALJ is a registered association – a real legal body! Congrats again! The network now is allowed to give contribution receipts for donors.

➡ Both versions of the statutes can be downloaded from www.eab-berlin.eu/lay-judges.

Now it is time for all organisations to decide whether to **become members** of the network. We decided not to require fees. EAB as our administration office and DVS (German association) are trying to get some funding from private and official funding bodies. Please check the note above in the red-framed box.

General Assembly in August in Berlin

The General Assembly (GA) in Belfast decided to meet again from **11 – 13 Aug. 2013 in Berlin**. This meeting will be hosted by the European Academy Berlin, with kind support of the Federal Foreign Office (tbc) – thanks a lot for this. As we have only limited funding from the Federal Foreign Office, we can unfortunately **not refund travel costs** and have to charge a registration fee of 130 € (the fee will include two nights' accommodation, full board and programme costs).

So far the topics for the upcoming GA will be

- **Election of a new president (annual rotation)**

Gérard Chambard will leave the presidency, John Fassenfelt on behalf of the England and Wales Magistrates' Association will become president, Hasso Lieber will become past president. Based on alphabetical order, Belgium may send a representative to the presidency as future president.
- **ENALJ communication strategy and lobbying for lay judges**

Main topic of the meeting: How to make ENALJ well known in European bodies and politics.
- **European Citizens' Initiative**

Legal and organisational questions

- Organising Association for the European Day of Lay Judges in 2014

Which country will take responsibility for the central European event? Motto and mode of the event? Speakers, special effects?

➡ please send your topics to Claudia at EAB: cr@eab-berlin.eu

Please note: Unfortunately there will only limited funding by the Federal Foreign Office for the workshop in Berlin. Travel costs and a participation fee of **130 € p.p.** (including 2 nights' accommodation and subsistence) must be paid by national organisations.



(l. to r.: Kevin Donaghy, N. Ireland Vice Chair, Deirdre Kennedy, Chair, Paulette Vercauteren, Belgium Vice President and General Secretary, European Association of Commercial Judges, Petra Pflanz, Berlin.

+++ News from Europe +++

England and Wales

The Coalition Government for England and Wales continues to show confidence in the Magistracy by extending their powers in recent Bills before Parliament. In one called the Offender Rehabilitation Bill it is intended to give all offenders who have served less than 2 years in prison a further 12 months supervision in the community. Any breaches of this supervision will come before magistrates for consideration which may include a further time in prison.

Legal information

Managing committee, Chair

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Germany

Two items of information which will have varying effects on lay judges:

- compensation amounts paid to all lay judges are to be increased. Currently, the Federal government and federal states (Länder) are in dispute about which body will assume these costs.
- In social court jurisdiction, involvement of lay judges may be reduced. By agreement of parties in the case, lay judge involvement may be dispensed with.

Italy

With the aim of saving public expenditure and of increasing efficiency in the judicial system, Statutory Order No. 156 dated 07 September 2012, which will enter into force on 13 September 2013, envisages restructuring court jurisdictional areas; by means of abolishing and amalgamating virtually all Justices of the Peace (JP) offices. (Specific regulations have been provided for amalgamating courts.)

Municipalities must themselves be responsible for administrative costs if they wish to retain these offices and positions. This new judicial landscape has brought about a veritable earthquake in the judicial system and is currently leading to numerous protests by lawyers (barristers), in particular because they fear that access to justice at local level might be under threat. Lawyers and barristers in fact believe that there will not really be any noticeable savings, there will merely be inconvenience for members of the public. They have already announced a strike on 08-16 July 2013, and in the meantime everyone is waiting for the Constitutional Court to express its opinion on the matter in the next few days. However, the government (of Italy), on the other hand, is not altering its position and is determined to proceed in the stated direction.

Registration for the General Assembly

11-13 August 2013 in Berlin

Please send your registration including

- Name
- Organisation
- Date of arrival
- Date of departure

no later than 31 July 2013 to Claudia Rehrs, European Academy Berlin: cr@eab-berlin.eu

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