



April 2007

*The*  
**IN-HOUSE COUNSEL**

Newsletter to the member associations of ECLA

**ECLA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
2007**

The ECLA annual meeting was held on Saturday March 23, 2007 in Oslo Norway.

The meeting appointed President, Vice Presidents, General Secretary and Treasurer for the period until the next general meeting.

The meeting resolved to approve the annual report for 2006 and thereby discharge the directors of liability for the fiscal year 2006.

The meeting also decided to keep the annual membership fee at 1.000 Euros.

All decisions by the Annual General Meeting were unanimous.

**ANNUAL MEETING APPOINTS  
PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS FOR  
THE TERM 2007 - 2008**

At the annual General Meeting Bengt Gustafson was re-elected President. Bengt Gustafson has been the President of ECLA since October 2004.

At the General Meeting Paul de Jonge and Sabine Lochmann were re-elected Vice Presidents and Petr Smelhaus was re-elected Vice President and Treasurer of ECLA.

Francesco Benigni was elected Vice President and General Secretary and daily manager of ECLA. Francesco is the first remunerated General Secretary of ECLA.

Didier Pissoort was re-elected Auditor of ECLA.

**NEW SECRETARY GENERAL**

Francesco Benigni, member and one of the founders of ECLA's Italian member association AIGI, has accepted to become ECLA's first remunerated General Secretary. The Board of Directors in November 2006 gave the executive board the mandate to find a suitable person for the position of General Secretary of ECLA. A suitable candidate was to be presented by the executive board at the Board meeting in Oslo in 2007. "In Francesco ECLA has found a qualified lawyer that has the capacity to develop ECLA to become the number one

in-house lawyer association in Europe”, says Bengt Gustafson. “Francesco has a solid background as in-house lawyer and he has the ability to get things happening which are necessary components to take ECLA forward“, says Bengt Gustafson.

## **ECLA FINANCES**

At the Annual Meeting Petr Smelhaus accounted for the financial report for 2006 and advised that the finances of ECLA are sound and ECLA has funds available to meet all its present and future obligations. “The finances of ECLA has never been better”, says Petr and mentioned the Foundation Sponsor Agreement with Eversheds as one major contributing factor. "The fact that almost all members has paid their membership fees for 2006 is also adding to the excellent financial result" says Petr.

The board of directors of ECLA approved the budget for 2007. “One has to look at the 2007 budget as an investment in the future” says Bengt Gustafson, President of ECLA.

## **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

At the ECLA board meeting in Oslo on March 23, 2007 Bengt Gustafson presented the President's report. He emphasised the importance of ECLA and the national members to continue improving the communications and interaction with each other. “With the appointment of ECLA's first remunerated General Secretary ECLA has moved another step towards increased professionalism and efficiency,” says Bengt Gustafson. ECLA now have to make sure that the cooperation and communication between ECLA and its members is at the highest possible level. Unless the individual members are continuously and adequately informed by ECLA and

the national associations a lot of work in ECLA and the national associations will be in vain. “This is the most important issue that ECLA is confronted with currently,” said Bengt Gustafson in his President's report.

## **VOXIUS PROVIDES ECLA "CAREER CORNER" – VOXIUS NEW SPONSOR OF ECLA**

ECLA and the Dutch search firm Voxius has agreed to commence to cooperate to provide all ECLA individual members with a site where they can find employment opportunities. “Employers and other firms looking for in-house lawyers will have an excellent venue for finding potential new hires on the ECLA Career Corner”, says Paul de Jonge responsible for the ECLA-Voxius cooperation. The "Career Corner" is expected to be fully implemented during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2007.

## **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ECLA SPONSORS**

ECLA's sponsors have a lot of benefits to offer the individual members the national associations.

Eversheds - ECLA's Foundation Sponsor - provides various materials free of charge including dictionaries, books and other printed material to all members of ECLA.

Translegal provides a quality language portal on the ECLA website called the ECLALingua which is a unique tool for in-house lawyers.

IUS Laboris - an alliance of labour law firms - provides free of charge a number of high quality material in labour law.

To find out more on the benefits please visit ECLA's website - [www.ecla.org](http://www.ecla.org).

## **THE SECOND "FORUM FOR IN-HOUSE LAWYERS" CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS, MAY 10 - 11, 2007**

European Academy of European Law (ERA) and ECLA organize the second "Forum for In-house Counsel" conference for in-house lawyers in Brussels on May 10 - 11, 2007. "The program is finalized and a "flyer" promoting the conference has been sent to all national associations", says Francesco Benigni - responsible within ECLA for the conference. The program in the 2007 conference will be divided in three parts, European Competition Law, European Company Law and European Private Law. This year the conference will have speakers from the academic world and law firms as well as in-house counsels. "These excellent speakers from all over Europe will provide a good balance between legal theory and practical legal work", says Francesco Benigni -General Secretary of ECLA.

Information on the conference can be found on the ECLA website [www.ECLA.org](http://www.ECLA.org).

Information and printed material will be sent to the national association during March and April 2007 and member associations are kindly requested to distribute the material to its individual members and to post the conference material on their respective websites.

## **INVITATION TO FORM ECLA FUTURE DIRECTION**

ECLA's President has invited all the national member associations to provide proposals and suggestions for ECLA's future operations. "The new ECLA program adopted by the Board of Directors in 2002 provides a solid base for ECLA's future operations", says Bengt Gustafson. However the program allows for different focuses. "In 2004 we have changed the focus of

ECLA from a lobbying organisation to an organisation providing real benefits e.g. in the form of conferences and seminars and other services to its individual members", says Bengt Gustafson. "Every organisation will benefit from regularly asking its members whether the current focus is the preferred direction or whether the focus should be changed". "This will allow the ECLA members to actively participate in the shaping of tomorrow's ECLA", concludes Bengt Gustafson.

## **LEGALLINGUA CONTINUES AS WEB MANAGER**

Legallingua will continue to provide web-related services to ECLA. Stephanie Schantz of Legallingua will continue to be the contact person for ECLA members, individual members and others wishing to post material or information on the ECLA website. Please note that Stephanie has a new e-mail address: [sas.legallingua.com](mailto:sas.legallingua.com).

## **UNIDROIT AND ECLA TO COOPERATE**

Unidroit and ECLA have agreed to cooperate in a project aiming at revising the "Unidroit Principles of International Commercial Contracts" Francesco Benigni has been appointed ECLA's representative with Unidroit.

## **ECLA NEW WEBSITE**

"The new ECLA website attracts more and more visitors", says Sabine Lochmann, Vice President of ECLA. The increasing number of visitors is good proof that the new website - launched in the fall of 2006 - serves its purpose of being the prime venue for our members and others to find information about ECLA and its present and future activities. The web address is [www.ecla.org](http://www.ecla.org).

**NEXT MEETING IN DUBLIN ON  
NOVEMBER 16, 2007**

ECLA Board of Directors has with great appreciation accepted the invitation from its member association the Law Society of Ireland to hold its next Board of Directors meeting in Dublin on November 16, 2007.

For the Executive Board

Bengt Gustafson  
President

*ECLA is Europe's leading association of in-house counsel in Europe. ECLA represents more than 20.000 individual in-house counsels and is represented in eighteen European countries*