



The President

Dear friends and members of the UAE,

The 28th Congress of the European Lawyers' Union will take place in Vienna in a few days, from 26 to 28 June. This year, it has been organized by Michael Poduschka and it will focus on punitive damages and class actions in Europe, a very topical matter that is becoming more and more prominent in many countries. The principle of punitive damages originated in common law. They are an emblematic example of a means not only of punishing the perpetrators of tortious acts but also of effectively deterring people from engaging in similar conduct in the future. They allow plaintiffs to claim exemplary damages from defendants who have acted in an egregiously insidious and reprehensible manner. The goal is to discourage such behaviour in the future. The perception of punitive damages in both legal theory and legal practice is evolving significantly in a number of European countries, even where historically everything has revolved solely around the core principle of comprehensive compensation for damages. Meanwhile, class actions have been in use for a number of years – European Directive 98/27/EC introduced inhibitory measures to protect collective interests as long ago as 19/05/1998 – but there have been various practical issues with actually filing suits of this kind that will be analysed during the Congress by legal experts from a range of places.

Since our international lawyers' association was founded 28 years ago, it has organized hundreds of conferences and seminars in the most beautiful cities in Europe. All of the most important and innovative topics in international and EU law have been discussed at the events, where there is always a high level of expertise and a wonderfully friendly atmosphere. The 2014 UAE Congress will continue this tradition.

I am delighted to say that the Congress in June will cap off a very busy spring, during which our association has organized conferences in Milan, Rome, Treviso (where once again Enrico Adriano Raffaelli outdid himself with the 11th Antitrust Conference, which was unanimously

deemed to be a world class event), Catania, San Marco di Castellabate (organized by the new Campania delegation of the UAE) and above all in Marseille, where the delegation led by Gérard Abitbol, the Dean of the Honorary Presidents of the UAE, organized an event in February and another in May. The sunny city of Marseille will also play host to the most important UAE event in the autumn: the international conference on the evolution of medical liability and defective pharmaceutical and medical products in Europe. In the meantime, I hope to see large numbers of you in Vienna.

Best regards,

Bruno Telchini
President of the European Lawyers' Union