



## ARTHUR STÜSSI

### Candidacy letter for the position of AIJA First Vice-President

Dear friends.

#### **The time has finally come.**

I first met AIJA at its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress, in Copenhagen, in 1987, when I was only 3 years old.

Along the 10 years that followed my very first AIJA experience, I was an active participant in what was then known as the '*Programme des Personnes Accompagnantes*', as well as in the commonly offered '*pre and post tours*'. These activities were more than mere events; they were a gateway to a world of boundless possibilities.

The impact of the AIJA Spirit, without a shadow of doubt, changed my life: it made me fall in love with the legal profession, ignited a desire to travel, to meet and connect with brilliant people, to learn languages, to be international. It's an unmatched energy that became a passion.

By 1997, I had no doubts left: international law was my destined path. I pursued my Law degree in Rio, specialized in the field, and began working as a trainee, immersing myself fully in the legal world. In 2009, at the age of 25, I ventured to Europe for an LLM in international taxation at Ludwig Maximilian University, in Munich, and at last became an effective AIJA member. It was a full circle moment, returning to the very association where my passion first took root, where it all began.

Today, following my roles as the National Representative of Brazil, Regional Coordinator of Latin America, Co-Chair of the National Representatives Committee, and especially having spent five unforgettable years as co-chair of the Rio Congresses of 2020 and (finally) 2023, my commitment to nurturing the continued success and growth of our beloved Association, and the irreplaceable AIJA Spirit, is proven to be deeper than I could have ever imagined.

Therefore, in the very year that marks my 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an AIJA member, and 37 years since I have first stepped into it, I am thrilled to humbly share my decision to run for Vice President at this year's annual congress in the *deslumbrante* Madrid.

#### **The Big Picture: It's Time to Grow!**

After years marked by challenging declines in membership, our association has emerged from the pandemic stronger than ever, finding itself at a truly special juncture: sold-out events have become the norm, and the prospects for growth have never seemed more promising. This resurgence is a direct continuation of our ongoing efforts, reflecting our

resilience and heralding a period of unprecedented expansion.

AIJA has always been and will remain deeply rooted in Europe, yet today it stands more globalized than ever. Our events are increasingly widespread, enhancing our visibility and attracting new members from diverse legal cultures and jurisdictions. This global expansion is a natural progression of our longstanding commitment, adapting strategically to the dynamic landscape of international law.

Our continued success is seamlessly connected to our firm commitment to sustainability, diversity, and human rights. These principles are not merely aspirational but are integral to every decision and initiative within AIJA. In embracing these values, we continue to foster a culture that is conscious, inclusive, responsible, and forward-thinking, ensuring that AIJA remains at the forefront of international legal practice.

These, however, are far from calm times, as the world today is marred by severe and sorrowful conflicts. In this context, our association has a duty to continue defending the rule of law. It is essential that AIJA remains steadfast in upholding legal principles and advocating for justice, serving as a beacon of hope and resilience in challenging times. This commitment underlines the critical role we play in fostering a just, peaceful, and equitable society.

The time has come for AIJA to embrace not only a brighter future but also significant growth. As the saying goes, *thinking small requires the same effort as thinking big*, and, with this in mind, I propose the following three goals for my campaign and highlight a major unceasing challenge that AIJA must continually address to ensure our enduring success.

## **1. AIJA as a Platform to ADAPT**

Since the legal profession continues to grapple with significant transformations, particularly through the integration of AI and technologies, AIJA has firmly established itself as a crucial platform for young lawyers to adapt effectively.

Building on this strong foundation, there is a vital opportunity to extend and amplify our efforts. By further promoting resilience and encouraging lawyers to be agile and dynamic, AIJA can continuously equip its members not only to manage but also to thrive amidst these disruptions. The concept of fostering antifragile lawyers - those who grow stronger through adversity and excel in challenging environments - remains at the core of our mission.

This proactive approach reaffirms AIJA's position as a leader in preparing legal professionals for the future, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate and flourish in an ever-evolving legal landscape. By intensifying and expanding our existing initiatives, we commit to making AIJA an even more pivotal resource, transforming potential setbacks into robust opportunities for growth and innovation in the field of law.

This commitment to doing more enhances our role and influence in the global legal community, ensuring that resilience, innovation, and adaptability continue to define our path forward.

## **2. Well-being of the Young Lawyer**

Given the AIJA Spirit's capacity to make its events about much more than "just" work, it is only natural that AIJA would succeed in promoting the well-being of its members. This spirit, characterized by empathy, openness, friendliness, and exceptional energy, perfectly positions AIJA to lead an effective well-being initiative.

We can harness this unique culture to launch a dynamic campaign focusing on critical mental health issues such as substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and burnout. The AIJA Spirit will ensure our events go beyond conventional seminars and workshops, creating a supportive community where members actively engage and support one another.

Moreover, collaborating with external mental health professionals and well-being organizations will enrich the resources and support available to our members. These partnerships will enhance both the professional and personal lives of our members, reinforcing AIJA's commitment to holistic success.

By stepping up as a leader in well-being, AIJA not only will continue to nurture its supportive and vibrant community but will also set a standard in the legal community for integrating professional excellence with personal fulfillment. This initiative,

obviously driven by the AIJA Spirit, affirms that our association understands the importance of well-being as integral to the legal profession.

### **3. Sustaining Momentum: Engaging the Next Generation of Young Lawyers**

As young lawyers are obviously the vibrant heart of our association, I propose a focused campaign to engage them more deeply, ensuring that AIJA's values and Spirit are effectively communicated. This campaign would pivot on the philosophy of prioritizing purpose over profit, tapping into the aspirations and needs of the modern young lawyer.

Forging connections with universities in cities where events are hosted is a strategic move to introduce Law students to the unique qualities of the association. This involves presenting at universities, highlighting what makes the association special, and providing local Law students with opportunities to participate in our events. Such initiatives are designed to not only expose students to the dynamic environment of the association but also integrate them into the community early in their careers.

Moreover, establishing a mentorship program will allow young lawyers to receive guidance from the most experienced members of our association. This program is designed to facilitate an invaluable exchange of knowledge and support, helping young lawyers navigate critical career decisions and adopt professional stances that are strategically wise.

Having joined the association myself in my mid-twenties, immediately after obtaining my Law degree, I am convinced that this strategy will not only enrich the journey of young legal professionals but also ensure the continual rejuvenation of our association, keeping the AIJA Spirit vibrant and influential.

#### **A Constant Consideration: Financing Our Future**

Even as we experience packed events and anticipate further growth and development, we face a significant challenge: continuously finding creative - and maybe even disruptive – ways to finance the association and our events. This is not a finite goal but an ongoing endeavor that we must constantly pursue. This involves adding value for sponsors and supporters, which is essential to maintain our high standard of excellence. By doing so, we would not just aim but continually work towards keeping participation fees affordable, ensuring that young lawyers are not hindered by prohibitive costs – which is especially crucial for those practicing the profession in less developed countries.

In a world grappling with inflation and worsening price conditions, financing the association in a way that remains attractive and accessible is a formidable task. Upholding the AIJA standard, we strive to persistently provide our members with special and unforgettable events without compromising on quality or exclusivity. This ongoing balance ensures that AIJA remains a vibrant and engaging community for young lawyers from literally the entire world.

Finally, here's what truly excites me: I am most passionate about crafting this future alongside each of you. Your insights, your perspectives, and your dreams for AIJA aren't just relevant - they are the very foundation of our next steps. I am all ears, ready to engage in a spirited exchange of ideas. Together, let's ignite the magic and transform our shared aspirations into reality. Let's make our next chapter the most memorable yet.

Rio, May 6, 2024,  
Arthur Stüssi