



**50<sup>YRS</sup> VIAC** || Vienna International  
Arbitral Centre

# Annual **REPORT** 2025

Anniversary  
Edition

**Imprint**

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# Your Partner for ADR



## Experience matters.

We have successfully administered more than 2,500 arbitration and mediation proceedings since 1975. Our Board consists of distinguished arbitration practitioners and academics with extensive expertise in ADR. Our Secretariat equally boasts practitioners with vast ADR experience and know-how as well as diverse backgrounds.

## Flexibility matters.

The Vienna Rules are straightforward and flexible. The 2021 Vienna Rules in force from 1 January 2025 combine our well-trying provisions with recent market developments. This allows parties to tailor the proceedings to the needs of their specific dispute.

## Costs matter.

VIAC offers an accurate cost calculator to ensure predictability and manage expectations. Arbitrators' fees are competitive but fair and arbitrators are rewarded for managing complex cases efficiently and with expedition.

## Efficiency matters.

VIAC endeavours to ensure that our arbitration proceedings are conducted in the most efficient manner possible. We have a strict award monitoring process in place to ensure that we can deliver on our promise of timely resolutions.

## Sustainability matters.

Our case management is predominantly digitalised and VIAC safeguards the secure storage of data. Counsel, arbitrators and the VIAC Secretariat communicate mainly via the VIAC Portal.

## Diversity matters.

VIAC adopted the ERA-pledge and lives it. We are continuously improving our regional and gender statistics, and tirelessly encourage our users to consider equal representation. Almost 60 % of institutional appointments are of female arbitrators.

## Personality matters.

Our cases are guaranteed individual attention. Parties, counsel and arbitrators are supported by their designated case manager. Complex issues can be elevated quickly to the Secretary General or the VIAC Board.

# From the Desk of the Secretary General

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

2025 was a landmark year for VIAC as we celebrated our 50th anniversary—five decades of dedication to excellence in international dispute resolution. Our jubilee year brought memorable events, elegant celebrations, the launch of our redesigned website, and even our anniversary documentary.

Alongside the festivities, we remained focused on our core mission: managing a high volume of cases with a record-breaking amount in dispute and strengthening international cooperation through key agreements. These milestones reflect VIAC's growing role as a trusted institution in international arbitration.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the VIAC Board and to our Secretariat—an exceptionally dedicated and passionate team whose commitment makes everything we do possible. My sincere appreciation also goes to our departing President, Nikolaus Pitkowitz, for his great leadership. In 2025, Franz T. Schwarz was elected President for the 2026–2028 term, together with VIAC's first Vice-President, Patrizia Netal. I am confident that this outstanding duo will lead VIAC into its next chapter with fresh ideas and unwavering commitment.

Looking ahead to 2026, we remain focused on innovation and service. Our priorities include advancements in our case management and electronic services, the publication of our new VIAC handbook, deepening partnerships in the CEE and SEE regions, and continuing to provide efficient and reliable dispute resolution services to our users worldwide.

None of our achievements would be possible without the support of our community—arbitrators, in-house counsel, practitioners, partners, sponsors, and friends. Your trust and collaboration have shaped VIAC's journey, and we are deeply grateful.

I invite you to explore the full Annual Report 2025 to learn more about our activities and accomplishments during this milestone year. Together, we look forward to building the next chapter of VIAC's story.



*As we honour our past and embrace the future, VIAC remains committed to delivering excellence and fostering collaboration in the global arbitration community.*

**Niamh Leinwather**  
VIAC Secretary General

**VIAC** ||

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**VIAC** ||

In 2025, we proudly celebrated VIAC at 50, marking five decades of excellence in alternative dispute resolution. Established in 1975 under the auspices of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, VIAC has evolved into one of the most respected arbitral institutions in Central and South-Eastern Europe and beyond. This Jubilee year was a vibrant celebration of VIAC's legacy and its vision for the future.

# 1 Year 28 Events 13 Jurisdictions

February

## THE THIRD VIAC CAN CONGRESS

The festivities began with the third VIAC CAN Congress, a flagship event that brought together leading professionals, including the VIAC CAN ambassadors from 33 countries to discuss the future of arbitration. Expert workshops, an exceptional keynote speech from Stavros Brekoulakis, and impressive panels explored pressing topics such as corruption in arbitration, the influence of social media, and leadership in the legal profession.

April / May

## PARIS ARBITRATION WEEK, WILLEM C. VIS MOOT, VIENNA ARBITRATION DAYS

The VIAC CAN Congress set the stage for an extraordinary year of global engagement, marked by VIAC's prominent presence at Paris Arbitration Week, the Willem C. Vis Moot, and the Vienna Arbitration Days.

October

## VIAC AT 50

The Grand Finale of VIAC's 50th Anniversary took place in Vienna in early autumn with the conference "VIAC at 50: The Legacy and Future of Dispute Resolution in the Heart of Europe." This closing event gathered users, practitioners, academics, and institutional representatives to reflect on VIAC's journey and its role in shaping the future of arbitration. Keynotes from leading figures, including the Austrian Minister of Justice, the Secretary of UNCITRAL and the President of ICCA, highlighted VIAC's unique position as a bridge between East and West. The celebrations ended with a festive Gala Dinner at Palais Ferstel, marking not only fifty years of achievement but also a renewed commitment to excellence, progress and innovation.



# #VIAC50





**VIAC** ||

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VIAC 50 Special | 6

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# VIAC Board in 2025

2025 was not only a year of celebration but also of transition for the VIAC Board. **Nikolaus Pitkowicz** concluded his term as VIAC President. VIAC extends its sincere gratitude to Nikolaus Pitkowicz for his outstanding leadership and dedication which progressed VIAC's mission and shaped VIAC's success and reputation. He also prepared the institution for its next era of growth. Nikolaus remains in the VIAC Board as Honorary President.

Under the newly elected VIAC President **Franz Schwarz** and VIAC Vice-President **Patrizia Netal** a new VIAC Board was established, reflecting our ongoing commitment to internationalisation and geographic diversity. Also, half of our Board members are now female arbitration specialists.

We warmly welcome the newly appointed members, whose expertise and vision will strengthen VIAC's role as a trusted institution. At the same time, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the departing members for their invaluable contributions and dedication throughout their respective terms.

## 20 Board Members

Scan the QR-Codes to find out more about VIAC's Advisory Boards



Domestic Advisory Board



International Advisory Board



Mediation Advisory Board



### Incoming Board Members



**Crenguta Leaua**  
Professor | Bucharest & Lugano



**Ana Stanić**  
Founder | E&A Law Limited



**Georg Kodek**  
President | Austrian Supreme Court



**Vladimir Pavić**  
Professor | University of Belgrade



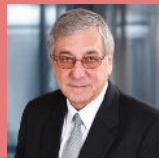
**Ingeborg Edel**  
Partner | Binder Grösswang



**Brigitta Zöchling-Jud**  
Professor | University of Vienna



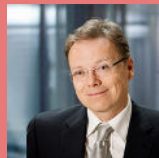
### Departing Board Members



**Anton Baier**  
Honorary President



**Friedrich Rüffler**  
Professor | University of Vienna



**Erich Schwarzenbacher**  
Judge | Austrian Supreme Court



**Franz T. Schwarz**  
President  
Partner | WilmerHale



**Patrizia Netal**  
Vice-President  
Partner | KNOETZL



**Günther J. Horvath**  
Honorary President



**Nikolaus Pitkowicz**  
Honorary President



**Diana Akikol**  
Partner | Walder Wyss Ltd.



**Claudia Annacker**  
Independent Arbitrator



**Claudio Arturo**  
Partner | Petsch Frosch  
Klein Arturo



**Ingeborg Edel**  
Partner | Binder Grösswang



**Georg Kodek**  
President | Austrian Supreme  
Court



**Veronika Korom**  
Professor | ESSEC Business School



**Crenguta Leaua**  
Professor | Bucharest / Lugano



**Paul Oberhammer**  
Professor | University of Vienna



**Vladimir Pavić**  
Professor | University of Belgrade



**Alexander Petsche**  
Partner | Baker McKenzie



**Karl Pörnbacher**  
Partner | Hogan Lovells



**Dietmar Prager**  
Partner | Debevoise & Plimpton



**Lucia Raimanova**  
Partner | A&O Shearman



**August Reinisch**  
Professor | University of Vienna



**Stefan Riegler**  
Partner | Wolf Theiss



**Ana Stanić**  
Founder | E&A Law Limited



**Irene Welser**  
Partner | CERHA HEMPEL



**Brigitta Zöchling-Jud**  
Professor | University of Vienna

# Message from the VIAC President Franz Schwarz

As we move on from our 50 Year Anniversary celebrations, I am honoured to step into my new role as VIAC President. Our anniversary offered an important moment of reflection and reaffirmation of our core values: excellence in providing fair, efficient and effective dispute resolution to our users; a deep partnership with our core region in Central and Eastern Europe; and raising a global voice on arbitration's most pressing issues.

## *Excellence in User Experience*

At the core of our mission is the service we provide to our users. Regardless of the size or complexity of a dispute, our aim is to deliver a consistently outstanding service. I look forward to working with our exceptional multinational team to advance this commitment.

Excellence must be measurable. We therefore continue to prioritise transparency in our decision-making and performance data. Our average 13-month duration of administered arbitrations; our competitive fee structure for arbitrators; and a Board composed of leading practitioners all reflect our dedication to a user-centred service built on integrity and excellence.



*Our mission remains clear: to deliver service of the highest quality, to strengthen our partnership with the region, and to champion integrity and innovation on the global stage.*

**Franz Schwarz**  
VIAC President

## *A Deep Partnership with the Region*

Looking ahead, we are strengthening our role as the natural home for disputes originating in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe. With high case numbers from the CEE and SEE, VIAC enjoys a level of regional engagement that is unmatched. This reflects not only our historic position as a bridge between East and West, but also the rise of a dynamic new generation of practitioners who rightly expect meaningful participation in international dispute resolution. Through initiatives such as the VIAC Community Ambassador Network (VIAC CAN), now active in 39 countries, we are deepening our understanding of local needs and perspectives. Combining VIAC's longstanding experience with regional insight will be a key focus in the years ahead.

## *Shaping the Future Together*

As we look ahead, VIAC also remains committed to innovation. We continue to set standards in diversity and transparency in appointments, in high-quality case management supported by clear guidance, and in the thoughtful and responsible use of new technologies, including AI. In a global environment characterised by uncertainty, strong and inclusive leadership is essential. VIAC aims to contribute a pragmatic, principled and regionally grounded voice to the global arbitration community.



# VIAC Secretariat in 2025

The VIAC Secretariat welcomed 2025 with enthusiasm with a focus on the VIAC at 50 celebrations, inspired by the strong leadership of **Secretary General Niamh Leinwather** and the remarkable dedication of the team.

The year saw several important developments within the Secretariat. Two colleagues returned from maternity leave in 2025. **Anna Förstel-Cherng** resumed her position as Deputy Secretary General, while 2025 marked a new chapter for **Elisabeth Vanas-Metzler**, who transitioned into the role of Managing Counsel. In her new role, Elisabeth will mainly focus on knowledge management.

On the case management front, **Klaudia Sood**, a valued Case Manager who has been with VIAC since 2018, rejoined the team following her maternity leave. Klaudia continues to be a cornerstone of VIAC's case management team. Beyond casework, Klaudia is also responsible for the organisation of the VIAC Board meetings.

**Nazli Morali**, who joined VIAC in 2024, became a permanent member of the Case Management team. With her background in investment and commercial arbitration from a leading Austrian law firm, Nazli continues to enrich VIAC's case administration and contributes to the organisation of high-level panels with stakeholders such as UNCITRAL.

The Secretariat also marked the transition of **Ferenc Pöcz**, VIAC's first-ever paralegal, to new professional opportunities. His thoughtful and reliable support in case management and administration has made a meaningful impact on the Secretariat.

The Secretariat also welcomed a new face. **Viktoria Fritz** joined the case management team. With law firm as well as institutional experience, Viktoria proves to be an excellent choice for her role as case manager and the VIAC team are excited to welcome her.

*Anna Förstel-Cherng*

Returned from maternity leave



*Klaudia Sood*

Returned from maternity leave



*Nazli Morali*

Permanently joined the team



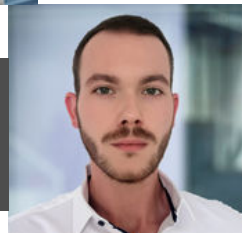
*Viktoria Fritz*

Joined the team



*Ferenc Pöcz*

Concluded his tenure



**Jessica Puhr** is one of our most experienced Case Managers. Beyond her casework, Jessica continues to be a driving force behind VIAC's public visibility efforts and was heavily involved in the development of VIAC's new website as well as VIAC's LinkedIn activities. In addition, Jessica is also responsible for the Domestic Advisory Board as well as the newly launched In-house Counsel Breakfast Series. Jessica will be on maternity leave as of January 2026.

**Sophie Tesarik**, another one of our most experienced Case Managers, remains deeply committed to the advancement of investment arbitration. She spearheads the Frankfurt Investment Arbitration Pre-Moot, which has significantly deepened VIAC's ties with the global investment arbitration community. In addition, Sophie is responsible for the Mediation Advisory Board and was primarily responsible for an internal working group dedicated to advancing the digitalisation of VIAC's files.

**Ema Potočnik**, who has successfully served as VIAC CAN Director since January 2023, continues to expand and elevate the initiative. Together with **Vladyslava Donchyk**, VIAC CAN Coordinator, this exceptional team has strengthened partnerships across the CEE and SEE region and broadens VIAC CAN's strategic reach. In 2025, VIAC CAN significantly increased its network and (re-)appointed a multitude of Ambassadors, further strengthening our ties to the region.

Across all operational areas, **Susanne Schindler** and **Beatrix Wendt** provide vital support. Beatrix plays a particularly central role in case management, ensuring smooth and reliable handling of our proceedings. Susanne's focus on the website relaunch and her coordination of IFCAI matters highlight her importance in both our internal processes and our international engagement.

VIAC's Secretariat remains one of our greatest strengths. Though lean in structure, the team consistently delivers outstanding work with professionalism, enthusiasm, and a shared sense of purpose. Their contribution is essential to everything we achieve!



# More Guidance, More Confidence: New VIAC Handbook

On the occasion of VIAC at 50, VIAC took the opportunity to lead the work on a Third Edition of the **VIAC Handbook – Rules of Arbitration and Mediation: A Practitioner’s Guide**.

The VIAC Handbook is written by leading arbitration and mediation experts, including members of the VIAC Secretariat and individuals closely involved with the institution. It offers an article-by-article commentary with a strong focus on practical application and procedural guidance as well as providing insights into the Secretariat’s day-to-day practice.

This Third Edition specifically addresses recent questions from practitioners and significant changes to the rules since the 2018 edition.

The Handbook includes a targeted commentary on the Vienna Investment Arbitration Rules and Vienna Investment Mediation Rules, highlighting their specific features and cost-efficient design.

New annexes address VIAC’s role in ad hoc proceedings, special provisions for succession-related disputes, and the new model arbitration clause for intra-corporate disputes introduced in 2025, alongside recent revisions to the Mediation Rules.

We trust that this handbook will continue to contribute to the growth and understanding of the Vienna (Mediation) Rules, reinforcing the credibility and reliability of VIAC as a leading institution in international arbitration.

VIAC expresses its sincere gratitude to all authors and contributors — past and present — whose expertise, commitment, and collaboration were essential to this publication. VIAC also very much appreciates the work of **Kluwer Law International**, who have published this Anniversary Edition.

## KEY UPDATES

- ✓ expansion of VIAC’s authority to administer investment proceedings
- ✓ revision of the mediation rules
- ✓ new and revised provisions regarding third-party funding, disclosure, use of digital technology, and costs
- ✓ a new model arbitration clause for intra-corporate disputes
- ✓ special provisions for succession-related disputes

# NOW AVAILABLE

**VIAC Handbook – Rules of  
Arbitration and Mediation: A  
Practitioners Guide, Third  
Edition**

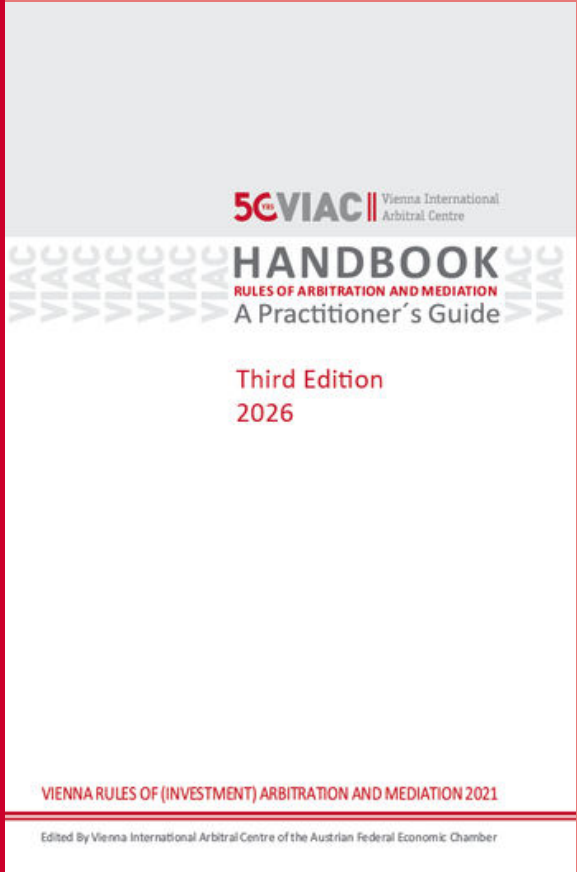
SKU:10127109-0001

Vienna International Arbitral  
Centre

Kluwer Law International

ISBN: 9789403522296

EUR 159.00



# Meeting our Users: Launch of the VIAC In-house Counsel Breakfast Series

In spring 2025, VIAC launched a breakfast series for in-house counsel, a quarterly get-together designed as a relaxed information and networking event. VIAC hosts experts on a specific topic that is relevant to the everyday work of an in-house counsel, thereby connecting arbitration with other areas of law.

VIAC's In-house Counsel Breakfast Series is designed to serve as a platform for exchange among all participants by providing practical tools and insights to in-house counsel while also learning further about their legal and practical realities. Although this particular initiative is brand-new, VIAC has a history of engaging directly with its users, both in Austria and beyond. This Breakfast Series underscores our ongoing commitment to listening closely to the needs of our users, in order to continue providing efficient, effective and tailor-made dispute resolution services.

Three in-person meetings were held in the framework of this new series in its inauguration year. All of them were well attended by in-house counsel and welcomed representatives from various sectors. The kick-off event in March, moderated by Ingeborg Edel and Christian Koller (both VIAC Domestic Advisory Board), addressed a broad range of the most pressing practical questions of arbitration. The second breakfast in May, expertly presented by Paul Oberhammer (VIAC Board), focused on the topic of class actions.

The third breakfast in November tackled the ongoing challenge of sanctions presented by Veronika Korom (VIAC Board) and Helmut Ortner (VIAC Domestic Advisory Board). Looking already into 2026, VIAC has four more exciting breakfasts planned covering topics such as M&A disputes, construction, costs in arbitration and third-party funding.

The initiative was developed within the VIAC Domestic Advisory Board and is led by VIAC Secretary General, Niamh Leinwather, and Legal Counsel, Jessica Pühr.

**Are you an Inhouse  
Counsel or know  
someone who might  
be interested?**

E-mail [office@viac.eu](mailto:office@viac.eu) to  
register your interest.

# VIAC Legal Tech Think Tank in 2025

Beginning in 2024, VIAC's Legal Tech Think Tank (LTTT) undertook an in-depth examination of the use of artificial intelligence in arbitration proceedings, with a particular focus on transparency, data protection and ethical considerations. This work intensified in 2025 and culminated in the publication of the VIAC Note on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Arbitration Proceedings.

Issued as part of the VIAC Best Practice Series, the Note on AI was developed with two clear objectives: to safeguard the fundamental principles of arbitration and to provide arbitrators and parties with practical guidance on the responsible integration of AI in arbitral proceedings. Aimed at advising, rather than regulating, VIAC's Note on AI is non-binding and should be tailored to the specific needs of the case.

Reflecting VIAC's conviction that arbitral institutions should play an active role in shaping the use of AI in the ADR field, the topic featured prominently at a number of events in 2025. With the support of the LTTT, VIAC hosted an Oxford-style debate during the Vis Moot Week entitled "Arbitr-AI-tion: Justice Meets the Algorithm", where experts discussed both the opportunities and risks associated with the use of AI in arbitration.

In an episode of the podcast Confabul-Arb, VIAC's Secretary General Niamh Leinwather joined host Piyush Pandit to explore the rise of AI in international arbitration. Listen here:



In 2026, VIAC will continue to build on the expertise of the LTTT, focusing in particular on assessing the risks posed by new technologies in relation to evidence, and on drafting an annex to the Vienna Rules tailored to the specific needs of technology-related disputes. The outlook is promising, stay tuned for further developments!

## THE WORKING GROUP



**Niamh Leinwather**  
VIAC Secretary General



**Vladyslava Donchyk**  
VIAC CAN Coordinator



**Mihaela Apostol**  
Solicitor



**Aija Lejniece**  
Attorney at Law



**Seán McCarthy**  
Aegis Arbitration



**Philipp Schwarz**  
Cermak Schwarz



**David Tebel**  
Rothorn Legal



Read the VIAC Note on the Use of AI in Arbitration Proceedings or explore it through an AI-generated podcast on the VIAC website!

# Launch of the Modernised VIAC Website

In 2025, VIAC reached an important milestone with the launch of its fully redesigned website. The new platform reflects VIAC's commitment to accessibility, user-friendliness, and transparency. With a modern visual identity and more intuitive navigation, access to key resources is ensured.

The new website marks a significant step forward in VIAC's mission to deliver a modern and service-oriented experience, supporting parties and arbitrators with clear information and a refreshed, future-ready online presence.

A highlight of the redesigned website is VIAC's new Arbitrator and Mediator Search. This tool is designed to make it easier for users to identify suitable practitioners for their proceeding. The search function offers improved filtering, clearer profiles, and a more intuitive interface, supporting parties and arbitrators as they navigate the appointment process.

VIAC's Arbitrator and Mediator Search currently has almost 1,000 profiles listed. This service, which is free-of-charge is an additional offer for practitioners worldwide to create a profile and present themselves. The arbitrators' profiles are non-binding and do not constitute the institution's recommendation. Parties and the VIAC Board are free to nominate and appoint arbitrators of their own choice. The feature is currently still in development and its functionality is constantly being improved. Its effectiveness will grow significantly as more practitioners complete their profiles.



## YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

We encourage all arbitrators and mediators listed on the VIAC website to review and update their profiles. A complete and accurate profile not only increases visibility within the community but is also necessary to allow for the functionality of the filter and search function. Please help us strengthen the usefulness of this new tool for users worldwide by updating your profile!

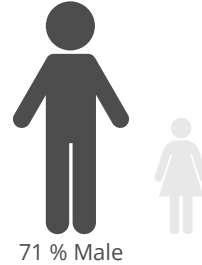
Please reach out to [office@viac.eu](mailto:office@viac.eu) to register your interest to be included in our Arbitrator and Mediator Search or to update your profile.

# Promoting Diversity

In 2025, VIAC continued to be an advocate for women in arbitration and amplified its efforts to increase the presence of female arbitrators. As a dedicated signatory and advocate of the Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge (ERA-Pledge), VIAC will continue to raise awareness about the under representation of women in arbitration and will keep the conversation going in 2026. VIAC once again launched an International Women's Day campaign on LinkedIn. Female VIAC Board and Advisory Board members as well as VIAC CAN Ambassadors shared their insights and perspectives on *"What piece of advice would you give your younger self embarking on a path in arbitration"*.

Although only 29 percent of party-nominated arbitrators were female in 2025, 64 percent of VIAC Board appointed arbitrators were female. VIAC's efforts, through advocacy, appointments, and institutional frameworks are part of a broader mission to close the gender gap in arbitration. By offering inclusive dispute resolution and encouraging parties to consider diversity in nominations, VIAC contributes to shaping a fairer and more representative legal landscape.

## Gender of party nominated arbitrators



## Gender of Board appointed arbitrators



## ? Did you know?

Women are still underrepresented as arbitrators. In 2025, only 29 percent of party-nominated arbitrators in VIAC arbitrations were female. Let's change this statistic together for 2026! Here is what you can do:

- Consider gender parity when nominating arbitrators. A list of arbitrators is available on the VIAC website and there is a gender search option.
- If you are a female arbitrator, get in touch with us to have your profile added to our website ([office@viac.eu](mailto:office@viac.eu)).
- Sign the ERA-Pledge and become an advocate for women in arbitration. The ERA-Pledge is an initiative that addresses the concerning under-representation of women on arbitral tribunals. The initiative aims to promote diversity and inclusion by increasing the number of female arbitrators based on equal qualifications within the international dispute resolution community. Scan the QR-code and sign the ERA-Pledge.



# VIAC Community Ambassador Network

Launched in February 2023, the VIAC Community Ambassador Network (VIAC CAN) was established to promote alternative dispute resolution and enhance VIAC's international reach, with a particular focus on the CEE/SEE region. Since then, the initiative has developed into a globally recognised platform for professional exchange and cooperation in the dispute resolution field.

VIAC CAN's activities throughout the year included conferences, workshops, meetings, and online sessions tailored to regional and professional needs. In cooperation with local partners and the foreign trade centres of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, VIAC organised international events and roadshows in jurisdictions including India, China, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Slovakia, Hungary, Montenegro, Türkiye, Georgia and beyond. These initiatives strengthened cross-border collaboration, supported the development of local arbitration communities, and enhanced VIAC's international visibility.

In addition, VIAC strengthened its regional engagement through collaboration with the Arbitration Association of Central and Eastern Europe (ArbCEE) and significantly increased its outreach through LinkedIn and other communication platforms.

2025 marked a key transition for VIAC CAN, as the initial two-year mandates of the first cohort of Ambassadors concluded. While several Ambassadors prepared for a second term, others passed their roles to newly appointed colleagues. A new call for applications was launched in jurisdictions not yet represented within the Network, attracting an exceptionally high number of strong candidates. As a result, VIAC CAN continued to expand in 2025, reaching 54 Ambassadors in 39 countries across three continents. Growth was particularly strong in Central Asia, the United Kingdom, Northern Europe, and through the appointment of a second Ambassador in Latin America, further strengthening VIAC's global presence.

**54** Ambassadors

**39** Countries

**3** Continents



Find out more  
about VIAC CAN



Find out more  
about the  
Ambassadors



# The Third VIAC CAN Congress

A central highlight of the year was the Third VIAC CAN Congress, held on 28 February 2025. Celebrating VIAC's 50th anniversary, the Congress focused on the theme "Shaping the future of arbitration in CEE/SEE for the next 50 years."

The event brought together Ambassadors and practitioners from across the Network to exchange insights on market developments, future trends, and cross-border collaboration. As in previous years, the Congress was preceded by an exclusive Ambassador programme and concluded with the Ball of Legal Professionals.



”

*VIAC has evolved into this modern and vibrant arbitral institution that is more popular than ever. But it always kept this special character that distinguishes VIAC from any other institution in the world; in being this living historical symbol that international arbitration can be more than just resolving commercial disputes. That it can be a platform where people from very different backgrounds leave their parochialism, cultural assumptions and prejudices behind to find common ground. (...) international law and arbitration are at a crossroads today. In the next 50 years, VIAC's role should be not just to administer more arbitration cases; it should be to remind us all what international arbitration is all about.”*

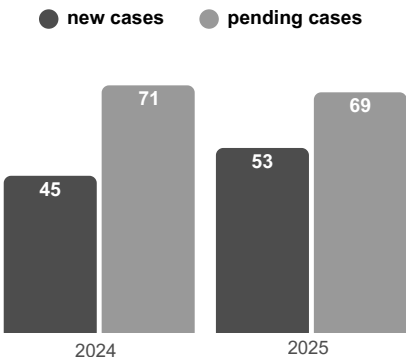
**Stavros Brekoulakis**  
during his keynote at the VIAC CAN Congress



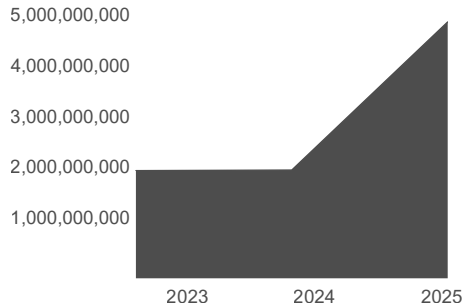
# 2025 Statistics

## 1 Caseload and Amount in Dispute

In 2025, VIAC's caseload remained high, with 53 new cases and a total of 69 pending cases, making it one of the highest case numbers for new cases in recent years. The aggregated amount in dispute reached nearly 4,5 billion, the highest in VIAC's history. It is also worth noting that 81 percent of VIAC's cases were international in nature.



New and pending cases 2024 - 2025.



Amount in dispute 2023 - 2025.

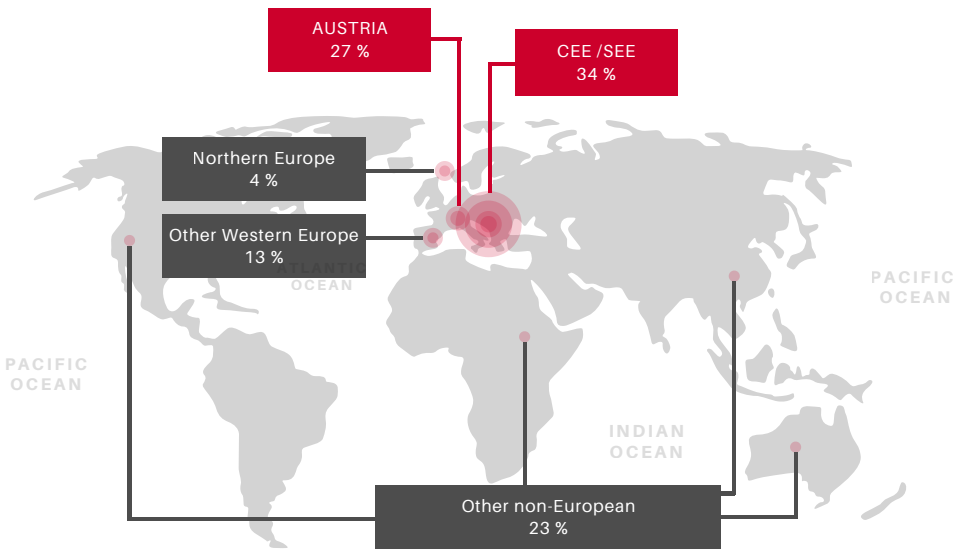


81 % international cases

International Cases in 2025.

# 2 Origin of the Parties - CEE in Focus

VIAC continues to strengthen its position as the leading institution in the CEE and SEE region while simultaneously expanding its reach in the Austrian market. 34 percent of all parties originate from the CEE and SEE region. The percentage of parties from Austria amounted to 27 percent. The remaining parties are distributed across Northern and Western Europe (17 percent) and other regions (23 percent), including Belize, China, Jordan, South Korea, and the United States of America.



## Origin of parties

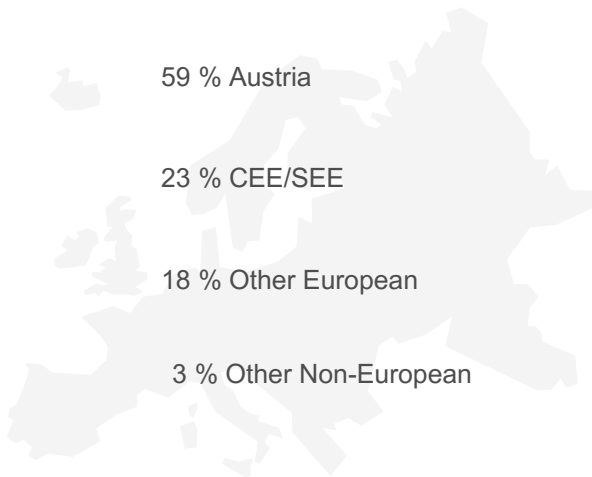
### Top five:

1. Austria
2. Romania
3. Ukraine
4. Czech Republic
5. China / Spain / Serbia



# 3 Nationality of Arbitrators

The arbitrators confirmed by the VIAC Board represent a diverse range of nationalities, reflecting an increasingly international composition. In the 2025 statistics, Austrian nationals accounted for 59 percent of arbitrators. The number of arbitrators from CEE/SEE remained steady at 23 percent. Approximately 18 percent of arbitrators were nationals from other Western and Northern European countries.



## Origin of arbitrators Top five:

1. Austria
2. Germany
3. Romania
4. Serbia
5. Czech Republic

**Disclaimer:** Some arbitrators hold dual citizenship. In cases where more than one citizenship was listed by the respective arbitrator, all citizenships were included. Hence, the list does not amount to 100%.



*VIAC's strong caseload in 2025, with nearly EUR 4.5 billion in dispute, reflects the trust parties place in our institution. With a growing footprint across the CEE and SEE region and an increasingly international user base, VIAC continues to reinforce its role as a modern, trusted institution for resolving complex cross-border disputes.*

**Niamh Leinwather**  
VIAC Secretary General



# 4 Applicable Law, Seat, Language

Austria is recognised as an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction with a modern and well-developed legal system. Unsurprisingly, Austrian law is designated as the governing law in the majority of arbitration agreements (53 percent). Reflecting this preference, an overwhelming 94 percent of cases provided for Vienna as their seat of arbitration. Vienna is also an excellent choice of seat with its' law based on the UNCITRAL model law, an arbitration friendly judiciary and the Austrian Supreme Court as a one-stop shop for annulment proceedings.

53 % Austria

8 % Czech

8 % Ukrainian

6 % Romanian

6 % Serbian

Applicable law of new cases received in 2025.

77 % English

19 % German

4 % Other

Language of the proceedings of new cases received in 2025.

94 % Vienna



Seat of arbitration of new cases received in 2025.

# 5 Duration of Proceedings and Expedited Proceedings

The Vienna Rules stipulate that VIAC proceedings shall be conducted efficiently (Art. 28 para. 1 Vienna Rules 2021), and VIAC makes every effort in its administration to uphold this principle. The average duration of proceedings in 2025 was 13 months.

Art. 45 of the Vienna Rules 2021 governs supplementary rules for expedited proceedings. If parties opt in, the arbitral tribunal must render an award within six months of the transfer of the file.

13 months



Average duration of proceedings of cases closed in 2025.



Percentage of expedited proceedings of new cases received in 2025.

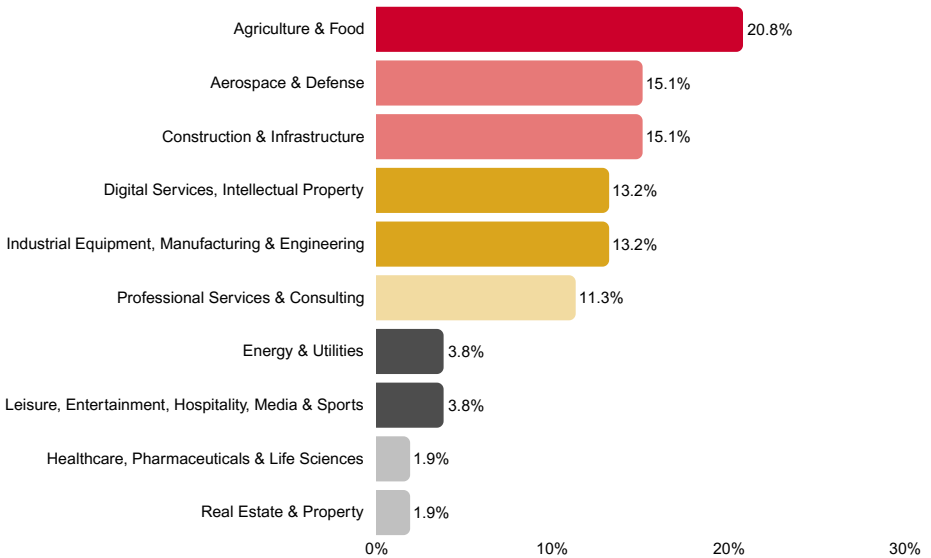


*Our users rightly expect arbitrations to be conducted efficiently and with speed. By providing a very flexible framework – and quite frankly, less convoluted rules and procedures than you might find elsewhere – we are proud to report that the average resolution time for a VIAC arbitration is about 13 months. Together with our regional focus, this has helped to cement VIAC’s place as the premier institution in Central and Eastern Europe.*

**Franz T. Schwarz**  
VIAC President

# 6 Nature of Disputes Industry Sectors

The breadth of disputes administered in 2025 once again underscored VIAC’s position as a truly versatile arbitral institution. Agriculture & Food accounted for the largest share of cases (20.8 percent), followed by significant activity in Aerospace & Defense as well as Construction & Infrastructure (each 15.1 percent). The sectors Digital Services, Intellectual Property as well as Industrial Equipment, Manufacturing & Engineering (each 13.2 percent) are on third place followed by Professional Services & Consulting (11.3 %) and a wide range of other sectors. This diversity reflects VIAC’s ability to handle complex disputes across a wide range of sectors and reinforces its role as a trusted forum for parties across the full spectrum of commercial activity.



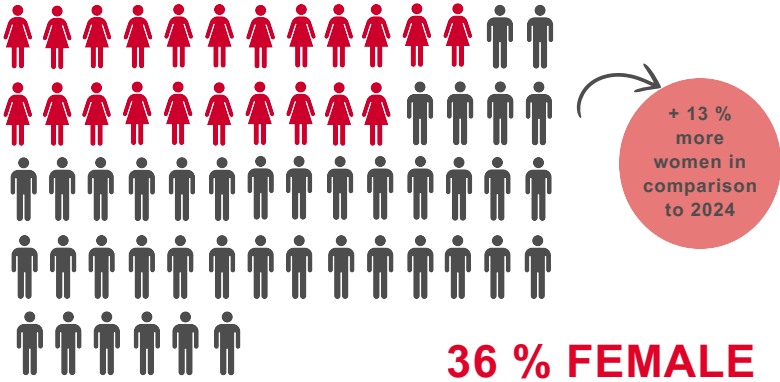
**Nature of disputes of new cases received in 2025.**

# 7 Gender and Age of Arbitrators

VIAC is committed to addressing gender imparity in arbitration and, thus, the majority of arbitrators appointed by the VIAC Board in 2025 were female (64 percent in 2025).

In 2025, 64 percent of all arbitrators were male, which demonstrates a decrease from 2024 where the number was 13 percent higher. However, when considering only party-nominated arbitrators, the disparity was more pronounced: 71 percent were male and only 29 percent female.

44 percent of arbitrators were in the age group 46 to 55. 26 percent of arbitrators were between the ages of 36 to 45.



Gender of all confirmed arbitrators in 2025.

# Cooperations

Find information on VIAC's cooperation agreements here



Collaboration with other institutions remains central to VIAC's mandate of promoting ADR on a global scale. Today, VIAC maintains over 50 cooperation agreements, underscoring our dedication to building strong, lasting partnerships across the international dispute resolution community. In 2025, VIAC signed agreements with the following institutions:



**UKRAINIAN  
ACADEMY  
OF MEDIATION**

The Ukrainian Academy of Mediation (UAM) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2014 to promote mediation and alternative dispute resolution in Ukraine. UAM pioneers initiatives such as establishing mediation rooms in courts, developing training standards, and advocating for mediation legislation. Through education, publications, and partnerships with national and international institutions, UAM fosters a culture of peaceful conflict resolution and empowers professionals and communities to resolve disputes effectively.

More information: <https://en.mediation.ua/>



**SCOTTISH  
ARBITRATION  
CENTRE**

Founded in 2011, the Scottish Arbitration Centre is a non-profit hub in Edinburgh dedicated to promoting Scotland as a premier venue for both domestic and international arbitration. Offering competitively priced, modern hearing facilities and administering cases under its own rules since 2022 with oversight from its Court, the Centre also supports arbitral appointments, training events, and signature gatherings such as ArbFest.

More information: <https://scottisharbitrationcentre.org/>



The Society of Indian Law Firms (SILF) is a collective body of India's top corporate law firms and the only representative body for Law Firms of India to-date. SILF believes in working for the interests of the legal community in general and law firms in particular. It has been actively working towards achieving its goals with the help of its member firms, numbering more than 100.

More information: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/society-of-indian-law-firms-silf/>



The Finland Arbitration Institute (FAI), established under the Finland Chamber of Commerce, is an independent, non-profit provider of arbitration and mediation services for domestic and international commercial disputes. Administering both standard and expedited proceedings under its two sets of rules, the FAI offers fast, cost-effective, and confidential dispute resolution, supported by competitively priced hearing facilities, model clauses, and expert secretariat support.

More information: <https://arbitration.fi/en/>



中国海事仲裁委员会

CHINA MARITIME ARBITRATION COMMISSION

The China Maritime Arbitration Commission (CMAC), founded in 1959 is China's sole permanent maritime arbitral institution, handling admiralty, transport, logistics, and related commercial disputes. With headquarters in Beijing and Shanghai, sub-commissions across major coastal cities, and an Arbitration Center in Hong Kong SAR, CMAC offers unified arbitration services under its comprehensive rules and panel of experts. It also operates specialised centers for mediation and industry-specific ADR and continues to modernise its services with online platforms, broadening access for both domestic and international users.

More information: <https://www.cmac.org.cn/>



**ITOTAM**

ISTANBUL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTER

The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce Arbitration and Mediation Center (ITOTAM), established by the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, provides professional arbitration and mediation services for resolving commercial disputes efficiently and impartially. As a leading institution in Turkey, ITOTAM offers modern facilities, expert panels, and tailored procedures to support both domestic and international parties. Committed to promoting alternative dispute resolution, ITOTAM combines cost-effective solutions with confidentiality and neutrality, fostering trust and business continuity in a global marketplace.

More information: <https://itotam.com/>



The Beijing Arbitration & Investment Arbitration Center (BAIAC) is an independent, non-profit institution dedicated to providing efficient, neutral, and cost-effective arbitration services for international and investment disputes. Based in Singapore, BAIAC offers specialised rules tailored for cross-border and investor–state cases, supported by a panel of experienced arbitrators and modern case management. Committed to accessibility and transparency, BAIAC promotes best practices in arbitration and fosters collaboration across Asia and beyond.

More information: <https://baiac.org/>



ArbitralWomen is the leading international network for women in dispute resolution, dedicated to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities in arbitration, mediation, and related fields. With members spanning over 40 countries, the organisation drives change through mentoring, advocacy, and global initiatives that empower women professionals and foster gender balance in the ADR community.

More information: <https://arbitralwomen.org/>



The Shenzhen Court of International Arbitration (SCIA) is a leading independent arbitration institution in China, recognised globally for its innovative approach to dispute resolution. Established in 1983, SCIA provides arbitration, mediation, and other ADR services for commercial, investment, and cross-border disputes under modern, internationally aligned rules. With advanced case management systems, expert panels, and a commitment to fairness and efficiency, SCIA serves as a trusted platform for resolving complex disputes in one of Asia's most dynamic economic regions.

More information: <https://en.scia.com.cn/>

# Outlook 2026

We are dedicated to expanding our reach and enhancing our services for **you**, our users.

Stay connected with us and subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on LinkedIn.

## Contact the VIAC Secretariat



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+43 (0)5 90 900 - 4398

## Our Goals

1

### Entering a new era:

We are ready to step into our post-VIAC at 50 era. We are dedicated to expanding and growing our excellent service for the next 50 years. We aim to be fit for the future!

2

### Intensifying efficiency in our case management:

We are constantly critically reviewing and optimising our processes and will continue to do so in 2026. We are eager to receive feedback from our users so please stay in touch.

3

### Strengthening global reach and thought leadership:

Through our VIAC CAN network, VIAC has significantly expanded its' reach. We vow to continue this outreach and contribute to thought-leadership in an ever-growing field.





# Keep in touch



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