

Letter from the President / December 2025

Dear VIAC colleagues and friends,

As we approach the close of an extraordinary year, I am honoured to address you for the first time as the President of VIAC. Stepping into this role at such a pivotal moment is both a privilege and a responsibility.

This past year, VIAC celebrated fifty years of excellence in dispute resolution. We introduced updated arbitration and mediation rules, strengthened our commitment to modernisation, and published our

Note on the Use of Artificial Intelligence - an important step in ensuring that innovation enhances, rather than disrupts, the integrity of our processes.

Our anniversary year also brought record numbers of **international cooperation agreements**, **high-profile events at home and abroad**, and the continued confidence of our global community. These achievements are a testament to the dedication, professionalism, and vision of everyone connected to VIAC. They form a strong foundation as we look ahead to the next chapter of this wonderful institution.

Excellence in User Experience

At the heart of our mission is the service we provide to our users: whether a dispute is large or small, our goal is to deliver a standard of service that is reliably exceptional. I look forward to working with our stellar, multinational team to deliver a consistently excellent user experience, led by Secretary General **Niamh Leinwather**, Deputy Secretary General **Anna Förstel-Cherng**, and newly appointed Managing Counsel, **Elisabeth Vanas-Metzler**.

Excellence must be measurable to be meaningful. Our decision-making and performance data are therefore fully transparent. This includes **an average 12-month duration of proceedings** for the arbitrations we administer; administrative and arbitrator fees that are highly competitive; and a Board composed of market-leading practitioners who ensure the highest levels of integrity and responsiveness in every decision that we take.

In this 50th Anniversary Year, we can build on tremendous success: in the past year, VIAC had administered more than 70 disputes with an aggregated amount of EUR 1.9 billion. We take this success as inspiration to continuously improve our services and do even better.

A Deep Partnership With the Region

Looking to the future, we are deepening our role as the natural home for disputes from Central and Eastern Europe. With 41% of our cases originating from the CEE region and 33% of arbitrators appointed from this geographic area, VIAC stands unmatched in **regional engagement**. This

reflects not only our historic position as a bridge between East and West, but also the emergence of a dynamic new generation of CEE practitioners who expect - and deserve - meaningful participation.

Partnership with the region remains central to our vision. Through initiatives such as the **VIAC Community Ambassador Network** (VIAC CAN) we are active in 33 countries, allowing us to tailor our services more closely to regional needs and perspectives. Marrying VIAC's experience and know-how with unique local understanding will be a central focus point of the coming years.

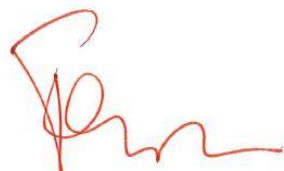
Shaping the Future Together

As arbitration faces new challenges, VIAC is committed to leading with clarity and purpose. We continue to set standards in diversity and transparency in appointments, in excellent case management supported by clear and accessible guidance, and in the responsible use of emerging technologies such as AI. In a global environment marked by uncertainty, thoughtful and inclusive leadership is essential. VIAC is determined to contribute a strong, pragmatic, and regionally grounded voice to the international arbitration community.

In short, our mission remains clear: to deliver service of the highest quality, to strengthen our partnership with the region, and to advocate for integrity and innovation as a global thought leader.

As we conclude this anniversary year and look ahead, all of us at VIAC are excited to work with stakeholders in Austria, the region, and beyond to serve as a reliable partner for our users and a respected voice on the global stage. I thank you for your trust and your engagement as we open the next chapter in VIAC's journey.

With warmest wishes for a peaceful and restorative year-end,
Sincerely yours,

A stylized, handwritten signature in red ink, consisting of a large 'F' followed by a cursive 'S' and a horizontal line.

Franz Schwarz

VIAC President



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