

## Message from the new President

As a first message let me repeat here the few words which I said at ASA's General Assembly on 2 September 2005, in particular my words of thanks to Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler, my predecessor:

Gabrielle, during the four years of your presidency you invested enormous time and energy in our organization – and this, never with much ado. You did this alongside your teaching and research obligations at the University of Geneva, numerous and important mandates as international arbitrator, and your role as Spiritus Rector in the successful arbitration practice of Schellenberg Wittmer. And it must be added that – together with your husband – you are raising three splendidly prospering children. All the more do we admire and appreciate your four-year commitment and labor for ASA.

Four years ago when Gabrielle stood here to honor her predecessor, Pierre Karrer, among his character traits she praised were two special ones: ‘une formidable efficacité’ and ‘une frappante présence’. These two qualities you too, display, Gabrielle – to an extraordinary degree. But not only did you direct ASA’s activity with great efficiency – in your personal rapport with your colleagues on the executive board of ASA you proved to be a remarkably engaging president: not dictating, but motivating; devoted not to personal vanities, but to the issues; sovereign and with a good sense of humor. In short, we on the board have highly valued your mode of leadership and we will greatly miss you as president.

For *all* the members of our organization your effective presence in the international arena has been evident. You represented ASA at many international events with thoughtful and wise votes – and I would venture to add, with elegance and a touch of glamour. In a recent publication (with your portrait appearing prominently on the title page!) one of your colleagues and fellow ASA members described international commercial arbitration as being a domain ‘which is dominated by a few aging people, with the usual suspects being pale, male, and stale’. Clearly you have set a counterpoint that can’t be overlooked. No wonder that during your presidency ASA’s membership has grown from 800 to over 1,000!

Dear Gabrielle, I wish and hope that – despite your withdrawal from office – we can continue to count on your good service as an ambassador for ASA. On behalf of each and every ASA member: our deepest gratitude for your past four years as president.

It is a tradition of our association to express its appreciation for the leaving president by appointing him or her honorary president. I therefore take the liberty to propose to this assembly to elect Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler an honorary president of ASA. And I would like to ask you all to show your vote of agreement with a round of applause.

As for myself, it is with great pleasure that I succeed Gabrielle as President of ASA. I thank you for the trust you demonstrated in electing me. It is true that every now and then I have declared my intent to bow out of my professional activity before I become the earlier mentioned ‘pale, stale, ageing male’. However, the prospect of the job as ASA president is a sufficient enticement to temporarily postpone my retirement. I believe that Switzerland as a place for international arbitration stands before great challenges. I promise you that I will try my best to tackle these challenges – in the interest of *all* the practitioners of international arbitration in Switzerland – our Swiss members, as well as those from abroad.

Dans la poursuite de ces buts je suis heureux de pouvoir compter sur la bonne collaboration de nos deux vice-présidents, François Knoepfler de Neuchâtel et Michael Schneider de Genève ainsi que de tous les autres membres du comité. La collaboration entre praticiens romands, tessinois et alémaniques a toujours été très enrichissante et je suis convaincu que le succès de la place d'arbitrage Suisse est en grande partie dû à cette coopération multiculturelle. Je peux vous assurer que je continuerai à attacher beaucoup d'importance à cette coopération entre praticiens de toutes les parties du pays durant ma présidence.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the non-Swiss members of ASA for their continued interest in our association. Meanwhile about 350 of the over 1'000 members of ASA are non-Swiss. It is thus with particular pleasure that I welcome the first non-Swiss to the Board of ASA. I hope this expansion will help address the interests and needs of the ever increasing number of our members who live outside of Switzerland – and that it will further assist us in understanding what is going on outside of our own country. I also very much count on the contribution of our non-Swiss

members as speakers, discussion leaders and session chairs at future ASA conferences and seminars.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to working with you.

Zurich, September 2005

Dr. Markus Wirth