

President's Message

Every year, the Statistical Report of the ICC International Court of Arbitration provides interesting information on key statistics and recent trends in international commercial arbitration. From a Swiss perspective one notes with satisfaction that in 2006 Switzerland has remained a popular venue for international arbitrations. In about 20% of the ICC cases, the designated place of arbitration was Switzerland. In 9 out of 10 cases it was the parties themselves that chose Switzerland, as opposed to a designation by the Court. Looking specifically at the party-chosen places of arbitration, Switzerland was the most popular venue, ahead of France and the United Kingdom. Within Switzerland, Geneva had a slightly higher share (49) of ICC arbitrations than Zurich (41). Of the ICC arbitrators confirmed or appointed in 2006, about 16% were Swiss nationals, followed by US and German nationals, with 11% and 10% respectively. Given the tough competition among the ever-increasing number of proposed places of arbitration, these are encouraging numbers, demonstrating that ASA's efforts to keep Switzerland an exceptionally arbitration-friendly place are widely recognized. Given the role of Switzerland in ICC arbitration, it is all the more regrettable that we have for many years not been able to encourage young Swiss lawyers to serve in the Court's Secretariat. It is true, of course, that both the past and current President of the ICC Court are Swiss. However, it would fit the Swiss arbitration community well if we could encourage young Swiss lawyers to serve in the ICC Secretariat, whether as counsel, assistant counsel, or stagiaire, and profit from the unique international environment and global experience of that institution. This is a call to ASA's Swiss members to spread the word and encourage young lawyers interested in international arbitration to spend some fascinating years in Paris.

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