



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES MAGISTRATS
UNIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE MAGISTRADOS
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG DER RICHTER
UNIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI MAGISTRATI**

PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA - PIAZZA CAVOUR - 00193 ROMA - ITALY

Rome, April 20, 2020

COMMUNIQUE OF THE IAJ SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

Dear Colleagues,

After consultations with the IAJ Presidency Committee, the Secretary-General has decided to issue the following communiqué, relating to the exceptional and unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By this mean, we inform all Member Associations about the resolutions adopted by the Presidency Committee on all issues regarding the life of our Organisation, during its extraordinary meeting, held on Wednesday, 15 April 2020, by electronic means.

Next Annual Meetings

By letter of 17 April you have already been informed by President Tony Pagone about the latest developments in the organisation of the next IAJ meetings. We may just add that we have very recently received another generous offer from the Association of Taiwan to host the IAJ annual meeting in 2022 or 2023. This would fit perfectly with the availability of the Association of Costa Rica to postpone the organisation of the next meeting (originally scheduled in 2020) to 2021 and of the Association of Israel for 2022. The postponement of the 62nd annual meeting to 2021 unfortunately brings about the need to postpone to the same date also the votes on the two applications currently under discussion, namely the ones of Gabon and Philippines (and possibly Honduras and Yemen, but these ones are linked to the peculiar situations of those countries).

Automatic Prolongation of IAJ PC and SG

The current exceptional and unprecedented situation, which prevents us from holding our 62nd annual meeting in 2020, forces us also to have a prolongation of the membership of the Presidency Committee and of the Secretariat-General. The Presidency Committee envisages that it may require Central Council at its next meeting to ratify the prolongation of the membership of the Presidency Committee and of the Secretariat-General between that period from when the elections ought to have taken place (2020) to the time at which the new elections do take place (2021).

2020 Meetings of the Presidency Committee

The Presidency Committee decided to hold its next meeting (which was originally scheduled to be held in Verona on 5 and 6 June) by electronic means. The same will apply to its autumn meeting. Needless to add that the Presidency Committee is constantly keeping close contacts via e-mail on all issues that may come up.

Regional Groups

As to the Regional Groups, the Presidency Committee decided to leave to them the whether to organize at another time the meetings which were to occur to have occurred this northern hemisphere spring which have been cancelled: in other words that they may postpone their meetings to the same season in 2021, or to choose another date—maybe in autumn 2020—as there

are no statutory provisions on the date of their meetings, although they are usually held in spring because the Presidency Committee meets in June.

Study Commissions

As to the Study Commissions, their Presidents have agreed not to have a virtual meeting, but to hold meetings in person on the occasion of the next annual meeting of the Central Council (which we we presume will be in autumn 2021 in Costa Rica). Therefore, the new deadline for the answers to the questionnaires (distributed a couple of months ago) need to be scheduled and Associations will be informed hereafter (those who already sent their contributions will be allowed to update them, if need be).

Working Groups

Working Group on the assistance to judges. This WG has already been created and started working via e-mail: therefore, there is no reason to suspend its activities (all the more in these times) and this Secretariat-General is fully available to provide support to its President and members.

Working Group (Commission) on Regular Monitoring. The Presidency Committee decided to postpone the appointment of members of this WG and its works to 2021, as these activities are strictly confined to the annual meetings of the Regional Groups and of the Central Council. This means that the first group of 31 associations are now informed of the deferral of the deadline for submission of their report (of course those reports which have been already sent will be considered as having been submitted on time and will be evaluated together with the ones that will be sent within the new deadline in 2021).

Working Group on the Reform of the IAJ statutory provisions on voting procedures. Also, for this WG the Presidency Committee has decided to postpone the appointment of its members and its works to 2021, as these activities are also confined to the conduct in person of the annual meetings of the Regional Groups and of the Central Council.

2020 Annual Membership Fees

The Presidency Committee has decided to approve the proposal of the Secretariat-General to reduce by half all membership fees related to the current year 2020, taking into account the fact that the postponement of all the meetings “in person” of this year has the effect of lowering a certain number of expenses. However, it is clear that the Presidency Committee and the Secretariat-General continue working and some activities at the level of Regional Groups are still anticipated. We inform therefore all Associations that those members who still have to settle their dues for this year will pay half the amount due for 2020, namely:

- a) for the first group: € 883,50 (instead of € 1767),
- b) for the second group: € 589 (instead of € 1178),
- c) for the third group: € 353 (instead of € 706),
- d) for the fourth group: € 176 (instead of € 352).

We inform those Associations which already paid the entire amount for 2020 (following the letter we sent in January this year) that they will only be required to pay half the amount that will be due in 2021 (this situation will be reflected in the request for payment letter that we will send for the payment of the 2021 fees, which will specify the exact amount due by each and any Association).

Survey and Study upon the Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Judicial Activity

Finally, the Presidency Committee agreed on a proposal submitted by the French Association and by the Secretariat-General for the Study Commissions to undertake a wide ranging survey and study upon the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on judicial activity and more generally on the impact and reactions to the pandemic on the Rule of Law and on the Independence of the Judiciary. President Pagone has already contacted the Presidents of the four Study Commissions in order to ask them to confer together with a view to seeing how best we might learn from this experience in a way that is meaningful and positive.

In this framework the Presidency Committee also asked the Secretariat-General to send a general message asking the associations to provide information about possible problems in their countries due to corona virus to obtain short answers of general character on the main issues at stake. We are therefore working on a short questionnaire that will be spread very soon.

This is all for the moment.

We are very confident that the world Judiciary will cope with the huge challenges which are currently before us.

We wish you all the best in these perilous times. Kind regards from Italy.

Giacomo Oberto – Secretary-General

Lucio Aschettino – Deputy Secretary-General

Galileo D'Agostino – Deputy Secretary-General

Raffaele Gargiulo – Deputy Secretary-General

Daniela de Vincentiis – Assistant to the Secretariat-General

Barbara Scolart – Assistant to the Secretariat-General