

Charlotte Tregunna

Candidacy letter for the position of
First Vice-President of AIJA



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Executive Summary ¹		
Equality	Affordability	Ensuring value for money and as many young lawyers, from trainee to partner and beyond, have the opportunity to attend as many events as possible and to expand their networks in all four corners of the world
	Enhancing Sponsorship	Building on current strides in amplifying benefits of sponsors, streamlining the sponsorship process, and expanding support in the process from all areas of AIJA's organisational structure
	Force for Good	Actively advocating for Human Rights and Diversity and Inclusion – developing a more concrete mandate to utilise existing statuses in the multilateral space

¹ Needed. This is a long-read guys, just to forewarn, and sadly it's a non-chargeable review. You might even need to go and make yourself a cup of tea.

Expansion	Supporting Commissions	Leveraging connections with other associations, entering into dialogue with Bar Associations and Collective Members and working in conjunction with them to support Commissions in achieving the “1 in 3” events outside Europe #globalaija policy
	Engaging Representatives	Finding further regional representatives in underrepresented areas to build local networks, securing full commitment from all representatives
	Global Topics	Ensuring topics covered at major events are of global interest and enhance online offerings to attract or maintain members who cannot travel as easily
Engagement	Boosting Involvement	Minimum requirements for OCs to include two individuals who have never served on an OC (and in other areas such as Session Coordinators where possible)
	Clarifying Expectations	Expanding and clarifying the role of the Executive Committee – including involvement in taskforces to assist Committees and Boards
	Upskilling	Building upon the association’s work of equipping young lawyers with skills needed to thrive professionally

Dear AIJA Friends, Colleagues, and Future Members,

As you know, AIJA currently comprises over 1,700 members. I am just one of those members: a Partner at Peters & Peters Solicitors LLP in London, specialising in White Collar Crime.²

So, if you're just another member, why have you decided to run for First Vice-President?

I have been committed to AIJA **since 2015**, after attending my first Congress in London. I met so many like-minded, gregarious and genuine young lawyers, who wanted to grow, learn and network in the same way as me: working hard, but having a hoot at the same time.

In 2018, at the Brussels Congress, AIJA members gave me the opportunity to participate in my first panel. It was probably the most nerve-wracking professional experience of my life up until that point, and yet our members gave me the space and the ability to – let's be honest – completely mess it up...

Despite this initial set back, my commitment to AIJA strengthened further when AIJA members supported me in offering multiple further opportunities to grow and develop my public speaking skills, from Hong Kong to Vaduz.³ Thanks to AIJA, I now feel slightly more confident at public speaking (well...not as bad as I used to feel anyway: thank goodness for box breathing!).

In 2019, my enthusiasm continued to grow when I successfully applied for Vice President of the (then named) Commercial Fraud Commission. In that role, I had the privilege of working alongside truly dedicated AIJA members, collaborating on novel ideas for panels, webinars and events. After my appointment as President of the Commission **in 2022**, I was also part of the team who decided that the Commission needed to accurately and openly reflect its composition and direction, motivating us to change to the Business Crime and Civil Fraud Commission, attracting many new members as a result.

What a joy it has been to be involved in so many amazing events with other AIJA members! Joint session coordinator for panels in Singapore, Gothenburg⁴, Rio⁵ and various webinars as part of the Virtual Congress during the pandemic; part of the Organising Committee for the Curacao BCCF and Litigation seminar, as well as the AIJA Women Network's Second Retreat in Italy; all of which culminated in being part of the first all-female Academic Coordinator team with (the legends that are) Beatriz, Zoya and Laura Manz at last year's Madrid Congress. A time was had, let me tell you.

² Particular expertise in corporate crime disputes/investigations, complex fraud, corruption and money laundering cases, and related public law issues, including extradition. Check out my bio [here](#).

³ Great cities; different vibes.

⁴ Which I insist you must pronounce correctly.

⁵ Winning the award for best session of the Congress – don't ask me of course what happened to the award after I failed to accept it during the Gala Dinner...



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In 2024, I was elated to be appointed to my current role as Co-Chair of the Human Rights Committee, where I have learned more about the inner workings of the association as part of the Extended Bureau, as well as dealing with a plethora of human rights issues, some of which have been extremely challenging to navigate. This has opened my eyes to the hard work that is necessary to keep the association running as smoothly as it does, and which is often never seen.

This has been yet another opportunity for me to work alongside outstanding young lawyers and AIJA members, who give so much personal energy to the vision, direction and progression of the association.

Okay thanks for setting out your AIJA CV... back to the question: why do you want to run for First-Vice President?

Alright, calm down I'm getting to that! Primarily, I want to help other members gain as much and even more than I have from AIJA over the last ten years. I have had some of the most incredible experiences at AIJA events, and have made lifelong friends, both on a personal and professional level.

Given how stressful our jobs can be, I want to demonstrate to young(er) lawyers that business development is not only crucial to our working world (and of course, technically, the monetisation of our ability to be social!), but if embraced in the right way, it can also be key to our self-development, our self-worth, and our future success.

This, of course, depends on an individual's ability to get involved in AIJA, and be able to embrace it in the same way I did. After all, #thisisyourAIJA. It is what you make of it.

So, my presidential campaign will not be focused on any grand gestures to change the direction of the association. My goal will be to engage as many people as early as possible, ensuring and emphasising that those who want to be involved can do so, upholding AIJA's values of diversity and inclusion, and building upon the amazing work already done by countless past Presidents and Bureaux in expanding the association on a truly global scale.

AIJA is yours. It's your space to connect, and your platform to thrive. I want to make sure that AIJA is working for you, and it is what you want it to be.

Beautiful. Sounds like you're being lazy. What will you actually do then?

I want to focus on three E's:

- Equality;
- Expansion; and
- Engagement.



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I can be known as Charlotte “ThrEEEgunna” if you will...⁶

Equality

AIJA should be for all.

We must ensure that participation is not a privilege for the few, but an opportunity for everyone.

Cost of Events

Some have argued that in AIJA ‘going global’, events have become more expensive. We should of course remember that affordability is relative: an event in the Americas is not as expensive for local/nearby lawyers, just as a European destination is not as expensive for commensurately local/nearby lawyers.

Equally, however, I believe in ensuring as many young lawyers, from trainee to partner and beyond, have the opportunity to attend as many events as possible, and to expand their networks in all four corners of the world. A huge amount of work has already gone into trying to ensure that underlying expenses are monitored to ensure that every event is affordable, is value for money, potentially with higher sponsorship targets, and is accessible to all young lawyers, wherever they are in their careers or the world. If elected, I would like to devise consistent and clear guidelines for OCs to follow when it comes to ensuring continuing value for money, and where possible keeping operating costs to a minimum so that everyone can continue to benefit from what AIJA offers. Ideas that have already been floated within the Extended Bureau should be explored, such as potentially looking at partnerships with hotel chains to minimise hotel costs even further than the fantastic rates the AIJA office secures, as well as ensuring registration fees are as low as possible by continuing the strategic reinvestment of AIJA’s profits.

Part of this plan can be supplemented by a strong sponsorship programme to encompass both institutional sponsors over the year, as well as sponsors for individual events. I remember having the daunting task of securing tens of thousands of Euros worth of sponsorship for the BCCF and Litigation seminar in Curacao in 2024, and thinking: “how the hell am I going to achieve this?”⁷

The current Bureau is doing wonders with the creation of the Sponsorship Committee, the amplification of the benefits that sponsors get for their money, and the creation of a sponsorship handbook to assist those lawyers-turned-salespeople who are responsible for securing sponsorship for each event.

⁶ Thought of this gem after I printed my stickers. Doh! Don’t worry, I dispense with it by the end of the letter.

⁷ I sent a lot of emails, put it that way. Some might say I begged.



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I wish to enhance that work with further engagement with sponsors to understand their expectations and needs either as annual sponsor or during a particular conference, and seek to secure centralised support from the AIJA office. This would be assisted by advanced data mapping and visualisation charts with details of the firms behind the individual members, to include details of turnover, number of lawyers, international reach etc., to better attract and secure corporate sponsors. I would also like to streamline the sponsorship process, to ensure efficient use of time for those involved in the sponsorship process, to avoid reaching out to sponsors in a fragmented way.

We should also garner more support from other areas of AIJA e.g. the Executive Committee, where possible (see further below under Engagement). After all: the wider the potential pool and network of sponsors and the greater the publicity and benefits for the sponsor, the easier it will be to secure and maintain sponsors moving forward.

Equity and Being a Force for Good

Both the AIJA Women Network and the Human Rights Committee are close to my heart, given my involvement with both during my AIJA career.

I am deeply committed to ensuring that these critical issues remain central to our association's work, together with AIJA's commitment to sustainability and diversity and inclusion. I will continue to advocate for the empowerment of female and marginalised lawyers worldwide, encouraging and supporting AIJA initiatives that highlight women's leadership, as well as building upon opportunities that have been created by AIJA for mentorship and visibility.

Whilst I am conscious that AIJA's bylaws prohibit activities or discussions of a political or religious nature, I would like to develop a more concrete mandate within the Human Rights Committee to utilise its ECOSOC status and its participant status with other bodies such as the global NGO committee, to monitor discussions that affect young lawyers or values at AIJA's heart, and leverage AIJA's role and influence on these issues in a multilateral space.

My vision is that AIJA can be both a space for professional growth, but also a force for good.

Expansion

I fully support the continuing **#globalAIJA** initiative and its expansion.

The legal world is evolving; so should AIJA. With upcoming events in San Diego, DC, Vietnam, Panama, Abu Dhabi, Tokyo, and Cairo, today's AIJA is becoming a truly global association. How good could tomorrow be?



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As members have seen on the referral WhatsApp group, there are often requests for lawyers in far flung jurisdictions in which AIJA has not even yet set foot. My aim would be to:

1. Champion the continued growth of AIJA to new destinations in existing countries within which AIJA already has a solid membership – expanding the membership to other major cities;
2. Enhance support to commissions in expanding their reach to jurisdictions or areas where there have been fewer events, cementing AIJA's position in those jurisdictions; and
3. Support and encourage OCs in identifying lesser tapped markets and regions for AIJA to grow into, particularly those in Asia, Australia and Africa, building bridges where few existed before, to embed AIJA as a global structure.

Supporting Commissions, Regional Representation and Growth

More concrete support is required to assist some, if not all, commissions in venturing further afield as part of the **#globalaija** initiative to have at least one event every three years outside of Europe. This can be daunting and difficult for many commissions who have fewer members outside of Europe.

Leveraging the Extended Bureau and EC's connections through other associations (including engaging early or entering into Memoranda of Understanding with Bar Associations and Collective Members if necessary) and working in conjunction with other associations such as the UIA and IBA (with joint seminars), learning from those associations to understand how to organise events in those jurisdictions, will enhance support to Commissions in achieving the #globalaija requirements.

Offering temporary flexible memberships to local lawyers who are not yet AIJA members to enable them to assist OC's in jurisdictions where AIJA has fewer members but needs more 'on the ground' support is also something I would like to explore. Sponsored memberships, encouraging law firms to sponsor young lawyers from underrepresented countries could also be considered, if there is sufficient appetite to do so.

Ensuring and monitoring the engagement of all regional, national and local representatives is obviously key to expansion in those areas, including finding further regional representatives in underrepresented areas to build local networks and organise events where possible.

Global Topics

We should also ensure that any topics covered either online or at major events do not just focus on topics that are of interest to Europeans, but have a global interest in mind. Additionally, since COVID, the online offering of AIJA has reduced (understandably!) but high-quality content can often attract or maintain members in jurisdictions who cannot travel as easily. Commissions should be encouraged to organise a webinar each year that will have global interest.



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Engagement

AIJA is strongest when its members are engaged.

I have been very fortunate to have had the ability and opportunity to get involved at every stage of AIJA.

I would like to make it even easier for members to get involved and make a difference, whether it's your first event or your fifteenth. Recognising the enormous work that many already put into the association is vital, but as we expand our horizons, let's increase our active population; this will generate further enthusiasm for the association (as people see their own potential within it), allowing a wider reaching more effective association, building for future sustainability.

Minimum Requirements for Organising Committees and Session Coordinators

I would like to see each Organising Committee include a minimum of two individuals who have never served on an OC before. This would expand the number of individuals who get exposure to an OC and its work, with the support of more experienced members to guide them. This initiative could also extend to positions such as session coordinators where perhaps, one session coordinator for each panel is completely new to that role.

Enhancing the role of the Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee and the expectations of the EC should be clarified and expanded. I fear that EC participants may not fully understand what is required of them and are not called upon to do as much as they could. These participants are usually new members who want to get involved and who should be recognised and rewarded for doing so.

I would like to work with the EC to define its role more clearly and perhaps empower groups of EC members to become more involved in assisting the Committees and Boards of the Extended Bureau (akin to the Human Rights Committee's Taskforce) as well as the Bureau, with enterprises such as sponsorship, global connections, and the generation of ideas. This could be such a rich resource of engagement, which I perceive as currently underutilised.

Upskilling and supporting young lawyers

Engagement of course is contingent upon AIJA members having the ability to come to AIJA in the first place. I would like to build upon the association's work of equipping young lawyers with the skills needed to thrive professionally, such as public speaking, active listening, emotional intelligence, adaptability, judgment, commercial awareness, learning how to bold/italicise/strikethrough



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on WhatsApp⁸ etc., which will demonstrate how the association is of huge benefit to the law firms who fund their young lawyers in coming to AIJA.

As with previous First VPs, I will also focus on supporting initiatives aimed at supporting the well-being of young lawyers, with the aim of fostering a culture where well-being is not just an afterthought, but a shared and crucial priority.

That was all a bit serious.

Ultimately, I am just another member, and these are things that I have perceived over the last ten years might benefit current and future members, in making connections and securing referrals, which is the main aim of the association.

If elected, I will listen and learn from fellow members about whether any of the above is what you want, whether it is of benefit to the association, and include as many people as possible in that discussion. Might even throw in a few jokes to make it fun too.

#thisisyourAIJA

It is what we make of it.

Together, we can continue to ensure that AIJA is the most inclusive, engaged and truly global network of young lawyers in the world.

It's #treGunnabegreat⁹, and I would be honoured if you would vote for me as your First Vice-President of AIJA at the Washington Congress in August.

And look at me! I got the whole way to the end without even mentioning the AIJA spirit...

⁸There is even an "in joke" from the AIJA Referral WhatsApp group...I'm pulling out all the stops.

⁹Dispensed with thrEEEGunna, clearly. I may still graffiti it somewhere if I have time during my campaign. Watch this space.



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