



EUROPEAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2013



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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to a new issue of your newsletter!

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate the relaunch of the ELA programme in Edinburgh in 2014. This has been made possible by the commitment and hard work put in by our esteemed colleague Charles Mullin who has worked hard alongside our secretary Sabrina and the Board to make this a reality!

In this issue we focus on the new measures adopted by the Spanish Government to promote economic activity, the life of one of our members as a diplomat in Burundi, and legal changes afoot in Scotland.

We also have the opportunity to partake of “the life of others”. Our Dutch colleague Anne Sophie Andela provides an interesting account of an Erasmus lecturer’s life in London whilst ELA members from France display their hidden talents in an international and multicultural choir which travels all over Europe singing a variety of music ranging from classical to modern, opera to musicals in just as many languages.

To put the icing on the cake (no pun intended!), we admire the culinary talents of one of our members currently undertaking a cordon bleu cooking course which requires more effort, cooking hours and determination than first anticipated!

If you have an interesting hobby, play an unusual sport, have experienced an extraordinary holiday in an unusual place or in unusual circumstances, please let us know.

If there is a legal issue that is currently affecting your jurisdiction, write to us and tell us your opinion

If you have ever come across a client that provided you with “more than work”, behaved in an extraordinary manner or provided you with the funniest time of your career, do not hesitate to contact us.

As my predecessor once said, this is YOUR NEWSLETTER. This is what YOU make it. If you have any suggestions, news or articles that you would like to see published in the next issue please email them to me at [asunsueiro@hotmail.com](mailto:asunsueiro@hotmail.com).

We call for members to email their photograph to us at the aforementioned email address. The Board wishes to add a photo to your profile on our webpage with a view to assisting members recognise one another at annual meetings. Any photo in which you are not in disguise will do for this purpose although good pictures would be preferable!

Finally, we congratulate Christina Koycheva and Donald Vankatapen on the arrival of their newborn babies. Another two additions to the ELA family!



Excellent news from Scotland

## **NEW EURODEVIL INVASION TO HIT THE STREETS OF EDINBURGH IN APRIL 2014**

Dear Members,

Xmas has come early this year with the announcement of the re-launch of the Eurodevils' programme in Edinburgh in 2014!!

This is excellent news for the European Lawyers Association and it shows the effort and commitment put in by its active members, in particular the current Board and Charles Mullin without whom this would not have been possible. We are indebted to him.

The Dean of the Faculty of Advocates (that is, the Head of the Bar in Scotland) has indicated his support for the Faculty and the ELA to work together to produce an un-funded Eurodevil Programme, with placements of Eurodevils with Junior and Senior Advocates and with Judges.

Correspondence to confirm the terms of the agreement has been exchanged between Hanif and the Dean, a further update will be provided in the next newsletter

Both Sabrina and Charles spoke with Lord Pentland, one of the Court of Session Judges who had previously been involved with Eurodevils. He was very supportive of the Programme being revived and wished





to be of practical help when it comes to placements of Eurodevils with Judges. Lord Pentland would be prepared to approach the Lord President of the Court of Session (Lord Gill) to get his agreement to the proposed placements with Judges.

On the basis that the Dean and Vice Dean have already indicated their support, a training room has been booked for the period 7th to 16th April 2014 in the Faculty's training building, where an induction course on the Scottish legal system will be provided for Eurodevils.

Placements with Advocates should start on Tuesday 22nd April (the start of the Court Summer Term) and run until 27th June. The programme will be held from 7 April until 27 June 2014.

The induction course is likely to be run by a highly recommended young Advocate, Ross Anderson. He has a very strong academic background, having a doctorate from Edinburgh and having also studied and taught at the Max Planck Institute in Hamburg, as well as in Glasgow University (indeed, he is still doing some teaching in Glasgow). He is fluent in German (and also happens to have a Swiss girl friend!). Ross is very keen to help with the induction training and with the Eurodevil Programme in general.



The other two Junior Advocates who may become involved are Stephen O'Rourke (who has previously organised placements with Advocates and Judges) and Isla Davey (also previously involved with Eurodevils). The Dean is happy for them to be our first points of contact. A meeting is being arranged with them and Ross Anderson to consider the content of the induction training and who might deliver talks etc. The idea would be to have a mix of young and senior lawyers giving seminars and also arrange visits to places such as the Scottish Parliament.

We are unfunded, but some token of appreciation will be shown to induction speakers. In addition the ELA may host a party at the end of the Programme to thank all who will have given time to the Eurodevils during their stay in Scotland.

Philip Jadoul's recruitment company Via Legis has kindly donated 5,000 euro to assist with the re-launch and the financing of the aforementioned activities.

In future, it is envisaged that more active funding methods will be sought from European Bars as discussed in past ELA general meetings such as the one held in Milan

The next stage will be for the ELA to take forward a recruitment campaign to be completed by the end of the year, so that the successful candidates can give three months' notice to their employers of their proposed attendance in Edinburgh. National representatives have already been contacted by our Chairman for this purpose and have replied enthusiastically to his call.

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## COMPUTER MATTERS...

Hanif Mohammed and Philip Jadoul are preparing a new web page aimed at providing more capabilities. The new page would be user friendly and built on the same basis as the much praised registration page for the highly successful Antwerp meeting. More to come on the next issue... Watch this space!





News from Scotland

## **THE TAYLOR REVIEW REPORTS ON EXPENSES IN SCOTLAND**

Following on from the publication of the Scottish Civil Courts Review (SCCR) in 2009, the Report of the Taylor Review, published on 12 September 2013, addresses the issue of legal expenses (it assumes that the SCCR recommendations have been implemented).

The Taylor report will inevitably be compared with the Jackson Report in England and Wales and although some of the proposals are similar Sheriff Principal Taylor makes it clear that he has not deferred to the Jackson recommendations and that he has recognised the differences between the two jurisdictions.

Two of the most significant distinctions he recognises are that, as ATE premiums and success fees under speculative fee agreements are not recoverable in Scotland, there has never been the imbalance between the parties in litigation that Jackson identified in England and Wales; nor does Sheriff Principal Taylor recognise a 'compensation culture' in Scotland, with lower levels of personal injury claims of all types in Scotland than in England and Wales. The Scottish Government is also much more supportive of legal aid than the Westminster Government.

**Anne-Marie Ségala-Altieri**  
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## **THE SINGING LAWYERS!**

Canta Lex is a French Choir, where you may find 3 ELA members, namely, Dominique Gantelme, Frédéricque Le Berre (both alti) and Anne-Marie Ségala-Altieri (soprano).

It is the Choir of the judicial professions of the Paris Bar and it comprises about 50 members.

Its Choir Master, Tsvetan Dobrev, was born in Bulgaria. He was awarded diplomas in piano, organ and musical composition in Sofia. He has lived in France since 1990. Mr Dobrev has won many international awards for the music he has composed to date. He has recorded 4 CDs. In 2009 he published a "Summary of Musical Knowledge" (3 bilingual volumes in French and English), editions Archétype 82, Paris. He directs 3 other choirs (Flori Canti, Orphée and Sarabande.)

Our choir sings in many languages: Bulgarian, French, English, Spanish, German, Italian, etc... and this is part of the fun!

Our repertoire comprises abstracts from West Side Story. It ranges from Misa Flamenca to Brazilian songs. It includes classical French songs from the Renaissance period to the present, both religious and non religious music such as pieces by G Fauré, one of our favorite French authors. These are only but a few examples.

We gave a concert in support of Transhépate (an association for liver transplant) on June 1st 2013. We will be doing another one on December 5th for LICRA.

For further details of our activities please check out our website: "cantalex.free.fr" and please note that any Parisian lawyer (with a good voice if at all possible...) is welcome to join us. We need more members in particular tenors or base.

We sing once a week on Thursday evenings at the Eglise ecossaise (Paris 75008). You are welcome to come along!





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## RESIDENCE PERMITS IN SPAIN EASIER AND FASTER PROCEDURES.

On September 19th, the Spanish Parliament passed a new bill aimed at supporting entrepreneurs and their Internationalization (the "Act").

One of the main goals of the Act is to promote economic growth and opportunity by attracting individuals who can contribute financially to the Spanish economy.

Amongst other measures, the Act implements flexible and faster procedures to grant residence permits to individuals who meet certain economic conditions. For instance, foreigners investing a minimum of EUR 500,000 in real estate will be eligible for fast track residence permits. This avoids having to deal with complex renewal processes. The Act sets up a different track to that used for granting ordinary work permits.

The Act is aimed at encouraging and facilitating the residency of successful business people and highly talented entrepreneurs in Spain. The new Act sets out the requirements to qualify for this new type of residence permit.

The criteria is as follows:

- Investors who make a significant financial investment in Spanish debt (i.e. EUR 2,000,000 onwards).
- Entrepreneurs involved in an activity of special economic interest.
- Highly qualified professionals, who are involved in projects of general interest, conduct research or carry out innovative activities in the public or private sector.

The Act sets out a new trend that should continue to be supported by reforms of national legislation aimed at promoting economic growth, which in all cases will be very welcome by the Spanish market.





**María Luisa Pérez**  
Spanish National  
Representative  
(and future chef!)

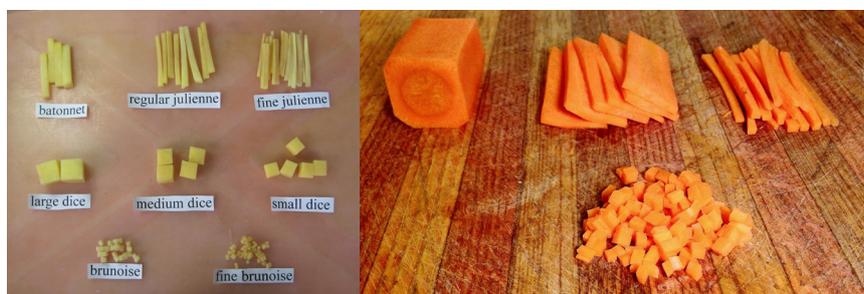
## WHAT IS A LAWYER DOING AT THE CORDON BLEU SCHOOL?

I would like to announce that I have made a complete U turn in my career changing my lawyer's cap and gown for la toque blanche (or the chef's hat)! Even though for the time being I am only allowed to wear a cap. I will not have the right to wear la toque until I graduate!

I am studying at the prestigious international school Cordon Bleu in Madrid. This is not just a school to learn peculiar recipes only. It is probably the most famous school to learn the basic techniques of the most famous cuisine in the world, that is, French cuisine.

We started off by "turning vegetables" which is the classic French method of cutting vegetables by hand. Have you ever heard of or even eaten a brunoise? It is a mix of carrots, turnips or leeks to the dimensions of 2 mm by 2 mm or less so you can imagine the hard work and attention to detail that this involves! A perfect brunoise is considered to be one of the overall most difficult knife techniques to master.

We then graduated to "turning potatoes" in quite a lot of different shapes paying particular attention to Chateaux potatoes that need to have seven edges, this is supposed to be the perfect number! I am sure you can easily guess how many potato leftovers we have eaten after a lot of cutting to achieve the perfect shape! You can see some examples below.



Please do not ask if it would be possible to cut all the vegetables using a machine, this is considered to be sacrilege! Always by hand! But do not worry, plasters are free!

And let us not forget les champignons tournés or turned mushrooms this tops the lot!



I would need a few more pages to explain how to bone out all types of poultry, from chicken to small quails and how to stuff them with different kinds of meat, liver and vegetables but always wrapped in caul fat. Caul fat is a fine adipose tissue covering the intestines of cows, lambs or pigs - that you probably never have heard about, neither had I!.



Fish is another chapter. The most amazing thing I have had to do to date is murder a lobster! yes, "murder" is correct. The animal was alive and I had to kill it by chopping its head off with a big knife. You can be certain that I felt as guilty as my clients in criminal cases!

But, not everything is bad. In fact, everything is very satisfactory and exciting.

To finish off, here is a very nice picture of a *Bar farci braisé au sauce vin blanc*, stuffed braised sea bass with white wine sauce. Please do not ask me how it is possible for somebody to go to a restaurant and order a dish like this to be served within ten minutes. We took three hours to prepare it so ... I do not have the answer yet!. But one has to admit that the result is spectacular:



I can assure you I have never been as stressed when dealing with a criminal case as I am in the kitchen when I hear the Chef director that we have to plate up!

Bon appétit!

# TALES OF AN ITINERANT TEACHER

## LONDON 2012

Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London...  
(*Ralph McTell*)

As Erasmus lecturer I have visited London Metropolitan Business School several times now. This usually involves a lively email exchange with my London contact, Ronke Shoderu, followed by a hectic but fulfilling visit to the mutual satisfaction of both our institutions and the students. This last Spring break I took over eight classes from seven of my English counterparts on four different topics in three City locations: Moorgate, Holloway Road en Jewry Street. This is the account of that capital adventure.

Monday 27 February

Moorgate. The neo-classicistic building from 1903 very aptly used to serve as the headquarters of Cable & Wireless, an early cable and communication giant. In an auditorium with 80 first year students the Power Point -tailor-made for this visit- stands at the ready. I set out the background and realities of the European legal order to students from all over the globe. Just like in Amsterdam it is a motley crew, including students from India, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe alongside those from Munich, Manila, Tbilisi, Baku and Hong Kong. And London of course. The truly international classroom gives me a round of applause as I conclude my lesson. Oh, the joys of guest lecturership!

The next session starts with a Starbucks Cappuccino and a brownie handed to me by Etienne Bresch, a French economist I already met on a previous visit. I don't get round to polishing these delicacies off until after I finalize this two-hour lecture on European competition law. The exorbitant fines handed out to the likes of Microsoft and Intel for the abuse of their respective dominant positions and cartels are well-known in the international business world. As is our own Dutch "Nickel Neelie" Kroes, who in her capacity as Euro commissioner used to say: "These are the rules, I am merely the referee." These third-year students are fully aware now of the "do's en don'ts" of doing business in Europe and of the threats and opportunities involved. Forewarned is forearmed!

Afterwards Etienne and I talk crisis, higher education and the attitude of students. We discuss the importance of ethics and moral leadership and our responsibility to prepare our students for this world in transition as



best as we can. Etienne refers to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "Le Petit Prince" and I bring in Lucebert's acronym: 'Alles van waarde is weerloos', (All that is precious is vulnerable). Incredible, how much we teachers have in common!

Tuesday 28 February

Holloway Road. Just as the IBS is right behind the ArenA, the North campus of LondonMet is located next to Arsenal's Emirates Stadium. Polish-born lecturer Krzysztof Boroch picks me up at the turn-stiles. His students are amazed that a producer or license holder can not control the further distribution of goods after these have been marketed for the first time within the European Union. As a former solicitor and company lawyer I know better than to just show them the limitations. I also hand them possible solutions. When pricing their products as marketers they will be aware of the fact they might not be able to prevent parallel imports, but they will certainly be able to make it an unattractive proposition. Mission accomplished!

Fleet Street. In Hammick's Legal Bookstore, where as a law student at King's College London I used to while away many an hour, I look at the latest legal publications. After that I have dinner in Chinatown at Wong Kei's, famous for "upstairs/downstairs". Oh, the joys of London!

Wednesday 29 February

On my way to Moorgate I pass by Finsbury Square where the Occupy movement has found refuge after having been ousted from St. Paul's Cathedral. Tonight I service the part time students. Just like in Amsterdam these mature and very motivated students combine their evening studies with day-time jobs. I greatly admire their perseverance and discipline. Hats off to these mature students!

Thursday 1 March

I attend a seminar on the ins and outs of the English judicial system. Montesquieu's separation of the legislative and judicial powers has finally been executed. No longer is the House of Lords the highest court: it has been renamed the Supreme Court. With a symbolic logo that would have done William Morris proud.

Over lunch Ronke fills me in on the recently finalized consolidation of subjects into larger coherent units at LondonMet. The idea is that less



fragmentation will lead to increased focus. The intended result: decreasing the drop-out rate whilst increasing study success and student satisfaction. A well-known theme!

London Metropolitan University and the International Business School have a lot in common indeed. With a history that hails back to the 19th century and is closely related to the international and commercial environment of a major port, both institutions have educated the business community long before the term bachelor of business administration even came into existence

Friday 2 March

Jewry Street. The subject: employability. The future plans and ambitions are wide ranging. From solicitor to barrister to banker and even police officer! What are the core qualities that will make you employable and prepare you for today's fickle and flexible labour market? Knowledge and skills are a sine qua non, a necessity. It is attitude that makes the difference. Hands on. Can do. To be in your strength. To be aware of your strong and your weak points. Passion. Authenticity. And also: what extracurricular activities – be it sports, games, jobs or charitable causes - have you pursued? I have touched a nerve: a lively discussion ensues. The format of this module would fit our curriculum like a glove. It is one of the recommendations I take home.

The South Bank. Strolling along the Thames Ronke and I look back on the past week. As before, it has been a mutually beneficial and satisfactory experience. A successful “venture between capitals”, or as Ronke puts it: “A new face, a new voice, a new perspective gets the juices flowing.”

(previously published in BITS Magazine and EuropaExprese in 2012)



**Mr. Anne-Sophie Andela LLM (KCL) is Senior Lecturer International Business Law and Current Issues in Business in the IBMS department of the International Business School of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences/HvA. She participated in the European Young Lawyers' Scheme in London in 1992**





**Brent Van Tassel**

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## **A DIPLOMAT IN BURUNDI**

After a long career spanning over ten years as a business lawyer at the Brussels Bar, Brent Van Tassel, changed his career path and entered the service of the Belgian Foreign Affairs office. Brent is a former Belgian Representative of the ELA. He also participated in the Edinburgh Scheme in 2009. His first posting as a diplomat sent him to Burundi.

Burundi, officially the Republic of Burundi, is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa. It has borders with Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Its capital, Bujumbura, where the Belgian embassy is located, can be better described as a small town rather than a city. Although the country is landlocked, much of the south western border is adjacent to Lake Tanganyika, which makes it a good place to live with nearly perfect temperature, fresh fish and tasty fruit.

Despite Burundi's huge potential in the field of tourism, political instability in the region sadly keeps tourists at home.

### **A little Belgian history**

Burundi is definitely a very interesting post for a Belgian diplomat. It is one of those places where Belgium still has some influence on the political arena. This is due to the history of the country as a former Belgian territory.

The Twa, Hutu and Tutsi people have lived in Burundi for at least five hundred years. For over two hundred years, Burundi was ruled as a kingdom. Following its defeat in World War I, Germany handed over control of a section of the former German East Africa to Belgium. This section included modern day Rwanda and Burundi. On October 20, 1924, this land became a Belgian League of Nations mandate territory, in practice, part of the Belgian colonial empire, known as Ruanda-Urundi. The Belgians allowed Ruanda-Urundi to keep their monarchy.



Following World War II, Ruanda-Urundi became a United Nations Trust Territory under Belgian administrative authority. During the 1940s, a series of policies caused divisions throughout the country.

In 1948, Belgium allowed the region to form political parties. These factions would be one of the main influences for Burundi's independence from Belgium.

On January 20, 1959, Burundi's ruler, Mwami Mwambutsa IV, made a formal request to the Belgian Minister of Colonies for Burundi and Rwanda to be separated and for Ruanda-Urundi to be no more.

Six months later, political parties were formed. The first of these political parties was the Union for National Progress (UPRONA).

Burundi's hunger for independence was influenced to some extent by the instability and ethnic persecution that occurred in Rwanda. In November 1959, Rwandese Hutu attacked the Tutsi population and massacred thousands of people. Many Tutsi escaped to Uganda and Burundi to find freedom from persecution. The Hutu came to power in Rwanda by winning Belgian-run elections in 1960.

The UPRONA, a multi-ethnic unity party, led by Prince Louis Rwagasore and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) became the most prominent organization throughout Ruanda-Urundi. Following UPRONA's victory in the elections, Prince Rwagasore was assassinated on 13 October 1961.

The country proclaimed independence on July 1, 1962 when it legally changed its name from Ruanda-Urundi to Burundi. Mwami Mwambutsa IV was crowned king. On September 18, 1962, just over two months after declaring independence from Belgium, Burundi joined the United Nations.

Burundi police and military were now brought under Tutsi control. Mwambutsa was deposed in 1966 by his son, Prince Ntare V, who claimed the throne. That same year, Tutsi Prime Minister Captain Michel Micombero deposed Ntare, abolished the monarchy, and declared the nation a republic, though in practice it was no other than a military regime.

First attempt at democracy

In June 1993, the leader of the Hutu-dominated Front for Democracy in





Burundi (FRODEBU), won the first democratic election and became the first Hutu head of state, leading a pro-Hutu government. However, in October 1993, Tutsi soldiers assassinated him. His murder led to years of violence between Hutus and Tutsis. It is estimated that some 300,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the years following his assassination.

In early 1994, parliament appointed Cyprien Ntaryamira, also a Hutu, president of Burundi. He and the president of Rwanda both died together when their airplane was shot down. More refugees started fleeing to Rwanda. Another Hutu, parliamentary speaker Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, was appointed president in October 1994. Within months, a wave of ethnic violence began, starting with the massacre of Hutu refugees in the capital, Bujumbura, and the withdrawal of the mainly Tutsi Union for National Progress from government and parliament.

In 1996, Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, took power through a coup d'état. He suspended the constitution and was sworn in as president in 1998. In response to rebel attacks, the population was forced by government to relocate to refugee camps. Under his rule, long peace talks were commenced, with the assistance of South Africa acting as a mediator. Both parties signed agreements to share power in Burundi. The agreements took four years to be implemented, and on August 28, 2000, a transitional government for Burundi was formed as a part of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

The transitional government was set up on a trial basis for five years. After several aborted cease-fires and a peace plan in 2001, one can conclude that the power sharing agreement has been relatively successful. A cease-fire was signed in 2003 between the Tutsi-controlled Burundian government and the largest Hutu rebel group, CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy).

In 2003, a Hutu leader Domitien Ndayizeye was elected president.

In early 2005, ethnic quotas were agreed for the purpose of filling in ministerial roles in Burundi's government. Parliamentary and presidential elections took place. Pierre Nkurunziza, once a leader of a Hutu rebel group, was elected president.

In 2008, the Burundian government held talks with the Hutu-led Palipehutu-National Liberation Forces (NLF) to bring peace to the country.

2006 to present

Reconstruction efforts in Burundi did not start to take place until after 2006. The UN brought its peacekeeping mission to an end and changed its focus to assist with reconstruction.

In order to achieve economic development, Rwanda, Congo and Burundi re-launched "The Great Lakes Countries Economic Community", a regional economic group. In addition, Burundi, along with Rwanda, joined the East African Community in 2007.



However, the terms of the September 2006 Ceasefire between the government and the last remaining armed opposition group, the FLN were not fully implemented. Senior FLN members subsequently left the truce monitoring team, claiming that their security was being threatened. In September 2007, rival FLN factions clashed in the capital, killing 20 fighters and causing residents to flee. Rebel raids were reported in other parts of the country. The rebel factions disagreed with the government over disarmament and the release of political prisoners. In late 2007 and early 2008, FLN combatants attacked government-protected camps where former combatants lived. The homes of rural residents were also pillaged.

In late March 2008, the FLN asked parliament to pass legislation to guarantee them 'temporary immunity' from arrest. This would apply to ordinary crimes, but not grave violations of international humanitarian law like war crimes or crimes against humanity. Even though the government had previously granted this type of request to people, the FLN has been unable to secure immunity from prosecution.

On April 17, 2008, the FLN bombarded Bujumbura. The Burundian army fought back and the FLN suffered heavy losses. A new ceasefire was signed on May 26, 2008.

#### Judicial system and political background

Burundi's political system is that of a presidential democratic republic based upon a multi-party system. The President of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, is the head of state and head of government.

Burundi's legislative branch is a bicameral assembly, consisting of the Transitional National Assembly and the Transitional Senate. Burundi's constitution sets out a system of representation in the Transitional National Assembly in accordance with the following split: 60% Hutu, 40% Tutsi, and 30% female members, as well as three Batwa members. Members of the National Assembly are elected by popular vote and serve a term of five years.

The Transitional Senate has fifty-one members, and three seats are reserved for former presidents. Due to stipulations in Burundi's constitution, 30% of Senate members must be female. Members of the Senate are elected by electoral colleges, which consist of members from each of Burundi's provinces and communities. For each of Burundi's seventeen provinces, one Hutu and one Tutsi senator are chosen. They serve a five year term as members of the Senate. Both the National Assembly and the Senate elect the President for a five-year term.





Burundi's president appoints officials to his Council of Ministers, which is also part of the executive branch. The president can also choose fourteen members of the Transitional Senate to serve on the Council as Ministers. The appointment of Members of the Council of Ministers must be approved by two-thirds of Burundi's legislature. The president also appoints two vice-presidents.

The Supreme Court is Burundi's highest court. There are three Courts of Appeal directly below the Supreme Court. Courts of First Instance are used as judicial courts in each of Burundi's provinces. There are also 123 local tribunals.

There is an urgent need for reform of the judicial system. Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity remain unpunished. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Tribunal for investigation and prosecution are not operational yet. Freedom of expression is limited; journalists are frequently arrested for carrying out legitimate professional activities.

#### The Belgian Embassy & Cooperation for Development

Burundi is one of the five poorest countries in the world. It has one of the lowest per capita GDPs of any nation in the world. The country has suffered from warfare, corruption, poor access to education and the effects of HIV/AIDS. Burundi is densely populated and experiences substantial emigration.

While there are still some difficulties ensuring the return of refugees and securing adequate food supplies for the war-weary population, the group for development & cooperation has managed to win the trust and confidence of a majority of the formerly warring leaders as well as the population at large. It has also been involved in several "quick impact" projects including rehabilitating and building schools, orphanages, health clinics, and rebuilding infrastructure such as water lines, most of them funded by Belgian Technical cooperation funds.

The economy of the country is in tatters, Burundi has one of the lowest per capita gross incomes in the world. With the return of refugees property conflicts have sparked off.

Burundi now participates in African Union peacekeeping missions, including the mission to Somalia against Al-Shahab militants, which is a main concern of the embassy, because of the recent terrorist attack in nearby Nairobi on 21 September 2013.

Burundi has been a partner country of Belgium since its independence in 1962 -apart from the period of time when the international community imposed sanctions in the 90s-.

Public institutions in Burundi have suffered much over the 15 year crisis that the country underwent. Investment stopped, cooperation programmes were suspended, human resources eloped, infrastructure deteriorated...



The agricultural sector covers 95% of food needs and employs 90% of the working population. But poor productivity, small size farms, weak management of water and processing and preservation problems are structural constraints to agricultural growth.

In the field of education as well as health care, the authorities are overcome by demand. That and the lack of competent staff represent two major challenges.

Belgium plans to concentrate its action on three priority sectors, Health care, Education and Agriculture.

In general, the support that Belgium provides to solve development problems in Burundi take the form of promotion of a favourable institutional environment, training of staff, part funding of projects, etc

Belgian cooperation aims to strengthen local projects set up by the Burundi government. It tries to help Burundi get the resources for the measures and reforms that it undertakes. The objective is to strengthen the performance of the national systems.

The establishment of the rule of law, the strengthening of the judiciary and the modernisation of Public Services remain central to Belgian cooperation concerns.

From a consular point of view, it's also worth mentioning Belgium manages the granting of travelling visas to Schengen-territory for 16 out of the 24 Schengen States. This makes the Belgian embassy a compulsory stop for any person wishing to travel to Europe and therefore it basically functions as a little European delegation.

I propose to host the next Board Meeting or ELA General Assembly in Bujumbura, but otherwise, of course, all ELA-members interested in coming to Burundi are most welcome!

Best regards,



## VALENCIA 2015

We are advised the preparations for this event are well under way with our colleagues Paco and Cristina meeting on a monthly basis for the purpose of allocating tasks, making decisions on events and enlisting the help of other members from Valencia to ensure this event will be a success. Our ex Chairman, Philip Jadoul recently visited Valencia and met up with the organiser for an update and discussion of issues arising. A full presentation providing relevant details will take place in Latvia in 2014.

In the meantime, all members were sent an email with quite a comprehensive programme of what is in store for the annual meeting in Riga in 2014. If you have not received it, please email Peteris Dalderis for a further copy. I must be the first ELA member to have booked my plane ticket to attend. We would not wish to miss out on this fantastic opportunity to visit a world heritage site accompanied by friends and colleagues!

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."

*Mohandas Gandhi*



## **THE BOARD CONTINUES TO WORK ON YOUR BEHALF**

The Board continues to work on your behalf. Regular monthly meetings held via conference calls ensure progress on the issues that currently affect the Association.

In addition, the Board will meet up in Luca, Italy on the weekend commencing 8th November. All members are welcome to attend even if they are not members of the Board. The next issue of the newsletter will provide further details of the issues discussed in Luca.

In the meantime, national representatives are being encouraged to hold annual meetings with other ELA members in their own country to promote relationships and strengthen the bond amongst them. Belgium and Holland have shown the way with their successful annual soirees which are renowned for their “highly spirited” nature!