

Annual Report 2019 – The Danish Bar and Law Society

1. New Secretary General of the Danish Bar and Law Society

On 1 March 2019 the Danish Bar and Law Society welcomed Mr. Andrew Hjulær Crichton as new Secretary General.

Andrew – a former lawyer and deputy permanent secretary of several Danish ministries – will continue the work to emphasize and shed light on the importance of lawyers in modern society under the rule of law when it comes to the political system and lawmakers as well as in the general public debate.

2. The Danish Bar and Law Society celebrated its 100 year anniversary

The Danish Bar and Law Society turned 100 years old in 2019 and was celebrated in connection with the General Assembly of Danish lawyers held on 23 and 24 May 2019 in Copenhagen.

The festive events included a seminar with high-level national and international speakers at the Royal Danish Library followed by a gala dinner at the Royal Danish Opera House.

The overall theme for the seminar was the rule of law and the reputation of lawyers in a future perspective. The President of the Danish Supreme Court amongst others spoke on the subject and the Danish Bar and Law Society had the honor of welcoming lawyer and Chairperson of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Ms. Berit Reiss-Andersen, as she participated in a debate on the role of lawyers in modern society.

3. Amended Administration of Justice Act:

A number of amendments to the Danish Administration of Justice Act entered into force on 1 January and 1 July 2019 respectively. The amendments directly effect how the Danish Bar and Law Society conducts the supervision of lawyers. The Danish Bar and Law Society is currently working on the implementation of said amendments and will be for the coming years.

By summer 2019 the first risk assessment of every lawyer (“advokat”) and every law firm was concluded. The selection of lawyers who will be subject of supervision in autumn 2019 and spring 2020 has been and will be based on the results of the risk assessment.

The risk assessment involves an individual assessment of the risk of non-compliance with the duties and obligations imposed on the legal profession. The lawyers and law firms are then divided into three categories: High, medium and low risk. The frequency and to some extent the substance of the supervision is determined by the assigned category. In 2020 the Danish Bar and Law Society will continue to strengthen the underlying data for the risk assessment and will further develop specific supervision initiatives for example in the field of anti money laundering.

4. Amended bye-laws regulating client accounts

During 2019 the General Council governing the Danish Bar and Law Society finished an audit of the bye-laws on lawyers’ duties and obligations relating to the handling of fiduciary funds (client account byelaws). The work, which is supervised by the Rules and Regulations Committee under the General Council, was initiated since it had become evident that there was a need for a more general and updated version of the byelaws.

It is expected that the draft byelaws will be approved by the Danish Ministry of Justice in 2020.

5. Project on preventing complaints etc.

The Danish Bar and Law Society is currently working on a project for the prevention of complaints and client discontent. The project aims to improve the complaint process and maintain and strengthen trust in the lawyer/client relationship.

To seek inspiration the Danish Bar and Law Society has visited England and Scotland where the organizations for a number of years have worked effectively with prevention and strengthening of the client relationship. Furthermore, the Danish Bar and Law Society has visited a number of Danish lawyers and law firms in order to learn how they address situations with client dissatisfaction and whether they need help such as specific tools or information. The project, which is expected to be completed by the summer of 2020, is intended to result in a number of preventative measures, including among other things a booklet with advice for the lawyers and an instructive film on how to prevent complaints.

6. Project on Lawyers’ reputation

The reputation of the Lawyer profession has been under pressure and the last couple of years the news media have focused on a number of negative stories – national as well as international – involving lawyers. Therefore, the Danish Bar and Law Society has initiated a study on the image of Danish lawyers. The work will continue in 2020 and will result in a strategy.

In addition the Danish Bar and Law Society has allocated substantial resources to keep members informed about relevant regulation through newsletters, magazines etc. and to tell the many positive stories about lawyers' pro bono work for the purpose of making a positive impact on lawyers' reputation.

7. Pre-approval of mandatory continuing education

All lawyers who permanently practice law in Denmark – including assistant attorneys – are obliged to participate in ongoing continuing education relevant to the profession of lawyers. In order to be accepted as relevant continuing education a specific course or seminar must comply with the conditions listed in the by-laws regulating mandatory continuing education.

In order to make it less complicated for lawyers to assess whether a certain course is considered acceptable continuing education the Danish Bar and Law Society will introduce an optional scheme where courses can be pre-approved as continuing education by the Danish Bar and Law Society. The pre-approval scheme is aimed at the individual lawyer as well as at the providers of courses who can have a general pre-approval of an offered course.

The pre-approval of mandatory continuing training is expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2020.

8. Rule of Law and Social security law

The Danish Bar and Law Society has in collaboration with a number of civil society organizations continued the efforts to draw attention to and strengthen rule-of-law within the area of social security- and administrative law. A first specific case concerning a decision on public services from the civil administration against a citizen was tried in District Court as well as in High Court. The work in this field will continue in 2020.

9. The People's Political Festival "Folkemødet" at Bornholm

The Danish Bar and Law Society participated for the eighth time at the People's Political Festival in June 2019. The People's Political Festival is a unique platform with open and informal debates where politicians can meet citizens, business people and organizations. The meeting takes place every year in June and lasts for four days. The Danish Bar and Law Society hosted a stand with numerous activities, including a moot court displaying a criminal law case.

The Danish Bar and Law Society will attend the People's Political Festival again in June 2020.

10. Participation in international work

The Danish Bar and Law Society has throughout the year upheld a strong focus on its international work and cooperation with bars from other countries. This has included

active participation within the IBA and the CCBE, including Danish involvement in a number of committees and working groups.

In September 2019, the Danish Bar and Law Society welcomed the CCBE and its delegations to Copenhagen. In the course of a couple of days a number of committee meetings as well as a Standing Committee were conducted and the participants gathered at the old garden and amusement park Tivoli for a festive dinner.

11. Facts about the Danish Bar and Law Society and its members

The Danish Bar and Law Society has per 23 January 2020 a total of 6600 lawyers who each pay a yearly subscription fee of app. 1000 euros excl. VAT. Of the 6600 lawyers 1745 are employed as in-house lawyers and 4922 are employed at law firms. The 6600 lawyers employ 1524 assistant attorneys. 2412 of the lawyers are women and 4.188 are men.

The age distribution of the lawyers is as follows: Age 27-39: 2067 lawyers; Age 40-49: 2081; Age 50-59: 1329; and age 60+: 1123.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hjuler Crichton
Secretary General