



**Abogacía
Española**
CONSEJO GENERAL

48th EUROPEAN PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE

COUNTRY REPORT

CONTEXT

The Consejo General de la Abogacía Española (Spanish National Bar) is formed by the 83 Spanish local Bars. It represents more than 150.000 lawyers.

In December of 2019, the President called for elections. They were held in January and Victoria Ortega has validated a second term.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The engagement of the Consejo to the UN Sustainable Development Goals marked the activities of the institution during 2019 and inspires the strategy for the following years. One of the main objectives is to scale up these goals to all lawyers and law firms in Spain, tackling them together.

Along 2019, Environment has been the issue of the year. The Consejo is raising awareness on the importance of laws and behaviour to respect environment. Our annual congress on Human Rights on December was the crowning moment of different activities and events celebrated during this year on Environment.

EQUITY & DIVERSITY

Gender Equality is a priority for the Consejo. The approval of Equity and Gender Equality Plan and the creation of the commission of Equity and Gender Equality ensure the progress of their objectives and allow adapting measures and actions to situations. Equity approach must be adopted in every action of law as a tool to encourage a social change. Identifying and removing prejudices and clichés is mandatory to avoid any kind of discrimination.

NATIONAL CONGRESS

In May 2019 we celebrated our XII National Congress in Valladolid. This event is celebrated every four years getting together lawyers and jurists from Spain and abroad. The biggest law firms of the country share time and space with lawyers and small firms, universities, institutions and companies discussing about the most important issues for our profession.

This year Congress was focus on legal technologies, including discussions about the future of the profession, technologies to be applied and research, development and innovation policies for

lawyers. They were several workshops to improve lawyers in the use of technologies and maximise the management of their firms. At the end, we presented a report highlighting the position of lawyers in the regulation of technology and the scope of deontology.

Finally, we presented our Digital Library, one of the measures included in our Strategic Plan, aimed to promote the equality of arms in the process. The removal of obstacles that prevent the equal knowledge among lawyers is a logical corollary of this principle. In order for lawyers to have equivalent means of information in the development of their professional strategy, without physical, temporal or geographical limitations, they must be able to access to a common digital library, regardless of their specific membership. You are invited to join us in this project, being able to share our reports and publications.

LEGAL AID AND RULE OF LAW

Access to legal aid for people who can least afford has being since the dawn of history one of the main aims of the Consejo and Spanish Bars. This social commitment rises ensuring the right of universal Justice. Socio-economic inequities cannot become an unequal Access to courts. Free Legal Aid has been always given by the Spanish Bars without any consideration but the commitment with society. Today, we all recognise the high value of corporate social responsibility, but Spanish Bars have been socially responsible for centuries as public Law corporations and they have developed one of the most efficient public policies with the higher standards of quality of the administration with symbolic costs to the Treasury.

Thousands of Law professionals organised and well trained by the Spanish Bars, practises the legal aid scheme in Spain. This fact guarantees free justice and legal protection for every citizen.

One of our main goals during 2020 has been guarantying the legal aid system before the Ministry of Justice, establishing an agile and efficient process of payment.

Besides, the Consejo has experience and collaborates in several projects to improve access to justice and to reinforce legal institutions with the Ministry of Justice, the Spanish Agency for development and cooperation and other European institutions and Bars. In concrete, we are now working in the establishment of a new legal aid system in Jordan.

On the other hand, we worked with the Observatory of Lawyers in Danger in coordination with other important lawyers' institutions in Europe and abroad to protect the right of defence. We have been actively involved in monitoring the process in Honduras of Berta Cáceres. We also began supporting lawyers fighting against ecoterrorism in Peru and assuring the right of defence for defendants in several cases in Colombia.

Furthermore, The Consejo began to collaborate with our Consulates giving support to Spanish prisoners abroad and launching a campaign to aware against international crimes.

Finally, we ended the development our Legal Aid Switchboard, designed to tackle two main challenges, transparency and legal certainty. To protect the rule of law and fundamental rights is mandatory an independent an equal justice for all the citizens. The guaranteed instrument is a

system of legal aid that must be trustable, agile, solid and transparent, opened to society and lawyers. This instrument allows to follow and monitor all the process and coordinating all the stakeholders participating in legal aid assistance. This System provides the technical means to follow and monitor all the process and coordinating all the stakeholders participating in legal aid assistance.

DEONTOLOGY

The Consejo has approved during 2019 a new code of Deontology. This code is adapted to the new technological reality, gives stronger protection for clients and reinforces the duty of professional secret. All following the changes introduces by European regulation.

INTERNATIONALISATION

The priority of the Consejo is to get closer to its European partners, fostering better coordination and cooperation. To achieve this objective we also facilitate our lawyers knowledge and networking abroad Spain. In 2019 we have launched in our web our service of country report documents for lawyers, giving the main lines of our profession in Europe and in other countries.

We are also boosting Spain as a centre of International arbitration and encouraging our experts to work in other places. We did a mission to Miami in order to show and get to know better arbitration in the Americas and we supported the annual conferences of Spanish arbitration societies.