

International Association for Water Law
Asociación Internacional de Derecho de Aguas
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DU DROIT DES EAUX

Rome, 16 October 2022

REFORM OF THE AIDA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Dear current and former members of the International Association for Water Law – AIDA,

As you know, AIDA was founded in 1967 by a handful of visionaries, both legal and non-legal professionals, who anticipated a future where freshwater would gain centrestage on the stakeholder community's agenda worldwide; and where water law would underpin the good governance of an increasingly stressed natural resource of vital importance to the continuation of life on Earth. That vision has since materialized, and has inspired countless freshwater law specialists from many countries to rally around AIDA and to further its claim to promote the evolution, study and knowledge of water law.

AIDA's track record of achievements is impressive! It can be measured by the influence its individual members have had, and continue to have, on the water law advances in many countries that have undergone water law reform, as well as by the influence of its own congresses, and contribution to the congresses of sister associations like IWRA, on the evolution of water law. You will recall that the reach of AIDA's impact has also extended to the realm of capacity-building and training through the generation of top-quality educational products and materials.

Times have changed radically from the time the Association was founded, more than fifty years ago, and new challenges lay ahead. To continue to meet those new challenges, AIDA must continue to grow and adapt.

Accordingly, the Executive Council of the the Association has deliberated to overhaul the current governance structure of AIDA, and to replace it with a new structure that provides enhanced opportunities for participation and effective engagement of the membership. An Executive Council will continue to provide direction and guidance, however, its composition has been expanded to include a new position of "Projects Chair", whose elected incumbent will oversee and manage the association General Assemblies, projects in general, events, and collaborations with other entities. This is in response to the recognized significance of this dimension of AIDA's life to the visibility and, ultimately, to the relevance of the Association. In addition, the position of "Editor" has been re-styled as "Publications Chair" whose responsibilities are expanded to encompass oversight of all Association publications, including AIDA's flagship newsletter *AquaForum*, various scholarly projects, and the Association's website and social media.

Moreover and perhaps more importantly, all positions in the Executive Council will henceforth be open to a competitive election process, and will be filled by elected AIDA members. However, in a bid to smoothen the transition to the new system, and to ensure some continuity of direction, the new structure will be phased in gradually, with elections staggered to take place every three years. In the first election cycle, that is due to begin later this year, the positions of Executive Council Deputy Chair, Treasurer, and Projects Chair will be filled through a competitive election process. Two current Executive Council members – Mr. Gabriel Eckstein and Ms. Marcella Nanni - will fill the positions of Executive Council Chair and Publications Chair, respectively. As part of the overhaul process, the undersigned current Executive Council Chair Mr. Stefano Burchi, and Executive Council members Ms. Lilian del Castillo and Ms. Ariella D'Andrea, will step down when the new Executive Council, made up of the newly elected officials plus Mr. Eckstein and Ms. Nanni, takes office, in mid-2023. Three years later from that date, fresh elections will be held for the positions of Executive Council Chair and Publications Chair, thus completing the renovation process of the entire Executive Council.

For the sake of simplification, the new charter of the association has been split into Articles of Association and Bylaws. The former sets out the purpose, composition, skeleton governance structure, funds and duration of the Association.

The Bylaws provide all the necessary operational details. The Articles of Association and the Bylaws can be accessed at (<https://www.aida-waterlaw.org/about-us/>). In keeping with its status of a registered association under Italian law, the new Articles of Association have been registered in Italy in replacement for the old Charter. Lastly, both the Articles and Bylaws include mechanisms for amending those documents by the Council and AIDA's membership in accordance with Italian law and as is typical of international associations.

The election process for the first three Executive Council positions mentioned earlier is scheduled to begin on 1 December 2022, with the appointment of an Elections Committee from among eligible AIDA members. Actual elections will be held from mid-April to mid-May 2023, with the newly elected officials scheduled to take office on 1 July 2023. The full election process and the relevant schedule are described at greater length at (<https://www.aida-waterlaw.org/2023-aida-election-process-and-schedule/>).

The pre-requisite for AIDA members to qualify for the Election Committee, run for election for the open Executive Council positions, and vote in the upcoming elections is to be in good standing with the Association. One of the requirements of maintaining good standing is to be up-to-date on Association dues. Hence, if you are not up-to-date with your dues, I take this opportunity to urge you to pay them at your earliest convenience. Currently, dues stand at € 50 (or US\$ equivalent) per year. In doubt, feel free to contact this Chair, who also serves as the acting AIDA Treasurer, at stefano.burchi@gmail.com.

Exciting times lie ahead of the water law community of practice. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of it through a restructured AIDA, and to contribute in the years to come to shaping the Association's responses to the daunting challenges ahead!

Long live AIDA!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stefano Burchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stefano Burchi
Executive Council Chair