

40 Years of International Arbitration in Vienna

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The Vienna International Arbitration Centre turns 40 today. 

VIAC was created four decades ago to serve the needs of users engaged in commerce between East and West countries. Parties were facing the problem of arbitration clauses that were defective because they relied on the background of their countries, and were not enforceable for purposes of Austrian law.

The Vienna Arbitration Chamber already existed, but it was structured for domestic disputes. The decision was made not to modify the rules of the existing chamber, but instead to create a new arbitration institution.

The benefits of this forward-thinking are aptly summarized by Dr. Werner Melis in his introduction to VIAC's "Selected Arbitral Awards, Volume 1" (published on the occasion of the 40th birthday),

VIAC had originally been established in 1975 mainly to resolve East-West commercial disputes but that at the time the Iron Curtain fell in 1989 it had already established itself to such an extent that it was able to continue its work as an internationally accepted arbitral institution on a worldwide basis. In the ICC Statistical Report 2012 Vienna was ranked number 5 in Europe and number 7 among the arbitration venues worldwide. Not bad, I would say.

Not bad at all. And despite reaching middle age, VIAC shows no signs of slowing down.

In addition to publishing the above-mentioned collection of arbitral awards, this past summer VIAC co-organized of the Consensual Dispute Resolution Competition Consensual Dispute Resolution Competition, which is based on the VIS problem, and maintains a hectic pace of conferences and activities on current topics in international dispute resolution.



Happy Birthday, VIAC, and wishing you more years of innovations to benefit the users of international dispute resolution!