

# Kluwer Arbitration Blog

## CEPANI Celebrates Golden Anniversary with Three Days of Events and a New Set of Arbitration Rules

Maarten Draye (Hanotiau & van den Berg) and Emma Van Campenhoudt (The Belgian Centre for Arbitration and Mediation) · Tuesday, November 19th, 2019

Located in the heart of Brussels, Europe's capital and home to international organisations such as NATO, CEPANI, the Belgian Centre for Arbitration and Mediation, was founded on 25 September 1969. At that time, Belgium had just acceded to the Geneva Convention and was exploring ways to update its obsolete legal arbitration framework.

Much has changed in these five decades. Not only has CEPANI developed into the largest arbitration institute in Belgium. Nowadays, it boasts a full range of dispute resolution services, offering rules on [arbitration](#), [mediation](#), [mini-trials](#), [expert appraisals](#), [contract adaptations](#) and [domain name disputes](#).

Through its President, Secretariat and various Committees (*e.g.* on the appointment and challenges of arbitrators), CEPANI administers on average 80 cases each year in English, French and Dutch. While the majority of cases involves at least one Belgian party and is seated in Belgium, an increasing number of cases involves foreign parties and arbitral seats. CEPANI arbitration proceedings last on average 15 months from introduction, and 13 months from the appointment of the arbitral tribunal until the award. Disputes submitted to CEPANI arbitration relate to different fields, including in particular civil and commercial contracts, inter-company disputes, services agreements, and share purchase agreements.

In addition to its role as an institution, CEPANI actively promotes the knowledge and use of arbitration through study and research. To this end, CEPANI regularly organizes [conferences and lunch meetings](#), publishes books on dedicated topics and casebooks in its [scientific collection](#), and edits [b-Arbitra](#), a bi-annual arbitration review (also available online through KluwerArbitration). Every three years, it organizes an [academic prize](#) to reward an outstanding paper in national or international arbitration.

CEPANI has further become one of the major players in Belgium in the development of dispute resolution. A CEPANI working group was instrumental in the adoption by the Belgian legislator of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Arbitration as [Part VI of the Belgian Judiciary Code](#) in 2013. Since a number of years, CEPANI further actively participates as an observer in [UNCITRAL's Working Group II](#) on Arbitration and Dispute Settlement at its sessions in Vienna and New York. Together with ICC Belgium, CEPANI recently set up [Brussels Arbitration Hub](#), a website aimed at assisting parties who have chosen Brussels as place of arbitration in

finding accommodation, interpreters, court reporters and other service providers. CEPANI40 offers a platform for below 40 practitioners with an interest in arbitration, giving the next generation a chance to meet and exchange views.

The Centre's golden milestone did not go by unnoticed. On 13, 14 and 15 November 2019, CEPANI hosted **three days of celebrations** in Brussels that brought together arbitration practitioners from Belgium and abroad for a gala dinner and various academic sessions. The Centre has further issued a **special edition of b-Arbitra**. Dedicated to supreme court decisions, this collector's item contains contributions discussing arbitration-related case law of the highest courts in the world's most prominent arbitration jurisdictions. Finally, CEPANI will release a *Liber Arbitrandum* in its scientific collection, a liber amicorum containing contributions from national and international experts on a variety of arbitration topics.

To keep its rules up to date with the most modern trends, CEPANI also launches a new set of arbitration rules. The new rules will enter into force on 1 January 2020 and modernize the current 2013 arbitration rules. The 2020 Rules will maintain a number of the current features, including the setting up of terms of reference at the outset of the arbitration proceedings and the possibility of parties to resort to an emergency arbitrator pending the constitution of the arbitral tribunal.

With the new rules, the Centre aims to make the use of CEPANI arbitration even more secure, while maintaining an approach driven by an efficient, rapid and legally sound solution to disputes governed by its rules.

Most of the changes to the 2020 rules aim at clarifying and completing a number of existing provisions. These changes either seek to address practical issues that have arisen in practice, or are innovations inspired by the most recent arbitration practice.

One of the most eye-catching novelties is that the CEPANI Arbitration Rules will no longer be divided in two separate sections. Where the 2013 rules contained a separate set of expedited rules for claims of limited value in Section II, such expedited rules will be integrated in the main rules. Under the 2020 rules, expedited rules shall apply if the amount of the dispute does not exceed a total of EUR 100,000, unless the parties opt out.

Furthermore, the 2020 Rules will introduce a mandatory formal review of all draft arbitral awards by the CEPANI Secretariat. This will ensure that every arbitral award issued by an arbitral tribunal under CEPANI Rules will meet all formal requirements, making such awards more robust against possible challenges.

Finally, to enhance efficiency and reduce costs, electronic communication will become the default rule under the 2020 rules for communications between the CEPANI Secretariat, the arbitral tribunal and the parties. In addition, CEPANI will continue to use BOX, a secure online platform where the entire file is accessible for the parties and the arbitral tribunal.

To guide users through the new rules and the Centre's practice, the CEPANI Secretariat will issue the first edition of its *Guide to CEPANI Arbitration*. Being written in English, this will become an indispensable tool for users of CEPANI arbitration, including the growing number of international parties, counsel and arbitrators.

At 50 years, CEPANI thus underscores its leading role as a regional arbitration centre in the heart of Europe. With a set of cutting-edge rules and the support of a thriving multilingual arbitration

community, the Centre's future looks bright.

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