

The Role of AIDA from its Origin until Today

by

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On opening AIDA's 14th World Congress I too, as Honorary President of AIDA Italia, was assigned the welcome task of addressing a few words of greeting to the participants.

“Senectus est natura loquacior”! old age is naturally loquacious, wrote Marcus Tullius Cicero in *De Senectute*. Therefore you will excuse me if I begin from when, fifty or so years ago, I was in Luxembourg for the establishment of AIDA on the 28th of April 1960.

At the time, I was a young student full of admiration and curiosity. And I had the privilege of finding myself side by side with the masters of insurance law from all over the world. They were there for a course in comparative insurance law at the *Université Internationale des Sciences Comparées*, where they also decided to establish an international association devoted to the study of insurance law.

Their intent was to promote three lines of research: compare the laws of different countries, conducting an in-depth comparative survey of different systems, proposing innovative regulations aimed at meeting the needs of both insurance companies and the insured.

Companies and people exposed to risks have different expectations which require an unbiased and objective agreement taking into consideration the international nature of insurance and reinsurance.

The project was also based on the observation that insurance law is particularly suitable for comparison and for legal harmonization insofar as it has had common features, since the very beginning, in all the countries in the world and in European harbour-cities: from Venice, to Genoa, Barcelona, Antwerp and London.

This gave way to a working model that would subsequently be adopted by the more than fifty national sections of AIDA, whose work in the following years gave rise to an Association branched out in all the continents of the world.

Exactly two years later, the first World Congress on Insurance Law was held in April 1962 in Rome, with the attendance of Italy's President of the Republic, Giovanni Gronchi and, for the conclusive remarks, of Foreign Minister Antonio Segni, who would also later become President of the Republic. The topics were chosen by the founders and international co-presidents of AIDA and world-renowned writers of insurance law treatises: Antigono Donati, from the University of Rome, and Hans Möller, from the University of Hamburg. The first World Congress addressed themes crucial to insurance law: contracts, the features of private insurance and social insurance and supervision.

In his opening address to the first World Congress in Rome, Donati emphatically underscored that one of the dreams of the generation of scholars that had preceded him had finally come true. They were all well aware of the international scope of insurance and of the need for a comparative study. On that occasion, Donati recalled the work of Cesare Vivante, Georges Ripert, Ernst Bruck, and Albert Ehrenzweig senior.

Now, fifty years later, Rome is again hosting AIDA's 14th World Congress on Insurance Law, which is taking place, as is tradition, four years after the 2010 Paris Congress, the memory of which remains vivid in our memory.

The Congress now opening at the European University of Rome will also deal with the globalization of insurance: in legal provisions, in companies, as well as in consumers' demand for insurance products. Today, the core issue of insurance concerns the insurance market, with all its complexity and differences. Within this context, the need for transparency and information in the relationship between companies and users is of fundamental importance, also with a view to reducing the asymmetry in information.

Transparency and information will therefore be the first topic addressed by this Congress. These will be followed by other topical issues: the referral of insurance disputes to arbitration; preventative measures aimed at avoiding the occurrence of accidents or concerning a qualifying life event; online insurance, after technology's radical transformation of communication; discrimination, in all its forms, and insurance coverage.

Our goal is to make Rome's second Congress equally successful and as scientifically in-depth as the first Congress of 1962 and all the congresses that have followed to date.

I therefore wish the utmost success to all Congress participants, while entreating their family members and accompanying guests to enjoy The Great Beauty of this city, to quote the title of the recent Oscar-winning Italian film, and its mild September climate.