



## \_key dates of the European Constitution

The conference in Warsaw planned on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 is a good opportunity to go over the last steps of the European Constitution.

Fifty years after the start of the European construction, marked by Berlin wall's fall and Soviet Union's disintegration, the enlargement of the European Union to 25 members makes necessary the adaptation of both institutional and political European structure.

- **15<sup>th</sup> December, 2001** : Laeken European Council decides to call a Convention on Europe's future and takes on a declaration that defines the composition, the functions and the aim of the Convention.
- **28<sup>th</sup> October, 2002** : the Convention presents a draft project of the constitutional Treaty.
- **4<sup>th</sup> October, 2003** : start of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in Rome, that will be in charge of going over the project of constitution.
- **1<sup>st</sup> May, 2004** : ten new States become Members of the European Union.
- **13<sup>rd</sup> June, 2004** : elections to the European Parliament.
- **18<sup>th</sup> June, 2004** : the 25 heads of European Union States and governments approve the Treaty of Europe Constitution.
- **29<sup>th</sup> October, 2004** : the Treaty of Europe Constitution is signed in Rome. The ratification process through parliamentary agreement or referendum starts in the 25 European members states.

Source: <http://www.ladocfrancaise.gouv.fr>

## \_letter from the Chairman

Early 2005 is an opportune moment to evaluate the year 2004, which has been very rich in events, regarding both activities and new memberships.

Regarding our activities, we would like to outline the conference about International Tax Planning in Lecco on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004 - whose conclusions have been helpful for the organization of future events - and to point out the success of our Annual Conference in Lisbon last October.

Both the conference in Lecco and the one organized in Barcelona in 2003 have led to the publication of two files, that were given on CD during the conference in Lisbon.

Regarding our international development, Pragma is branching out! We are pleased to welcome both Greg Wolton and Yitzhak Uzdin's offices as new members of our

network. As you can see, the list of countries beside our logo has risen to seven members.

In 2005, we are still looking to expand to new countries, either in Europe or in the rest of the world.

As far as internal matters are concerned, our aim is to reinforce our relationship and we are pleased to present this winter edition of our new newsletter.

We hope that you will make the most of this new medium to make Pragma more alive. Your comments are welcome, as well as contents for the next edition planned for next Spring.

Have a nice 2005!

Michel Lacroix  
Les Juristes Associés du Centre - Clermont-Ferrand - FRANCE  
Chairman of Pragma's Board of Directors

## Pragma's schedule

- \_ **Warsaw** - 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2005 (Poland):  
Conference about the new European Constitution and Annual General Meeting
- \_ **Strasbourg** - October 2005 (France):  
Annual International Conference



A view over Warsaw

## \_can I pre-register for a «.eu» domain name ? Be careful !

The European Commission has announced that the new ".eu" top-level domain (TLD) will open for business in 2005, providing new Internet space to European companies and promoting an EU internet identity.

Until now, companies either based their internet presence in one country, or created websites in each EU country they operated in. The ".eu" TLD means that they will be able to have one internet identity for the entire EU and will provide a counterweight to the generic TLDs such as ".com" and ".org", which are dominated by the US in terms of registration and applicable law.

### What is the State of Play ?

Following a call for expressions of interest, in May 2003 the Commission chose EURID, ("European Registry for Internet Domains") a private, non-profit organisation in Brussels, to be the ".eu Registry".

A number of steps must still be taken before users can start registering .eu domain names, but the Registry is expected to become operational in April 2005.

In order to avoid so-called "cybersquatting", where a company finds that someone else has registered its trademark as a domain

name and then tries to sell it to the right holder for a profit, owners of prior rights will be able to register in priority.

### 2005: Sunrise for ".eu".

The first phase of operation will be the so-called "sunrise period", during which owners of prior rights can register their domain names before other eligible parties. The first two-month period will provide an opportunity for organisations to register Domain names based on official trademarks, followed by a second two-month period for registration based on company or individual names.

Once the sunrise period is over, any individual resident in the EU or any organisation or company established in the EU will be able to register a name under the .eu TLD. In all cases, the "first-come-first-served" rule will apply.

Applications will need to be made through registrars who have been formally accredited by the .eu Registry.

These are companies which can undertake the registration of domains on behalf of end users, under competitive market rules.

For the moment, these registrars have not

been accredited yet. As names cannot be registered until the Registry is operational, pre-registration of names is not possible for the moment in the .eu Top Level Domain.

The Commission says that it is aware that some companies are already offering to "pre-register" or "reserve" domain names, essentially by offering to make an application for the registration of a domain name to registrars as soon as the registration process is formally initiated.

Given the risk of confusion or even fraud, use of "pre-registration" services is not recommended. In any case, consumers and companies are encouraged to check exactly what is and what is not being offered.

Source: <http://www.eubusiness.com>

## This month's Figure: 1.3604

The Euro ends the year 2004 at US Dollar 1.3604. What will the Euro be worth on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2005, day of the Annual General Meeting of Pragma in Warsaw? Please send your answer (to 4 decimal places) before the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2005 to:  
[nfacon@manubensasoc.com](mailto:nfacon@manubensasoc.com).  
The winner will be rewarded!

## International Conference 2004 in Lisbon

From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2004, our Annual Conference took place in Lisbon, with more than 120 participants of 8 different nationalities. Here are some photos...



Thierry Novat,  
Jean Bader,  
Magali Pasche,  
Lionel Dulaurent,  
Joël Bonnemason  
and  
Bertrand Beigbeder



Greg Wolton and his wife



Cecilia Caria Mendes  
and Quim de Freitas



Monica de Magistris, Maurizio Bottoni, Giorgio Rosso,  
Daniela Purghe and Fabio Colombo



Olivier Richard, Laurent Diatta, Frédéric Baron, Isabelle Richard-Monti,  
Nathalie Arnaud, Christine Laurent and Lionel Dulaurent

## \_interview: Jordi Ruiz de Villa across the Atlantic Ocean

This time last year, Jordi Ruiz de Villa, partner of Manubens & Asociados in Barcelona (Spain) had just come back from a successful race by catamaran across the Atlantic Ocean that took him from Cadiz (Spain) to Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in 26 and a half days of navigation.

To be honest, his passion for sailing appeared at an early age. When a boy, he used to sail with his 7 brothers and sisters on his father's 44-foot-long boat that he would later inherit and refurbish. Then, for comfort reasons (he has three little daughters), he decided to change it for catamaran.

In December 2003, this passion led him to register for a race across the Atlantic Ocean on a catamaran with a team of 7 people, along with 29 other boats.

The crossing was very eventful: they faced a force seven storm with winds of up to 60 knots in an incredibly rough sea. Two boats broke their masts. Moreover, the last boats faced a tropical depression that forced them to abandon.

Then, they sailed in a dead calm sea during more than two weeks and, consequently, only 6 boats arrived on time.

That was the case of Jordi's catamaran, which won the race in its category and arrived second in the general classification.

**N.F.:** «Jordi, what do you most remember about this crossing?»

**Jordi Ruiz de Villa:** «When we were stuck in dead clam, I remember playing golf from the deck of the catamaran with biodegradable balls.

More seriously, I think that the most difficult is to come back to our stressful and commercial daily life. Being isolated during one month with no radio and no television and only with the instinct of survival makes you think about the sense of life.»

**N.F.:** « Now, how do you express your passion for sailing? »

**Jordi Ruiz de Villa:** «Through my daughters, of course, whom I take sailing, but also through the Nautical Club of Vilanova I la Geltru (Spain) where I have been elected Chairman. With 820 moors, 900 members and 49 years of history, this club is the 3<sup>rd</sup> marina of Catalonia and it keeps me very busy! »

Interview by Nathalie Facon



Jordi Ruiz de Villa



## \_in brief

### Metz-Barcelone



On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2004, a group of 47 lawyers from the Bar of Metz (France), headed by their Dean, Ms Sylvia Ferrari-Blosch, and lawyers from the office "Juristes Associés de Lorraine", came to visit the Bar of Barcelona (Espagne) and the Spanish office Manubens & Asociados.

### Let's play golf!



Manubens y Asociados' girls

People from the office of Manubens & Asociados in Barcelona (Spain) were invited to an introductory course of golf on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2004 at Torremirona golf resort located near Figueras (Spain).

### The Dean



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We are very pleased to announce that our Chairman, Michel Lacroix, has been elected as new Dean of the Bar of Clermont-Ferrand (France), which has 260 lawyers.

We wish him all the best for this new position, which started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and will last two years.

### Cécile Leroux' training period



Cécile Leroux (second on the right) with some of the members of Manubens & Asociados' office

We are also pleased to highlight the stay of Cécile Leroux, lawyer of "Les Juristes Associés du Centre" in Clermont-Ferrand (France), at the office Manubens y Asociados in Barcelona (Spain).

The course, in Spanish, made her study practical assignments and share the life of the office for two weeks at the end of February 2004. This course followed the one done by Josep Vandellos (from Manubens & Asociados' office) in the office "Les Juristes Associés du Centre" in Clermont-Ferrand the year before.

The office Manubens & Asociados thanks Cécile for her availability and her professionalism.