

PAW celebrates Paris as a legal “anchor” in a turbulent world

3 min read | 23 March 2026



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As the largest-ever Paris Arbitration Week opened today, French government officials emphasised the importance of Paris as an arbitral seat amid recent geopolitical and economic turbulence.

PAW’s 10th edition opened today with remarks from France’s Minister of Justice **Gérald Darmanin**.

Over the past decade, Darmanin said PAW has established itself as the leading intellectual platform for developing arbitration practice and shaping the economic regulation of global commerce.

He said the themes of the week’s agenda – which ranged from natural resources and climate change to the fight against corruption and arbitrator bias – reflected the vitality and ambition of the international arbitration community itself.

Some 7,000 delegates are expected to attend this year’s PAW, following more than 40,000 event registration requests – far surpassing last year’s 32,000.

Darmanin said that since taking office in 2024, he has made arbitration and alternative dispute resolution a key priority, including reforms to the country’s arbitration law, which were [proposed](#) by a working group set up by the ministry of justice last year.

The reforms – which among other things would create a single arbitration code and strengthen the powers of supporting judges to issue provisional measures – are contained in a draft decree that has already undergone public consultation and has now been submitted to the French Council of State for review.

He said the legal security of Paris is an “anchor” in a world marked by serious geopolitical tensions, armed conflicts, economic uncertainties, and occasionally political decisions from major democracies that call into question the very functioning of justice.

On behalf of the French government, he thanked the judiciary and the arbitration community for providing credible, transparent, and predictable arbitral justice that is equal to the challenges of our time.

Military threats and misuse of tariffs

The theme of geopolitical turbulence was also taken up by **Éléonore Caroit**, a Minister Delegate to France’s Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs. Caroit is a former arbitration lawyer and a non-practising partner at MCL Arbitration in Paris.

She said we are now witnessing a succession of crises and the clear possibility of a breakdown of the international order created in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Since last year’s PAW, Caroit said the world has changed brutally and extremely rapidly in the face of military threats and economic instability. She alluded to recent military interventions and misuse of tariffs by the US government that were traumatic not only because they are coming from France’s historical partner, but also because those actions affect everyone’s daily life.

In this context, Caroit said France was clear that a global response is needed – which is why the country continues to champion multilateralism, despite its imperfections.

But this multilateralism requires a common legal framework between nations. International arbitration is a structure that can be used to find legal solutions to our shared challenges, she suggested.

Caroit said she was proud to promote Paris as a centre of international arbitration, not only because the sector generates nearly €1 billion annually, but because this support comes at a moment when the international rule of law faces renewed pressure.

She said that politics and law must engage in dialogue; and politics must defend the law.

The event also featured remarks from **Louis Degos**, the President of the Paris Bar Association and an arbitration partner at K&L Gates.

Degos highlighted the Paris Bar’s commitment to PAW and French arbitration, noting that he recently presented the draft arbitration code in New York, where it was well received.

There followed an opening session addressing diversity and inclusion in international arbitration, moderated by **Yasmin Mohammad** of Fortress Investment Group. She was in conversation with **Nania Owusu-Ankomah**, partner at Bentsi-Enchill Letsa & Ankomah in Accra, and **Coralie Lolliot**, Africa Development Head at Sciences Po Paris.

PAW continues until Friday, with 266 events taking place across the city and delegates attending from 120 countries.

The 223 substantive topic discussions taking place is a 17% increase on last year’s PAW, where 191 panel sessions were held.

Commercial arbitration remains the dominant topic of discussion, accounting for over 55% of events. Investment arbitration accounts for 32%.

Topics related to construction arbitration have doubled, which may reflect the boom in mega-infrastructure projects linked to the energy transition and data centres needed to power artificial intelligence.

Thursday’s events include GAR Live Construction and the 16th annual GAR Awards ceremony, followed by the GAR Awards Afterparty, for which more than 1,000 are registered to attend. Details can be found [here](#).



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