

PAW turns 10: a decade of success and what to expect next week

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Diawara and Schroeder

*GAR spoke with Paris Arbitration Week co-presidents **Diamana Diawara** and **Catherine Schroeder** ahead of the 10th edition of PAW – asking what has driven the event’s success over the past decade and what attendees can expect next week.*

Ten years on, how has Paris Arbitration Week changed?

PAW was founded at a time when the international arbitration community lacked a dedicated gathering point. Relying on the very international nature of the spring annual meeting of the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR in Paris, PAW’s founders had the brilliant idea to build a series of events around this gathering – which would then transform Paris into the connecting place for the world of arbitration.

The community has grown exponentially in size and diversity: PAW went from a modest gathering of 17 partners to more than 40,000 event registration requests and 288 partners in 2026.

Diversity and inclusion have moved from being a peripheral conversation to a central priority, while sustainability has gone from a niche topic to a core pillar of the PAW agenda, with a major dedicated conference.

PAW has also become a genuinely global event. While the vast majority come from Europe (77%), many practitioners from Asia (9%), Africa (6%), North America (5%), Latin America (3%) are not just attendees but active contributors and partners.

What explains PAW's success and staying power over the past decade?

A committed and highly-engaged [board](#) continues to drive the week forward, while PAW's mission of "connecting the world of arbitration" remains central – not just hosting panels, but building lasting relationships.

The success stems from combining substantive programming with genuine community-building (social events, cocktail receptions, informal gatherings).

Each edition introduces new formats, new topics, and new voices – such as our sustainability and sport arbitration events, the PAW Fellowship and the PAW Games.

The diversity of participants – law firms, institutions, academics, in-house counsel, service providers and judges – also makes PAW uniquely cross-sectoral.

Finally, the Paris "effect": the city itself is a draw, and PAW has leveraged iconic venues and the French capital's legal prestige to enhance the experience.

Taking the helm for this 10th edition, what are your key priorities or themes for 2026?

Marking PAW's institutionalisation: the 10th edition is not just a celebration but a formal recognition of PAW as a lasting pillar of the arbitration ecosystem, underscored by the high patronage of the French Ministry of Justice for the third consecutive year and, for the first time, the institutional partnership with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A key priority is the launch of the PAW Fellowship, which supports emerging practitioners from Asia and Africa, reflecting the commitment to geographic and socioeconomic inclusion

Our new logo, inspired by the Eiffel Tower's understructure, is a symbol of strength through interconnection, mirroring PAW's philosophy: four pillars (learning, sharing, celebrating, together) and four core values (rule of law, diversity & inclusion, innovation, sustainability) as the framework for the decade ahead.

What makes Paris unique as a hub for arbitration — and how does PAW reflect that identity?

Paris is home to the ICC, one of the world's leading arbitral institutions, and has highly specialised judiciary with dedicated arbitration chambers at the Paris Court of Appeal.

France also has a deeply rooted pro-arbitration legal tradition and pioneering jurisprudence on arbitral autonomy.

PAW reflects this identity by using emblematic Parisian venues (Hôtel de Ville, Tribunal de Commerce, Cour d'Appel, Cour de cassation, salons du Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères), embedding Paris into the experience, not just as a backdrop but as a protagonist.

Our new logo, inspired by the Eiffel Tower's understructure, makes this connection explicit: Paris's architectural genius is a metaphor for PAW's own architecture of connections.

PAW also reflects Paris's diversity – a cosmopolitan city that naturally brings together practitioners from every legal tradition and region.

What themes or discussions do you expect will dominate this year's PAW?

Artificial intelligence and technology: the impact of AI on arbitration proceedings, evidence, and the role of counsel and arbitrators, a topic that has grown from emerging to urgent.

Energy, natural resources, and climate: the intersection of the energy transition with arbitration, including renewable energy disputes and ESG-related claims.

As well as key themes of diversity and inclusion and sustainability, the week will also cover the rule of law and arbitration's role as a guardian of legal certainty and enforceability in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment.

With the PAW Fellowship targeting Asia and Africa, you can also expect more programming focused on jurisdictions in emerging markets.

Do you anticipate challenges for international participants given the ongoing crisis in the Middle East?

As an organisation advocating for the rule of law and peaceful dispute resolution, PAW is deeply concerned about the current situation in the region and sorry that many colleagues are affected. PAW has always welcomed participants from all regions and remains committed to its foundational principles of independence, neutrality, and inclusion.

The PAW Board has been in close contact with participants and partners from the region to help minimise any impact of the situation on their participation in the 10th edition of PAW. The strength of PAW lies in its ability to bring together practitioners across political divides, this is precisely when that mission matters most.

What role do you see for cultural, social and wellness-focused events within PAW's identity?

These events are not peripheral to PAW, they are central to its mission of "connecting the world of arbitration". Genuine human connection happens outside the conference room; the cocktail receptions, social gatherings, and cultural events are where relationships are built and trust is established.

Events like the now traditional "PAW Games", the "Cycle to PAW" or the "ACICA early morning walk with the Aussies", embody PAW's values on multiple levels: sustainability, community, wellness, and solidarity (through charitable causes like Save the Children).

For first-time attendees, what should they absolutely not miss?

The PAW kick-off ceremony, which will gather prominent French policy makers from the ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Paris Bar). It will also feature a fireside chat on diversity and inclusion led by PAW founder and former president **Yasmin Mohammad** (of Fortress Investment Group).

The opening Gala (if they managed to secure one of the 1600 Golden Tickets!) sets the tone for the week in this 10th edition. The PAW Board has chosen a rare and iconic venue that even many Parisians do not know about (the Musée des Arts Forains).

But for the unlucky ones who did not win the lottery this time, they should attend at least one evening social event (for instance the PAW Cruise), as this is where PAW's community spirit truly comes alive.

The PAW Sustainability Event is also flagship moment that showcases PAW's values in action, featuring high-profile keynote speakers.

One travel tip about Paris for PAW attendees?

Schroeder: Don't take the Parisian bad mood personally!

Diawara: Look up when you go from one venue to another: the city is beautiful and has secrets in plain sight everywhere.

The 10th PAW takes place from 23-27 March. The agenda can be found [here](#).