

Welcome to the second issue of the ERA Pledge Newsletter!

As we approach the end of the year and mark **almost a decade of the ERA Pledge**, we are delighted to share this **second edition of our global newsletter** with our community around the world. This milestone is a moment to reflect on the progress we have made together, while looking ahead with renewed energy to the work still to be done.

In this issue, we highlight the remarkable work taking place across our committees, with a spotlight on our **Corporate Subcommittee** and an in-depth interview with our new Corporate Subcommittee co-chair, **Camilla Godman**, who shares her priorities and vision for the year ahead.

We also feature the winner of the **GAR ERA Pledge Award 2025**, proudly recognising the **Arbitration Fund for African Students (AFAS)**, founded by **Dr Emilia Onyema**, for its outstanding work in widening access to arbitration through education, training and skills development for African students and young learners, and for helping to build a strong pipeline of diverse future practitioners.

We also highlight a major new initiative - the **First Appointment Guidelines for Arbitrators** - aimed at supporting fairer, more transparent and more inclusive appointment practices across the arbitration community.

As always, we extend our sincere thanks to all our members, partners and supporters for your continued commitment to advancing equal representation in arbitration. Your engagement and collaboration remain at the heart of the Pledge's impact.

We hope you enjoy this edition, and we wish you a joyful festive season and a successful year ahead!

Read on for news of the ERA Pledge's current initiatives, recent events and general updates on our regional and global efforts towards promoting equal representation for women in arbitration.

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ERA Pledge Corporate Subcommittee

Driving Change in Arbitrator Diversity - A Corporate Perspective

The Corporate Subcommittee continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the ERA Pledge across the global arbitration community. As frequent users of arbitration, corporate legal teams and general counsel significantly influence arbitrator selection. The Subcommittee's efforts focus on embedding diversity practices into internal governance, shortlisting processes, and external engagement.

The Corporate Subcommittee was launched in 2019 and since then it has:

- Welcomed new members from leading multinational corporations spanning aviation, energy, finance, construction, manufacturing and technology.
- Delivered practical sessions supporting the implementation and internal rollout of the ERA Pledge Corporate Guidelines.
- Collaborated with arbitral institutions to align expectations around transparency and balanced shortlisting.
- Contributed to panels and workshops at major international conferences including GAR Live, IBA Arbitration Day, ICCA Congress satellites and regional arbitration weeks.
- Launched model internal protocols designed to help in-house counsel integrate diversity considerations at the outset of every arbitrator selection process.

While progress is being made in institutional and co-arbitrator appointments, the latest statistics for party appointment shows that party appointments of female arbitrators have stagnated at around 20% for the past few years.

There remains more work to be done with corporates and their external counsel to tackle the persistent challenges hindering progress towards better gender diversity in party appointments.

This year, the Subcommittee is pleased to welcome Camilla Godman (Omni Bridgeway) as its new co-chair. The ERA Pledge would also like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing co-chair, Alison Pearsall (Atol), who has stepped down from the role after over two years.

Read on to hear all about Camilla's priorities in her new role!

The full list of Corporate Subcommittee members can be found [here](#).

SUBCOMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

The ERA Pledge now has an incredible nine subcommittees broken down into six regional subcommittees, including Africa, APAC, India, Latin America, Middle East, and the USA, plus Corporate, UK BAR and Young Practitioners.

In this issue, we shine the spotlight on the Corporate subcommittee and an interview with new co-chair Camilla Godman.

Corporate Subcommittee 2025-2027

Co-chaired by:



Camilla Godman
Omni Bridgeway



Sylvia Noury KC
Freshfields LLP

ERA Pledge Presents:

An interview with Corporate Co-chair – Camilla Godman



1. **As the newly appointed co-chair of the Corporate Subcommittee, what are your key priorities for the year ahead, and where do you see the greatest opportunity for impact?**

One of my key priorities is to support an increase in the number of women appointed by parties. Recent statistics show that progress has been limited over the past five years, with many institutions recording a decrease in women's appointments by parties in 2024 compared with 2023. That trend highlights both the scale of the challenge and the opportunity ahead.

As Co-Chair, I would like us to shine a brighter light on the many excellent women arbitrators available for appointments, some well-known, others who, possibly more importantly, are emerging and deserve greater visibility. Our hope is that increasing familiarity with a wider pool of talented women will influence appointment practices. I'm optimistic that by working together with corporate teams, counsel, institutions, and the broader arbitration community, we can help shift those numbers in a positive direction.

2. **Corporate legal teams play a crucial role in arbitrator appointments. What practical steps can organisations take to meaningfully integrate diversity commitments into their appointment processes?**

A simple but powerful step is to ask external counsel to prepare candidate lists that genuinely reflect equal-opportunity considerations. This should include a balanced representation of women and corporate legal teams should be ready to question those lists that don't.

Corporate legal teams can also invest time in getting to know female arbitrators in the market. Tools like the Pledge's Arbitrator Search function on the [arbitrationpledge.com](https://www.arbitrationpledge.com/) website are a helpful place to start.

Equally important is building habits around tracking, reporting, and sharing diversity data. When organisations are intentional about discussing diversity at each stage of the appointment process, it becomes part of the culture rather than an afterthought. These small, practical steps accumulate and can lead to meaningful, lasting change.

3. From your perspective, what challenges remain in ensuring women arbitrators are consistently visible and considered for appointments?

One continuing challenge is the strength of long-established, often male dominated professional networks. Familiarity frequently drives recommendations, so arbitrators who have been appointed many times before (predominantly men) tend to be the default. From what I see as a funder at Omni Bridgeway, women are still underrepresented on many “shortlists”.

Soft skills, which many women demonstrate exceptionally well, also tend to be undervalued, even though diverse tribunals commonly deliver better dynamics and, in many cases, more balanced decision-making.

There is also still a perception that women need to demonstrate a higher level of experience before being considered “seasoned enough” for high-value disputes, even when they have the necessary expertise. Addressing these perceptions openly and constructively is an ongoing task for the whole community.

4. What message would you give to female practitioners seeking to position themselves for future arbitral appointments?

Seek out mentors! Formal or informal. And take opportunities to shadow or observe arbitrations where possible. Conversations with established arbitrators, both men and women, can provide valuable insight into how they received their first appointments and how they built momentum from there.

It can also be helpful to speak with arbitral institutions who maintain a “reserve list” of emerging arbitrators; these lists can offer a route to smaller or first-time appointments that build confidence and visibility.

For those earlier in their careers, consider developing specialisation in areas such as construction, energy, or maritime disputes, where women arbitrators are still particularly underrepresented. These fields offer significant opportunities for growth and differentiation. Above all, stay visible, stay connected, and keep building relationships as appointments often follow from trusted, long-term professional networks.

And finally, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or any of the committee members. We are keen to connect and collaborate, wherever you are in your career path.

GAR ERA Pledge Award 2025

We are delighted to highlight that the Arbitration Fund for African Students (AFAS) - founded by Dr Emilia Onyema, Professor of International Commercial Law at SOAS University of London - was awarded the 2025 GAR ERA Pledge Award.

AFAS is a UK-registered charity dedicated to widening access to arbitration through education, training, coaching, and practical skills development for African students and school-age learners. In 2024 alone, AFAS trained around **400 university students** and expanded its “ADR Connect” initiative to reach secondary-school pupils, marking a major leap in its mission to democratise access to the field.

Reflecting on the award, Dr Onyema shared:

“This recognition further reassures us that the work we are doing is important and impactful; providing equitable access to knowledge and skills for the talented students that we support.”

This year’s award recognises not only AFAS’s remarkable educational impact but also its role in building a robust pipeline of diverse, future practitioners across the African continent. AFAS stands as an example of meaningful, long-term investment in the next generation of arbitration talent.

“AFAS is transforming access to arbitration by empowering students who may otherwise face systemic barriers to entry.”



The award was presented by Pledge members, **Alison Pearsall (Atol)** and **Yosr Bouassida (Freshfields)** at the Global Arbitration Review Awards Ceremony in Paris on 10 April 2025.

We would also like to thank and congratulate all the other nominees for this year’s ERA Pledge Award for their hard work and commitment to promoting diversity and female representation in arbitration.

Special spotlight:

Introducing the First Appointment Guidelines for Arbitrators

We are proud to announce the launch of the **First Appointment Guidelines for Arbitrators**, a major new initiative designed to support transparent, fair, and inclusive arbitrator selection.

Launched in February 2025, the Guidelines provide a framework that helps users:

- apply objective selection criteria
- reduce bias in shortlisting
- improve governance and record-keeping
- consider diverse candidate pools
- foster balanced and complementary tribunals

Why the Guidelines Matter

Arbitrator appointments have traditionally relied on network familiarity and repeat appointments. While experience remains important, this approach can unintentionally limit opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups. The new Guidelines encourage organisations to adopt a more deliberate, structured, and inclusive process.

What's Inside the Guidelines

- Recommended selection criteria
- Diversity-sensitive approaches to shortlisting
- Sample appointment protocols
- Tribunal composition considerations
- Documentation and transparency tools

Global Rollout

The launch will be followed by:

- global webinars
- regional training sessions led by Subcommittees
- institution-focused workshops
- corporate integration guidance sessions

This initiative represents a collaborative effort across corporates, arbitral institutions, law firms, and the broader arbitration community.

For more details, see the [News Release](#) and [the ERA Pledge First Appointment Guidelines](#).

Highlight of 2025 Events

The Pledge has a number of subcommittees who are actively committed to raising awareness of the Pledge. We are pleased to share some 2025 updates from across the globe.

- On **4 December 2025**, Italian members of the ERA Pledge Steering Committee, Michela D'Avino, Beatriz Saiz Marti, Fabrizio Arossa and Maria Beatrice Deli organised an event hosted by the Associazione Italiana per l'Arbitrato – AIA. It featured Evelina T. Wahlström, Irene Petrelli and Giulia Carbone.
- On **2 December 2025**, the ERA Pledge (along with other DEI initiatives) co-organised an event during London Arbitration Week: 'Arbitrivia After Hours: A DEI Evening Reception'. ERA Pledge members Sylvia Noury KC, Stephanie Mbonu and Ashley Jones represented the Pledge at the event.



- On **25 November 2025**, the Investment and Development Office (IDO) - Ras Al Khaimah signed the ERA Pledge.

WE'VE SIGNED
*the Equal Representation
in Arbitration Pledge.*



- On **14 November 2025**, the Pledge supported the 45th ICC Institute Annual Conference on Monetary Remedies in International Arbitration, represented by Zara Desai.



- On **12 November 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported GAR Live: Dubai.
- In **early November 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported Dubai Arbitration Week. Across the week, our Pledge Champion Safia Abdalla and Uttara Nair engaged with attendees, shared the mission of the Pledge, explained why continued awareness remains essential, and - importantly - welcomed many new signatories who joined us in committing to greater diversity in arbitral appointments.



- On **19-24 October 2025**, during Hong Kong Arbitration Week, the ERA Pledge and WIA held a joint breakfast event bringing participants into dynamic conversations around how personality traits, through the lens of MBTI, shape perspectives in legal decision-making. The session was moderated by Stella Hu, with speakers Chungang Dong, Greg Falkof, Alice Wang, and Edwina Kwan 关凯丽.



- On **15 October 2025**, the ERA Pledge hosted an event during Australian Arbitration Week, 'A Different Discourse on Diversity'.
- On **15 October 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported GAR Live London. The Pledge was represented by Camilla Godman, Ashley Jones and Stephanie Mbonu.



- On **14-15 October 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported the ICC-FIDIC Conference in Paris.
- On **2-3 October 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported GAR Live: Vienna which took place during VIAC's 50th anniversary.
- On **27 August 2025**, the ERA Pledge hosted an event in Singapore, 'From Intention to Impact: Accelerating Action on Underrepresentation in Arbitration and Opening Doors to First-Time Appointments'.
- On **2 July 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported the 8th edition of GAR Live: Energy Dispute in London.

- On **26 June 2025**, the ERA Pledge APAC Subcommittee hosted an ERA Pledge breakfast in Hong Kong.
- On **25-27 June 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported the 10th edition of the annual ICC Asia Pacific Conference on International Arbitration in Hong Kong.
- On **19 June 2025**, the ERA Pledge APAC Subcommittee hosted a "Meet the Institutions" event held at Maxwell Chambers in Singapore.



- On **4 June 2025**, the ERA Pledge joined forces with like-minded organisations to present Accelerate Action with Arbitral Allies as part of London International Disputes Week 2025.
- On **4 June 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported GAR Live: ISDS in London.
- On **4 June 2025**, Africa Subcommittee members participated in a Women's Breakfast event, held in conjunction with ICCA and Arbitral Women, attended by around 40 female arbitrators from Africa and beyond. The ERA Africa Pledge team were honoured to have the presence of Sylvia Noury KC, founding member of the Pledge.



- On **4-5 June 2025**, the Africa Subcommittee members represented the Pledge at the ICCA-Kigali conference. Out of the 28 conference speakers, session chairs, and moderators, there were 13 women on the programme, including the Chief Justice of Rwanda. Speakers from the Africa Subcommittee included Mercy Okiro, Madeline Kimej, Abayomi Okubote and Sylvie Bebohi.

- On **29-30 May 2025**, the ERA Pledge was represented at the 9th ICC Africa Conference in Nairobi on 29-30 May 2025. Out of the 28 conference speakers, session chairs and moderators, there were 17 women. The Pledge was represented by ERA Pledge Africa Subcommittee members Njeri Kariuki, Mercy Okiro, Sylvie Bebohi and Dr. Abayomi Okubote.



- On **7 April 2025**, the ERA Pledge partnered with ICC Arbitration to support the 9th ICC European Conference on International Arbitration in Paris.
- On **29 March 2025**, Sian Mirchandani KC, Chair of the Bar Subcommittee of the ERA Pledge, spoke on a panel on "Substantive Law and Feminism" at the LSE Law Summit 2025.
- On **27 March 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported a panel discussion and networking event held at Maxwell Chambers, Singapore on "The Power of Women in Conflict Resolutions".
- On **7 March 2025**, the ERA Pledge co-hosted an event to celebrate International Women's Day in Hong Kong, 'Redefining Arbitration Through Inclusive Leadership and Innovation'.
- On **7 March 2025**, the ERA Pledge hosted an International Women's Day event in Bangkok, 'Bridging the Gap: How Can We Accelerate Equal Representation in International Arbitration?'



- On **6 March 2025**, the ERA Pledge hosted a virtual webinar to discuss the ERA Pledge and how it is intended to promote and increase opportunities for women in arbitration in celebration of International Women's Day.
- On **25 February 2025**, the ERA Pledge supported an FTI Flagship Event on Diversity during Riyadh International Disputes Week. The panel featured Africa Committee co-chair, Amani Khalifa.
- On **11 February 2025**, the ERA Pledge was represented at the 13th ICC MENA Conference on International Arbitration held in the ADGM on 11 February 2025. Dr. Karen Seif, Payel Mazumdar, and Ramsha Hayat acted as ERA Pledge Champions at this year's conference.



- On **11 February 2025**, the ERA Pledge organised an event in Sydney, 'Hitting the Ground Running: the First Two Months of an Arbitration – Tips and Tricks: A Roundtable Discussion'. ERA Pledge APAC Subcommittee Co-Chair, Jo Delaney, co-facilitated the event.



If you have any ERA Pledge events (from December 2025 onwards) that you wish to be featured in the next Newsletter, please click [here](#) to provide details.

ERA Pledge Resources and Info

The ERA Pledge has various resources to assist practitioners to implement the Pledge in practice, including:

- **ERA Female Arbitrator Search Tool** (hosted by ICCA) – a pro bono service to offered by the ERA Search Committee (**comprised of members of arbitral institutions only**) to find women arbitrator candidates meeting the specific criteria for your case. This tool can be accessed via an online form which will be shared on a completely confidential basis with the ERA Search Committee who aim to respond within 48 hours.
- **The Female Arbitrator Resources Tool** – list of resources for researching women arbitrators.
- **ERA Pledge Corporate Guidelines** – best practice guidance for corporates wishing to implement the Pledge.
- **A Checklist of Best Practices for the Selection of Arbitrators** - outlines the best practices, methods and tools available for selecting arbitrators, relying on objective criteria that promote both efficiency and diversity in arbitration.
- In order to further the ERA Pledge's efforts and promote the Pledge around the globe, in addition to the forming of regional subcommittees, we have available translated versions of the ERA Pledge. The **9 translated texts** currently available can be accessed [here](#) on the ERA Pledge website.

ERA Pledge



ERA Pledge is available
in 9 languages:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional English
- French
- German
- Italian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish



- Our **Global Steering Committee** and **Subcommittees** are made up of experienced arbitration practitioners across law firms, chambers, institutions, corporates and other organisations. These individuals are focused on raising awareness of the ERA Pledge and helping to implement its objectives.
- For specified advice and/or training on the ERA Pledge, please contact **[Ashley Jones](#)** or **[Stephanie Mbonu](#)**.

For any other queries, to provide feedback on the ERA Pledge, or to unsubscribe, please email us [here](#).