

Welcome to the European Circuit Annual Conference 2026

We are thrilled that the conference is taking place in Málaga this year, in collaboration with the Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga. The participation of local lawyers in the panel sessions is an integral part of the conference each year and we are delighted that we will be hearing from many local speakers. We also look forward to meeting other colleagues based in Málaga who have signed up as attendees, who may be attending a Circuit event for the first time (though we hope that they will all be back).

Once again, this year's conference has a stellar line-up of speakers on a wide range of topics that are of interest to practitioners working across borders. We are particularly delighted that **Judge Hugh Mercer KC**, a former Leader of the European Circuit, will be giving a keynote speech. Hugh has been very much missed on the Circuit executive committee since his elevation to the European Court of Human Rights and we are honoured that he is returning to the Circuit conference once again to give this keynote speech.

Another highlight will be the Bar Leaders session, which has become a fixture at this conference. This year the panel who will be discussing challenges for lawyers across their different jurisdictions includes **Kirsty Brimelow KC**, Chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales, **Stéphane Haziza**, Member of the Paris Bar Council, **Michala Plachká**, Vice-Chair of the Czech Bar Association, **Seamus Clarke SC**, Chair of the Council of the Bar of Ireland, **Adolfo Martos Gross**, Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga and **Noemí Alarcón Velasco**, Vice President of the CCBE. The session will be chaired by the Circuit's current Leader, **Abigail Holt**.

The specialist panels on Friday include: Recognition and Enforcements of Judgments between the EU and the UK (with speakers **Ana Romero Porro**, **Dr Sarah Egan BL** and **Christopher Deacon**, chaired by **Paul McGarry SC**); Conduct in Financial Remedy Proceedings (with speakers **Lance Duran**, **Mayte Garcia** and **Amy Scollan**, chaired by **The Hon. Ms Justice Nuala Jackson**); Advocacy Before International Courts (with speakers **The Hon. Mr Justice David Nolan**, **Kirsty Brimelow KC**, **Antoine Parry**, **Inés Barba Novoa** and **Francisco Verdún**, chaired by **Judge Hugh Mercer KC**) and Recent Developments in EU Migration and Asylum Law (with speakers **Noemí Alarcón Velasco**, **David Conlan Smyth SC** and **Benjamin Seifert**, chaired by **Sonali Naik KC**).

Full details of all the speakers and chairs can be found at the end of this programme.

Finally, the social programme is, as ever, an essential part of the conference, allowing Circuit habitués and conference first-timers to reconnect with colleagues and make new friends from across Europe. On Thursday night, there is a drinks reception at the legendary beach-front restaurant Antonio Martín, which will be serving up canapés reflecting the best of both Andalusian and Spanish cuisine alongside the drinks. The Gala Dinner on Friday is at the luxurious 5-star Gran Hotel Miramar, kicking off with an open-air cocktail reception with stunning views of the Bay of Málaga. **Professor Oana Stefan** has kindly agreed to give a short speech at the Gala Dinner, looking at EU law from a more light-hearted angle.

The Circuit would like to express its immense gratitude to the Ilustre Colegio de Abogados for hosting us and for all the assistance on the practical side. In particular, this conference would not have been possible without the tireless and exceptional work of Adolfo Martos Gross and the Circuit would like to take this opportunity to thank him sincerely for all that he has done to facilitate this conference.

Huge thanks are also due to Laura Hartman, the Circuit's administrator, who has handled all the administration with her usual efficiency and attention to detail.

We wish you all a very enjoyable time in Málaga and look forward to many interesting discussions over the course of the two days!

The Circuit Executive Committee



Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga
1776-2026
250^o Aniversario

Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga

The Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga (Málaga Bar Association) was founded in 1776 by Royal Order of King Charles III and celebrates its 250th anniversary in 2026. Its inaugural General Assembly was held on 9 October 1776 and was attended by 21 lawyers. From those modest beginnings, the Málaga Bar has grown into one of Spain's important Bar Associations, today representing more than 6,200 lawyers throughout the province. As a public-law professional body, it plays a central role in the organisation and development of the legal profession in Málaga.

Its functions include safeguarding professional and ethical standards, supporting the proper administration of justice, organising legal aid and duty lawyer services, representing the profession before public authorities and institutions, and promoting access to justice and the continuing professional development of its members. The Bar also has a wide range of specialist sections covering virtually every area of legal practice, including International Law, Commercial Law, Tax and Finance, Real Estate and Construction, Family Law, Urban Planning, Tourism Law and Foreign Capital Investment. These sections organise conferences, seminars, courses and other training activities, while providing a forum for professional discussion and exchange of knowledge.

Málaga and the Costa del Sol have one of the most international legal environments in Spain. The province has a very substantial foreign resident and non-resident population and attracts significant international investment, particularly in real estate, tourism and business. As a result, Málaga lawyers have developed a particularly high degree of specialisation in advising non-resident and international clients and routinely handle cross-border property transactions, taxation, inheritance, family law, litigation, foreign investment and private international law. This experience makes Málaga lawyers natural partners for colleagues in other jurisdictions who require trusted Spanish counsel accustomed to coordinating matters across borders. It is in this spirit of professional and international cooperation that the Málaga Bar is delighted to welcome the European Circuit and to host its Annual Conference on 24th and 25th of September 2026.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW IN A WORLD THAT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE

at the **Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga**

P.º de la Farola, 13, Málaga-Este, 29016 Málaga

Thursday 24 September

16:30 Registration and coffee

17:00 Welcome and opening address

17:30-19:00 Perspectives on Challenges to the Profession from Bar Leaders Across Europe

20:30-22:00 Drinks reception at Antonio Martín

Friday 25 September

10:00-10:30 Keynote speech by Judge Hugh Mercer KC

10:30-11:45 Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments between the EU and the UK

11:45-12:15 Coffee break

12:15-13:30 Conduct in Financial Remedy Proceedings

13:30-13:50 EU-UK update

13:50-15:30 Lunch

15:30-16:45 Advocacy Before International Courts

16:45-17:00 Coffee break

17:00-18:15 Recent Developments in EU Migration and Asylum Law

18:15 close

20:30 for 21:30 Drinks reception and Gala Dinner at Hotel Miramar

"The world today doesn't make sense, so why should I paint pictures that do?"

—Attributed to Pablo Picasso, born Málaga, 1881

Map and Addresses of the Venues

From 16:30 on 24 September and all day 25 September for conference panels

Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Málaga

P.º de la Farola, 13, Málaga-Este, 29016 Málaga

///envelope.tripped.coffee

From 20:30 on 24 September for drinks reception

Antonio Martín Restaurante

Málaga, Pl. de la Malagueta, 4, Málaga-Este, 29016 Málaga

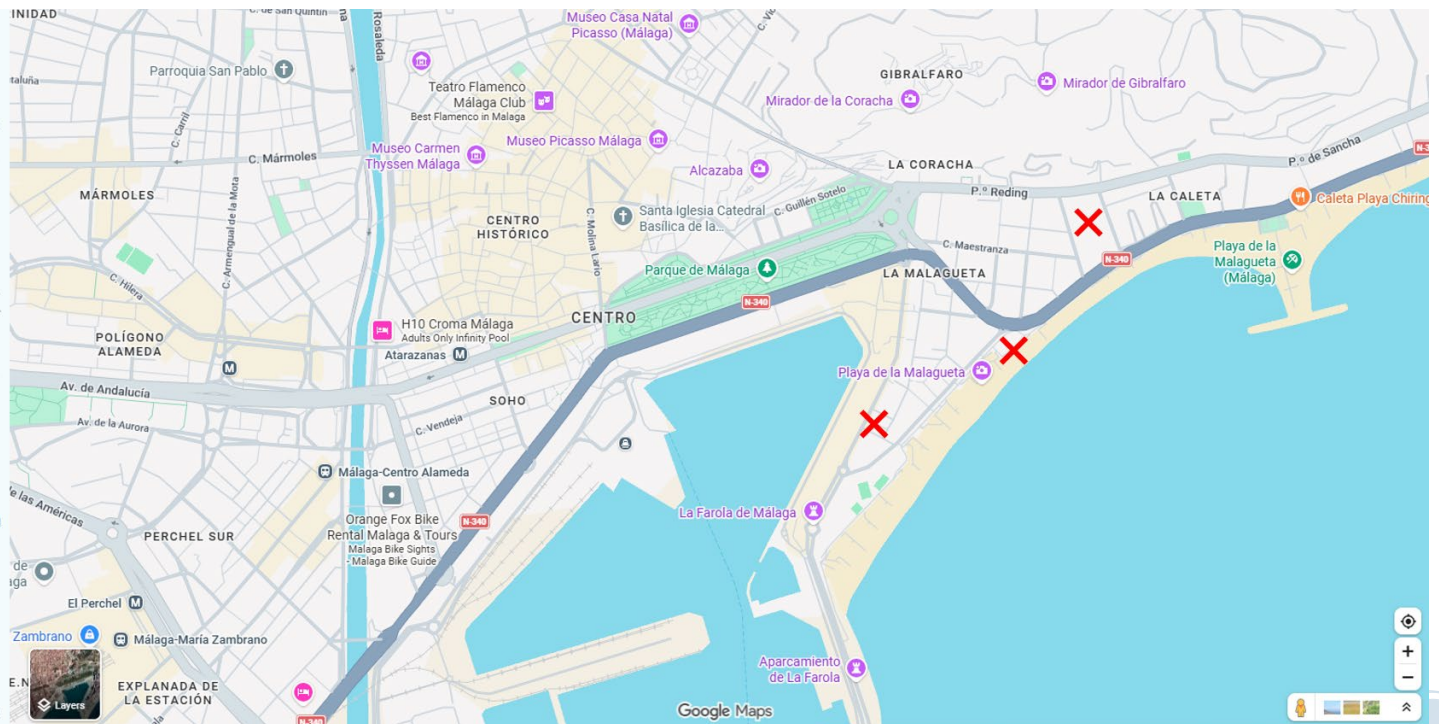
///detection.lifelong.circles

From 20:30 on 25 September for gala dinner

Hotel Miramar

P.º Reding, 22, 24, Málaga-Este, 29016 Málaga

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El Rol de Barrister

En España, no existe la figura del barrister, y su rol, en realidad, es una mezcla de habilidades prácticas y académicas. Para comprender el papel del barrister y el perito en otras jurisdicciones es necesario entender las diferencias entre los barristers y solicitors británicos; y al mismo tiempo algunas diferencias entre los abogados británicos y abogados españoles.

Es crucial tener en cuenta que en Inglaterra operamos bajo un sistema judicial de “common law”; lo que significa, que **no existe un código completo de leyes inglesas**. El derecho jurisprudencial y las resoluciones judiciales son más fundamentales en la evolución y el desarrollo de las leyes inglesas.

El régimen jurídico inglés

En Inglaterra hay varios tipos de profesionales De Derecho, “**lawyers**” que practican para sus clientes en el día a día.

Los más comunes son los **jueces, barristers, y solicitors**.

Este año hay 216,000 solicitors.

Solamente 18,000 barristers.

Además, existe el rol de “legal executive” – Es similar a un solicitador, pero con una formación práctica menos formal, menos académica y normalmente tienen menos responsabilidad.

Aunque no tenemos **notarios** en Inglaterra, existe la figura del “**notary public**”.

Siempre los “notaries public” son solicitors, pero con una formación profesional adicional, que les permite preparar y verificar documentos para asuntos **extranjeros**.

Los solicitors hacen este trabajo importante de verificar documentos, por ejemplo, testamentos.

No existe el rol de procurador en Inglaterra.

¡La formación de barristers y solicitors es algo similar, **pero se puede ser barrister o solicitador sin una licenciatura en Derecho!** Es importante de notar que la única persona que puede manejar el dinero del cliente es el solicitador. Por este motivo, los solicitors y los barristers tienen una formación profesional un poquito diferente. La formación profesional de los solicitors incluye un examen sobre contabilidad y gestión financiera del dinero del cliente, aspecto que los barristers no hacen nunca.

Educación

Tanto los barristers, como los solicitors, deben contar con una titulación universitaria, aunque no necesariamente en Derecho!

Hay una posibilidad de ser barrister o solicitador y licenciado en otra disciplina (Medicina, Filología Inglesa, Matemáticas, Ciencias, Historia, Ingeniero etc) y luego realizar **un curso de conversión** en Derecho en un año. ¡Este curso es menos académico que un Grado en Derecho pero es considerablemente difícil e intenso!

A los barristers y solicitors deben completar el último año con una formación específica en el ejercicio de la abogacía.

Aunque el curso es un poquito diferente para cada uno, las asignaturas suelen incluir la prueba en el proceso, la ética profesional y la práctica legal.

Después, hay meses de prácticas obligatorios como abogada en prácticas con supervisión formal de un barrister o solicitador con una amplia experiencia profesional.

El rol del barrister inglés

Como barrister en el Reino Unido soy **autónoma**. Por eso estoy libre de trabajar de manera flexible, porque no tengo jefe.

Sin embargo, mi forma de trabajar cambio radicalmente a causa de la pandemia.

En Inglaterra, después de la pandemia **usamos más los servicios de teleconferencia y videoconferencia**. Con clientes y otros abogados Zoom o MTeams; pero también hay una plataforma audiovisual especial y privada creado por el Ministerio de la Justicia – CVP – Cloud Video Platform – que usamos por audiencias con jueces.

Contacto con clientes

A diferencia de los solicitors, quienes tienen un **contacto directo con sus clientes**, los barristers **nunca tienen contacto con el cliente directamente**. Siempre lo hacemos **a través del solicitador**.

¿Un solicitador trabaja siempre con un o una barrister?

En la mayoría de los casos legales, los solicitors pueden resolverlos sin contratar un o una barrister. Sin embargo, cuando el caso es complejo y requiere llegar a los Tribunales, es entonces cuando interviene el barrister.

El solicitador subcontrata a un barrister si lo necesita. (**¡Es decir el cliente del barrister es el solicitador!**)

Pero, ¿que hacen barristers?

Los barristers son los especialistas en la **investigación, interpretación y presentación** de la ley; lo que les permite asistir en casos en otras jurisdicciones explicando la ley inglesa.

Documentos

En el trabajo de los documentos, el solicitador solicita al barrister crear los **documentos necesarios** en casos complejos. Por ejemplo:

- Escrito de demanda ("Particulars of Claim");
- Escrito de contestación a la demanda ("the Defence")
- El "Schedule of Loss" - es decir, el resumen o "lista de pérdidas" donde la parte demandante declara el daño sufrido, como totalidad causada por un accidente o muerte u otro tipo de negligencia. Los barristers preparan el "schedule of loss" cuando el demandante sufre lesiones y daños graves que resultan en discapacidades físicas y mentales **complejas**
- Otro ejemplo de documento – la redacción del pliego de preguntas escritas formales

Mas diferencias

Si bien los solicitors pueden realizar investigaciones legales, con frecuencia los solicitors prefieren que sea el barrister quienes lo haga, ya que subcontratar este trabajo resulta más barato para ellos.

Los mejores barristers tienen una reputación sólida como expertos en la ley y la jurisprudencia.

En este contexto, como expertos en jurisprudencia, derecho, y detalles procesales, los barristers dan opiniones muy precisas sobre problemas legales muy específicos.

Otro aspecto de la función de un o una barrister es que los solicitors me piden que desarrolle pruebas para presentar un caso de manera "más completo" al juez/a.

Por esta razón, gran parte de mis días profesionales los pasan en reuniones con el solicitador, el cliente, y a menudo "expert witnesses" – testigos expertos en diversas disciplinas como, medicina, ingeniería o contabilidad. Al mismo tiempo, la independencia de los peritos es crucial y los abogados tienen prohibido intentar decirles a los peritos qué decir o guiarlos.

Skeleton argument, conferences, mediations and negotiations

Normalmente, preparo yo agendas de preguntas precisas (escritos) antes de las conferencias o reuniones de este tipo para ayudar a los expertos en sus preparaciones.

Posteriormente, dirijo reuniones con los clientes y su equipo de abogados/as para dar consejo y hablar de los detalles de sus casos. Estas reuniones son oportunidades para hablar libremente, dar consejos sobre los riesgos y el valor del caso, incluyendo aquellos consejos que pueden ser no deseados para el cliente!

Con frecuencia, el barrister lidera el equipo del cliente en la **mediación o negociación**.

Audiencias

La mayoría de los casos se resuelven entre las partes y no llegan a juicio.

Sin embargo, si existen diferencias implacables y irreconciliables y es imposible llegar a un acuerdo entre las partes mi labor consiste en interrogar a los testigos frente al juez/a. Además, debo resumir el caso con todos los detalles, con el objetivo de persuadir al juez/a. Para las audiencias la preparación y el "skeleton argument" son fundamental.

Probablemente, en aspecto más difícil y desafiante del rol del barrister es presentar casos en audiencias frente un/a juez/a. Los solicitors utilizan los barristers en audiencias **preliminares y finales** que pueden durar días o semanas. El barrister se encarga de preparar y realizar el contrainterrogatorio, así como de presentar los argumentos finales.

Antes de la audiencia redacto mi resumen ("skeleton argument") de lo que voy a presentar ante el juez/a.

Cabe destacar que los barristers y **no** los Solicitors pueden presentar casos en los Tribunales Superiores de Apelación.

Barristers' Clerk

El "barrister's clerk" tiene un rol importante. El clerk se encarga de organizar la administración diaria del barrister y su agenda profesional. ¡Es muy importante – destacar que el clerk negocia los honorarios del barrister con el solicitor en casos privados!

Con frecuencia, el primer contacto profesional con un barrister en un caso esta con su clerk.

Jueces/juezas

En Inglaterra los jueces fueron solicitors o barristers (barristers con más frecuencia que solicitors) por mínimo 7 años. No es posible ser juez/a después de universidad.

Normalmente los jueces con salario fueron abogados (quince – veinte) 15-20 años al menos.

Algunos abogados, son jueces/juezas de tiempo parcial.

Abigail Holt

14 September 2026

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24 & 25 September 2026

Kirsty Brimelow KC Chair Bar of England & Wales



Kirsty practises in criminal, international and public law from Doughty Street Chambers, where she is on the management board as head of the criminal law team. Kirsty was appointed QC (now KC) in 2011. She has the distinction of having led in both Civil and Criminal Courts of Appeal, the Supreme Court, the Privy Council, and the European Court of Human Rights. She was a member of the Bar Council Public Affairs Committee and a Bar Council Young Spokesperson from 1998 to 2008 and the first female Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee (2012 to 2018) and served as the Vice Chair and then Chair of the Criminal Bar Association (2021 to 2023).

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Stéphane Haziza Member of the Paris Bar Council

Stéphane Haziza was admitted to the Paris Bar on 5 February 1997.

In 2002, she was elected "Secrétaire de la Conférence", one of the Paris Bar's most prestigious distinctions for criminal defence lawyers.

Since 2023, she has been serving as a Member of the Paris Bar Council (Conseil de l'Ordre), where she is Secretary of the Criminal Law Commission and Coordinator for Domestic Violence Matters.



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Michala Plachká

Vice-Chair, Czech Bar Association



Michala completed three years as a legal associate in the law firm Pyšný, Srba & Partneri in Ostrava. In 2019, she founded PURE Legal and has been the Managing Partner of the firm since 2020.

Since 2021, Míša has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Czech Bar Association. In 2025, she was re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Czech Bar Association.

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Séamus Clarke SC

forthcoming Chair of the
Council of The Bar of Ireland



Séamus Clarke SC is based at the Law Library in Dublin and practises mainly in public law, including criminal, constitutional and administrative law, as well as employment law. He is an arbitrator and mediator and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb). From 2020 to 2025, he served as a Director and member of the Board of Management of the Dublin Disputes Resolution Centre (DDRC). He has also held a number of senior leadership positions within The Bar of Ireland, including Vice-Chair and Treasurer of the Council.

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Adolfo Martos Gross

Martos & Gross

Adolfo has practised law for over 30 years, developing most of his professional career between Málaga and Marbella.

His practice focuses mainly on civil and commercial law, private international law, real estate and litigation. He has extensive experience in cross-border litigation cases. Since 2013, Adolfo has been the Coordinator of the International Section of the Málaga Bar Association, where he is involved in promoting relations and exchanges with lawyers and Bar associations from other jurisdictions. He also has considerable experience in legal training and has regularly participated in conferences, seminars and professional training activities, particularly in areas connected with international and cross-border legal practice. He also acts as an arbitrator at the Málaga Court of Arbitration.



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Noemí Alarcón Velasco

Noemí is an international lawyer and consultant specialising in human rights, EU law and migration.

She is the Vice-President of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and previously chaired its Migration Committee. She represents the CCBE before Frontex and the EU Agency for Asylum, and serves on the Spanish General Council of the Legal Profession's Immigration Subcommittee. A leading expert, she has coordinated advocacy for major legislation like the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Additionally, she is a Council of Europe HELP Programme tutor, an expert consultant for projects in Armenia and Moldova, and a former FIAP Senior Consultant, widely publishing professional guidance manuals on international protection.



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Abigail Holt Barrister, Garden Court Chambers

Abigail Holt practises in personal injury, industrial disease and medical cases which includes cross-border litigation. She also has expertise in human rights and international protection work, with a particular interest in Afghanistan, as well as employment law. She is on the list of Court Examiners appointed to take evidence for the High Court and to take depositions following requests for evidence from overseas courts. At Garden Court she is on the Environmental & Climate Justice and Commercial & Business Ethics teams. She is a fellow of the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law based at McGill University, Quebec and Cambridge University and is the current leader of the European Circuit.



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Hugh Mercer KC

Judge, ECHR

Hugh Mercer KC is a Judge of the European Court of Human Rights, appointed to the bench in September 2025. Educated at Cambridge and the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Mercer was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1985 and was appointed King's Counsel in 2008. His extensive judicial and international career includes serving as a UK Deputy High Court Judge since 2018, chairing the International Committee of the Bar of England and Wales, representing the UK at the CCBE, and holding multi-jurisdictional memberships across the Bars of Northern Ireland, Brabant Wallon, and Bruxelles. He is also a former leader of the European Circuit.



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Paul McGarry SC Bar of Ireland



Paul McGarry SC was Chair of the Bar of Ireland from July 2016 to July 2018.

He was President of Arbitration Ireland from 2022 to 2024. He was called to the Bar in 1996 and appointed a Senior Counsel in 2010. He has been a member of the Bar of England & Wales since 2012 and joined the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2019. He is also an associate at 6 Pump Court Chambers in London. His practice is primarily in public, commercial and European law. He is a former head of the Irish delegation to the Council of European Bars, a member of the Implementation Group of Ireland for Law, and Deputy Leader of the European Circuit. He is a Bencher of King's Inns and a Master of the Bench at Middle Temple.

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Ana Romero Porro

ASTROM Legal

A founding partner of ASTROM Legal, a firm specialising in Personal Injury and Insurance since January 2023, Ana has over 25 years of experience handling Spanish and cross-border tort claims, with recognised expertise in catastrophic injuries, brain and spinal trauma, clinical negligence, and product liability across multiple legal jurisdictions. Ana is the Immediate Past President of PEOPIL and a Governor of the American Association for Justice (AAJ). Her international litigation career includes key roles at firms like Irwin Mitchell and Cremades & Calvo-Sotelo. Frequently instructed as an expert in Spanish law for cross-border proceedings, she has prepared over 200 expert reports for courts in the UK, France, Germany, and the United States.



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Dr Sarah Egan Barrister New Square Chambers



Sarah is a Member of the Bars of England and Wales and of Ireland. She specialises in succession, estates, trusts, and Court of Protection work, as well as related professional negligence. Sarah has particular expertise in European cross-border succession and conflict of laws matters, including issues of domicile, the interpretation of foreign Wills, forced heirship, and the application of the EU Succession Regulation. Ranked as a Leading Junior in the Legal 500, Sarah has been commended for her "solid grasp of the law in her field". Prior to practising at the independent Bar, Sarah was in-house Counsel to a European commercial bank in the City of London, where her role involved advising on banking and financial services law and EU regulation.

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Christopher Deacon

Partner, Stewarts



Chris is one of the UK's leading international injury and travel lawyers.

He has been described as 'the leading lawyer of his generation in this area of law.'

He is recognised as 'a true force who leaves no stone unturned in his drive to succeed.' Chris studied European and French law at the University of Warwick and Lille II, France. He trained at Blake Lapthorn, qualifying into travel litigation before moving to Stewarts in 2013. Chris is a member of the Travel and Tourism Lawyers Association, APIL, PEOPIL and the AAJ. He chairs the PEOPIL EU-UK working group and is a member of the Law Society Private International Law Working Group.

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Ms. Justice Nuala Jackson

Ms. Justice Nuala Jackson is an Irish High Court Judge specialising in family, financial remedy, and child law cases. A Trinity College Dublin law graduate, she holds LL.M. degrees from Cambridge and Cardiff. She has lectured and presented extensively around family and child law. Before her judicial appointment, she practised as a Senior Counsel and lectured extensively. An accredited mediator, she formerly chaired the Family Lawyers Association of Ireland, helped initiate the Irish Family Law Arbitration Scheme, and served on the Irish CI Arb committee. She also chaired the Legal Aid Board and was Vice-Chair of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board. She is a Judicial Fellow of the International Academy of Family Law. She recently completed AI courses at LSE, UCD Professional Academy, and Oxford's Saïd Business School.



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Lance Duran

Provinziano & Associates

Lance Duran is a seasoned trial attorney with over two decades experience in civil and family law. Admitted to the California Bar in 2000, he began his career in Orange County handling complex litigation before launching his own practice. In 2012, he co-founded Erickson & Duran, expanding into insurance and estate planning while developing a focus on cross-border legal matters in Paris. He later served as a primary Senior Associate at Moshtael Family Law. He joined Provinziano & Associates in 2025. Based in Paris, he leverages his international perspective for complex family law cases, including cross-border custody and international divorce. Known for his assertive courtroom presence and strategic thinking, he guides clients through difficult challenges with empathy and clarity.



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Mayte Garcia

Mayte Garcia is the founder and managing partner of MAYTEGARCIA International Family Law, a Spanish boutique firm specialising in cross-border family law and child protection. With offices in Madrid and Málaga, she leads a five-lawyer team providing bespoke advice on complex international divorces, asset division, and custody disputes, specifically serving high-net-worth clients in Marbella and Sotogrande. A bilingual lawyer and mediator, Mayte is a renowned expert in international child abduction. She regularly collaborates with elite UK/EU law firms and foreign child protection authorities. Garcia is an IAFL and UIA Fellow, co-founder of the Spanish association on international child abduction, and a University of Málaga lecturer. She frequently speaks at global forums and widely publishes on international family law.



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Amy Scollan Hunters Law

Amy is a Partner at Hunters Law, specialising in complex, high-value financial remedy litigation and intricate company or trust structures.

Recognised as a Next Generation Partner in The Legal 500 and ranked in the Chambers High Net Worth Guide 2024, she is widely praised by peers and clients for her strategic problem-solving and thoroughness. Her broad family law expertise spans cross-border disputes, pre- and post-nuptial agreements, and serious child protection and safeguarding issues. As a key member of Hunters' International Safeguarding team, she handles sensitive cases involving mental capacity and welfare concerns. Additionally, Amy serves as a European Circuit committee member, regularly writing and speaking at international legal conferences.



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The Hon. Mr. Justice David Nolan Bar of Ireland



Mr. Justice David Nolan was appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Ireland in 2023. Educated at Gonzaga College and University College Dublin, he completed his legal training at the Honourable Society of King's Inns. He was called to the Bar in 1985 and appointed Senior Counsel in 2003. During his distinguished career, he established an extensive practice specialising in medical negligence, insurance law, and commercial litigation, earning a reputation as a highly skilled advocate in complex, high-profile cases. Mr Justice Nolan served as Chair of the Bar of Ireland from 2012 to 2014. He is a Bencher of King's Inns and is widely recognised as an international advocacy trainer, in Ireland and abroad.

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Antoine Parry

European Parliament

Antoine is a Member of the Legal Service of the European Parliament, where he advises on institutional, administrative and financial affairs and is regularly involved in high-profile litigation concerning MEPs, political parties and political groups. He previously spent five years at the Court of Justice of the European Union, serving as a legal assistant in the Cabinets of Advocate General Bobek and Advocate General Emiliou. He has published extensively on EU law, with a particular focus on UK-EU relations and the legal consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.



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Inés Barba Novoa

SBJ Abogados Asociados

Inés is a Málaga based abogada and a pioneering legal figure in Andalusia. In 2007, she co-founded the multilingual firm SBJ Abogados, specialising in complex criminal cases. She has led over 500 high-profile criminal cases across Spain, including drug trafficking, money laundering, and murder, representing clients before the Supreme and Constitutional Courts. Notably, in 2018, she became the first woman from Andalusia included in the Counsel List for the ICC. Her international expertise includes ICC seminar contributions, submissions to the Office of the Prosecutor regarding Colombia, and cross-border legal collaborations spanning France, the UK, Norway, and Algeria, frequently drawing international media attention.



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Francisco Verdún

Verdún Abogados

Francisco is a highly experienced Spanish lawyer with over 30 years of professional practice. A member of the Málaga Bar Association since 1987, he has a proven track record representing clients in complex civil and criminal matters before Spain's Supreme Court and regional high courts. Notably, he successfully argued *Karesvaara and Njie v. Spain* (2020) before the European Court of Human Rights. Following this victory, he secured a landmark Supreme Court decision granting a case review under Spain's updated Civil Procedure Act. He has also presented oral arguments before the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions. Additionally, Dr Verdún holds a Ph.D. in Law and regularly trains judges and legal practitioners in European law.



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Sonali Naik KC Joint Head of Garden Court Chambers

Sonali specialises in public law cases and in all aspects of immigration, asylum and nationality law and practice. She is ranked in immigration and public law in the Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 Bar Guides. Sonali is a senior practitioner with over 30 years' experience. She was appointed King's Counsel in 2018 and conducts almost exclusively leading work at all levels: the European Court of Human Rights, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the Administrative Court and in the Upper Tribunal in statutory appeals and judicial reviews. She has very substantial immigration and asylum experience in her High Court and appellate court practice, acting in various country guidance asylum cases.



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David Conlan Smyth SC

Bar of Ireland

David Conlan Smyth was called to the Inner Bar in 2013. He specialises in public, EU, and constitutional law, focusing on immigration and asylum, alongside admiralty and fisheries law. As lead counsel before the CJEU, he has argued landmark cases including *Makran*, *Besthame, S.A. and R.J.*, and *Zambrano*. He frequently appears before the Irish Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, representing clients in major constitutional and reception conditions cases like *IHREC v. Minister for Children, Gorry*, and *Luximon*. Currently, David heads the Irish Delegation to the CCBE and formerly led the EUBA and the CCBE Migration Law Committee. He also lectures widely in Ireland and internationally.



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Benjamin Seifert Barrister, 1 Crown Office Row

Benjamin Seifert is an experienced public law barrister with an impressive record, including three Supreme Court appeals, recently representing the US government.

Before joining the Bar, he worked at the European Court of Human Rights. An Assistant Coroner for South London and Attorney General's A Panel member, Seifert specialises in coronial law, public inquiries, deaths in custody, unlawful detention, and national security. He also represents the Bar Council at the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE). Clients praise his expert knowledge, meticulous attention to detail, and pragmatic, polished advocacy. Legal directories highly commend his communication skills, describing him as a "charming, engaging" and "eloquent" advocate who delivers focused, well-structured submissions.



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Evanna Fruithof Director, Bar Council's Brussels Office

Evanna began her career as a London barrister in 1985 before moving to Brussels in 1990 to work for the European Commission's Merger Task Force. She later practiced competition law at Freshfields and served as Deputy Director of an EU political think-tank. In 1999, she established and became Consultant Director of the Bar Council's Brussels Office, representing the Bar ever since. She manages the Bar's European Committee, co-founded its Brexit working groups, and sits on the UK Domestic Advisory Group under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Additionally, Evanna is a Middle Temple Benchers, a Temple Church Trust trustee, and Deputy Chair of the Institute of International and European Affairs in Brussels.



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Professor Oana Stefan

Professor of European Law

Prof. Oana Stefan is a Reader in Law and Associate Dean at KCL.

She previously taught European Union law at HEC Paris, the College of Europe, and University College Dublin. An expert in EU integration, she advised the Romanian Ministry of Justice and held numerous global visiting positions, including the 2022 Vincent Wright Chair at Sciences Po Paris. Her research focuses on EU energy, competition, and constitutional law. She is a leading expert on EU soft law and has published two major monographs. Her internationally significant research impact is widely recognised by UK funding bodies. She holds a PhD alongside prestigious degrees from Bucharest, the Sorbonne, and the College of Europe.



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