

I refer to the press release regarding the 2020 statistics for the London Maritime Arbitrators Association (LMAA).

At a time when other venues are trying hard to compete with London, often (as in the case of Singapore) with significant government backing, and when there is much talk about the impact of Brexit, it is heartening that London has maintained its very commanding lead over all other venues in this sector.

Research by HFW, a leading international commercial law firm with one of the largest maritime practices, in its report entitled "*The Maritime Arbitration Universe in Numbers One-Year On*" (May 2019), confirms that approximately 80% of all maritime arbitrations worldwide take place on LMAA Terms in arbitrations with a London seat. This trend has certainly continued in 2020. The nearest competitor (Singapore) registered about 90 maritime cases in 2020 (SCMA and SIAC combined) compared to London's 1775.

The London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) has also recently announced a significant increase in registered cases in 2020 (2020: 444 compared with 406 in 2019).

I believe the same is also true of the main London based commodity arbitration body, the Grain and Feed Trades Association (GAFTA), although I have not yet seen its 2020 statistics. GAFTA recorded an average of 799 cases annually between 2014 and 2018.

The numbers and the income from this arbitration activity accruing to London law firms, barristers and experts is very substantial

LMAA: 1775 new cases

LCIA: 444 new cases <https://www.lcia.org/News/record-number-of-lcia-cases-in-2020.aspx>

GAFTA: see above.

In very many cases both (or in multiparty arbitrations all) parties are foreign entities which choose to have their disputes dealt with in London arbitration. They come from a wide variety of countries (including Russia, China, India and many European and African countries) and from different commercial sectors: banking, finance, shipping commodities and construction.

Additionally a high proportion of international investment disputes are decided in London-seated arbitrations.

You may of course have seen the Queen Mary/White and Case Survey of International Commercial Arbitration, which confirms the leading position of London. In fact that study focusses almost entirely on institutional arbitration and pays little attention to ad hoc arbitration of the type dealt with by the LMAA and GAFTA and similar bodies. Whilst the values in some institutional (LCIA) arbitrations are often higher, their numbers of cases are much lower than those of LMAA/GAFTA. If the non-institutional arbitration numbers are included, the dominance of London is even more starkly demonstrated.