

Global issues top the agenda

Regular attendees may notice a few minor changes to this year's Annual Meeting, which marks INTA's 125th anniversary. For one thing, it is the first ever held outside of North America.

"We thought, and INTA thought, that the programme might be a little bit different this year," says Charles Gielen, a partner of Nauta Dutilh in Amsterdam and one of the Annual Meeting committee co-chairs. "It was a new opportunity," adds Helen Hill Minsker, co-chair and a partner of Banner & Witcoff. "We were especially conscious about making the programme more international in context, with a special emphasis on European topics."

The emphasis on Europe has prompted a special session with a mock ECJ argument in a trade mark case, on Monday morning, which is expected to be very popular. There are also a number of 'ask the expert' sessions, where examiners from OHIM and officials from the European Commission will be available to speak directly with delegates.

Logistically, also, this Annual Meeting

may be different from previous ones. "People will be in more locations than before," says Gielen. With the hotels spread around the city, there will be no INTA breakfast at the Convention Centre, and delegates are expected to have breakfast in their hotels. Instead, there will be lunch table topics each day in the Convention Centre where delegates can meet.

For Gielen and Hill Minsker, the Annual Meeting marks the culmination of four years of planning the programme and speakers. "I'm a little nervous," says Hill Minsker. "But I'm very much looking forward to it. I hope everyone will come and have a wonderful time. I think we'll see a lot of new faces."

Hill Minsker, who is based in Washington DC, says she is delighted INTA's conference is coming to Amsterdam: "I think the city is wonderful. I love the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum, and I really enjoyed a canal boat ride." Gielen, who has worked in Amsterdam all his life, adds: "Take time to stroll around the old centre of town. Take



Helen Hill Minsker



Charles Gielen

some good shoes, have lunch in a nice pub and visit some old churches."

If you have time to visit other parts of the country, he recommends going to the maritime museum at Enkhuizen, about 40 minutes out of the city, and the huge Van Gogh collection at the Kroller-Muller Museum in Otterlo.

Finally, Gielen says, don't worry if you don't speak Dutch: "Most people will be able to reply in simple English." He believes there are just two words you need to know: "goedendag" (pronounced hoodun-dag) meaning hello, and "proost" (pronounced prowste) meaning, roughly, cheers.