

Nicolas Michel

Short biography

1. Current position

- International mediator and arbitrator
- Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Syria (Mr. Staffan de Mistura), on a consultancy basis (constitutional issues)
- Chairman of the Board of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (since 2009)

2. Previous positions (in reverse chronological order)

- Member of the Arbitral Tribunal in the PCA case between Croatia and Slovenia (2015-2017)
- Ordinary professor of international law at the Law Faculty of Geneva University, and Adjunct Professor of international law at the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (2008-2015)
- Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mediator in the border dispute between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon (2008-2014), at the level of an Under-Secretary-General (on a “when actually employed” basis)
- Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, The Legal Counsel of the United Nations (New York, 2004-2008)
- Director of the International Law Directorate at the Swiss Federal Department (Ministry) of Foreign Affairs (Bern, 1998-2003) and « Jurisconsulte » of the Department (1998-2004)
- Professor of international law and european law, as well as administrative law in the first five years of teaching, at the Law Faculty of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) (1987-2004), on partial leave during the directorial functions at the Foreign Ministry (1998-2003)
- Member (judge) of the Federal Appeals’ Commission on public procurement (1996-1998) (at that time the highest federal court on public procurement)

- Guest Professor of international law, european law or administrative law at various universities: Paris II Institut des Hautes Études Internationales (public international law), Strasbourg, Beijing Ren Min University of China, Xiamen Academy of International Law, Geneva University Law Faculty (administrative law), Lausanne University Law Faculty (administrative law), Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (land planning law, environmental law and construction law), Università della Svizzera Italiana (european internal market law and WTO law), University of Neuchâtel Law Faculty (european internal market law)
- Research, with the support of the Swiss National Foundation for Scientific Research, on the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, in Washington D.C. (1985-1986) and in France (1986-1987), with the objective of drafting and publishing a « thèse d'habilitation »
- Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Canton State of Fribourg (Switzerland) (1980-1985)
- Stagiaire attorney-at-law in a law firm in Fribourg (Switzerland) (1976-1977)
- Research and teaching assistant at the University of Fribourg Law Faculty (1973-1974)

3. Education and degrees

- Law degrees : « licence en droit » (1973), doctorate (dissertation on public procurement – swiss, european and international law) (1979), « Privat Docent » (« thèse d'habilitation » on nuclear non-proliferation) (1989), University of Fribourg (Switzerland)
- Master of Arts (International Relations) (1979), Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. (1977-1978)
- Licensed attorney-at-law, Canton State of Fribourg (Switzerland) (1979)

4. Honorary degree and awards

- Doctorate *honoris causa* awarded by Université Robert-Schuman, Strasbourg (France) (2007)
- Annual Award of the New York State Bar Association International Law and Practice Section (2006)
- « *Pro Merito* » Medal of the Council of Europe (2004)

5. Selected activities as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, The Legal Counsel of the United Nations

- Provision of legal advice to the Secretary-General and the Departments of the Secretariat as well as to Funds and Programmes, and to other principal organs of the United Nations
- Leadership and overall management of the Office of Legal Affairs, the central legal service of the Organization (170 staff members, 40 mio \$ budget), which is composed of the following units :
 - the Office of the Legal Counsel (general public international law, rule of law, transitional justice, peace-keeping, privileges and immunities, etc.)
 - the General Legal Division (administrative law of the Organization, contracts, public procurement, litigation, administration of justice, etc.)
 - the Codification Division (secretariat of the VIth Committee of the General Assembly, and of the International Law Commission, etc.)
 - the International Trade Law Division (secretariat of UNCITRAL, etc.)
 - the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (continental shelf, fisheries, marine environment, etc.)
 - the Treaty Section (depository functions of the Secretary-General and registration of treaties, etc.)
- Leadership of consultations and coordination among legal advisers of the United Nations System, chairmanship of the networks of the legal advisers of the specialized and related agencies, of the legal liaison officers of funds and programmes, as well as of field legal officers

6. Selected activities as Director of international law in the Swiss Foreign Ministry

- Provision of legal advice to the Foreign Minister, the Ministry, other Ministries as well as to the Federal Government
- Overall management of the Directorate (50 staff members)
- President of CAHDI (Committee of the Council of Europe composed of the Legal Advisers of the Foreign Ministries of all Member States of the Council) (2003 and 2004)
- Chairman of the federal interdepartmental task force on ill gotten assets of politically exposed persons (1999-2003) (fight against fraud and corruption, as well as development of a new governmental policy on restitution of ill gotten assets of foreign political leaders)

- Head of the Swiss delegation to the meetings of the Preparatory Commission, and the first Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998-2003)
- Head of several Swiss delegations tasked with the submission and presentation of national reports to human rights treaty bodies
- Chairman of the Preparation and Consultation Conference on a Third Protocol to the Geneva Conventions (Emblems) (2000)

7. Selected activities as Professor

- Publication of a number of books (as an author or editor) and articles on a variety of subjects in international law, european law as well as procurement law and administrative law
- Vice-Dean of the Law Faculty of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) (2003-2004)
- Member of the Board of the European Law Faculties Association (2003-2204)
- Member of the Board of the World Trade Institute of the Universities of Bern, Neuchâtel and Fribourg (Switzerland) (2000-2004)

8. Personal data

- Date of birth : 7 November 1949
- Nationality : Swiss
- Languages : french (mother tongue)
english (working language)
german (working language)
italian (good reading abilities)
- Private address : Av. Jean-Gambach 11
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Switzerland
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