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Great success for the European ITech Law Conference, Madrid 2016

The worldwide technology lawyers association, ITechLaw (International Technology Law Association), which gathers more than 1,000 technology and digital law lawyers from around the world, held its 2016 European Conference at the Madrid Westin Palace Hotel from November 9 until November 11.

The Madrid conference, which was a mix of education, networking, and fun, attracted more than 30 expert speakers who shared their knowledge with over 330 attendees from 39 countries, a large majority of whom from Europe, and in smaller numbers from North America, India, Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong.

The Co-Chairs of the Local Committee, **Belén Arribas Sánchez** from **Miliners** and **José Ramón Morales** from **Garrigues**, had overseen the organization of the conference. **Emily Reineke** is the new Managing Director of the Association.

The topics discussed have been absolutely fascinating and novel and, unlike what we sometimes find in law conferences where "political correctness" or common themes and places dominate the debate, ITechLaw is a forum that brings freshness, innovation and passionate debates. All the attendees interviewed have highlighted the high quality of the presentations and the current reality of the chosen subjects.

Elisa Garijo from **IBM Spain**, spoke to all attendees about the Impact of Cognitive Technologies in the Legal Spheres and shared details about how it's now possible to have a cognitive discussion between machine and man. She shared a thought provoking video featuring IBM's Watson and how it can function as a colleague and enhance decision making.

The lawyers of ITechlaw made us see, from their particular angle of observation of reality, some keys to the new geopolitics with the session "*Brexit means Brexit … what does Brexit mean?"* While no legal decisions have been made yet, there are a number of implications that the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe are considering, which will lead to important decisions about what Brexit really means. **Julian Potter -WP Thompson**- facilitated the panel with expert speakers **Tony Noel -British Chamber of Commerce in Spain**-, **Shanker Singham -Legatum Institute**-, **Jordi Sellarés Serra**, **Secretary General of the Spanish Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce**, and **Ed Vaizey -UK Member of Parliament**-.

The session on "**Blockchain**" and the revolution it will involve in understanding the financial sector and the hiring between absentees, or in the case of "**Pokemon Go,**" on the legal implications of this game of augmented reality, are good examples of the novel issues tried. Equally futuristic and novel was the session on "e-health" or the speech on robotics and artificial intelligence by **Alejandro Sánchez del Campo** of **Telefónica**, that presented his interesting book "Reflections of a legal replicant" a few days ago.

There was also a discussion on how human body insertables are becoming the new wearables, and an intense one around which is better: the EU General Data Protection Regulation or US Privacy Laws? And of course, the new Trump era was not lacking in the debate.

The sessions on topics such as the new General Data Protection Regulation or the presentation on cybersecurity, offered provocative and novel angles. Professor **Christopher Millard** of **Queen Mary University** highlighted the protectionist threats behind many state measures that are trying to prevent cross-border data flows and forcing the location of data processing centers in supposedly "safe" territories. The cybersecurity debate with **Francisco Pérez**

Bes of **INCIBE** and the French expert **Claire Bernier** showed the magnitude and importance that the prevention of the incidents will have in the form of understanding the legal needs by all the sectors.

The incoming President of the Association, **Susan Barty**, a partner at **CMS Cameron McKenna** in London, emphasized the importance of IT lawyers in the disruptive technology we are living in, and commented that the Association was focusing on the international reach and women. The Women group has a significant weight in the Association. A special event is held for them during the conference and a virtual group called I-WIN -ITech Law Women's International Network- has been created to promote close contacts, referrals, networking and friendship. **Belén Arribas** presented the speaker **Cecilia Alvarez Rigaudias** in the I-WIN meeting.

Susan Barty commented: "*With more than 330 attendees, the Madrid conference was a great success. With expert speakers on Brexit, Blockchain, Augmented Reality, and the EU General Data Protection Regulation, all attendees learned new topics to implement in their practices. Personally, I particularly enjoyed the opening keynote speaker, **Elisa Garijo** from **IBM Spain**, who discussed advances in cogitative technology. I even wondered if IBM's Watson could help us determine the implications of Brexit! During the conference I met new attendees and old friends, and as always, I found this year's conference to be a great source of cutting-edge legal technology news.*"

The conference ended with a formal gala dinner at the lavish Casino de Madrid.

The next editions **of the ITechlaw will take place in** New Delhi (1-3 February 2017) and in Chicago (3-5 May 2017).