



## Sir Christopher Vajda KC

Call: 1979 | 2020 Luxembourg

Silk: 1997

Email: [cvajda@monckton.com](mailto:cvajda@monckton.com)

### **Education**

MA (Cambridge), EC law – Institut d’Etudes  
Européennes

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## **Introduction**

Sir Christopher Vajda KC was the UK judge at the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) between 2012 and 2020 (when Brexit occurred).

While a judge at the CJEU he sat on a wide range of cases including in the field of aviation, banking, competition, energy, investor state treaties, pharmaceuticals, sanctions, state aid, and tax. He was President of a three judge Chamber on two occasions. In a speech marking his departure from the CJEU the President of the Court said: *“He is an extremely able judge with a keen eye for detail and he has been a highly-valued member of this court for more than seven years. His analysis of complex legal problems is invariably to the point and his outstanding ability to distinguish between matters that are relevant to the specific legal issue that falls to be decided – and those that are not – has been invaluable, given the heavy and increasing workload that we face.”* He was subsequently appointed by the President of the CJEU to chair a Conciliation Commission to resolve a dispute within an EU Institution.

Prior to becoming a judge, he had a wide-ranging practice in both public and private law at the English Bar. He acted on numerous occasions for the UK Government, and public bodies such as the Bank of England, the BBC as well as various sectorial regulators, such as Ofcom (telecommunications) and Ofgem (gas and electricity). He also acted for companies and other bodies in fields such as aviation, banking, electricity, gas, sport (in particular cricket, football, and horse racing) tax, telecommunications, tech, transport, and water. He appeared frequently before the CJEU, and all English courts, including the UK Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. He also appeared before arbitration panels and was appointed to chair an arbitration panel in the Gulf region in a telecommunications dispute.

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He was knighted in the New Year's Honours List 2026. The citation from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office states:

*'Christopher Vajda is recognised for his distinguished career as a barrister, arbitrator, legal academic and international judge. Before 2012, he appeared in around 100 cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union, with more than half representing the UK Government. Appointed as the UK Judge at the Court in 2012, he gave exceptional service, and thereby enhancing the standing of the UK. Following the referendum, he ensured that there was no drop in either the quantity or quality of his judicial output, including leading and delivering judgments on some of the most difficult and sensitive cases to come before the Court during his time. Subsequently, he returned to the UK as a highly sought-after barrister and arbitrator and has continued to contribute to the legal profession through teaching, mentoring, and sponsoring young lawyers across the UK and Europe.'*

## Arbitrator

He has been appointed to the Panel of Recognised International Market Experts in Finance (P.R.I.M.E), the UK Sports Resolutions panel, the Panel of arbitrators at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and to the panel of persons suitable for appointment as Chairpersons for Arbitrations to which the EU is a party. He has sat as an arbitrator in ICC, LCIA, sports, and *ad hoc* arbitrations. The most recent published awards in cases in which he has sat are [The FA Rule K arbitration award](#) on the challenge by football agencies to the fee cap rule introduced by FIFA on football agents' fees and the challenge by [Manchester City to the Associated Party Transaction Rules of the Premier League](#).

In Chambers UK Bar 2026, he is ranked in Band 2, Silks for International Arbitration: Arbitrators: *"Christopher Vajda's awards are really well reasoned and clear. He runs the arbitration really well."* He has also acted as a mediator in sporting disputes.

He is a visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges (where he gives a course on arbitration and EU law) as well as at King's College, London, and at the University of Luxembourg where he teaches EU private international law. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Budapest where he also lectures on arbitration.

He is fluent in French (the working language of the CJEU) and speaks German.

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## Books, recent publications and lectures

- *International Commercial Courts: The Future of Transnational Adjudication* edited by Stavros Brekoulakis and Georgios Dimitropoulos (CUP, 2022),
- *The impact of EU law on Dispute Resolution in International Investment and Trade agreements*, The Stockholm Arbitration Yearbook (Walters Kluwer 2022)
- the *Liber Amicorum for Lars Bay Larsen, Shaping a Genuine Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*, (Bloomsbury 2024) *Extradition from the EU: Gimme Shelter*,

- the *Liber Amicorum for Jiri Malenovsky The applicability of Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights to international agreements to which the EU is a contracting party* (Bruylant, 2020), and
- *European Union Law of Competition*, Bellamy & Child, (3rd to 6th editions between 1983 and 2008).
- Recent published articles include:
- *Accrued EU Law rights encounter some Brexit turbulence*, [2024] E.L, Rev. 632,
- *What makes a good arbitrator?* The International Journal of Arbitration, Mediation and Dispute Management Vol. 89.3 p. 725 ,
- *The concept of restriction of competition: time for a rethink?* 2022, Edward Elgar, Competition Law Journal,
- *The role of judges in the development of Competition Law*, China Antitrust Law Journal (2019),
- *The Reception of Environmental Law and its Enforcement in International law and European Union Law*, co-author with Michael Rhimes, The Columbia Journal of European Law (2018),
- *The EU and Beyond: Dispute Resolution in International Economic Agreements*, The European Journal of International Law (2018),
- *Law as a Tool to build cross-Border Markets: the experience of the Court of Justice of the EU in opening up Government contracts*, Public Contract Law Journal (2018), and
- *The Common law and the CJEU*, Journal of the Common Law Society Prague (2018).
- *International Commercial Courts: The Future of Transnational Adjudication* edited by Stavros Brekoulakis and Georgios Dimitropoulos (CUP, 2022),
- *The impact of EU law on Dispute Resolution in International Investment and Trade agreements*, The Stockholm Arbitration Yearbook (Walters Kluwer 2022)
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- *The Common law and the CJEU*, Journal of the Common Law Society Prague (2018).

Recent lectures include: *From Award to Recovery, Trends and Challenges in Enforcement of Intra-EU Arbitral Awards* (33rd Croatian Arbitration Days, 2025), *How does the CJEU interpret EU Legal texts* (King's College, London, 2025) *Regulating the organization of sporting competitions* (University of Lausanne, 2025), *Is the right to privacy too important in EU law?* (Durham University 2025), *Data Protection: Made in Europe and exported globally* (UKAEL Annual Lecture 2023), *What makes a good arbitrator?* (The keynote address to the London Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, 2023). *The impact of Achmea: 3 years later* (New York State Bar Association (2021); *The keynote address to the Bar European Group* (2021); *Current issues facing the European Court and its users* (Burrell Lecture, London, 2019); *The Rule of Law within the EU and national legal orders* (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 2019); *Towards a Re-Definition of Dispute Resolution Fora: Insights from the CJEU* (HBKU College of Law & Public Policy, Doha, Qatar, 2018); and *Privacy and Cyber Laws: a view from the Court of Justice of the European Union* (Asian Academy of International Law, Hong Kong, 2017).

He has also been invited to speak at a number of universities including in Bologna, Budapest, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, ESSEC (Paris and Singapore), George Washington (Washington DC), King's College London, HKU (Hong Kong), Milan, Oxford, Stockholm, and Valencia.

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