



# PRESS RELEASE

## Human Rights Day: The CCBE's involvement in promoting human rights 10/12/2018

Today marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), adopted by the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) in 1948.

The Declaration is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with varied legal and cultural backgrounds, the Declaration sets out a common framework for all signatories concerning human rights after the atrocities experienced during the Second World War. The year 1948 was the first time in history that countries came together to protect fundamental human rights.

According to its preamble, the Declaration recognises the “inherent dignity” and the “equal and inalienable rights” of humankind, stressing that “human rights should be protected by the Rule of Law”.

The adequate protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, whether they be economic, social and cultural, or civil and political, which every person must be able to enjoy, requires that everyone have effective access to legal services provided by independent lawyers.

The regulation of the profession, the defence of the Rule of Law, human rights and democratic values are the most important missions of the CCBE. Areas of special concern include, amongst others, the right of access to justice, the development of the Rule of Law, and the protection of the individual citizen.

In this sense, the CCBE has developed several activities in support of threatened lawyers worldwide. These activities include, among other things, granting a Human Rights Award each year to a lawyer or lawyers' organisation committed to upholding human rights. On 29 November, the CCBE awarded its [2018 Human Rights Award](#) to Polish human rights lawyer Mikołaj Pietrzak, for his exceptional involvement and continuous work in support of human rights and the Rule of Law in Poland. Mr Pietrzak is also the President of the Warsaw Bar and Chairperson of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

The CCBE also regularly writes to national authorities when lawyers are victims of human rights violations. This year, the CCBE has already sent more than 50

letters to 31 countries where lawyers have gone missing, have been assaulted, harassed or even murdered.

The CCBE also supports the work currently carried out by the Council of Europe on a proposed [European Convention on the profession of lawyer](#) and welcomed [the Recommendation](#) adopted in January by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) inviting the Committee of Ministers to draft such a Convention. The CCBE considers that such [a binding instrument is needed](#) in order to respond to attacks against the role of lawyers, which have grown over recent years. Such a Convention would strengthen the Rule of Law and, thereby, the protection of the profession of lawyer whose mission is fundamental in the administration of justice and the safeguarding of fundamental rights.

### About the CCBE:

The CCBE represents the Bars and Law Societies of 45 countries, and through them over one million European lawyers. For more information about what the CCBE does for human rights, please consult the [Defence of the defenders initiative](#).

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