

PRESS RELEASE

The CCBE sounds the alarm bell for justice in Europe

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The CCBE calls to overcome urgently the current paralysis of judicial systems

During the confinement period, numerous cases and proceedings have been cancelled and postponed to the detriment of access to justice and respect of human rights. The fundamental right of any person to due process within a reasonable time has been interrupted. In a [statement](#) published today, the CCBE urges the European institutions and all Member States:

- **To facilitate the complete reactivation of justice systems in Europe, while promoting health and safety measures.** Justice must be recognised as an immutable duty for member states. The Judiciary must be reactivated immediately in phase I of every deconfinement strategy, to the greatest extent possible, to allow citizens and entities regain full access to Justice and to legal certainty.
- **To invest in justice and legal aid urgently.** Access to Justice must be made accessible for all parties in a safe and healthy manner including access of defence lawyers to prisons. Due to the cancellation and postponement of cases, the judiciary will face a significant backlog, which further negatively affects legal certainty and societal peace. Sufficient court staff and personnel must be provided, and investment should be made in IT development in court case management.
- **To provide support to lawyers** to ensure the defence of fundamental Rights and Freedoms **and to promote access to justice in order to guarantee citizens' rights.** Specific financial support must be provided as well as tax relief measures for lawyers and law firms. In particular, sole practitioners and small and medium sized law firms, who often are the first point of contact with

Justice and rights defence, have suffered dramatically from the confinement and coronavirus crisis, due to the lack of new cases and late or non-payment of invoices by clients, themselves adversely economically impacted.. While statistical data is not yet available initial soundings taken suggest that about 25% of European lawyers are significantly adversely affected.

“Justice must be accessible to all at any time. Any person, including the most vulnerable, must have access to legal advice and be able to seek justice within reasonable time if needed. This health crisis cannot go to the detriment of people’s fundamental rights” said Ranko Pelicarić, President of the CCBE.

About the CCBE:

About the CCBE: The Council of Bars and Law Societies (the CCBE), recognised as the voice of European Lawyers, unites the Bars and Law Societies of 45 European Countries, including the 28 EU Member States. Through them, the CCBE represents more than 1 million European Lawyers. The CCBE promotes access to Justice, respect for Human Rights and defence of the Rule of Law.

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