

CCBE roadmap on innovation in legal services

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— Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to set out the CCBE vision for innovation in legal services and identify key trends and drivers of change in the profession of a lawyer and in legal services. It also aims to frame the discussions on innovation in legal services to not only address the opportunities but also to highlight the need for doing so in full compliance with the values of the legal profession and the justice system.

As such, the paper is the first step in creating a blueprint for the CCBE membership to help inform its continuous reflections on the future of the profession. As such, it will be subject to periodical review and revision. The paper would also serve as guidance for directing the CCBE's efforts into areas that represent the biggest challenges for the profession and the justice system.

The legal profession is engaging with innovation in response to a rapidly evolving environment that is reshaping both legal practice and the delivery of legal services. These developments extend to the broader justice ecosystem, and in particular to the organisation and administration of justice. The deployment of new technologies, especially artificial intelligence, is accelerating, while clients are demanding more efficient and expeditious services. In several jurisdictions, competition from non-lawyer providers of legal and quasi-legal services is intensifying. At the same time, rising costs are affecting the internal organisation and business models of law firms and the conditions under which clients can access legal assistance. The regulatory framework is also in flux, encompassing both the regulation of the legal profession and legal services and the substantive regulation of emerging technologies and other areas of law. Parallel to these changes, expectations regarding the skills, roles, and professional identity of new generations of lawyers are evolving, while societal demands for enhanced access to justice are becoming more pronounced. Innovation holds significant potential to respond to these pressures; however, it also accentuates the need to safeguard fundamental rights, the core values of the legal profession, and the procedural guarantees that underpin the proper functioning and legitimacy of the justice system.

Against this background, the paper examines the challenges facing the legal profession, opportunities that the profession sees in innovation and possible ways ahead. It does so by analysing the views of CCBE members based on the member survey among the CCBE delegations carried out over the summer of 2024. The report also presents a brief review of the current trends affecting the legal profession. Fourthly, based on the findings of the survey and available research, the paper identifies areas of interest that could be further analysed or discussed within the CCBE.

1. Innovation in legal services

A cursory look at the term ‘innovation’ in various dictionaries gives us vague and brief definitions with little considerations of the context:

- *“The action of innovating; the introduction of novelties; the alteration of what is established by the introduction of new elements or forms. Formerly const. of (the thing altered or introduced)”¹*
- *“A change made in the nature or fashion of anything; something newly introduced; a novel practice, method, etc.”²*
- *“novelty or change to a product, process, field or idea; or use or development of a new idea, method, product, process.”*

The OECD/Eurostat manual on innovation (Oslo Manual) gives another definition: *“An innovation is a new or improved product or process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit’s previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process).”³*

Besides the Oslo Manual, there numerous definitions and approaches to the term “innovation” as used in specific fields of academic study, such as sociology, economy, philosophy of technology, psychology or science.

The report on innovation in legal services by England and Wales’ Solicitors Regulation Authority and Oxford University⁴ focuses on three types of innovation: product innovation (which is about offering new services or significantly improved existing services), delivery innovation (which is about making improvements to the delivery of services), and marketing innovation (which is about making improvements to the marketing of services). The innovation is thus defined as: *‘significantly improving existing services or introducing new services, or making improvements to the delivery or marketing your services.’*

In their Legal Innovation Regulatory Survey⁵ the American Bar Association (ABA) stated that: ‘It is also important to emphasize that the word “innovation” has two different meanings for purposes of this survey. First, there are regulatory changes that address a topic in a novel way and are, accordingly, an “innovation” in the regulation of legal services. Second, there are “innovations” in the actual delivery of legal services that can lead to lower cost legal services and broader access. Not all regulatory innovations lead to innovation in the delivery of legal services. Similarly, not all innovations in the delivery of legal services have their origin in a regulatory innovation.’

1.1 Considerations on innovation in legal services

There are several important considerations when discussing innovation in legal services. These relate to the special function of the legal profession in the broader justice system and the sensitive

¹ Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1989, Oxford University Press, “innovation”.

² Idem.

³ [Oslo Manual GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING AND INTERPRETING INNOVATION DATA](#), A joint publication of OECD and Eurostat, 3rd. edition, p. 48.

⁴ [Technology and Innovation in Legal Services](#), Solicitors Regulation Authority and Oxford University, July 2021

⁵ [Legal Innovation Regulatory Survey](#), American Bar Association (ABA)

nature of the services provided by the profession. The lawyer's role, whether retained by an individual, a corporation or the state, is as the client's trusted adviser and representative, as a professional respected by third parties, and as an indispensable participant in the fair administration of justice. By embodying all these elements, the lawyer, who faithfully serves his or her own client's interests and protects the client's rights, also fulfils the functions of the lawyer in society - which are to forestall and prevent conflicts, to ensure that conflicts are resolved in accordance with recognised principles of civil, public or criminal law and with due account of rights and interests, to further the development of the law, and to defend liberty, justice and the rule of law.⁶ Hence, the legal profession does not provide simple "services", it is subject to indispensable core principles, such as independence, confidentiality and the duty to avoid any conflict of interest.

This raises the question of how the concept of innovation can be defined under these particular conditions. Innovation in the context of legal services will certainly mean the introduction of new or significantly improved processes in the provision of the legal service, insofar as this in each case does justice to the special position of the lawyer in the rule of law and serves the client.

Process innovations in legal services could mean improvements in:

- a. the quality or speed of the service provided (including new ways to (i) verify or support any advice given or document created, (ii) rely on new sources of information for the provision of service, (iii) providing new ways for the clients to access and consume the services provided or to access any further information on the legal services provided) or
- b. in decreasing the costs of the provision service.

Further, and not at first sight serving the client and the rule of law, are marketing innovations. Marketing innovations that are possible based on the rules on deontology may refer to:

- c. changes in the design of the service (including service-based products),
- d. changes in the promotion of the legal service, or
- e. changes in pricing (such as new methods for varying the price of a service).

We propose that the kind of innovation that would be considered an improvement encompasses everything that leads to a fostering of the role of the lawyer as an independent and trustworthy advisor and representative of the client and indispensable participant in the fair administration of justice.

Following the classification outlined in the report on innovation in legal services by England and Wales' Solicitors Regulation Authority above, we propose to focus on **product innovation** (which is about offering new services or significantly improved existing services), **delivery innovation** (which is about making improvements to the delivery of services), and **marketing innovation** (which is about making improvements to the marketing of services). In addition, we also propose to focus on regulatory changes that address a topic in a novel way.

⁶ CCBE's Charter of Core Principles of the European Legal Profession & Code of Conduct for European Lawyers, p. 7.

— 2. Challenges facing the legal profession

The CCBE carried out a member survey in which it asked about the views from delegations on challenges, opportunities and barriers to innovation in legal services. The survey ran from 23 May to 12 July 2024 and was addressed to Bars and Law Societies from the entire CCBE membership.⁷ The replies were limited to one response per organisation. There were 26 respondents to the survey from 25 countries – this is because in some countries there is more than one Bar or Law Society. The respondents were: Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium (OBFG), Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (Faculty of Advocates). On this basis, and on the basis of available literature, the CCBE has identified several challenges for the profession in the years to come: relating to adopting new products or services, delivering services, marketing and regulation. These are analysed in the sections that follow.

2.1 Challenges in the area of adopting new products or services

The survey revealed that members' top concerns were:

1. problems in satisfying the increasing demand for more affordable services from clients while remaining profitable as law firms (Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Netherlands, Ukraine);
2. problems in satisfying the increased demand for faster solutions from clients (Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, UK);
3. satisfying the increasing demand for regulatory advice (Belgium (OBFG), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Spain);
4. problems in satisfying the increasing demand for more accessible services (Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands);
5. problems in satisfying the increasing demand for combined advice, including legal and other consultancy services (Azerbaijan, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Slovenia, Spain).

Respondents also highlighted several remaining challenges, including the need for more information on designing products or services within law practices, insufficient resources allocated to product design, and difficulties in meeting the demand for more customised client

⁷ This includes full, associate, affiliate and observer members: <https://www.ccbe.eu/structure/members/>

services. Seven respondents noted that their organisations did not collect data on such developments.

In their additional comments, respondents indicated the cyber risks and use of technology, in particular the AI, as challenges. For example, according to a Law Society of Ireland Member Survey carried out in May 2023, challenges in the area of adopting new products and services vary greatly depending on firm size. However, common challenges include cyber security, and regulation and compliance changes.⁸

As an illustration of the problems in meeting the growing demand from customers for faster solutions, the French National Council of Bars (CNB) reported numerous problems with the launch of the comprehensive service for handling all legal requirements for businesses. The service, which replaced an older one (infogreffe) faced a difficult launch with considerable delays in processing formalities.⁹

The CNB suggested that the possible remedy for the insufficient resources devoted to product design can be the profession funding innovative projects and innovation in general. They also believe that training for the profession, for example on subjects such as corporate social responsibility and the relating reporting requirements, may be a good response to the problem of satisfying the growing demand for advice of various kinds, including legal and other advisory services.

The survey results confirm the overall drive to ‘do more for less’ and the findings of similar surveys carried out by other organisations. For example, the IBA White Paper on the Future of Legal Profession (2023) that indicated more demanding client expectations and financial performance and profit as top five short-term impact areas.¹⁰

2.2 Challenges in the area of delivering legal services

The key challenges in delivering legal services reported by CCBE members were:

1. difficulties in taking up/adopting new technologies (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine, UK);
2. problems in satisfying the increasing demand for more affordable services from clients while remaining profitable as law firms / law practices (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine);
3. increasing competition from unregulated service providers (Andorra, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia);

⁸ For more details, see: [Shape the future of the Law Society of Ireland](#) and [Helicopter view, Law Society of Ireland Gazette](#), 12 July 2023 (accessed in August 2024)

⁹ Launched on 1 January 2023, by the French Patent Protection Institute (INPI), this [platform](#) is designed to centralise all company-related formalities. It integrates resources from about ten different organisations. However, a [flash audit](#) by the French Court of Auditors revealed several issues since its launch, including technical difficulties in completing formalities, specific portal functionalities, inability to validate formalities, and non-transmission of information. The Court noted that these problems have significantly impacted companies, particularly due to the inadequate user support system.

¹⁰ [Future of Legal Services – White Paper](#), International Bar Association (IBA), 2023

4. problems in relation to introducing change management in law firms / law practices (Austria, Belgium (OBFG), Belgium (OVB), Cyprus, Finland, UK);
5. difficulties in articulating where improvements in services should occur (Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, UK)

Respondents also highlighted challenges such as improving the efficiency of business processes, adapting legal services for clients who face access barriers, and identifying new types of clients.

The CNB noted that many challenges in providing legal services stem from inadequate improvements in law firm management and change management. They also highlighted insufficient efforts in developing lawyers' soft and business skills. Additionally, they emphasized significant difficulties in adopting new technologies, leading to a digital divide between law firms. This particular concern was also mentioned by the Spanish Bar who observed that the digital gap creates some difficulties in the provision of new legal services within the legal profession and may create problems related to observance of the principle of equality of arms.

Law Society of Ireland observed that there were numerous opportunities in key areas of expected growth, namely AI, data protection, environmental and planning law, and alternative dispute resolution. At the same time, however, these can be challenging in terms of delivery to meet increasing demand.

2.3 Challenges in the area of marketing of legal services

The respondents identified the following top three challenges in marketing legal services:

- problems in implementing new marketing techniques (e.g. social media, online) (Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Greece, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine)
- problems in interpreting regulatory requirements relating to marketing of legal services (Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovenia), and
- problems in allocating dedicated resources to marketing (Azerbaijan, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Spain).

However, it must be noted that 10 respondents indicated that their Bar did not collect information on that subject. Five out of this ten indicated other options available in the survey. Four respondents indicated that they have not observed any challenge in the field of marketing of legal services.

The CNB has noted that many legal professionals are not well-versed in digital marketing tools, such as Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Advertising (SEA). Although French regulations permit lawyers to engage in marketing and advertising, understanding these tools can

be challenging for some. Articles 10.1 and 10.2 of the National Regulation of Lawyers¹¹ outline the obligations related to lawyer advertising, while Article 10.5 specifies the criteria for online advertising. This allows lawyers to benefit from features like priority listing in online directories, which ensures their appearance in searches for lawyers within their bar, in exchange for a fee paid to the directory publisher. This service is not considered unfair competition ([CNB, Comm. RU, avis n° 2011-047 du 24 nov. 2011](#)). Despite these opportunities, few lawyers are familiar with these digital marketing tools. Consequently, some companies offer services to help lawyers improve their website's SEO.¹² Additionally, there are articles in legal publications and training courses available to support lawyers in this area.¹³

Some members of the profession are not seizing the opportunities offered, such as the possibility of making personalised solicitations. The Spanish Bar observed that the digital gap creates inequalities within the legal profession when using digital marketing tools.

2.4 Challenges to regulation

The primary challenge identified by respondents was ensuring the protection of confidentiality and maintaining professional secrecy when using new technologies (18 mentions). The second major challenge, noted by 12 respondents, involved difficulties in interpreting and applying the obligation of confidentiality in lawyer-client communications within the context of new technologies in the justice system (e.g., digitalisation of judicial proceedings, use of AI in decision-making).

The remaining top three challenges were:

- insufficient understanding of procedural issues related to the use of new technologies in the justice system (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovenia)
- difficulties in regulating legal technology providers (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, Ukraine)
- risks to professional independence related to the use of new technologies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Finland, France, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovenia, UK).

To illustrate some of these challenges, the CNB highlighted a recent example involving the regulation of legal technology providers. In January 2024, the 'I-AVOCAT' application appeared on the Apple Store. Created by a French individual through a Dubai-based company, the app claimed to offer legal advice based on artificial intelligence. However, it was actually an illegal practice of law, filled with legal errors, and a misuse of the title "lawyer" (*fr. avocat*). The Paris Bar, through the Centre for Economic and Legal Research (CRED), intervened and successfully had the app

¹¹ Conseil National des Barreaux (CNB), Règlement Intérieur National de la profession d'avocat (RIN), Version consolidée au 3 mai 2024: https://www.cnb.avocat.fr/sites/default/files/cnb_rin_version_2024-05-03_0.pdf

¹² See for example: <https://www.digital-avocat.fr/votre-site-avocat/optimizez-votre-referencement>

¹³ See for example: <https://www.village-justice.com/articles/business-development-pour-les-avocats-business-development-pour-les-cabinets,49753.html>

removed from the Apple Store within three weeks.¹⁴ The CNB is currently considering regulations for AI tools and has identified the risks to professional secrecy associated with the use of new technologies.¹⁵

Commenting on other challenges facing the profession, the CNB highlighted the challenge of attracting young talent, as many prefer to join the legal departments of commercial companies rather than law firms. The CNB also pointed out numerous future difficulties and challenges related to artificial intelligence, given its broad impact.

In Lithuania, challenges include adopting IT solutions in the national language and collaborating with other institutions, such as the National Judicial Administration, to implement IT solutions applicable to the justice administration process.

¹⁴ <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/un-monde-de-tech/20240111-le-barreau-de-paris-met-en-demeure-l-application-i-avocat>

¹⁵ The report was not accessible at the time of the drafting of this report.

3. Opportunities for the legal profession

The opportunities are divided into four groups: relating to adopting new products or services for delivering legal services, improving the delivery of legal services, relating to new marketing methods and relating to regulatory innovation.

3.1 Opportunities relating to adopting new products or services for delivering legal services

According to the CCBE survey, the top two opportunities relating to adopting new products or services for delivering legal services include:

- better quality of services to clients (16 respondents) (Azerbaijan, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Spain, Netherlands, Ukraine, UK)
- more affordable legal services (13 respondents) (Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium (OBFG), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Netherlands, UK)

The following four opportunities were each identified by 11 respondents:

- Better response to client requirements (Belgium (OBFG), Belgium (OVB), Czechia, Estonia, France, Greece, IT, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands, Ukraine);
- Improving the organisation of work (Austria, Azerbaijan, BE (OVB), Cyprus, Czechia, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain, Netherlands, UK);
- Greater flexibility in the way services are provided (Austria, Belgium (OBFG), Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, UK);
- Wider availability of certain legal services (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania);

Eight respondents highlighted the importance of increasing the speed of service delivery and the opportunity for smaller operators to compete with larger ones. Seven respondents noted the potential for improving well-being at work. Only one respondent identified staff retention as an opportunity.

The CNB observed that, in general, adopting new products can enhance workplace productivity, improve organisation, and lead to a better work/life balance. Additionally, these products can help access new markets and customers, thereby increasing sales. The Luxembourg Bar noted that in Luxembourg the Bar generally promotes innovation while ensuring compliance with ethical standards.

3.2 Opportunities relating to improving the delivery of legal services

The respondents were asked to indicate the top five opportunities related to the improvement of delivery of legal services. The highest ranked opportunity, with 16 indications, was better quality of services to clients (Azerbaijan, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Spain and The Netherlands).

It was followed by more affordable legal services (13 indications from Azerbaijan, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Slovakia and the Netherlands) and better response to client requirements (12 indications from Austria, Belgium (OBFG), Belgium (OVB), Czechia, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK). The next opportunity, all with 11 indications, was more flexibility in the way services are provided (Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain and the UK). Improving the organisation of work and wider availability of some legal services were both indicated by ten respondents.

3.3 Opportunities relating to new marketing models

The survey has shown that the top three opportunities relating to new marketing methods are:

- more ways of reaching out to new clients (14 respondents: Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine);
- improved information for clients (14 respondents: Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and UK); and
- improved presence (visibility) of a law firm / law practice (13 respondents: Andorra, Austria, Belgium (OVB), Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, UK and Ukraine).

Seven respondents indicated that their Bar or Law Society did not have an opinion on the matter. Four indicated better client retention.

3.4 Opportunities relating to regulatory innovation

The survey has shown that the top priority for the respondents was safeguarding professional independence of lawyers indicated by 17 respondents (Austria, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom).

It is followed by clarity for legal professionals as to the professional rules that apply to their activities which was mentioned by 13 respondents (Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovenia, Netherlands, Ukraine).

The same number of respondents (13) indicated safeguarding fundamental rights, such as a right to a lawyer (Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and UK).

Twelve respondents indicated improving access to justice (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine and UK).

Clarity for clients on the services received was indicated by eight respondents (Austria, Belgium (OVB), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Netherlands) and clarity for providers on the services they provide was indicated by nine respondents (Austria, Belgium (OVB), Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania and Netherlands).

Seven respondents indicated safeguarding proper administration of justice (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain, Netherlands and the UK).

Six indicated developing new roles in law firms and five indicated expanding the range of services provided by law firms (Azerbaijan, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia). Three respondents indicated ensuring better procedural safeguards (Azerbaijan, Estonia and Ukraine).

In their additional comments, the Austrian Bar pointed out the importance of safeguarding the integrity of lawyer - client communications. The French Bar mentioned that innovation is necessary in order to compete on equal terms with operators who are not lawyers (regulated professions, non-regulated professions, in-house departments of companies, etc.) but also to increase the credibility of the profession in the eyes of its clients, who use technological resources.

4. Barriers to innovation

The survey asked an open-ended question to understand possible barriers to innovation in legal services in members' jurisdictions. There were several categories of responses received:

4.1 Resource constraints and costs

A significant number of respondents highlighted financial limitations as a primary barrier to innovation. These include for example:

- high initial costs of adopting new technologies and innovative practices (Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg);
- cost-related barriers for smaller law firms and the challenge of implementing AI solutions (France);
- high cost of innovations (Ukraine); or
- lack of investment (UK).

4.2 Technological challenges and digital infrastructure

This group of barriers was indicated by eight respondents who mentioned

- capabilities and knowledge of risks and possibilities associated with technology (Estonia);
- insufficient digital infrastructure, cautiousness in adopting new technologies and fear that new technologies would disrupt existing workflows and concerns over data privacy and cybersecurity (Cyprus);
- the lack of technical possibilities or the implementation of the process (Liechtenstein);
- different tools required due to delegated administrative competence on justice matters (Spain).

4.3 Resistance to change and cultural constraints

Several respondents pointed out that one of the barriers to innovation in resistance to change and cultural constraints within the profession, for example:

- cultural resistance to innovation within regulated professions (France);
- conservative culture in the legal profession, resistance to new technologies (Finland);
- resistance to change from lawyers and judges (Belgium); or
- lack of appetite for change (UK).

4.4 Market size and geographic specific challenges

Four respondents also pointed out to barriers based on the size and specific characteristics of each market. For example, respondent from Lithuania observed that the adoption of some innovative solutions take time due to the need to adopt them to the national language which is not widely spoken in the world. This delays the use of the latest solutions. The issue of the language was also mentioned by the respondent from Hungary. Small market size discouraging investment was mentioned by Cyprus. Respondent from Luxembourg mentioned that the competition between service providers in their jurisdiction remains limited.

4.5 Other

Among other barriers mentioned by the respondents were lack of available data where improvement is needed (Ireland) and low levels of trusts towards the government from the profession (Hungary).

Earlier research, carried out by the European Lawyers Foundation and the CCBE, elaborated in more detail on the challenges faced by small law firms in adopting the AI tools and observed that without targeted interventions, the adoption of NLP tools could exacerbate inequalities in access to legal services for both small law firms and their clients, particularly in smaller language communities.¹⁶ The same research has also shown that most EU law firms are small and medium-sized practices which means they are facing their specific set of challenges (much like many other SMEs) in accessing technology, financial resources and internal expertise. At the same time, they are also increasingly facing the need to modernise and invest in new technologies to keep up with the evolutions in other sectors, client expectations as well as the growing trends of digitalisation of public services, including the justice system. The research underlined the challenge of not having a considerable IT budget, not having access to consultants, but being required to use IT tools increasingly more often.

¹⁶ [CCBE-ELF \(2021\). Opportunities and barriers in the use of natural language processing tools in SME law practices](#)

5. Role of Bars and Law Societies in supporting innovation

The survey asked members about the top four ways in which their Bar or Law Society responds to the challenges it had identified.

Twelve respondents indicated training for their members on the use of new technologies (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine). Also twelve respondents indicated organisation of events dedicated to innovation in legal services (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Ukraine)

The remaining options attracted between one and five indications, and included training for the Bar or Law Society members on change management or dedicating additional resources within the Bar or Law Society to innovation. Setting up innovation incubators was indicated by one respondent (France).

In their additional comments, the CNB indicated that although more resources are needed it is doing its utmost to ensure that the profession is as well adapted as possible to the challenges it faces. The CNB's Foresight Commission will be coordinating incubators at national level. The Bar is now involved in negotiations with the public authorities to increase funding for innovative initiatives. There are several aims that the Bar wishes to achieve:

- setting up an organisational unit dedicated to coordinating the Bar's activities in the field of innovation;
- identifying complementary areas of training (for example, in the field of AI);
- developing more in-house expertise to support the innovation activities of members of the Bar;
- identifying areas of training for lawyers in innovation-related fields.

Asked about what their Bar or Law Society would need to respond to the challenges, four out of six respondents indicated they would need to develop more internal expertise to support innovation actions of our members. Three respondents indicated that they would need to identify areas for training for lawyers in areas relating to innovation. Three respondents indicated that they would like to learn from the experiences of other Bars and Law Societies.

The CNB proposed that one solution to the lack of resources for product design is for the profession to fund innovative projects and innovation in general. They also believe that providing training on topics such as corporate social responsibility and related reporting requirements could help meet the growing demand for various types of advice, including legal and other advisory services.

Example: Paris Bar Incubator

In 2014, the Paris Bar created the Paris Bar Incubator (IBP) to guide and support legal innovation within the legal profession, in order to ensure that the new technological services offered by legal technology providers were understood and that the Bar was involved in this sector. Since then, IBP has diversified its activities: in addition to its initial work on the legal challenges of digitising society through the organisation of events and conferences on these topics, IBP has set up the first legal start-up incubation programme for lawyers.

Incubation. Each year, the Incubator works with its network of partners and with the support of specialist service providers to support several projects launched by Parisian colleagues that offer technological innovation in access to justice or in services for law firms: accessibility of legal information, assistance with GDPR compliance, calculation of personal injury, connecting clients or professionals, etc.

Two different movements have emerged in the projects that have been supported by IBP: so-called 'IN' innovation: projects that improve the productivity and/or profitability of the lawyer or law firm behind the project and are therefore mainly aimed at its existing or potential clients, and so-called 'OUT' innovation: projects that can be used by other colleagues or other players in the legal market.

The strength of the legal tech providers supported through the Incubator comes from the involvement of lawyers in the project who draw on their experience and expertise in their respective fields of practice. The involvement of lawyers also allows to integrate the guarantees provided by the applicable rules of the profession, particularly in terms of professional secrecy.

Incubated projects. Since 2018, the Paris Bar Incubator supported around thirty legal tech projects, led by lawyers. Some have since left the profession to devote themselves fully to the commercial development of their solutions, while others have fully integrated legal tech into their day-to-day practice.

Legaltechs 2024. This year, the Incubator received 14 applications, with four projects selected for the 2014 session. Initial feedback from the incubation partner, Kanbios, has been very favourable.

More information: <https://incubateur-ibp.com/>

Asked about what their Bar or Law Society would need to respond to the challenges, four out of six respondents indicated they would need to develop more internal expertise to support innovation actions of our members (Greece, Liechtenstein, Slovakia and UK). Three respondents indicated that they would need to identify areas for training for lawyers in areas relating to innovation (Finland, Liechtenstein and UK). Three respondents indicated that they would like to learn from the experiences of other Bars and Law Societies (Finland, Greece and UK). The Greek Bars and the Slovak Bar mentioned the need to understand better the situation in their jurisdiction, e.g. through research. Slovak Bar also mentioned setting up a dedicated organisational unit to coordinate our activities in the field of innovation.

6. Areas of interest for further reflection

Finally, the survey asked for the areas for further reflections. Three top priorities emerged:

- assessing the impact of innovation in legal services on core principles of the legal profession (13 respondents: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine and United Kingdom);
- providing dedicated training to members of Bar/Law Society (12 respondents: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine); and
- assessing the impact of innovation in legal services on the administration of justice (12 respondents: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovakia, Ukraine and UK).

Other priorities include developing stronger in-house capacity to support innovation among members (seven respondents: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Slovenia). Three respondents indicated securing more funding to support innovative actions (France, Lithuania and Spain). Three respondents indicated assessing the impact of innovation on access to justice (Croatia, Ireland and UK). Luxembourg Bar indicated monitoring of the take-up of innovation in legal services in their jurisdiction.

In their additional comments, the Hungarian Bar indicated that within the current Bar operations, the most important innovation related activity is the training of lawyers (including mandatory continuous education, organisation of optional trainings) and providing expert guidance to the government on behalf of our members in implementing new e-government solutions.

7. Wider developments affecting the legal profession and legal services

In his book ‘Tomorrow’s Lawyers’, Richard Susskind underlined technology as one of the key drivers of change and stressed they ‘fundamentally challenge and change conventional habits’ and as such many of them are disruptive and ‘do not sit happily alongside traditional ways of working.’¹⁷ Indeed, technological development stands out as the most prominent among the trends currently reshaping the legal profession. These technologies affect not only the ways in which law firms operate and work with their clients, but also the organisation of the justice system and the wider regulatory framework on legal services. As a result, technological change is not only a driver but also an accelerator of other developments, such as evolving client expectations, emergence of new roles in legal profession, or emergence of new ways in which legal services are delivered.

The adoption of new technologies has taken a new turn with the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022. The opportunities offered by generative AI tools were quickly embraced by many sectors, including the legal profession. It also created an impulse to investigate greater use of such technologies in the justice system to improve the way it operates, including the efficiency of operations and potentially widening the availability of such services.

In his latest book, Richard Susskind he argues that we are still in the early days of AI and we can reasonably expect these systems will become more capable and reliable.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as noted in its latest report on the future of legal services, the International Bar Association (IBA) notes that AI is a force influencing every major area: people, clients, business, and the rule of law.¹⁹ The profession reports that training teams in the use of AI is one of their top priorities. At the same time, concerns about client expectations and industry standards in relation to AI are rising quickly behind it. The report points out that although the profession remains slightly ahead of emerging competitors, it must stay vigilant to avoid being overtaken by more agile AI-driven startups.

Looking ahead, the report suggests that AI will continue to be a transformative force for at least the next five years, particularly as its role in dispute resolution and judicial processes becomes more significant. These developments may even enhance access to justice. Indeed, the findings of the latest report by Thomson Reuters show that AI has already contributed to a growing divide between the organisations that use it and those that do not.²⁰ Furthermore, the report also observed that the organisations that adopt a clear and strategic plan for AI adoption see much higher return on investment than those that use AI on a more ad hoc basis. Finally, the report points out that organisations and their support staff will need to adjust their ways of working in order to perform well in the future. This is due to the advancement of AI but also to other

¹⁷ Susskind R. (2017). *Tomorrow’s Lawyers*, p. 13

¹⁸ Susskind R. (2025). *How To Think About AI: A Guide For The Perplexed*

¹⁹ Future of Legal Services, Global Heatmap Survey Report 2025: <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=Future-of-Legal-Services-Report-2025>

²⁰ Thomson Reuters (2025). *Future of Professionals*, page 4: <https://www.thomsonreuters.com/content/dam/ewp-m/documents/thomsonreuters/en/pdf/reports/future-of-professionals-report-2025.pdf>

pressures. These changes will affect the deployment of talent, how work is done, how services are offered and how they are priced.²¹

Another trend affecting how lawyers and law firms work and develop are **economic and market pressures**. Richard Susskind refers to the ‘more-for-less challenge’ as one of the three drivers shaping legal services.²² In its latest report, Thomson Reuters points out that economic recession and costs of living remain one of the top concerns of legal professionals.²³ In its earlier report, Wolters Kluwer listed cost and price pressures as one of the trend shaping legal services.²⁴ Another important aspect of the economic pressures was highlighted in the 2023 report of the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF), carried out in consultation with the CCBE, which examined the impact of the cost of living crisis on access to justice in the EU from the lawyers’ perspective.²⁵ The report pointed out that while it was too soon to formulate definitive conclusions, some important trends emerged. Firstly, legal aid emerged as the biggest worry in the cost-of-living crisis, largely because governments, who are main funders of access to justice, were under severe financial pressure. With health and defence demanding the bulk of public resources, legal services rarely rise to the top of the priority list. Secondly, data gathered during the Covid pandemic suggested a clear divide: large firms have mostly managed the crisis well, and many have even grown, while small firms, especially solo practitioners, have continued to struggle. Those reliant on state-funded legal aid face particularly tough decisions. The report further notes that criminal lawyers were hit hard by Covid-related disruption and still contend with low legal-aid reimbursement rates in many EU Member States, adding further pressure to an already strained sector.

The third trend that impacts lawyers and law firms is **talent management and skills**, especially given the rising role of the use of technology in law firms and digitalisation of justice systems. In its latest report, IBA pointed out that that attracting and retaining talent remains among the top headline challenges.²⁶ Previous studies by the IBA²⁷ discussed skills mismatch and legal education reform, as well as the need to invest in training to develop specific skills such as legal-tech related skills, business skills or practical/generic skills (e.g. career progression, employer expectations, etc.). This is also to be seen in the broader context of labour market challenges and evolutions with more retirees than entrants in labour market in some countries²⁸, ageing population and migration, as well as changing expectations towards a workplace and changing patterns of working (hybrid, remote, flexi).

The fourth important area that impacts lawyers and law firms, as well as the broader justice system, is **regulation**, especially in the field of technology, digitalisation and AI. Importantly, however, the EU regulatory developments must be considered at several levels. While most of the regulations on in the EU member States come from the EU, these regulations are put into practice

²¹ Ibidem, page 12

²² Susskind R. (2017). *Tomorrow’s Lawyers*, p. 13

²³ Thomson Reuters (2025), page 5

²⁴ [2024 Future Ready Lawyer Survey Report ‘Legal innovation: Seizing the future or falling behind?’ Wolters Kluwer](#)

²⁵ ELF, Report on the impact of the cost of living crisis on access to justice in the EU, 11 April 2023 [not published]

²⁶ IBA (2025), page 6

²⁷ [IBA 2017, Drivers of Change in Legal Services](#) and [IBA 2021, Issues shaping the global legal ecosystem: Drivers for change in legal service](#)

²⁸ <https://anwaltverein.de/newsroom/pm-11-25-demographischer-wandel-digitalisierung-und-diversitaet-juristische-ausbildung-zukunftsfaehig-machen>

in a **great variety of regulatory traditions**, especially regarding the organisation of the justice system and the legal professions. Therefore, the take up and access to new technologies, however widespread it may be, is not the same across the legal profession or the justice systems. The EU Member States' justice systems and legal professions are regulated in different ways and although each of them reflects common principles, each also has their own specificities which are linked to its cultural and historical heritage, as well as the language. Therefore, examining the impact of technological, or any change, on the EU legal professions must necessarily take full account of this diversity.

This is especially important in examining the impact of various EU-level initiatives in the field of digitalisation and AI and their impact on the justice system and the legal profession. The recent decade in the EU has seen a considerable increase in laws and regulations targeting new services and technology companies which develop them. In parallel, the opportunities and the potential for change have not escaped the attention of policy makers in the EU who wish to improve the functioning of several key public services, including the justice system. Recently, the EU put forward several important initiatives designed to accelerate the take up of digital technologies in the justice system, including the use of AI. This includes the European e-Justice Strategy 2024-2028 which emphasizes that digitalisation should facilitate and improve access to justice while bringing justice systems closer to citizens. It also published its Digital Justice Strategy 2030 and Judicial Training Strategy, the latter focusing heavily on training justice professionals in the use of new technologies.²⁹ The EU's recent proposal for the Justice Programme, under the new round of EU financial programming for 2028-2034, envisages more resources for digitalisation and associated training activities. All of these initiatives entail substantial efforts to digitalise the work of courts as well as a wide range of cross-border judicial proceedings. In parallel, most EU Member States are undertaking significant measures to digitalise their domestic judicial processes. Taken together, these developments are expected to have far-reaching implications for the legal profession and for those who rely on legal services.

Most recently, the political debate on **digital sovereignty** has intensified following the geopolitical shifts and focused, among other things, on the European capacity to innovate and invest in new technologies and to develop solutions that would be independent of non-European technology providers. While the concrete effects are yet to be observed, the increased focus on the need to develop European-made technological solutions and associated infrastructure offers an additional background to the considerations on the need to innovate in legal services.

Technological change has also brought numerous concerns about the **implications of new technologies on lawyers' professional obligations** and on core principles that underpin the **justice system** and fundamental rights. In its work, the CCBE has frequently stressed that while there can certainly be benefits to digitalisation, these cannot be achieved at the expense of fundamental rights and safeguards.³⁰ From the lawyers' perspective, the e-justice systems need to be secure and the need to protect the confidentiality of the communications between lawyers and their clients and professional secrecy. The CCBE also stressed that judicial decision making

²⁹ Communication on DigitalJustice@2030: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/digitalisation-justice/communication-digitaljustice2030_en, 20 November 2025

³⁰ CCBE comments on the possible future priorities of the Commission in the area of digitalisation of justice, October 2024: https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/IT_LAW/ITL_Letters/EN_ITL_20241010_CCBE-comments-on-the-possible-future-priorities-of-the-Commission-in-the-area-of-digitalisation-of-justice.pdf

must remain a human-driven activity with human judges taking full responsibility for their decisions.³¹ Therefore, the advance and strong incentives to adopt new technological solutions in law and in public policy will create a tension between the pressure to achieve greater efficiency and the need to safeguard the fundamental principles upheld by the justice system and the legal profession.

The fifth area that affect the legal profession are societal expectations, and **changing values and ethical considerations** (e.g. transparency, access to justice and diversity and inclusion). Wolters Kluwer's 2024 report observes that environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations and services have become a fundamental and durable part of how legal services are delivered.³² Moreover, while ESG is a discrete practice area, law firms and corporate legal departments are also expected to embody ESG principles internally, particularly on sustainability, ethics, and diversity and inclusion. The most recent IBA report (2025) reports a shift in importance of the ESG considerations. While in previous years, the pressure from clients related to ESG issues was expected to be a major growth area, last year marks a decline in importance for these issues. The report observes that much of this shift can be explained by the changes of political rhetoric in the US and the simplification measures in legislation in the EU. However, the ESG, as well as diversity and inclusion, remain fundamental values for many legal professionals.³³

³¹ CCBE Statement on the European Declaration on Digital Rights and principles (2023): https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/IT_LAW/ITL_Position_papers/EN_ITL_20230216_CCBE-Statement-on-the-European-Declaration-on-Digital-Rights-and-Principles.pdf

³² 2024 Future Ready Lawyer Survey Report, Legal innovation: Seizing the future or falling behind?: <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/future-ready-lawyer-2024>

³³ Future of Legal Services, Global Heatmap Survey Report 2025, International Bar Association, page 13: <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=Future-of-Legal-Services-Report-2025>

8. Future priorities and recommendations

Based on the results of the survey, available references and analysis, this report makes a series of high-level recommendations for further action within the CCBE and by its members, bearing in mind a considerable variety of legal traditions, laws and justice systems between them.

By conceptualising innovation not merely as a technical enhancement but as an opportunity to elevate the legal profession, it becomes possible to strengthen lawyers' capacities in key areas such as responsiveness, inclusivity, and resilience. Concurrently, the CCBE and its member organisations must proactively address the potential risks and challenges associated with the adoption of innovative practices in legal work.

The CCBE's core role in this context will be to inform and support its members, as well as coordinate various actions, to make sure that the profession is able to reap the benefits of innovation while upholding the core values of the legal profession.

8.1 Product innovation

One of the key challenges that was highlighted by the survey were the difficulties in taking up new technologies and at the same time the difficulty in facing the challenge of working more efficiently and delivering more affordable services. At the same time, the survey also showed that members perceive the opportunities from such adoption: better quality and affordability of their services, more responsiveness and flexibility, as well as improved well-being and productivity. Among the barriers indicated were high initial costs for investment, resistance to change, insufficient infrastructure and in some cases geographical limitations.

The CCBE can play a role in increasing the **uptake of new technologies** by:

- supporting the knowledge exchange between Bars;
- gathering knowledge and experience from Bars and other organisations, and disseminating it to members;
- supporting joint initiatives of its member Bars, e.g. to deliver training and support to members (especially small and medium-sized practices) or to explore the possibilities of joint projects;
- supporting the creation or expansion digital legal infrastructure (e.g. shared tools, platforms, directories) that smaller firms can use to scale affordably;
- advocating for relevant funding or co-financing schemes at EU level;
- supporting members Bars' advocacy efforts at national level to help law firms, especially smaller practices, invest in innovation;
- supporting members in their activities, e.g. AI / technology / digitalisation readiness assessments, practice-specific recommendations for taking up and using technology and support in doing so, etc.

8.2 Delivery of services innovation

Another challenge emerging from the survey and related to the above challenges are difficulties in **embracing new methods of working**. Moreover, members increasingly feel the competition from other, often unregulated, providers. At the same time, and similarly to the above, members think that adopting new methods of working would bring better client outcomes, more accessible and flexible services and improved efficiency of internal workflow. Among the barriers indicated were high initial costs for investment, resistance to change, insufficient infrastructure and in some cases geographical limitations.

The CCBE can play a role in supporting its members in adopting new services / methods of working by:

- supporting the knowledge exchange between Bars on new methods of working and how these can be implemented in law practices (including technology-mediated changes and processes);
- gathering knowledge and experience from Bars and other organisations, and disseminating it to members;
- raising awareness of what actions can be taken by its members;
- developing dedicated training programmes and initiatives which would help members learn about the possibilities offered by new technologies in managing their workload and their practice;
- collecting experience and information on adopting or developing new types of services, e.g. modular, technology-enabled services that adapt to evolving client needs;
- by setting up structures or actions that would support lawyers and their practices in adopting new approaches to delivering their services (e.g. on how to improve client experience, speed and value of the service);
- by promoting legal innovation not only as a technical shift, but as a means to improve workplace satisfaction, flexibility, and well-being;
- by promoting some activities as models to follow to improve well-being in the profession;
- by supporting interdisciplinary collaboration between Bars and other relevant stakeholders, such as universities, technology companies, etc.

Bars and Law Societies can support their members in adopting new services / methods of working by:

- gathering knowledge, experience and trends in their respective jurisdictions;
- sharing knowledge with other member Bars and Law Societies, either bilaterally or collectively via the CCBE committees and relevant networks (if applicable);

Potential topics to explore in the future may include:

- investigating further the link between the use of new technologies by law firms and its impact on the organisation of work and well-being;
- models for cooperation with relevant stakeholders at national level;
- further investigating the expectations of clients towards lawyers and law firms, and how these can be met (e.g. by using more new technologies); or

8.3 Marketing innovation

Another challenge emerging from the survey is that many lawyers have difficulties in **adopting and using new marketing tools**. At the same time, the survey showed that their use would increase the ways of reaching out to new clients and increase the visibility of a law practice. The CCBE can consider the following activities:

- gathering knowledge and practice from members;
- supporting initiatives by its members;
- providing relevant guidance on professional rules applicable to marketing (especially in a cross-border context);
- developing and providing dedicated training on marketing tools; and
- developing guidance on the professional rules applicable to marketing.

8.4 Regulatory innovation

The survey has also shown the concern relating to regulation, including regulating legal technology providers, interpreting professional regulations in the context of innovation (e.g. introducing new services or roles within law practices, ensuring compliance, dealing with fragmentation of rules). Members also indicated their concerns about safeguarding confidentiality, managing risks stemming from the use of AI, adapting legal frameworks to digital systems and protecting professional independence. At the same time, the survey also showed opportunities such as the clarity of the rules that apply to legal services or safeguarding professional independence and fundamental rights.

The CCBE is invited to consider carrying out the following actions in the field of regulation:

- providing tailored guidance on professional rules applicable in contexts relating to innovation, in particular to using technology in legal practice, while protecting the rule of law and fundamental rights in the justice system;
- continuously reflecting on the professional rules and regulations in its member jurisdictions. These could take the form of recommendations for further actions, e.g. amendments or commentaries to the rules or exchange of knowledge and experience;
- continuously reflecting on the impact of innovation on administration of justice; and
- training on regulation and on examples of regulatory solutions from across its member jurisdictions.

Bars and Law Societies are invited to consider carrying out the following actions in the field of regulation:

- providing guidance to its members on relevant regulations applicable in the context of innovation, e.g. professional rules applicable to the use of new technologies, new methods of working or new roles in the profession;
- developing training programmes to support the development of AI literacy among its members;
- gathering knowledge and expertise on the regulatory trends in their jurisdictions; and

- sharing their knowledge and expertise with other Bars, either bilaterally or via the CCBE committees and its networks (if applicable).

8.5 Potential topics to explore in the future:

- The CCBE should continue to, and, where necessary, to develop further its guidance on the protection of confidentiality and professional secrecy in lawyers' use of new technologies;
- The CCBE should continue to, and, where necessary, to develop its training offer for members to raise awareness of the benefits and challenges of using new technologies in legal practice (including in the justice system);
- The CCBE and its members can investigate further the issue of a digital gap between different law practices (e.g. small v large);
- unregulated legal services providers – analysis of challenges;
- digitalisation and access to justice;
- the impact of innovation on systemic barriers, e.g. digital exclusion or regional disparities;
- an overview of work-life balance issues, e.g. teleworking to adapt the profession to the new vision of work and to the new generation;
- training or events for lawyers organised by the Bars about mental health and work-life balance.

To deliver on the recommendations, the CCBE should consider the following activities:

Supporting the **development and sharing of knowledge and expertise** of its Secretariat and CCBE members by:

- setting up a **permanent work strand** within one of its committees which focuses on innovation in the legal profession and regularly reflects on the initiatives undertaken by Bars and on the trends affecting the profession in the field of innovation. This work strand would also involve a more regular and structured exchange between relevant Bar experts on the key challenges and actions that merit joint action. Such an exchange could be supported by dedicated innovation experts in Bars and/or their relevant committees or working groups;
- up a **database** / knowledge-sharing tool;
- considering holding an **event dedicated to innovation** in legal services;
- supporting **peer-to-peer learning** and exchange of experiences, for example through a dedicated work strand overseen by a CCBE committee or between individual member Bars;
- collecting and disseminating **examples of successful reforms** from member Bars, as well as relevant reports and studies from the CCBE member jurisdictions;
- developing **resources for members** to support their efforts in improving their members' services, e.g. client engagement, adoption of innovative solutions, case studies and comparative insights from different countries on successful innovation policies;
- developing **guidance for members** on the application of professional obligations and core values of the profession in the areas relevant to innovation, e.g. digitalisation, safeguarding professional secrecy or protecting the independence of the profession;
- encouraging Bars to **collect and analyse data** on innovation initiatives in their jurisdictions;
- developing dedicated training programmes for members, for example in cooperation with the European Lawyers Foundation;

- providing guidance on integrating innovation into Bar governance, budgeting, and planning; and
- developing dedicated ‘innovation pathways’ or case studies for different stakeholders to show successful examples of innovation and how it was achieved.

Examples of concrete actions:

- through its Deontology Committee, and other Committees if applicable, **supporting the reflection on national professional rules** and how they apply to innovation and specific challenges identified in this paper for example by issuing additional guidance, model rules or commentaries to the existing rules. The topics could include the regulation of legal tech providers, service provided by unregulated providers, organisation of a workplace;
- through its IT Law Committee, continue the **broad reflection on the impact of digitalisation** on the legal profession, practice of law and the justice system;
- an **event on innovation** along with other CCBE events;
- further analysing the impact of automation of certain services provided by lawyers on lawyers’ working conditions, practice and deontology;
- exploring the impact of automation (or partial automation) of some processes within the justice system and their implications on the practice of law and deontology, as well as fundamental rights;
- reflecting on the impact of innovation on systemic barriers (e.g., disability, rural access, digital exclusion);
- more broadly, reflecting on the impact of technology on access to justice.

Supporting **joint actions** with and between member Bars and Law Societies by:

- developing **dedicated training programmes for members**, for example in cooperation with the European Lawyers Foundation;
- supporting (interested) members in their **various efforts to promote innovation**, e.g. exploring joint procurement models or shared digital platforms to lower initial costs for adopting innovative solutions or in addressing linguistic and jurisdictional barriers in legal technology development;
- supporting **cross-border collaboration** between Bars to co-develop innovative tools to be used in legal practice; and
- supporting/encouraging **inter-disciplinary cooperation** between Bars, courts, technology developers and academia, as well as with other stakeholders where appropriate.

Carrying out **EU-Level representation and advocacy**:

- continue engagement in the EU policy dialogue on AI, digital justice, protection of fundamental principles of the profession as confidentiality/LPP, data protection, and access to justice;
- advocate for the compliance with key procedural safeguards enshrined in the existing legislation to be reflected in the EU digitalisation efforts; and
- advocate at the EU level for innovation funding accessible to small and medium-sized law firms.

Role of Bars and Law Societies

Bars and Law Societies should consider following actions:

- setting up a dedicated unit or responsible person to coordinate the relevant activities in the field of innovation and to support members;
- investing in in-house training for Bar staff on legal technology, change management, and regulatory innovation to enhance their advisory role;
- considering cooperation models between Bars, law firms, and other stakeholders such as technology providers;
- where relevant, considering organising events such as innovation weeks, foresight events or hackathons;
- considering setting up networks or forums within their membership to support the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences;
- considering launching or co-sponsoring legal innovation incubators or pilot projects, especially for small firms or young practitioners;
- considering organising an exchange between young lawyers and more experienced lawyers, for the former to provide assistance on new technologies and the latter to advise on the practice of law (also between professionals from different countries or regions);
- considering setting up partnerships with legal tech startups and universities, as well as with other stakeholders where appropriate, to co-develop innovative tools and services to be used in legal practice;
- promoting innovation success stories within the profession; and
- encouraging, or exploring the possibility of, profession-funded innovation grants for developing client-oriented or access-to-justice solutions.

Conclusion

This paper marks a first step in developing a blueprint for the CCBE membership as it navigates the evolving landscape of the legal profession. By providing a structured framework for ongoing reflection, it is intended to be a living document—subject to regular review and revision as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Its purpose is not only to inform the CCBE’s continuous strategic thinking but also to guide its efforts toward those areas that present the greatest challenges for both the profession and the justice system.

The recommendations outlined above will be carefully reviewed by the relevant bodies within the CCBE and, where appropriate, taken forward and integrated into the CCBE’s ongoing work. The CCBE will continue to monitor developments and adapt its efforts as needed, ensuring that its activities remain responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the legal services sector.