



# Annual Report 2025

THE COUNCIL OF BARS AND LAW SOCIETIES OF EUROPE

The voice of European lawyers

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THIERRY WICKERS



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- SECRETARIAT

&gt; CCBE President Thierry Wickers



THIERRY WICKERS

# Foreword of the President

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer was officially opened for signature on 13 May 2025, during the 134<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Ministers held in Luxembourg.

On 13 May 2025, 17 States immediately signed the Convention. On 9 December 2025, Finland became the 24<sup>th</sup> signatory State.

All the abovementioned is due to the efforts of the CCBE.

The very concept of the Convention? It was first expressed at the CCBE plenary session held in Gdańsk in May 2015.

The proposal made to the Council of Europe to study the feasibility of such an instrument? It was put forward in a letter sent on 27 September 2016 by the CCBE to the Secretary General of that organisation.

The drafting of the text? The CCBE participated in this process in its capacity as an observer and because several of its members were part of the group of experts responsible for drafting the text.

24 countries signing it in just a few months? This rapid start is entirely the result of the efforts made by CCBE members with their respective governments.

The Convention is the first legally binding treaty specifically dedicated to the protection of the legal profession. The Convention is a unique legal instrument. To date, no other regulated profession benefits from an international convention specifically dedicated to its protection, comparable to that adopted for lawyers.

And the reasons for this special treatment are even more fundamental – lawyers are entitled to special protection because of their essential role at the core of the rule of law.

This recognition of the role of the legal profession is also the result of the efforts of the CCBE.

> CCBE President, Thierry Wickers, in the European Parliament for the CCBE Plenary event, with Javier Zarzalejos, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)



“

**24 countries signing the Convention in just a few months? This rapid start is entirely the result of the efforts made by CCBE members with their respective governments.**

”

The Convention immediately attracted enormous interest around the world.

In 2025, the CCBE was invited to present the Convention all over the world, as far afield as Asia, in Kathmandu and Hanoi.

The Convention was included in the programme of events of all the major international lawyers' organisations: the IBA, the UIA and LAWASIA. On each occasion, the CCBE was responsible for presenting the spirit and functioning of the Convention.

The Convention has given rise to numerous events and symposiums on every continent.

The ink on the treaty was barely dry when First Vice-President Roman Završek was in Istanbul to talk about the Convention.

It is therefore no surprise that the Convention dominates the review of 2025, but it does not contain the whole story.

In 2025, the CCBE continued its commitment to defending the rule of law through strengthening a network of contact points that enables us to contribute more and more effectively to the European Commission's annual Rule of Law Report.

The release of our colleague Sonia Dahmani, at the very same time she was being awarded the CCBE Human Rights Award, will also remain one of the highlights of 2025.

In 2025, the CCBE also concluded a long and fruitful strategic review. This enabled us to take decisions that will enable us to meet the challenges of the digitalisation of the legal profession and the judicial system.

Finally, in 2025, for the first time in its history, the CCBE appointed a gender-balanced presidency. There is no doubt that under the presidency of Roman Završek, accompanied by Alex Tallon, Imbi Jürgen and Noemí Alarcón Velasco, the CCBE will have an exceptional year in 2026.

THIERRY WICKERS

# CCBE Membership in 2025

- Full members
- Affiliate members
- Associate members
- Observer members
- Suspended members

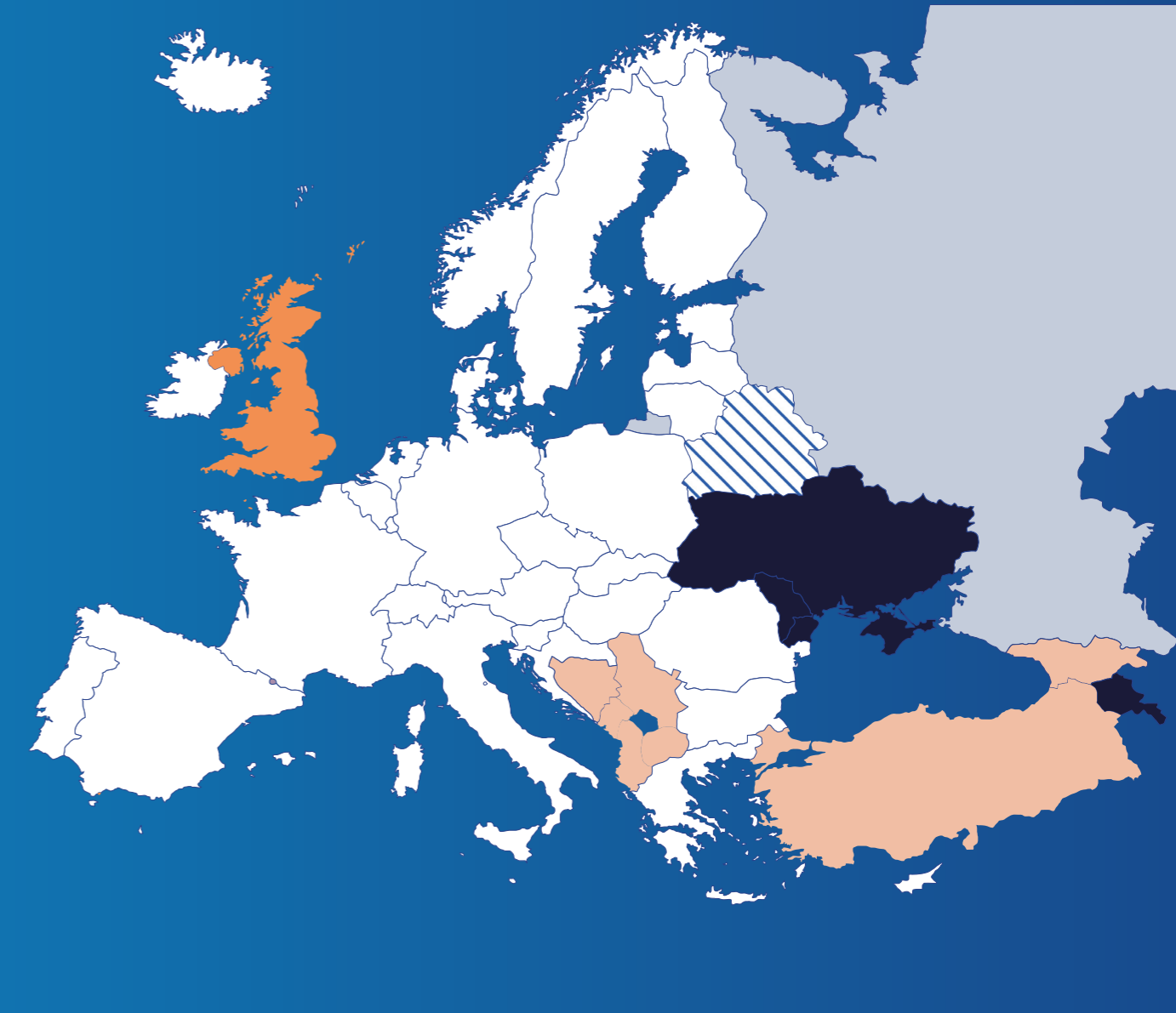
### FULL MEMBERS

### AFFILIATE MEMBERS

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### OBSERVER MEMBERS

\* Russian Federal Bar Association – Observer membership suspended



Bars and Law Societies from 46 European countries

31 — 1 — 9 — 5

Full members — Affiliate member — Associate members — Observer members

# The CCBE in figures



**+1** Million  
European lawyers

The CCBE is recognised as the voice of the European legal profession, representing more than one million European lawyers through its members.

**58**



Bars & Law  
Societies

The CCBE represents European Bars and Law Societies in their common interests before European and other international institutions.



**46**

Countries

31 full members  
1 affiliate member  
9 associate members  
5 observer members



- 25 Statements
- 4 Position papers
- 13 Responses
- 2 Letters
- 1 Amicus curiae brief
- 3 Guides
- 1 Contribution for the 2025 Rule of Law Report
- 1 Contribution to the High-Level Forum on the Future of EU Criminal Justice
- 1 Contribution for the European Judicial training Strategy 2025-2030

**51**

Positions & publications



**5**

Plenary Sessions & Standing Committees

**3**

High-level events



Joint event on "Digitalisation of justice systems and its implications for the legal profession"  
European Parliament, Brussels  
📅 3 October 2025



Joint event on "Protecting lawyers to ensure access to justice"  
Palais des Nations, Geneva  
📅 27 June 2025



Joint reception on "The importance of the legal profession in maintaining the rule of law"  
📅 Brussels, 4 April 2025

→ MORE INFORMATION [HERE](#)



**70**

Committee & working group meetings

**159**

Participations in external events and meetings

Including events organised at European or international level, such as meetings with key actors at EU level and other leading institutions like the Council of Europe.



# The CCBE in figures



**22/01/2025:** Online press conference focused on the situation of lawyers in Belarus for the 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the Endangered Lawyer

**31/03/2025:** Online joint webinar with the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF) programme on digitalisation of judicial proceedings

**26/05/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on European asylum and immigration

**26/06/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

**07/07/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on EU procedural rights directives

**08/07/2025:** Online joint webinar marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 709 Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in China

**22/09/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on EU data protection

**03/10/2025:** Joint CCBE-ELF event on Digitalisation of justice systems and its implications for the legal profession

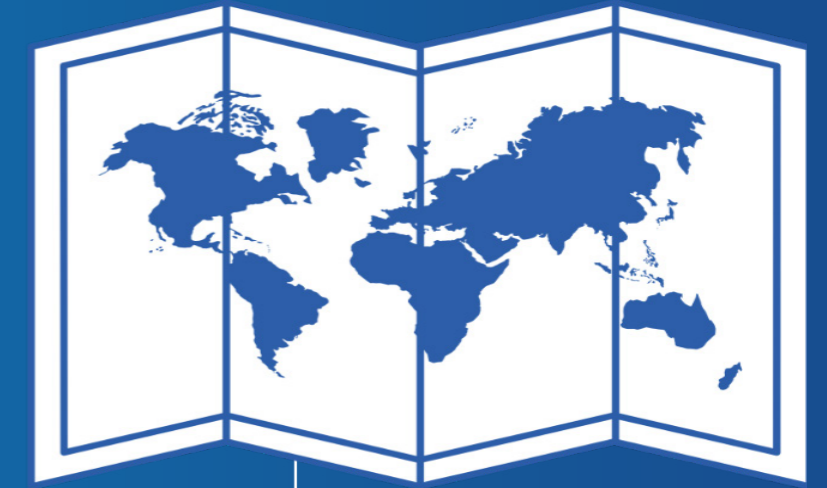
**13/10/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on Intellectual property enforcement for generalist lawyers in the EU

**15/12/2025:** Online joint webinar with ELF on European climate change

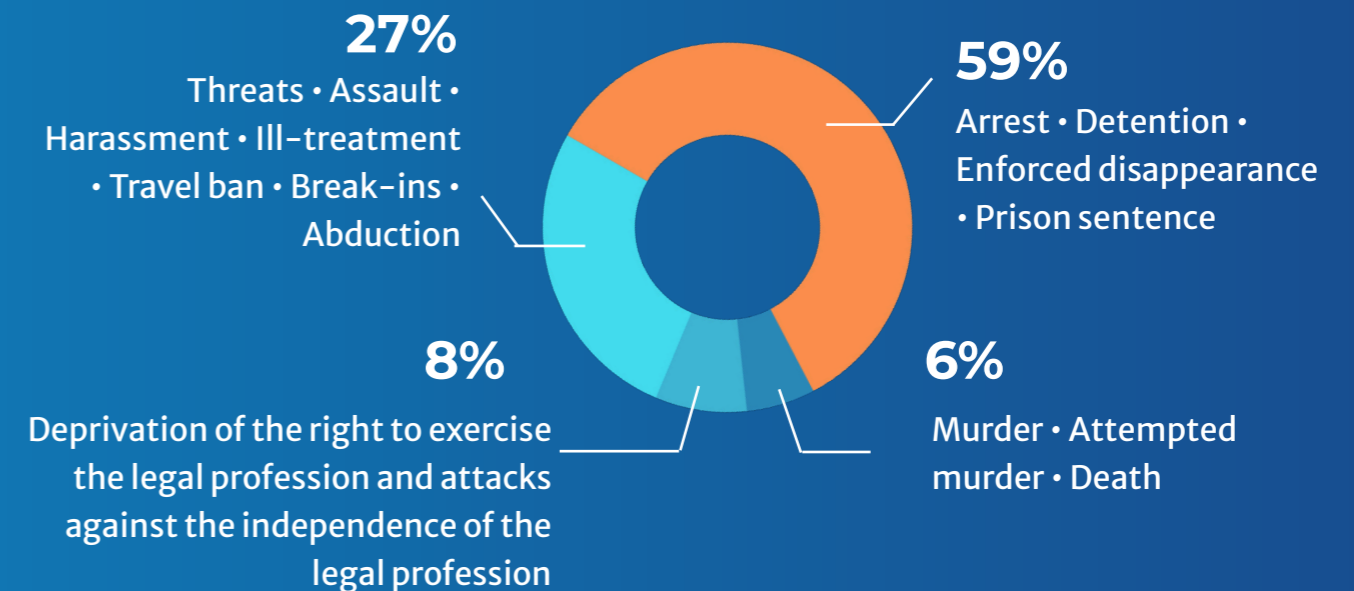
**121**

Letters in support of **920** endangered lawyers

sent to **42** countries around the world



## Type of attacks



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

# Protecting lawyers and strengthening the rule of law: the Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer

The CCBE placed the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer at the heart of its priorities in 2025, with the aim of strengthening the rule of law and safeguarding access to justice. With attacks against lawyers continuing to rise, ranging from harassment and intimidation to detention and violence, the need for a binding international instrument providing effective protection has become urgent.

Building on a process which began almost ten years ago, the CCBE played an instrumental role during the drafting of the Convention. As an observer within the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Lawyers (CJ-AV) of the Council of Europe, the CCBE ensured that the Convention reflected the reality of legal practice across Europe and addressed the most serious threats lawyers face in the exercise of their professional functions.

Following the adoption of the Convention by the Committee of Ministers in

March 2025 and its opening for signature (photo 1), the CCBE made extensive efforts to promote its signature and ratification through more than 30 interventions in events across Europe and internationally. In particular, at the World Justice Forum 2025 in Warsaw (photo 2), held under the theme of standing up for the rule of law, the CCBE President presented the Convention as a landmark achievement, the first binding international treaty

> CCBE President Wickers alongside Clare Ovey, Director of Human Rights at the Council of Europe, at the World Justice Forum 2025 in Warsaw



dedicated to safeguarding the independence, safety, and integrity of the legal profession. In October 2025, the CCBE publicly called on EU Member States and institutions to approve the Convention without delay, highlighting that the protection of lawyers is essential for the protection of justice, fundamental rights and democratic societies.

By December 2025, the following 24 countries had signed the Convention (in chronological order): Luxembourg, Andorra, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Belgium, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Finland.

Find the updated list of signatories on the Council of Europe's [website](#).

“

The decisive role played by the CCBE in the initiative and the development of this Convention illustrates the capacity of this organisation to transform a vision into concrete reality, thus contributing significantly to the protection of the independence of lawyers and, by extension, to the defense of the rule of law and human rights in Europe and throughout the world.

”



Laurent Pettiti, CCBE Chair of the European Convention working group

→ Continued: "Protecting Lawyers and strengthening the Rule of Law: The Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer"

The Convention was the theme of the [European Lawyers' Day 2025](#), reflecting the CCBE's objective of raising awareness across the legal profession at both European and national levels. In this framework, the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI), together with the CCBE, organised a high-level discussion ([photo 3](#)) on the protection of Lawyers worldwide, placing the Convention at the centre of the debate. Speakers underlined that protecting lawyers is inseparable from protecting the rule of law and fundamental rights, focusing on the human impact of attacks against members of the profession.

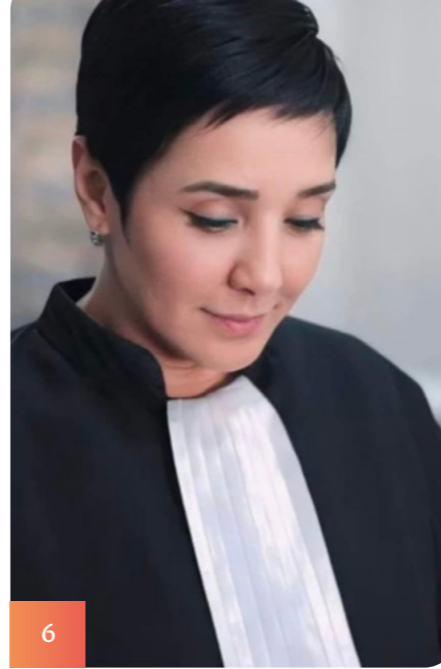
As part of the ELD, two additional joint events were organised with the Council of Europe. The first was a [reception](#) held on 4 April 2025 in Brussels on the importance of the legal profession in maintaining the rule of law ([photo 4](#)), in cooperation with Orde van Vlaamse Balies, Avocats.be, Balie Brussel, and Barreau de Bruxelles. The [second side event](#) was organised on 27 June 2025 in Geneva, during the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, in collaboration with the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), and the

Grand Duchy of Luxemburg dedicated to protecting lawyers to ensure access to justice ([photo 5](#)). The emphasis placed on the protection of lawyers throughout the year was reflected in the granting of the [CCBE Human Rights Award 2025](#) to Tunisian lawyer Sonia Dahmani ([photo 6](#)), recognising her courage and commitment to defending human rights, freedom of expression, and the independence of the legal profession.

The CCBE will continue to promote the Convention and support its effective implementation, reaffirming its commitment to defending the independence of the legal profession and the rule of law throughout Europe and beyond. ■



Available in [English](#)



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“  
**This Convention is not only about protecting lawyers; it is about safeguarding the very foundations of the rule of law. When lawyers can work freely and independently, everyone's rights are protected.**  
 ”



Thierry Wickers,  
 CCBE President in 2025



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5

> Missed the events and promotional campaign on the Convention? Watch our overview videos below!



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

# Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI): safeguarding justice, ethics, and the legal profession

The CCBE organised a high-level conference at the European Parliament on 3 October 2025, on digitalisation of justice systems and its implications for the legal profession. The event provided a forum for dialogue between EU institutions, international organisations, judicial authorities, and legal professionals on how digital transformation can improve access to justice while preserving professional independence, ethical standards, and fundamental rights.

The discussions highlighted that digitalisation and AI offer significant opportunities to improve efficiency,

transparency, and access to justice. At the same time, speakers emphasised the need to address risks related to confidentiality, professional secrecy, liability, and the integrity of judicial decision-making. The conference underlined the CCBE's position that technological progress must serve justice and society, and not undermine the fundamental principles of the legal profession.

The conference opened with an introductory address by Javier Zarzalejos, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), followed by an opening address by Thierry Wickers, President of the CCBE.



“

Digital tools are not a substitute for justice, they can make justice more accessible; technology can help bring justice to citizens. However, technology must always serve democracy, not the other way around.

”



**Javier Zarzalejos**,  
Chair of the European Parliament  
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice  
and Home Affairs (LIBE)

Missed the CCBE-ELF event? Watch all the panel discussions on this [YouTube playlist here!](#)





→ Continued: "Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence: safeguarding justice, ethics, and the legal profession"

Building on these opening reflections, the first panel explored the practical implications of digitalisation for justice systems and legal professionals, with contributions from representatives of the EU judiciary, the European Commission, and the CCBE. The discussion was complemented by a [video message](#) from Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, addressed the promises and risks of AI in justice systems.

Following this, a second panel examined the transformative impact of AI on legal practice, focusing on both opportunities and ethical limitations. This panel also provided an opportunity for the CCBE to

refer to its [guide on the use of generative AI by lawyers](#), which provides practical and ethical guidance to bar associations and lawyers across Europe. The guide aims to support the responsible use of generative AI tools in legal practice, while ensuring compliance with professional obligations, confidentiality, independence, competence, and transparency towards clients.

The conference concluded with a panel dedicated to the protection of fundamental rights in the digital transformation of justice, emphasising the importance of safeguards, particularly in cross-border cases. ■

Panel 1



**Dirk Staudenmayer,**  
Head of Unit at the European Commission, DG Justice, Unit A1, Digital Transition and Judicial Training

**Vittorio Di Bucci,**  
Registrar of the General Court of the European Union

**Dominic Gerstberger,**  
Chair of the CCBE IT Law Committee

Panel 2



**Enrico Francesconi,**  
Director at the National Research Council of Italy and Past-President of the International Association for Artificial Intelligence and Law (IAAIL)

**Jeroen Soeteman,**  
President of the Netherlands Bar

**Maria Dymitruk**  
Member of the CCBE Future of the Legal Profession and Legal Services Committee

Panel 3



**Daniel Schmidt,**  
Secretary of the Working Group on Cyberjustice and AI, European Commission for the Efficiency of justice (CEPEJ) of the Council of Europe

**Jana Gajdosova,**  
Head of Justice & Security Sector, Justice, Digital and Migration Unit, at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

**George M.R. Zlati,**  
Tech Lawyer specialised in cybercrime, blockchain technology, virtual currencies

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

## CCBE's contribution to the Future of EU Criminal Justice and Justice for Growth

The CCBE played an active role in the European Commission High-Level Forum (HLF) on the Future of EU Criminal Justice and the European Commission High-Level Forum (HLF) on Justice for Growth, held in early 2025.



### The Future of EU Criminal Justice

The CCBE was closely involved in the HLF on the Future of EU Criminal Justice (photo 1), which aimed to develop a long-term vision for EU criminal justice. The HLF addressed a variety of issues, including substantive and procedural criminal law, judicial cooperation, EU agencies and the

digitalisation of criminal justice systems. In 2025, the CCBE actively participated in the HLF's four plenary meetings and several technical preparatory meetings. Represented by Salvador Guerrero Palomares, Chair of the CCBE Criminal Law Committee, the CCBE ensured that the perspective of the legal profession was clearly articulated in the exchanges and debates. In its interventions, the CCBE underlined that the effectiveness of criminal justice systems must not come at the expense of defence rights and fair trial guarantees.

In addition to its various contributions, the CCBE submitted a comprehensive written [contribution](#), identifying key areas for further reflection and reform. In this document, the CCBE encouraged the European Commission to pursue a balanced, rights-based approach to the future development of EU criminal justice, particularly in the context of increasing digitalisation and cross-border cooperation.

“

**The High-Level Forum on the Future of EU Criminal Justice is a critical initiative that will shape the direction of EU criminal justice for the next decade and beyond. It is vital that the voice of the legal profession - and the rights of citizens - are fully represented in this process.**

”



Salvador Guerrero Palomares,  
Chair of the CCBE Criminal Law  
Committee



### Justice for Growth

The HLF on Justice for Growth was established in the context of renewed efforts to strengthen European competitiveness and adapt legal frameworks to the digital economy. The HLF focused on how civil and company law, as well as the digitalisation of justice, can contribute to development while preserving legal certainty, access to justice, and the functioning of the internal market.

In 2025, the CCBE participated in the HLF's technical meetings and four plenary sessions. Represented by

Alix Frank-Thomasser, Chair of the CCBE Company Law Committee, the CCBE contributed to discussions on key issues such as the digitalisation of justice, the proposed 28<sup>th</sup> Company Law Directive, automated contracting, data-driven business models, and the contractual implications of digitalisation.

In its interventions, the CCBE underlined that the justice system must remain a human-driven process, and that any new EU regulatory framework on company law must be voluntary, flexible, and compatible with national legal systems. It stressed the importance of legal certainty, multilingualism, and the important role played by legal professionals in advising businesses and protecting the rights of parties. ■

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

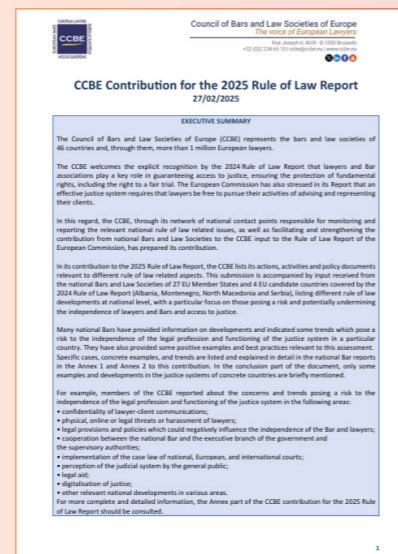
# Rule of Law: growing the international dialogue

The CCBE intensified its engagement on the rule of law, the protection of fundamental rights, the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession with key institutional partners and EU policy makers.

A key element of this work has been the CCBE's [contribution](#) to the European Commission's 2025 Annual Report on the Rule of Law (photo 1). Drawing on its network of national Bars and Law Societies, the CCBE submitted a detailed contribution highlighting developments affecting access to justice, the independence of lawyers, and the digitalisation of justice. Attention also focused on emerging trends that risk undermining the effective exercise of defence rights and the proper functioning of judicial systems, while identifying positive reforms and best practices in Member States and candidate countries. Through this contribution, the CCBE reaffirmed the essential role of an independent legal profession in

safeguarding the rule of law and ensuring public trust in justice.

Read [here](#) the CCBE's contribution to the European Commission's 2025 Annual Report on the Rule of Law.



In addition, in April 2025, the CCBE adopted a [statement](#) addressing recent developments in the rule of law and recalling that fundamental values, including respect for human rights, the independence of the judiciary, and the rule of law, must not be compromised by political expediency, or technological innovations. The statement emphasised that reforms in areas such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and the efficiency of judicial systems must be based on legal safeguards, equality, and the protection of professional secrecy. It stressed that lawyers play a crucial role as intermediaries between citizens and the judicial system, marking that any undermining of their independence directly weakens democratic societies.

“No political shift, economic crisis, technological advance, or societal transformation can ever justify undermining the principles of the rule of law and the independence of courts and lawyers.”



Thierry Wickers, CCBE President in 2025

→ Continued: "Rule of Law: growing the international dialogue"

In parallel, and within the framework of its Standing Committee, the CCBE welcomed an address by the President of the American Bar Association (ABA) (photo1). On that occasion, CCBE delegations approved a [statement](#) in support of the ABA. In its statement, the CCBE stands in strong and unwavering solidarity with the ABA as it defends the foundational principles of justice, democracy, and the rule of law. In August, the CCBE President and CCBE Secretary-General attended the ABA annual meeting in Toronto, where they participated in high-level exchanges on developments in the rule of law in the United States and their international implications. Meetings with ABA leadership (photo 2) and representatives of its global initiatives provided an opportunity to discuss



The CCBE supports the ABA in its efforts to uphold and protect the fundamental principles of judicial independence, the rule of law, and the right to legal representation without interference or intimidation.



Read the CCBE statement in support of the ABA



1



2



3

challenges facing the legal profession, including attacks on lawyers, threats to judicial independence, and the impact of new technologies on legal practice. These discussions also addressed shared concerns regarding the protection of lawyers worldwide and the importance of international standards, notably the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer.

The CCBE also reaffirmed its commitment to multilateral dialogue through contacts with the International Criminal Court (ICC). In October 2025, the CCBE welcomed Judge Beti Hohler to its Standing Committee meeting (photo 3) following a meeting of the CCBE Presidency in The Hague in July on the role of international justice, judicial independence, and respect for fundamental procedural guarantees.

In 2025, the CCBE issued a [statement](#) in support of the Istanbul Bar Association, condemning proceedings targeting its President and members of its Council, and expressing deep concern over criminal charges brought against lawyers in connection with the exercise of their professional duties.

The CCBE submitted an *amicus curiae* brief, together with other lawyers' and human rights organisation, and acted as an observer during all proceedings, represented by the CCBE Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Barbara Porta. Through these actions, the CCBE reaffirmed that attacks against Bars, Law Societies, and lawyers constitute serious threats to the independence of the legal profession and to the rule of law itself.

These activities reflect the CCBE's continued role as a key actor at both European and international level on rule of law issues. The CCBE has committed itself to ensuring that political debates remain focused on the protection of fundamental rights, the independence of judicial systems, and the role of the legal profession. ■

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

# The need for constant awareness of the increasing threats to lawyer-client confidentiality

**L**awyer-client confidentiality is recognised as a fundamental aspect of access to justice and the rule of law.

The CCBE collaborated with EU institutions on legislative and policy initiatives that could affect the confidentiality of communications between lawyers and clients. Particular attention has been paid to proposals and preparatory work concerning data retention, access to electronic evidence, surveillance measures, and digital investigation tools. In this context, the CCBE has submitted several contributions to public consultations and impact assessments, underlining that any extension of investigative powers must be accompanied by safeguards for professional secrecy.



## Read more on:

[CCBE response to the call for evidence for the European Internal Security Strategy](#)

[CCBE input to the call for evidence on the impact assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings](#)

[CCBE response to the public consultation on the impact assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings](#)



Serious risks arising from indiscriminate access to communications data were also highlighted. It was emphasised that metadata, once aggregated, can reveal sensitive information about lawyers' professional activities, client relationships, and defence strategies, thereby compromising the right to a fair trial. The CCBE invoked the necessity and proportionality requirements, effective judicial control, and the exclusion of privileged communications from the scope of retention and access measures.

Relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union was recalled, confirming the high level of protection afforded to communications between lawyers and clients.

**Support** for the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer also proved central in this context. The Convention recognises the protection of professional secrecy and legal professional privilege as essential

elements for the independent exercise of the legal profession. In calling for the rapid signing and ratification of the Convention, the CCBE emphasised that binding international standards are necessary to ensure consistent and effective protection of confidentiality across all jurisdictions.

In addition to its legislative input, the CCBE continued to raise awareness of the practical implications of technological developments for confidentiality, including the use of AI, large-scale data analysis, and cross-border digital cooperation, underlining that the goals of innovation and security must not compromise the fundamental safeguards that enable lawyers to perform their role without fear of surveillance or influence.

Through its engagement in 2025, the CCBE reaffirmed a clear message: protection is a prerequisite for fair, and rights-based justice systems in Europe. ■

# Committees & Working Groups

## OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS IN 2025

### Access to Justice

- CCBE response to the European Commission's public consultation on EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (24/10/2025)

### Anti-Money Laundering

- CCBE interpretative note on Article 3 (3) (a) AML Regulation (03/04/2025)
- CCBE response to the EBA consultation on proposed regulatory technical standards in the context of advice on new AML Authority mandates (06/06/2025)

### Criminal Law

- CCBE contribution to the High-Level Forum on the Future of EU Criminal Justice (08/10/2025)



### Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer

CCBE Statement calling for the swift signature and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer (02/10/2025)

Leaflet 2 | Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer (12/03/2025)

### EU Lawyers

- CCBE response to the European Commission's "call for evidence" on the Single Market Strategy (30/01/2025)

## Human Rights



- The CCBE sent 121 letters in support of more than 920 endangered lawyers to 42 countries around the world.
- Joint statement by the International Legal and Human Rights Community on the Actions Against the Istanbul Bar Association (28/01/2025)
- CCBE statement in support of the Istanbul Bar Association (27/02/2025)
- Joint statement on the sentencing of prominent human rights lawyer Lu Siwei (06/05/2025)
- Joint statement on the arrest and enforced disappearance of Sudanese lawyer Khaled Omar Al-Sadiq (09/05/2025)
- Joint statement on the arrest and detention of lawyer Ruken Gülağacı (27/05/2025)
- Joint statement on the unlawful detention of lawyer Mehmet Pehlivan and escalating repression of the legal profession in Turkey (01/07/2025)
- Joint oral statement on the persecution of lawyers in Crimea (04/07/2025)
- Joint statement on "Chinese government impunity for crackdown on lawyers fuels decade of repression" (07/07/2025)
- CCBE response to the European Commissions call for evidence on the 2026–2030 gender equality strategy (30/07/2025)
- Joint statement on the arbitrary detention of lawyers at the Kinshasa-Gombe Bar Association (11/08/2025)
- Amicus brief by 12 international orgs on the legal proceedings against the Istanbul Bar (19/08/2025)
- Joint letter calling for the halt of the unfair trial and release of lawyer Xie Yang (28/08/2025)
- CCBE response to the European Commission call for evidence and consultation EU Civil Society Strategy (03/09/2025)
- Joint statement on disbarment and reprisals against Hong Kong lawyer Kevin Yamon (03/09/2025)
- Joint statement over incident involving lawyer Zola Ferreira Bambi in Angola (05/09/2025)
- Joint statement on Amicus Curiae Brief for ISBA (08/09/2025)
- Joint statement on the critical health of Egyptian lawyer and human rights defender Hoda Abdel-Moneim (16/09/2025)
- CCBE statement on the situation of Turkish lawyers and the challenges facing the European Court of Human Rights (19/09/2025)
- Joint statement on the travel ban and deteriorating health of human rights lawyer Lu Siwei (21/10/2025)
- Joint statement on the reported tortured of Chinese lawyer Zhang Wenpeng while in detention (31/10/2025)
- Joint statement calling for the immediate release of lawyer Hoda Abdelmoniem, after seven years behind bars despite deteriorating health (03/11/2025)
- Joint statement calling to end the judicial persecution of human rights lawyers Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha (01/12/2025)

## International Legal Services

[CCBE comments on the Commission recommendations on recognition of third country qualifications \(27/02/2025\)](#)



## IT Law

[CCBE guidelines on the use of cloud computing by lawyers \(27/02/2025\)](#)

[CCBE input to the call for evidence Digital Justice Strategy 2025–2030 \(24/06/2025\)](#)

[CCBE response to the call for evidence for the EU Cloud and AI Development Act \(07/2025\)](#)

[CCBE response to the targeted stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the AI Act's rules for high risk AI systems \(20/09/2025\)](#)

[CCBE guide on the use of the use of generative AI for lawyers \(02/10/2025\)](#)



## Migration

[CCBE suggestions regarding free legal counselling \(18/02/2025\)](#)

[CCBE statement condemning stigmatisation of and threats to immigration lawyers \(04/04/2025\)](#)

[Joint letter calling on MEPs to support a mandatory humanitarian clause in the anti smuggling directive \(08/05/2025\)](#)

[CCBE position paper on the proposal for a new Return Regulation \(06/06/2025\)](#)

[CCBE statement in support of all lawyers working in the field of migration and of the need to safeguard access to asylum \(02/10/2025\)](#)

[CCBE response to the call for evidence on the five year European migration and asylum strategy \(06/10/2025\)](#)

[CCBE response to the public consultation on the revision of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Regulation \(27/11/2025\)](#)

[CCBE Guide for lawyers on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum \(27/11/2025\)](#)

## Permanent Delegation to the European Court of Human Rights

[CCBE statement on the letter published on 22 May 2025 concerning the interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights \(04/06/2025\)](#)

[CCBE comments following up on the CCBE Statement on the letter published on 22 May 2025 concerning the interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights \(04/12/2025\)](#)



## Rule of Law

[CCBE Contribution for the 2025 Rule of Law Report \(27/02/2025\)](#)

[CCBE statement in support of the American Bar Association \(04/04/2025\)](#)

[CCBE statement on rule of law developments: justice – the compass for an evolving world \(10/04/2025\)](#)



## Surveillance

[CCBE response to the call for evidence for the European Internal Security Strategy \(12/03/2025\)](#)

[CCBE input to the call for evidence on the impact assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings \(20/06/2025\)](#)

[CCBE response to the public consultation on the impact assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings \(15/09/2025\)](#)



## Training

[CCBE contribution for the European Judicial Training Strategy 2025–2030 \(02/10/2025\)](#)

# Committees & Working Groups

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES IN 2025

CHAIR: ELISABETH SCHEUBA (AUSTRIA)

### Access to Justice



The Access to Justice Committee organised an exchange of views with its experts and representatives of the European Commission, which was followed by the presentation of the EU Justice Scoreboard. Furthermore, the Committee prepared and submitted its suggestions for amending the questionnaire for the European Commission's EU Justice Scoreboard 2026, which were subsequently taken into account by the Commission. In addition, the Committee coordinated and provided support to the Commission in collecting relevant data from national Bars for the EU Scoreboard analysis.

Based on the updated CCBE recommendations on legal aid, exchanges of views among Committee members took place throughout all meetings last year, focusing on recent national developments in legal aid systems. Members were encouraged to share information and experiences regarding the application of the updated CCBE Recommendations on Legal Aid to support relevant discussions and lobbying activities at national level.

As part of its annual work plan, the Committee monitored the work of the European Commission Expert Group Against Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). In addition, discussions were held with Committee experts on certain pro bono-related issues.

Among other matters, within the Committee's activities, the CCBE prepared a [response](#) to the European Commission's public consultation on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. The response emphasised the need to recognise and promote access to justice through adequately state-funded legal aid for individuals with limited financial means in the upcoming Strategy.

Finally, the Committee held an initial exchange with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) regarding access to justice, particularly concerning the FRA's work on the planned update of the [FRA Handbook on European Law Relating to Access to Justice \(2016\)](#).

CHAIR: CLAUDIO COCUZZA (ITALY)

### Anti-Money Laundering



The CCBE continued to monitor the progress on the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) package. It has been analysing the final texts and their impact on Bars and lawyers, while also monitoring the initiatives relating to the implementation. In April, the CCBE adopted an [interpretative note](#) which aims to bring clarity regarding the scope of this provision by suggesting a teleological interpretation that avoids the problems that inevitably arise due to the wording of this provision.

In addition, the CCBE was granted observer status to the informal Non-Financial Sector Sub-group coordinated by the European

Commission's Directorate General for Financial Stability, Financial Services, and Capital Markets Union (DG FISMA), and provided views within this forum. Moreover, in June 2025, the CCBE adopted a written [response](#) to the public consultation launched by European Banking Authority regarding proposed regulatory technical standards in the context of advice on new AML Authority mandate.

Moreover, throughout the year, the CCBE continued to maintain contacts and exchanges with European and international organisations, such as Europol and Accountancy Europe.



CHAIR: ALIX FRANK-THOMASSER (AUSTRIA)



## Company Law

In 2025, the Company Law Committee concentrated its work on closely following the discussions on the forthcoming optional 28<sup>th</sup> Regime for company law and on contributing to the High-Level Forum on Justice for Growth, launched by the European Commission in cooperation with the Polish Presidency.

The Committee was actively involved throughout the Forum's process, taking part in both the preparatory technical meetings and the plenary sessions. The particular focus of the discussions was on the 28<sup>th</sup> Regime for companies. In September 2025, the Committee contributed to the related

public consultation by completing the European Commission's questionnaire.

Prior to the concluding session of the High-Level Forum, the Committee submitted written comments on the draft final report. While expressing overall support for the objectives of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regime, the Committee also submitted an additional [contribution](#) to the European Commission in the context of its forthcoming proposal on the 28<sup>th</sup> Regime for company law, with a view to underlining the need for robust safeguards to ensure legal certainty.



CHAIR: SALVADOR GUERRERO PALOMARES (SPAIN)



## Criminal Law

Throughout 2025, the CCBE participated in four plenary meetings in relation to the European Commission High-Level Forum (HLF) on the Future of EU Criminal Justice (each of these plenary meetings were preceded by extensive technical preparatory meetings in which the CCBE also participated). The HLF was launched by the European Commission's Directorate General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) in February 2025 to assess the state of EU criminal justice and to identify priorities for EU criminal Justice going forward. The HLF focused on four interconnected areas: substantive criminal

law, procedural criminal law (including mutual recognition), digitalisation of criminal justice, and the role of EU agencies and bodies. In light of these discussions, in October 2025, the Criminal Law Committee submitted a substantial [position paper](#) to the HLF in order to highlight its views on a number of issues raised. With this paper, the Committee aimed to ensure that future EU criminal justice policies strike the right balance between effective law enforcement and the essential role that lawyers play in ensuring the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights.

> CCBE Chair of the Criminal Law Committee, Salvador Guerrero Palomares, and European Commission Director-General for Justice and Consumers, Ana Gallego, at the 4<sup>th</sup> High-Level Forum on 1 December 2025.



CHAIR: ÉRIC BALATE (BELGIUM)  
 VICE-CHAIRS: ANDREW WALKER KC (UK), ELI HRISTOVA (BULGARIA)



## Deontology

In 2025, the committee, through its subgroup, has continued the reflection on the review of the Code of Conduct for European Lawyers. The committee also agreed on the final wording of the new core principle on non-discrimination and equality which was subsequently approved by the Plenary Session in November 2025.

The committee held an exchange of views with Prof. Severine Menétrey (ULB) on 18 June 2025 on third-party litigation funding. Together with the Environment and Climate Change Committee, the committee continued to develop guidelines on climate change and the impact on lawyers' professional obligations.

CHAIR: JEAN-MARC GOLLIER (BELGIUM)



## Environment and Climate Change

During 2025, the CCBE Environment and Climate Change (ENVCC) Committee concentrated on the concrete implementation of the CCBE's climate-related commitments. In March 2025, the CCBE published its third carbon footprint [report](#), covering data from 2024. As part of this, the CCBE Secretariat continued to strengthen its internal environmental management practices following the ecolabel obtained in 2023.

Furthermore, the Committee remained actively engaged with the work of the Council of Europe, in particular through its observer role within the Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment (CDDH-ENV).

In parallel, the ENVCC Committee monitored the work of the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) on its draft [study](#) on national climate litigation. The study was circulated within the CCBE, and cooperation took place with the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF) on the organisation and dissemination of a joint ELF-CCBE [webinar](#) on the latest legal developments in European climate change, held on 15 December 2025, during which the study was presented.

The ENVCC Committee also continued its work on a guidance addressing the impact of climate change on the legal profession. While one set of guidance is expected to be finalised in the short term, additional work is ongoing on a separate document, both of which are foreseen for in 2026.

CHAIR: JOANNA WISŁA-PŁONKA (POLAND)  
 VICE-CHAIR: MICHAEL PALOFF (AUSTRIA)



## EU Lawyers

In 2025, the EU Lawyers Committee focused on issues related to the cross-border practice of lawyers and monitored policy developments of the European Commission in the area of regulated professions and legal services. It followed the discussions leading to, and following, the publication of the EU Single Market Strategy in May 2025.

The Committee also monitored the European Commission's infringement procedures concerning legal services and

key case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the regulation of the legal profession, and initiated preparatory work to update the Free Movement of Lawyers [Guide](#) (FML Guide) in light of recent developments and case-law.



CHAIR: LAURENT PETTITI (FRANCE)



## European Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer

Throughout 2025, the CCBE remained actively engaged in the promotion and follow-up of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer, the first binding international instrument specifically dedicated to safeguarding the independence and security of lawyers. Following its adoption in March 2025, the Convention marked a major step forward in addressing increasing concerns related to pressure, harassment, and interference affecting the legal profession in several European countries.

A key milestone of the year was the opening of the Convention for signature in Luxembourg on 13 May 2025. On that occasion, 13 States signed the Convention. By the end of the year, the number of signatories had risen to 24 States, including

17 Council of Europe Member States, while ratification procedures were initiated in several countries.

During the year, the CCBE carried out extensive communication, outreach, and awareness-raising activities in relation to the Convention. These efforts included participation in conferences and public events, targeted engagement with national Bars, as well as exchanges with national authorities aimed at encouraging signature and ratification. In parallel, the CCBE closely monitored developments at national and EU level, following the progress of signature and ratification procedures in individual States. The CCBE also maintained a continuous open communication with the relevant EU institutions on the signature and ratification process of the Convention by the EU.



> The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI), together with the CCBE, came together to discuss "The Protection of Lawyers Worldwide" and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer.

CHAIR: BEATRICE DESHAYES (GERMANY)



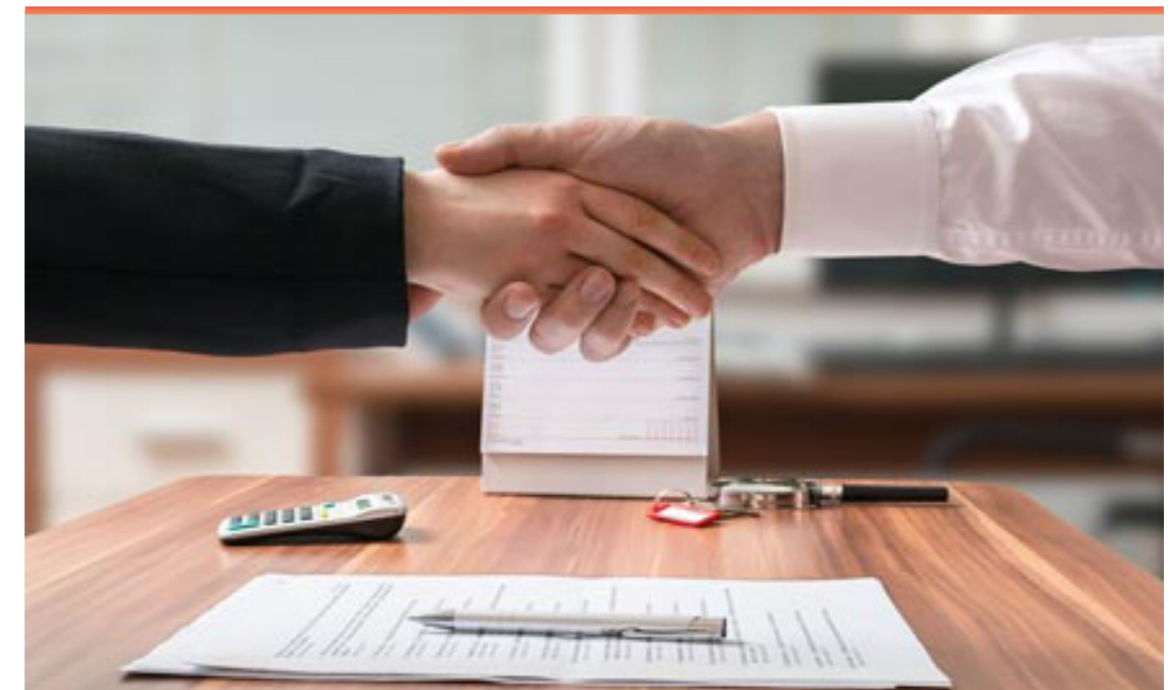
## European Private Law

In 2025, the European Private Law Committee continued to follow a variety of legislative and policy developments in the area of European private law. A key focus of its work was the ongoing review of the Brussels Ia and Rome II Regulations, including discussions within the High-Level Forum on Justice for Growth (HLF). The Committee contributed to the CCBE's involvement in these exchanges, and work on position papers regarding the amendment of the Regulations was underway throughout the year.

The Committee also discussed, in light of the HLF, the adaptation of private law to the digital economy, in particular issues relating to automated contracting, with possible future CCBE input under consideration. In parallel, the Committee reviewed developments related to AI and civil liability.

Furthermore, the Committee monitored several European Commission initiatives, including the proposal amending the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive, the proposal on combating late payment in commercial transactions, and the initiative regarding Digital Fairness.

The Committee additionally followed the work of other organisations, in particular the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), and began preparing a response for 2026 to the consultation on a possible future convention on parallel proceedings and related actions. It also further engaged with the European Judicial Network (EJN) in civil and commercial matters, participating in discussions and relevant working groups on the Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence Regulations, as well as on the digitalisation of the Brussels IIb Regulation.



CHAIR: ÉLODIE MULON (FRANCE)

## Family and Succession Law



Throughout 2025, the Family and Succession Law Committee remained engaged in several developments in family and succession law. The Committee continued its work on the European Commission's proposals on parenthood and on the protection of vulnerable adults, monitoring the developments and the evolving discussions within the EU institutions throughout the year.

Additionally, the Committee continued to be active in relation to the work carried out within the European Judicial Network (EJN) in civil and commercial matters. Developments from the EJN Working Group on Succession were regularly brought to the Committee, and members discussed the issues under examination, including possible The Committee also followed the discussions within the EJN concerning the Maintenance Regulation.

A further focus of the Committee in 2025 was the work of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Access to Origins (CJ-OR). The Committee reviewed the drafts under preparation, provided informal observations, and followed the discussions as the expert group works towards a recommendation on the rights of donor-conceived persons to know their origins. The Committee also began engaging in the Council of Europe's review of the Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice, which will similarly continue into 2026. Relatedly, the Committee held further internal discussions and collected information on the assistance of a lawyer during the hearing of a child during the year.

Moreover, the Committee maintained oversight of the work at the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), especially the Parentage/Surrogacy Project, and will examine the file in greater depth as work progresses in 2026.

CHAIR: CHRISTIAN LEMKE (GERMANY)

## Future of the Legal Profession and Legal Services



During 2025, the Committee continued working on the report on innovation in legal services. It also started the discussion on diversity and inclusion in law firms, the Bars' activities in this area, as well as the impact of the developments

in the US. Lastly, the Committee's experts also provided input to the CCBE [guide](#) on the use of generative AI for lawyers and looked at the digitalisation efforts in member jurisdictions.

CHAIR: BARBARA PORTA (ITALY)  
AND STEFAN VON RAUMER (GERMANY) UNTIL FEBRUARY 2025  
VICE-CHAIR: LAURENCE ROQUES (FRANCE)

## Human Rights



In 2025 the CCBE sustained its longstanding commitment to the protection of lawyers exposed to intimidation, threats, detention, and urgent appeals to public authorities and institutions in over 42 countries, concerning both individual cases and broader patterns of persecution affecting the legal profession. During the year, the CCBE addressed 121 [letters](#) and urgent appeals to public authorities and institutions in over 42 countries, concerning both individual cases and broader patterns of persecution affecting the legal profession. During the Plenary Session in Paris on 27 November 2025, the CCBE has also granted the [CCBE Human Rights Award](#) to Tunisian lawyer Sonia Dahmani, an award to honour lawyers or organisations of lawyers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law, often working in environments marked by political repression, armed conflict, or systemic threats to justice because of their professional duties.

At the same time, the CCBE intensified its cooperation with Bars, Law Societies, and lawyers' associations through coordinated statements and collective actions aimed at defending lawyers at risk. Particular attention was given to the International Day of the Endangered Lawyer 2025, which highlighted the [situation of lawyers in Belarus](#). In this context, the CCBE, together with the Coalition for the Day

of the Endangered Lawyer, convened an online [press conference](#) to draw media and public attention to the issue. Additional information is available on the [CCBE Human Rights Portal](#).

The CCBE also continued to consolidate its Human Rights Network and to expand collaboration with human rights organisations, seeking to enhance coordination and effectiveness in responding to cases of persecution.

Furthermore, it supported the commitment of national delegations to participate in international trial observation missions, notably in Turkey and Tunisia, as part of its efforts to promote the rule of law and the protection of lawyers.

Lastly, during the CCBE Plenary Session in Bordeaux on 16 May 2025, the CCBE granted the award of the [CCBE Amicus Curiae Contest](#) to Léa Silveira, law student from the IE University in Madrid.



CHAIR: HERMAN BUYSSENS (BELGIUM)



## Insurance

In 2025, the Insurance Committee focused on developments in the field of professional indemnity insurance (PII), examining the need for adequate and proportionate coverage to protect both lawyers and clients. The committee also discussed the situation of young lawyers, with reference to how ensuring protection for clients while avoiding excessive financial burdens at the start of their careers.

In addition, the Committee analysed possible models of compulsory PII with limited but sufficient coverage,

including the role of collective insurance schemes supported by Bars and Law Societies to keep costs affordable.

Finally, the topic of cybersecurity risks was also identified as a factor to consider when assessing coverage needs. Preparatory work started on possible recommendations, including the creation of a small expert working group and a mapping of relevant insurance stakeholders at national and EU level.

CHAIR: DAVID LEVY (FRANCE)



## International Legal Services

In 2025, the Committee continued its work regarding recognition of third-country qualifications with focus on lawyers, and adopted [comments](#) on the Commission recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals in February 2025. Subsequently, the Committee continued to monitor the European Commission's plans that were announced regarding the Skills Portability Initiative. This is seen as a continuation of the work carried out on the recommendation of the European Commission regarding the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals. On 5 June 2025, the CCBE also held a discussion with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)

regarding the upcoming initiatives.

Moreover, the CCBE followed the progress in the EU's conclusion of various free trade agreements, and in particular the upcoming revisions of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. In order to prepare for the revision, data was collected regarding issues arising for lawyers from the EU-UK TCA.

Finally, the Committee launched an analysis of the data provided by CCBE experts and members in order to understand the state of play of the rules regulating joint practice between foreign lawyers and EU lawyers in CCBE member countries.

CHAIR: DOMINIC GERSTBERGER (AUSTRIA)

## IT Law



As part of its work in 2025, the IT Law Committee produced two papers which are relevant to on the use of AI in legal practice.

The first paper was a CCBE [response](#) to the targeted stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the AI Act's rules for high-risk AI systems, which was adopted in July 2025. The paper elaborated on the proposed risk classification under the AI Act for the AI systems to be used in law enforcement and the justice system, illustrating its arguments through 13 case studies.

The second paper was the CCBE [guide](#) on the use of the use of generative AI for lawyers, adopted in October 2025, which discussed the benefits, risks, use cases and, most importantly, professional obligations of lawyers when using the generative AI (GenAI) systems in their practice. The Committee already started working on the follow-up to the guide, which would focus on technical aspects of the GenAI applications.

In addition, on 23 April 2025, the CCBE held a virtual consultation meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur (UNSR) on the independence of judges and lawyers regarding her report on 'Artificial Intelligence: Promises and Pitfalls for Justice Systems.' The CCBE also held a virtual launch event of the report on 29 October 2025, where the UNSR presented her key findings, and the Chair

of the Committee presented the first reactions.

Moreover, the Committee continued its reflection on the ongoing discussions and policy initiatives on digitalisation of justice. To this end, it provided input and strategic guidance to the European Lawyers' Foundation (ELF) research on the impact of digitalisation of justice on certain fundamental rights. The Committee also provided [input](#) to the call for evidence Digital Justice Strategy 2025–2030 in July 2025 and, throughout the year, followed and contributed to the work of the High-Level Forum on Justice for Growth, whose main focus was to discuss the future challenges to the justice system. In parallel, the Committee also followed the work of the High-Level Forum on the Future of Criminal Justice System, and in particular the discussions on digitalisation and AI.

Furthermore, the Committee finalised its [guide](#) on the use of cloud computing by lawyers in February 2025 and, through its Lawyers Use of Cloud Services group (LUCS), submitted its [response](#) in June 2025 to the call for evidence for the EU Cloud and AI Development Act.

Lastly, together with CCBE Surveillance Working Group, the Committee held an exchange of views with the representatives of the European Commission's Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) on the impact assessment of



the planned legislative instrument on data retention for criminal investigations. The exchange touched upon the issue of the protection of lawyer-client confidentiality and due process.

In parallel, the Chair represented the CCBE in several meetings and events concerning the digitalisation of justice. On 3 June, he took part in the European Economic and Social Committee's Expert Hearing on "Regulatory Simplification through digital tools", as well as took part in the joint CCBE-ELF event on digitalisation of justice, which was held in the European Parliament on 3 October 2025.

The CCBE Secretariat also took part in the joint CCBE-ELF webinar on digitalisation of justice held on 31 March 2025, and spoke at the conference on digitalisation of justice organised by the Polish Presidency and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) on 19 May 2025. Finally, the Secretariat also attended

an in-person meeting of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) working groups, including the meeting of CEPEJ-CYBERJUST group.

The Chair represented the CCBE in several meetings and events concerning the digitalisation of justice. On 3 June, he took part in the European Economic and Social Committee's Expert Hearing on "Regulatory Simplification through digital tools." On 3 October, took part in the CCBE-ELF event on digitalisation of justice, which was held in the European Parliament ([photo 1](#)).

The Secretariat took part in the CCBE-ELF [webinar](#) on digitalisation of justice (31 March) and spoke at the conference on digitalisation of justice (19 May) organised by the Polish Presidency and the European Commission's DG JUST. The Secretariat also attended an in-person meeting of the CEPEJ working groups, including the meeting of CEPEJ-CYBERJUST group.

CHAIR: NOEMÍ ALARCÓN VELASCO (SPAIN)



## Migration

Throughout 2025, the Committee monitored the implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and, in particular, the new concept of free legal counselling, legal assistance, and representation. In February 2025, the CCBE submitted to the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) its [suggestions](#) regarding free legal counselling to feed into the preparation of the agency's guidance on this topic. In October, in its [response](#) to the call for evidence on the five year European migration and asylum strategy, the CCBE indicated how effective access to good quality legal assistance and representation could be achieved, as well as how it would contribute to efficient implementation of the Pact. In December, the CCBE published its [guide](#) for lawyers on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which provides lawyers with an overview of the most important elements of the new legislative framework. The guide focuses on the aspects that are crucial from the point of view of practitioners, such as the right to legal assistance during various procedures or access of lawyers to migrants present in the facilities regulated by the Pact.

Moreover, in order to react to a publication in France that designated lawyers as “guilty of the immigration invasion”, the CCBE published a [statement](#) condemning stigmatisation of and threats to immigration lawyers. Although the incident in France triggered the CCBE

reaction, several other developments were reported by other CCBE members, thus confirming a general worrying trend. Several months later, noting criticism towards lawyers for merely using available remedies, the CCBE adopted another [statement](#) in support of all lawyers working in the field of migration and highlighting the need to safeguard access to asylum.

The CCBE's concern was reinforced by the ongoing legislative work on the proposal for an anti-smuggling Directive. In this context, the CCBE continued to plead, for instance, in a joint [letter](#) sent to legislators in favour of a narrow definition of the offence of ‘smuggling’ in line with international standards, as well as for the inclusion of a mandatory humanitarian exemption covering legal assistance, such as in the EU sanctions Directive.

The CCBE additionally monitored the work on the proposal for a new Return Regulation and presented its [position](#), with particular attention to the legal assistance and representation that should be available to returnees.

Furthermore, the CCBE's concerns regarding the growing pressure on lawyers and civil society more generally were flagged in the CCBE [response](#) to the European Commission call for evidence and consultation EU Civil Society Strategy. The CCBE also urged cautiousness regarding the use of the concept of

instrumentalisation and creating zones closed to lawyers or other civil society actors.

Building on its experience as a member of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights, the CCBE also [responded](#) to the public consultation on the revision of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Regulation. During the year, the CCBE continued to act as a member and contribute to the work of Frontex Consultative Forum, including by co-organising a seminar in October 2025, regarding procedural safeguards in the screening procedures to be implemented as part of the New Pact.

Lastly, the CCBE further built and developed its cooperation with various institutions, such as the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In parallel, the CCBE maintained ongoing cooperation with civil society, including the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

> The Chair of the CCBE Migration Committee, Noemí Alarcón, participated in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe conference “Envisioning effective public policy to prevent and address cases of missing migrants”, held in Strasbourg on 23–24 April 2025.



CHAIR: PRZEMYSŁAW KAMIL ROSIAK (POLAND)

## Permanent delegation of the Court of Justice and the General Court of the European Union and the EFTA Court (PD LUX)



In 2025, the Permanent Delegation of the Court of Justice and the General Court and the EFTA Court (PD LUX) Committee continued its dialogue with the EU Courts and focused on key procedural developments affecting practitioners. The Committee coordinated the CCBE’s annual meeting with the Court of Justice of the European Union, the General Court of the European Union, and the EFTA Court, which was held in Luxembourg on 8 December 2025 (photo 1). The meeting addressed several matters, including procedural practice, transparency, digitalisation, appeal proceedings, and expedited procedures.

The Committee also followed recent changes to use of the Report for the Hearing before the General Court, and engaged in an exchange of letters with the President of the General Court between May and June 2025, stressing the importance of this document for transparency and effective preparation of the parties and their lawyers.

In addition, the Committee prepared the practical guidance for lawyers in preliminary reference cases and the guide to using the electronic filing system of the European Union Courts (e-CURIA) (2025). Both guides were adopted by the CCBE during the Plenary Session of 16 May 2025 in Bordeaux.



CHAIR: KLAVDIJA KERIN (SLOVENIA)

## Platform for Exchange, Cooperation and Outreach (PECO)



Following the requests received, the Platform for Exchange, Cooperation and Outreach (PECO) Committee continued to monitor and assess developments relating to the legal profession and justice systems in different CCBE associate and observer member countries during 2025. This work was carried out through the organisation of exchanges among its members, the collection of information on different topics, and the providing of relevant assistance when requested. One of the Committee’s main priorities of the year was the monitoring of the situation in Ukraine with regard to lawyers and legal services, based on information provided by the Ukrainian National Bar Association. In addition, the Committee organised a comprehensive exchange among its members on the EU Enlargement Package and the related annual assessment reports

prepared by the European Commission as part of the evaluation of candidate countries.

The Committee also examined ways to further strengthen the engagement of associate and observer members in the work of the CCBE. In this context, and with a view to promoting the CCBE’s core values relating to the legal profession, enhancing the organisation’s visibility in different countries, and encouraging deeper involvement by national Bars, a note on the work of the Committee was prepared and approved by the Presidency supporting the possibility of holding PECO Committee meetings on an occasional basis in associate or observer member countries.

CHAIR: ACHILLEAS DEMETRIADES (CYPRUS)

## Permanent Delegation to the European Court of Human Rights (PD STRAS)



During 2025, the CCBE maintained its commitment to improving the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) system through active engagement with key stakeholders and practical reform initiatives.

In March 2025, the CCBE organised a roundtable on the execution of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments and the role of Bars and Law Societies under Rule 9(2). The objective of the roundtable was to foster dialogue with CCBE members on the implementation of the ECtHR judgments, focusing on Rule 9(2) submissions. The event included discussions with experts from the Council of Europe Execution Network, Government Agents, and the European Implementation Network, along with practical training on preparing submissions and the role of the CCBE's Early Warning Mechanism. In the subsequent months, a trial phase was carried out for the Early Warning System for Encouragement of Engagement by National Bar Associations in Enforcement of General Measures.

On 21 November 2025, representatives of the CCBE and national Bars of the Council of Europe Members States had a biannual meeting with the Court's representatives in Strasbourg. The meeting was an occasion to speak about the future of the bilateral cooperation, as well as three particular topics: category IV cases, the

non-contentious phase (NCP), and the Court's Digital Strategy.

Moreover, reacting to the letter published on 22 May 2025 by nine countries criticising the interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights by the European Court of Human Rights, the CCBE adopted a [statement](#) to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary: principles at the core of the European legal order. In December 2025, the CCBE also published more detailed [comments](#) on this topic, demonstrating that the criticisms of the Court's interpretation are not evidentially supported. It stressed that any attempt to unravel the Convention amounts to a collateral attack on fundamental rights also protected by EU law and by the Court of Justice of the European Union. In a [press release](#), the CCBE President also emphasised that the judicial independence and effective protection of human rights of all individuals in Europe must remain the guiding principles of any future work.



CHAIR: SEBASTIAN CORDING (GERMANY)

VICE-CHAIR: IAIN G. MITCHELL (UNITED KINGDOM)

## Surveillance



In 2025, the Working Group continued monitoring, and reacting when appropriate, to the ongoing legislative work on the proposal for a regulation against child sexual abuse (CSA Regulation). To this end, it addressed the Danish Presidency in October 2025 reiterating its [concerns](#) relating to the proposed compromise text of the proposal, notably in relation to the protection of professional secrecy.

The Working Group also published two responses for call for evidence from the European Commission. The first was a [response](#), adopted in March 2025, to the call for evidence for the European Internal Security Strategy in which it recalled its recommendations on the protection of client confidentiality within the context of surveillance activities and in the context of national security. Subsequently, in June 2025, [input](#) to the call for evidence on the impact assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings was submitted. In its input, the Working Group recalled the fundamental principles that must apply to any law providing for direct or indirect access to data of citizens, and in particular the guarantee of the protection of professional secrecy/legal professional privilege through specific and explicit provisions.

The Working Group also [responded](#) to the public consultation on the impact

assessment on retention of data by service providers for criminal proceedings in September 2025, in which it recalled the abovementioned principles and elaborated on the specific concerns of the legal profession towards the proposed legal instrument.

Furthermore, in April 2025, the Working Group provided input to the joint amicus curiae submission of the CCBE and the Polish National Bar (NRA) in *Brejza v Poland* (Application No 27830/23, ECtHR) which stressed the importance of professional secrecy/legal professional privilege and its protection under Articles 6 and 8 of the ECHR.

Moreover, the Working Group also contributed with the IT Law Committee to the CCBE [response](#) to the targeted stakeholder consultation on the implementation of the AI Act's rules for high-risk AI systems, which was adopted in July 2025, in relation to high-risk AI systems in the field of law enforcement.

Lastly, the CCBE Secretariat took part in the panel on 'Securing Justice and Privacy: Aligning EU Data Retention with CJEU Standards', which was part of the Microsoft Law Enforcement series "Justice, Security and Fundamental Rights" event held on 21 November 2025 in Brussels.

CHAIR: SILVIA SPARFELD (GERMANY)



## Tax

Throughout 2025, the CCBE continued to monitor the adoption of the proposal of the Commission for a Directive regarding VAT rules for the digital age (ViDA) and its potential impact on professional secrecy, as well as assisted its members during the implementation phase.

In February 2025, as part of the CCBE [contribution](#) to the Rule of Law Report, data were collected on the application of legal professional privilege/professional secrecy in the context of tax activities in various countries, and the implementation of the CJEU judgment of 8 December 2022 in the Case C-694/20.

In October 2025, the CCBE held an exchange of views with the European Commissions' Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) representatives regarding the upcoming EU initiatives, in particular on the Directive on Administrative Cooperation (DAC). Additionally, the Committee prepared a response to the European Commission public consultation on DAC, which was published at the end of 2025.

> On 3 July, the CCBE participated in the annual HELP Network Conference in Strasbourg.



CHAIR: NIKOLAOS KOUTKIAS (GREECE)



## Training

As every year, the Training Committee organised a presentation by representatives of the European Commission on the annual European Judicial Training Report, as well as a discussion between its members and the Commission on the findings of the Report and the challenges in collecting data on trained lawyers in different EU Member States. The Committee also supported the European Commission in coordinating the collection of data from its members for the forthcoming annual Report.

In addition, as a main topic, the Committee launched a discussion on the implementation of the European Commission's European Judicial Training Strategy for 2021-2024 and on the key aspects to be included in the Commission's next policy document. This discussion resulted in a CCBE [position](#)

[paper](#) setting out the main elements to be taken into account in the new Judicial Training Strategy. Among other issues, the position highlighted the need to ensure the effectiveness of funding for the judicial training of lawyers, addressed the content and methodology of such training, and emphasised the importance of sustainability and long-term impact at EU level.

Moreover, within the framework of the long-standing cooperation between the CCBE and the Council of Europe's Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) ([photo 1](#)), the launch of a dedicated CCBE-HELP joint training course on child-friendly justice was organised for an international group of lawyers from 25 Council of Europe Member States ([photo 2](#)).



CHAIR: IINA-MARI SUPPERI (FINLAND)

## Young Lawyers



During 2025, the Young Lawyers Committee continued its work on policy issues affecting lawyers at the early stages of their careers. The Committee exchanged examples and experiences from national Bars on the representation of young lawyers within local Bars, focusing on how such representation is organised and on ways to ensure that the voice of young European lawyers is effectively heard.

In parallel, the Committee focused particularly on issues related to work-life balance and mental health in the legal profession, as well as engaged in exchanges on these topics with other organisations representing young lawyers, including the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) and the European Young Bar Association (EYBA).

# Rule of Law

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES IN 2025

In response to the European Commission's invitation and public consultation, the CCBE's [contribution](#) to the 2025 Rule of Law Report (RoL Report) was prepared and adopted by the Standing Committee in Vienna on 27 February. In its submission, the CCBE highlighted key rule of law developments and concerns affecting legal professionals, as well as emerging trends that may threaten the independence of lawyers and Bars, as identified by its members across the Member States.

The presentation of the European Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report was organised as part of the CCBE Standing Committee, providing members with the opportunity to raise questions, share

observations on the report, and contribute to discussions on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the Member States.

Additionally, to ensure ongoing monitoring of rule of law issues, the CCBE Rule of Law contact points held several meetings in 2025. These meetings offered a forum to assess national developments, report on significant concerns, and strengthen the contributions of national Bars and Law Societies to the CCBE's draft input for the European Commission's Rule of Law Report.

## OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS IN 2025

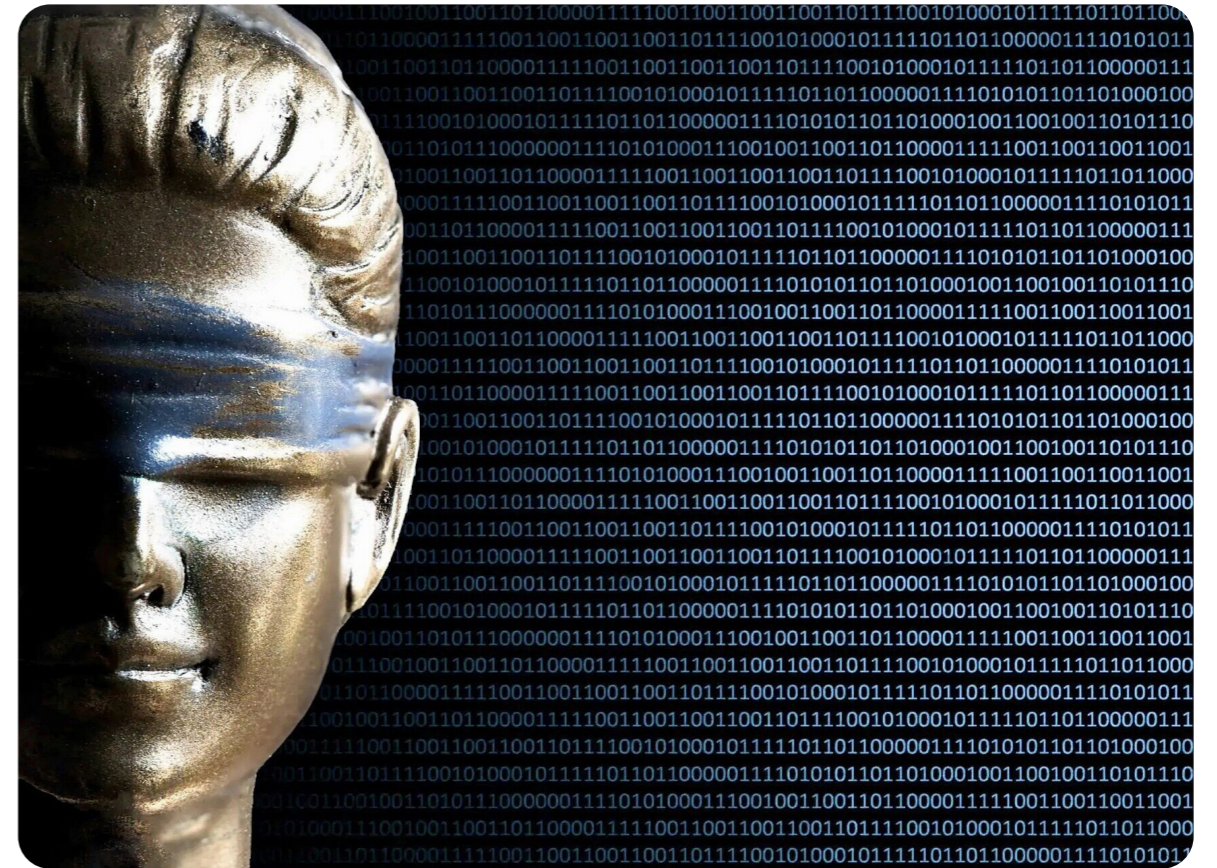
# CCBE Projects

## TRADICIL

The TRADICIL (short for “Training of lawyers on digitalisation of justice and EU civil law”) project was developed in response to the European Commission’s Communication Ensuring justice in the EU – a European judicial training strategy for 2021–2024. The strategy provides a framework for the proper implementation of the competences granted to the EU by the Lisbon Treaty in relation to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, notably through the training of lawyers so as to improve the correct and uniform application of EU law. It also aims to ensure the effective application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and to make Charter rights a reality in people’s everyday lives. As highlighted in the European judicial training strategy, justice practitioners play an essential role in upholding the rule of law, making their training an obligation rather than an option.

Given their role as regulators of the legal profession in the various EU Member States, Bars and Law Societies are in a unique position to support the EU’s objectives in training. Through their regulatory and service functions, they are able to identify where training is needed and how it should be delivered in order to have a direct impact on the rights of citizens and businesses while contributing to the rule of law in their Member State. The TRADICIL project is the result of a reinforced collaboration between the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF), the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), and Bars and Law Societies from several EU Member States. It addresses lawyers’ training needs in two specific areas of EU law: digitalisation of justice and EU civil law.

The project is based on an assessment of lawyers’ evolving training needs, covering both established areas such as family and succession law and timely topics relating to the digitalisation of justice in the EU. It also takes into account the format in which



training should be delivered, combining online and in-person activities in order to accommodate different fields of practice and facilitate networking between participants.

Under TRADICIL, at least 500 lawyers from 26 EU Member States will receive training on digitalisation of justice through two pan-European hybrid events addressing various aspects of digital judicial procedures. In addition, 316 lawyers from eleven Member States will participate in ten in-person seminars on EU family and succession law. The material resulting from the training activities will be made freely available for consultation and download on the ELF website.

Communication activities will aim to reach the largest possible group of potential participants in the training activities and to keep EU Bars and lawyers informed about the project’s progress. By strengthening lawyers’ expertise in EU law, TRADICIL contributes to the EU’s objective of continuing training on EU law reaching 15% of lawyers in the EU. The main target group is lawyers, while EU Bars are also involved and informed through the project’s activities and dissemination efforts.

# Who's Who

## — Presidency



Thierry Wickers  
President



Roman Završek  
First Vice-President

Alex Tallon  
Second Vice-President

Imbi Jürgen  
Third Vice-President

# Committees & Working Groups Chairs



Noemí Alarcón Velasco  
Migration



Alix Frank-Thomasser  
Company Law



Éric Balate  
Deontology



Aldo Bulgarelli  
Quality



Herman Buyskens  
Insurance



Claudio Cocuzza  
Anti-Money Laundering



Sebastian Cording  
Surveillance



Beatrice Deshayes  
European Private Law



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Permanent Delegation to the  
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(PD STRAS)



David Lévy  
International Legal Services



Jean-Marc Gollier  
Environment and Climate Change



Klavdija Kerin  
Platform for Exchange,  
Cooperation and Outreach  
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Training



Salvador Guerrero Palomares  
Criminal Law



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Future of the Legal Profession  
and Legal Services



Élodie Mulon  
Family and  
Succession Law



Dominic Gerstberger  
IT Law



Laurent Petitti  
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Przemysław Kamil Rosiak  
Permanent Delegation to the  
Court of Justice and the General  
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Elisabeth Scheuba  
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Young Lawyers



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