

CCBE statement in support of the American Bar Association (ABA)

4 April 2025

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 45 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers. The CCBE stands in strong and unwavering solidarity with the American Bar Association (ABA) as it defends the foundational principles of justice, democracy, and the rule of law. The ABA's call for adherence to the core values that have shaped American democracy for over 200 years - defending judges and courts, acknowledging their vital role, upholding the rule of law, and respecting the separation of powers - resonates deeply with the legal community worldwide. These principles are not just cornerstones of American democracy, but universal pillars that safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals everywhere. The CCBE unequivocally supports these values, which are essential for ensuring that justice is administered fairly, impartially, and without political interference.

The efforts of any government to use power to punish individuals and law firms based on their representation of clients or their legal positions are a clear violation of the core principle of legal independence. The CCBE echoes the ABA's firm rejection of these practices. Lawyers have a duty to act in the best interest of their clients, and no lawyer should face retaliation for fulfilling this duty. The actions of any government against law firms and legal professionals only serve to undermine the rights of clients to access justice and deny individuals their fundamental right to receive advice and representation. The CCBE affirms that such actions must be condemned in the strongest terms.

The principles upheld by the ABA are not mere ideals - they are the bedrock upon which democratic societies are built. The CCBE stands united with the ABA in calling for the protection of these principles, which are vital not only to the legal profession, but to the well-being and stability of society as a whole. The global legal community must remain vigilant and united in the defence of judicial independence, the rule of law, and the fundamental rights of all individuals.

Respect for the rule of law is the foundation of a democratic society. Without such respect, citizens are condemned to live in a State where the only law is the naked exercise of arbitrary power.

The CCBE therefore 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.

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