

Interview with the CCBE President in 2026

ROMAN ZAVRŠEK

What is your professional background and what are your interests outside your work as a lawyer?

Professional background

Roman Završek:

I am a Slovenian lawyer and the Managing Partner at Law Firm Završek & Šnajder LLC, where I focus on civil and corporate law and human rights, and represent clients before domestic courts as well as international courts (European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the EU.) Since 2005, I have led my own law practice, which I then transformed into a limited liability company and after the acquisition of another law firm in 2018 I have been the Managing Partner at Law firm Završek & Šnajder L.L.C. in Ljubljana.

My academic foundation is at the University of Ljubljana, where I graduated cum laude in law (LLM) and completed a master's degree in science examining the "right to be tried within a reasonable time" under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Early in my career, I trained at the Ljubljana Appellate Court and later worked in the Registry of the European Court of Human

Rights in Strasbourg as a legal adviser for Slovenia, experiences that shaped my approach to advocacy and legal policy.

Alongside my practice, I have held a number of leadership roles in the profession: I currently serve as President of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), having previously chaired its PECO Committee, and I served as President of the Slovenian Bar Association for three terms from 2012 to 2021. I am also a Member of the Board of Trustees at the Academy of European Law (ERA) and an adviser to the AI Ethics and Integrity International Association, reflecting my ongoing engagement with the evolution of legal practice and responsible innovation and Council of Europe expert. Earlier in my career, I worked as a Legal Adviser in the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights and as a legal consultant in the telecommunications sector, experiences that shaped my practical, policy-aware approach to advocacy.

Over the years I have contributed to legislative and policy work — including initiatives on the Law on Advocacy in Slovenia — and have published in domestic and foreign legal journals. I have also been



> Roman Završek officially assumed the position of CCBE President on 1 January 2026.

honoured by heads of state and regional bar associations for contributions to the legal profession across Central and South-Eastern Europe. I am fluent in English and proficient in German and several regional languages, which supports my cross-border work and engagement.

Interests outside legal work

Outside my work as a lawyer, I am an avid sports enthusiast. I played ice hockey for 11 years, mostly for the city team Olimpija and was a member of Slovenia's and ex-Yugoslavia national junior teams. I continue to enjoy tennis (including coaching), mountain biking, golf, alpine and cross country skiing. Time on the ring and in the mountains keeps me grounded, fosters teamwork, and refreshes the discipline I bring to my cases and leadership roles.

Why did you want to become CCBE President?

My aspiration to lead the CCBE is rooted in a lifelong commitment to the legal profession and its fundamental values—*independence, integrity, and the protection of human rights*. Over the years, I have seen how strong leadership can shape not only national legal communities but also the broader European landscape. As President of the Slovenian Bar Association, I faced significant challenges: steering the profession through legislative reforms, defending the independence of lawyers during periods of political pressure, and leading the successful resolution of a major dispute with the government regarding unlawful searches of law firms. These experiences taught me the importance of resilience, consensus-building, and transparent communication.

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> Roman Završek moderating a panel discussion on *Digitalisation of justice systems and its implications for the legal profession* at the European Parliament during the CCBE-ELF event on 3 October 2025.

→ Continued: "Why did you want to become CCBE President?"

At the European level, the CCBE represents over a million lawyers from 46 countries. The presidency offers a unique opportunity to foster cooperation and innovation, especially as we navigate the digital transformation of justice and the evolving demands on our profession. For example, chairing the CCBE PECO Committee required balancing diverse perspectives from member states and building bridges between legal traditions—sometimes in the face of conflicting interests or rapid regulatory changes.

Ultimately, I sought the CCBE presidency to help ensure that lawyers across Europe remain united in defending the rule of law and access to justice. My goal is to strengthen our collective voice, support the profession through change, and uphold the values that define us.

What issues will the CCBE be focusing on this year?

As the CCBE looks ahead to 2026, it does so with a strong commitment to shaping the future of the legal profession in Europe. In a changing world, the CCBE will continue to serve as a trusted, forward-looking voice for Europe's bars and law societies, actively engaging with European and international institutions to anticipate challenges and seize opportunities.

Building on the wonderful momentum of recent years, 2026 promises to be a dynamic and impactful year in which the CCBE will strengthen the rule of law, advance access to justice and support lawyers in fulfilling their essential role at the heart of democratic societies.

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The priorities of the CCBE in 2026

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Committee meetings

The 26 CCBE Committees will be focussing on an enormous range of issues in 2026. Each Committee has a comprehensive indicative list of issues which it prepares when looking forward to the year ahead. The work of the Committees covers a wide range of issues from justice, technology, deontology and human rights issues

Through our Committees, the CCBE engages continuously with the European Commission, contributing to legislative and policy-making processes through consultations, expert input, position papers, and participation in stakeholder forums. This engagement spans key areas such as the rule of law, digitalisation of justice, procedural rights, anti-money laundering, access to justice, and the protection of professional secrecy.

The CCBE will also maintain close relations with the European Parliament, particularly with relevant parliamentary committees, ensuring that the perspective of lawyers is taken into account during legislative scrutiny and debate. Regular exchanges with the European Parliament support informed decision-making on justice, fundamental rights, and internal market matters affecting legal services.

The CCBE also looks forward to its interactions with the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, Council of Europe as well as its exchanges with the other bodies including the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, and the European Public Prosecutor's Office and United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and many other stakeholders.

Commission Rule of Law Report

The CCBE will continue to play an active and constructive role in contributing to the European Commission's annual Rule of Law Report by providing detailed, practice-based insights drawn from its member bars and law societies across Europe. Building on its established methodology, the CCBE will submit targeted contributions focusing in particular on access to justice, the independence and safety of lawyers, professional secrecy, and the effective functioning of justice systems. By consolidating national-level information and identifying cross-cutting trends and concerns, the CCBE helps ensure that the Report accurately reflects the realities

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The priorities of the CCBE in 2026

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→ Continued: "What issues will the CCBE be focusing on this year?"

faced by the legal profession and justice users, while supporting the Commission's efforts to strengthen the rule of law as a foundational value of the European Union.

Convention on the protection of the profession of lawyer

The CCBE will continue and intensify its efforts to promote the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer, building on the significant focus devoted to this instrument in 2025. Recognising the Convention as a landmark achievement for the independence and safety of lawyers across Europe, the CCBE will continue to engage with national bars, governments, and relevant European and international institutions to raise awareness of its importance and practical implications. Through these efforts, the CCBE aims to ensure that the Convention becomes a robust and widely adopted standard, strengthening the protection of lawyers, access to justice, and the rule of law throughout Europe and beyond.

Justice strand of the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations

The CCBE will also follow and provide input to the negotiations on the Justice strand of the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations. In this context, the CCBE will work towards ensuring that EU institutions and Member States understand that adequate and stable EU funding for justice is essential to uphold the rule of law, ensure effective access to justice, and support the uniform application of EU law across Member States. It is also key that training needs for lawyers are supported as part of the justice programme.

Global Cooperation with the Legal Profession

Beyond its member Bars and Law Societies, the CCBE will continue to cooperate with global bar associations and legal organisations, recognising the increasingly international nature of legal practice and the shared challenges facing the profession worldwide. The CCBE maintains strong links with many organisations and through these exchanges, the CCBE participates in global exchanges on the rule of law, the independence of the legal profession, access to justice, legal ethics, and



> From left to right: Imbi Jürgen, Second Vice-President of the CCBE, Roman Završek, President of the CCBE, Alex Tallon, First Vice-President of the CCBE, and Noemí Alarcón Velasco, Third Vice-President of the CCBE.

emerging challenges such as digitalisation and artificial intelligence. This international cooperation enables the exchange of best practices, coordinated advocacy on issues of common concern, and joint responses to threats against lawyers and legal institutions worldwide.

Looking ahead to 2026

The CCBE enters the year with confidence, ambition and a strong sense of purpose. Building on its deep institutional expertise, broad stakeholder engagement and trusted voice at European and international level, the CCBE will continue to act as a proactive, constructive and unifying force for the legal profession. Through forward-looking policy work, close cooperation with European institutions and global partners, and unwavering commitment to the rule of law, fundamental rights and the independence

of lawyers, the CCBE is well placed to shape positive outcomes for justice systems and society at large.

2026 will be a year of continued momentum, meaningful impact and renewed opportunities to strengthen the role of lawyers as essential guardians of justice in Europe and beyond.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these insights. I look forward to working together with colleagues across Europe to uphold the values of our profession and to ensure that lawyers remain essential guardians of justice in an ever-changing world. ■

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