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Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe
The voice of European Lawyers

Rue Joseph II, 40/8 - B-1000 Brussels
+32 (0)2 234 65 10 | ccbe@ccbe.eu | www.ccbe.eu

CCBE contribution for the European Judicial Training Strategy 2025-2030

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Introduction

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries, and through them more than one million European lawyers. The CCBE responds regularly on behalf of its members on policy issues which affect European citizens and lawyers.

While placing strong emphasis on the respect of the rule of law, democratic principles, and fundamental rights, the CCBE welcomes the efforts of the European Commission to further develop the EU policy on judicial training for justice professionals, especially for lawyers, and is committed to contributing its expertise to this work.

The CCBE attaches great importance on the continuation of an EU policy designed to carry forward the principles established in the current European Judicial Training Strategy of the European Commission. Such a policy framework at EU level is vital to secure lasting political support and to ensure that both national authorities and EU institutions recognise the importance of ongoing professional development, continuous legal education, and the specific training needs of lawyers and other justice professionals.

The CCBE acknowledges the efforts of all stakeholders that have contributed to the successful implementation of the current European Judicial Training Strategy. Throughout the years, the CCBE has actively supported judicial training policy goals by encouraging its members to promote and monitor the training of lawyers at national level, thereby also providing information for the annual Judicial Training Reviews. In addition, the CCBE and its members – directly or indirectly, notably through cooperation with the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF) – have participated in different EU-funded training projects, as well as in collaboration with a wide range of institutions and training bodies, such as the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme.

At the same time, in further developing the judicial training policy at EU level, it is important to recognise and take into account the specificities of the diverse systems of judicial training of legal professionals, including lawyers, that exist across Member States.

Effectiveness of funding for judicial training of lawyers

Adequate and properly allocated funding is essential to guarantee the effectiveness of judicial training within the EU, including when it comes to lawyers. Without sufficient financial support,

such programmes are at risk of being inconsistent, underdeveloped, or inaccessible to many professionals who would greatly benefit from them. By investing in well-structured and comprehensive training, the EU not only could strengthen the knowledge and skills of lawyers but also reinforce the overall quality of justice across member states.

The CCBE considers that the funds and budget available for the judicial training of lawyers could be better coordinated to maximise effects. In this regard, a **more substantive, easily accessible, and structural EU funding mechanism for the training of lawyers should be made available**. The CCBE considers that equal EU-level training opportunities and comparable resources **equally for all legal professionals** would better ensured if a **dedicated EU funding mechanism for training of lawyers** that enables cost-effective, well-resourced, and structured training for lawyers throughout the Union is established. Such mechanism would facilitate the organisation of training programmes on a larger scale, ensuring that all lawyers, regardless of geography, have access to EU-level training opportunities. It would also provide **continuity and predictability in training**, moving away from the uncertainties of the current ad-hoc funding and project-based system, while supporting Bars and Law Societies more comprehensively in their role. The CCBE has already underscored these concerns in its *Manifesto for the June 2024 European Parliament Elections* and its recommendations for the new European Commission (2024–2029).

The CCBE firmly believes that a coherent, sustainable, and well-funded EU framework for lawyer training is essential. By investing in the competence of the legal profession, the EU invests in the quality of justice itself, strengthens the rule of law, and reinforces citizens' trust in the legal system.

Content of the judicial training for lawyers and methodology

The CCBE strongly supports the continuation of a comprehensive European Judicial Training Strategy that places a strong emphasis on the **promotion and protection of fundamental rights, as well as the safeguarding of the rule of law**. Such a strategy would ensure that legal professionals across Europe, including lawyers, are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and shared values necessary to uphold democratic principles and maintain public trust in justice systems.

The forthcoming Judicial Training Strategy should prioritise equipping legal professionals with the **skills and knowledge required to adapt to the digital transformation of justice systems**. The objectives in this regard must focus on quality over quantity, addressing diverse needs across professions.

The digitalisation of justice is not a temporary trend but a structural change also influencing the skills of legal professionals. The CCBE considers that lawyers must be systematically trained to work within this new environment at all stages of a lawyer's career. It is important to note that there is a need for regular and continuing professional development covering rapidly developing tools, digital platforms, management and communication methods.

By strengthening training in these areas, the lawyers will be able to adapt to innovation while enabling them to continue to serve clients effectively and protect the rule of law. While digitalisation is a vital and growing area, it must not be allowed to overshadow the importance of strong foundations in substantive EU law.

Training content should **integrate digital competencies into general professional education**, covering areas such as digital literacy, use of e-justice tools, cross-border procedures, AI applications, cybersecurity, e-evidence, and online dispute resolution, alongside enduring priorities like the rule of law, human rights, and ethics.

To make training impactful, **practical modules** – such as case studies of digital justice systems in Member States – should complement courses on substantive EU law, particularly new legislative frameworks governing cross-border judicial cooperation and data exchange. Embedding these digital skills within regular training will help lawyers and other practitioners shift their professional mindset toward embracing digital justice. Structurally, training objectives should be flexible to accommodate differences in age, experience, and professional backgrounds, while encouraging cross-professional training for shared understanding of country-specific challenges.

Digital skills are a means of applying the law more efficiently, but they cannot replace legal knowledge itself. Training must be tailored to the lawyer's field while ensuring awareness of when and how EU law applies. European Judicial training must therefore **maintain a strong emphasis on substantive and procedural EU and national law, non-legal skills, soft skills and, most importantly, all relevant trainings related to deontological rules and ethical principles important for the profession**. The balance would be needed to prevent an overemphasis on technology at the expense of core legal knowledge, which remains indispensable for legal reasoning, advocacy, and the protection of citizens' rights. Only a balanced approach to training methods will ensure that digitalisation enhances the quality of legal education. Non-legal competences are equally important. Lawyers need skills in negotiation, emotional intelligence, intercultural communication, and project management. Innovative methods, such as workshops with virtual reality scenarios, can help simulate negotiations and court procedures, fostering practical experience in a modern, engaging way.

An adaptation of training methodologies is also important for the training of lawyers, enabling them to embrace innovation while upholding the highest professional standards and protecting citizens' rights. There is a clear need to update training methodologies to reflect the evolving legal profession and the increasing role of new technologies, including AI. A blended learning approach, combining online theoretical modules with in-person practical sessions, is recommended to cater to diverse learning preferences. Integrating gamification, such as leaderboards and incentives like Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits, can enhance engagement and motivation.

In-person training remains important, particularly for practical skills, while cross-border training benefits from a combination of online and in-person sessions to reach a wider audience. Sharing successful project outcomes and creating sandbox platforms for experimentation would further improve training effectiveness.

Ongoing adaptation is essential to align courses with technological advancements, using methods such as virtual reality, short frequent videos, simulations, and hands-on practice. Overall, training should focus on practical application, collaboration, and experiential learning.

A centralised European Training Platform (ETP) could be better developed and promoted providing the access to comprehensive courses, facilitating experience sharing, and fostering collaboration, creating a continuous learning community.

Sustainability and long-term impact of judicial training at EU level

Ensuring the sustainability and long-term impact of judicial training requires a **flexible approach to the design and implementation of courses**, allowing for adaptations within the framework of approved project proposals. Training should, wherever possible, adopt a **multidisciplinary and cross-professional perspective**, while also making full use of digital learning tools and methods. It is equally important to ensure that courses are tailored to different levels of expertise, ranging from beginners to advanced practitioners and experts.

A broader commitment is needed to support the delivery of training in participants' native languages, thereby enhancing accessibility and effectiveness.

Training should be aligned with current legal challenges at both EU and national levels, and responsive to identified national training needs. This includes not only a focus on EU legal instruments, but also on specific areas of law such as family law, insolvency, anti-money laundering, and migration. Complementary skills are equally important, including ethics, interpersonal competencies, and language proficiency. The 'train-the-trainers' mechanism should receive stronger support to secure sustainable, high-quality dissemination of knowledge.

Cross-professional projects addressing common interests and goals across the legal professions – such as initiatives similar to the Court of Justice training videos project coordinated by the European Commission—should be organised and coordinated more widely.