

CCBE Info

N° 61
April 2017

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JOINT STATEMENT BY LAWYERS, JUDGES, AND JOURNALISTS ON THE ONGOING CRACKDOWN ON THE RULE OF LAW IN TURKEY

On 5 April, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), and the European Association of Judges (EAJ) issued a joint statement firmly condemning the ongoing widespread persecution of lawyers, journalists, judges and prosecutors in Turkey. This is the first time that these three professions have taken such a joint initiative. In the statement, the organisations called for the Turkish government to:

- Restore an independent judicial system in accordance with the rule of law.
- Ensure freedom of expression and of the media.
- Guarantee to all citizens the fundamental right of access to justice and access to a lawyer.
- Respect its international commitments to protect human rights, as guaranteed under the European Convention of Human Rights and other international agreements.
- Release all judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and journalists who have unduly been detained for carrying out their professional activities.
- Uphold the rule of law and democracy in the country.
- Bring an end to the persecution of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and journalists.

The full statement can be found [here](#).

PUBLICATION OF 2017 EU JUSTICE SCOREBOARD

On 10 April, the European Commission published the 2017 EU Justice Scoreboard, which gives a comparative overview of the efficiency, quality, and independence of justice systems in the EU Member States. The aim of the Scoreboard is to assist national authorities in their efforts to improve their justice systems, by providing this comparative data.

The CCBE contributed to the following parts of the EU Justice Scoreboard:

- Income threshold for legal aid in a specific consumer case
- Exchanges between courts and lawyers:
 - * Use of ICT between courts and lawyers;

* Reasons for the (non-)use of ICT between courts and lawyers

The 2017 Justice Scoreboard can be found [here](#).

LETTER OF CONCERN WITH REGARD TO CHINESE LAWYERS IN DETENTION AND TO THE SITUATION OF THEIR RELATIVES

On 24 April, the CCBE co-signed a letter addressed to the Chinese Minister of Public Security, Mr Guo Shengkun Buzhang, in which was expressed grave concerns about the continued mistreatment of detained lawyers in China since July 2015, and the increased harassment and surveillance imposed on their relatives.

The letter was signed by the following organisations: The International Observatory of Lawyers in Danger; The Geneva Bar Association; The Paris Bar Association; UIA

(International Association of Lawyers); ACAT; Lawyers for Lawyers; Institut des droits de l'Homme du barreau de Paris.

The above-mentioned organisations called for the Chinese government to respect its international commitments with regard to human rights and specific safeguards for lawyers, and urged the Chinese authorities to cease harassing the family members of detained lawyers.

The letter can be found [here](#).

MEETING OF A DELEGATION OF POLISH JUDGES IN BRUSSELS

On 24 April, the CCBE was invited by the European Network of Councils of the Judiciary (ENCJ) to attend, as an observer, a meeting with a delegation of Polish judges organised by the European Commission. At the event, the Polish Judges expressed their concerns about current initiatives regarding the organisation of the Judiciary in Poland:

- A draft legislation which aims to reform completely the Polish Council of the Judiciary giving nearly exclusive power to the executive to nominate judges;
- 500 vacant positions for judges are not being filled, as the new nomination procedure has not yet been decided;

- Several legislative proposals are being drafted to reform courts and tribunals, affecting the term of nomination of sitting judges; An aggressive campaign is being conducted in government owned media to undermine the trust in judges and the reliability of the judiciary system;
- Judges and spokespersons for the judiciary are being personally harassed and put under pressure to resign.

The CCBE is concerned and is following very closely the evolution of the judiciary in Poland, and fully supports its Polish member in its efforts to defend and protect the rule of law.

Furthermore, on 20 May, the first ever Congress of Polish Lawyers will be jointly organised by two Polish Bars together with Polish judges. The Congress of Polish Lawyers will have three main themes: judicial independence, the professional lawyer as a guarantor of citizens' rights, and access to justice as basic human right.

More information about the congress can be found [here](#) (in Polish only).

EUROPEAN CRIMINAL BAR ASSOCIATION (ECBA) CONFERENCE, PRAGUE

CCBE 1st Vice-President, Antonín Mokrý, participated in the ECBA conference in Prague which took place on 21 and 22 April. Vice-President Mokrý, referred to the wonderful cooperation over many years between the CCBE and ECBA. This cooperation goes back a long way, and first started at the time of the discussions on the European Arrest Warrant back in 2001. Ever since, the two organisations have supported each other and worked with each other with a common goal of promoting defence rights.

Iain Mitchell QC, Chair of the CCBE Working Group on Surveillance also spoke at the conference on the subject of “Protection of Clients’ information in the Age of IT” as did the Chair of the CCBE Criminal Law Committee, James MacGuill, who addressed the participants on the subject of the European Public Prosecutor.

EP: WORKSHOP ON THE TRAINING OF JUDGES AND LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

On 12 April, the Policy Department for Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs organised a workshop on “The training of judges and legal practitioners – ensuring the full application of EU law” for the European Parliament JURI and LIBE Committees.

Pier Giovanni Traversa, chair of the CCBE Training committee, participated for the CCBE. He reported on the role, mission and results achieved by the Training Committee in the field of European Judicial Training (EJT) and the results of the two main EU financed projects:

the European Training Platform and the joint CCBE EIPA study on the state of play of lawyers’ training in EU law. Furthermore, he announced that the CCBE will organise in December 2017 (date TBC), in Brussels, a conference dedicated to the training of lawyers which will deal with a number of topics: the future of training, new training methods, training in EU law and support tools, and cooperation amongst training providers.

At the workshop, the European Commission announced that it will launch a public consultation in May to prepare a New Training Strategy. The aim is to find out more about particular needs of particular legal professionals. The Commission will also organise a conference in November which will bring together relevant stakeholders to consider ideas and strategies of all legal practitioners to feed into the New Training Strategy.

More information about the workshop can be found on the [CCBE’s training blog](#).

FIND-A-LAWYER 3 PROJECT

One of the goals of the Find-A-Lawyer project 3 was to improve the [Find-A-Lawyer Search Engine](#) on the European Commission’s [e-Justice portal](#), and during the 18 months of the project’s lifecycle (October 2015 – April 2017), citizens, legal professionals and businesses using the search engine have already benefited from the continuous effort of bars to improve their lawyers’ registers and increase the quality and consistency of lawyers’ data. International format for phone numbers, faster response time, reduction of failed queries, extension of supported search fields, dissemination activities at national level, adoption of new security protocols and mitigation of technical problems are examples of the

activities undertaken by the bars to offer a better tool to the users of the e-Justice portal. Further, the increase in the number of FAL 1 participating bars offers the chance to EU citizens to find the right lawyer in an expanding number of European countries.



At the same time, the Feasibility Study produced in the course of the FAL 3 project offers useful recommendations to the European Commission on new functionalities in the current Find-A-Lawyer Search Engine, analyses sensitive features of lawyers search engines and looks at the future of lawyers’ e-ID in the coming

landscape of a much wider extension of e-government services, in which lawyers will be expected to participate.

Finally, the expansion and continuous operation of Find-A-Lawyer 2 (electronic verification of lawyers through their bars), as well as its successful interconnection with the e-CODEX system – another of the project’s goals – increased the usefulness of this important tool which

aims at replacing bureaucratic and high-cost cross-border procedures, simplifying lawyers’ work in cross-border proceedings, and reducing the cost of such proceedings for the benefit of EU citizens.

GERMAN LAW STUDY COURSE IN BRUSSELS AND AMSTERDAM

The Dutch speaking Brussels Bar (NOAB), the Deutscher Anwaltverein (DAV) and the Centre for Professional Legal Education of the Radboud University (CPO) are jointly organising a Course of study of German law in 2017 and 2018.

This course offers a unique chance to acquire in-depth knowledge of German law on a variety of topics such as contract law, insolvency law, employment law, tax law, and company law. The different modules are taught by German attorneys and professors, who are all experts in their

respective fields. The course will take place in May and November 2017 and in spring 2018

More information about the course can be found [here](#) (in Dutch only).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 19 May** *CCBE Plenary Session, Edinburgh*
- 24-25 May** *IBA 12th Annual Bar Leaders’ Conference, Belfast*
- 24-26 May** *68th Annual Conference of the DAV, Essen*