



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

European Commission sets goal of training 700,000 legal professionals in EU law by 2020

Brussels, 13 September 2011 - The European Commission has set a clear target for increasing the numbers of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other legal practitioners trained in European law. In a policy paper agreed today, the European Commission aims to ensure that half of all legal practitioners in the European Union – around 700,000 – participate in some form of European judicial training by 2020. The aim is to equip legal practitioners to apply European law – which is part of their role as judges and lawyers at national level. It will also help to build mutual trust between Europe's different legal systems and improve the implementation of European legislation. This will benefit people and businesses in Europe, who will be able to rely on swift decisions and proper respect for the rules.

"An independent, well-trained and efficient judiciary is essential for a functioning judicial area and single market in Europe. It caters for good and prompt judicial decisions strengthening predictability and legal certainty. As European law is part of everyday life, citizens and businesses want to know that they can count on a knowledgeable and well-trained judiciary across the Union enabling them to exercise their rights and get justice. But judges and lawyers delivering such justice need to know the rules to be able to apply them effectively," said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. *"That's why I want to set a clear and ambitious target for expanding training in how the judiciaries in Europe apply European law. This will help cement our efforts to create an EU-wide area of justice, improving the way the internal market operates. Judicial training is central to a modern and well-functioning judiciary capable of reducing the higher risks and higher transactions costs that impede economic growth. European judicial training is therefore a much needed investment to develop justice for growth."*

Background

There are around 1.4 million legal practitioners in the EU, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs and court staff. The Commission wants to enable at least half of these legal practitioners to participate in European judicial training at local, national or European level by 2020. It has set an additional target of ensuring that all legal practitioners benefit from at least one week's training in EU law during their career.

To achieve this, it has called on national governments, councils for the judiciary, professional bodies and judicial training institutions both at EU and national level to commit to integrating EU law into their training programmes and to increasing the volume of courses and participants.

The Commission itself intends to facilitate access to EU funding to support high-quality training projects, including e-learning. Under the EU's new multi-annual financial framework, the Commission has proposed to make European judicial training a major priority, with the aim of training more than 20,000 legal practitioners a year by 2020.

To help build a common European judicial culture based on mutual trust, the Commission will launch a two-week exchange programme for new judges and prosecutors from 2014 onwards. The Commission will support training through the [European e-Justice Portal](#) – the EU's one-stop shop for laws and access to justice in all EU countries – and by sharing practical guidelines on training methodologies and evaluation.

The Commission will also encourage public-private partnerships to develop innovative training solutions. The Commission will build on the strengths of all existing training providers, including the European Judicial Training Network ([EJTN](#)), the Academy of European Law ([ERA](#)) and the European-level legal professional organisations: the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary ([ENCJ](#)), the [Association](#) of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the EU, the [Network](#) of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe ([CCBE](#)), the Council of Notaries of the EU ([CNUE](#)), International Union of Judicial Officers ([UIHJ](#)) and the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association ([EULITA](#)).

European judicial training may take place during initial or life-long training periods. It covers:

- EU legislation, including substantive and procedural law, together with the corresponding case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union,
- knowledge of national judicial systems.

These strands may be supported by linguistic training. The European judicial training scheme includes two complementary components: judicial training activities in general, whether organised at local, national or European level, and cross-border exchanges.

Legal Basis

Judicial training is primarily a national responsibility, as highlighted in a Council [Resolution](#) in 2008. The Lisbon Treaty (articles 81.2.h and 82.1.c of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), calls on the EU to "support the training of the judiciary and of judicial staff" in both civil and criminal matters.

Training judges and legal practitioners in how to apply European law is one of the key recommendations for action of former European Commissioner Mario Monti's [report](#) on 9 May 2010 "A New Strategy for the Single Market." The report urged European leaders to remove the remaining bottlenecks that are hampering innovation and dampening Europe's growth potential.

The [Stockholm Programme](#), which outlines measures to create a single area of justice in the EU, was endorsed by national governments in December 2009 and called for strong EU action to support national training efforts as well as developing EU level training mechanisms. The European Parliament has also consistently underlined that proper judicial training contributes significantly towards improving the operation of the internal market and making it easier for citizens to exercise their [rights](#).

At the end of 2010, the Commission consulted Member States, [Justice Forum](#) members, the European Judicial Training Network and its members. The summary of the findings of the consultation can be found [here](#).

For more information:

Justice Directorate General Newsroom:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/index_en.htm

European judicial training:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/european-judicial-training/index_en.htm

European e-Justice Portal – [judicial training section](#)

Homepage of Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner:

<http://ec.europa.eu/reding>

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