

“Development of the human rights lawyers’ community: theory and practice”

Place: EHU, Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights, Vilnius, Lithuania

Format: hybrid – online via zoom / offline at EHU Campus, Vilnius, Savičiaus str. 17

Partners: Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights, EHU; International Partnership ILIA; Belarusian association of Human Rights Lawyers; Lawyers for Lawyers.

FORUMCIV.



Center for Constitutionalism
and Human Rights



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IDEAS LEADERSHIP HOPE



19 — 20 April 2024

Vilnius, Lithuania

PURPOSES:

- 1.** To strengthen the legal community of the Eastern European region on the basis of common values, competencies and approaches so as to enhance access to justice, and the protection and promotion of human rights.
- 2.** To reveal the possibilities of improving access to justice through the activities of human rights lawyers.
- 3.** To discuss the issues of professional training of lawyers in the field of human rights and strengthening the learning outcomes.

SOURCES:

1. Report of UNSR Margaret Satterthwaite, "The Promise of Legal Empowerment in Advancing Access to Justice for All." A/HRC/53/31, 2023.
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/O66/58/pdf/g2306658.pdf?token=qViOfijt5Su3nPjqGQ&fe=true>
2. PROFESSION OF LAWYER: STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A NEW EUROPEAN LEGAL INSTRUMENT, Report prepared by Jeremy McBride, consultant, 2021.
https://regionallawyersnetwork.coe.int/images/studies/Study_on_the_feasibility_of_a_new_binding_or_non-binding_European_legal_instrument_on_the_profession_of_lawyer_possible_added-value_and_effectiveness.pdf

The conference is organized by alumni and partners of the educational programme "Lawyers for the rule of law. Education and professional training". The programme is a unique place aimed at enriching lawyers with knowledge necessary for daily law practice as well as at preparation on legal assistance for those, who are made to apply to international judicial and quasi-judicial bodies because of military actions and the human rights crisis.

The programme includes a set of materials that orient the participants of the training to comprehend and implement approaches, initiated by UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Report "The promise of legal empowerment in advancing access to justice for all" is oriented at the improvements of the effectiveness of access to justice by focusing on the interests of the people. The Special Rapporteur suggests not to limit ourselves to a "superficial approach" and "not to persist in maintaining the usual methods of work".

The conference is designed to present and discuss best practices and support human rights lawyers who have already started implementing these methods in their activities.

Joint training is both a platform for interaction between lawyers from the region and serves to unite them.

The mutual exchange of information contributes to the disclosure of knowledge about international standards and existing legal mechanisms. In a region where non-legal methods of conflict resolution are becoming more widespread, the work of human rights lawyers in the sphere of public justice will contribute to the fight against selflessness and restore confidence in international law.

The solidarity of the training participants is important to counter the pressure of authoritarian states on the work of human rights lawyers and interference into the activities of professional bar associations. Interaction and cooperation with bar associations of European countries makes it possible to elevate the role in the realization of the right to protection and access to justice in these countries.

09.45 – 10.00

Registration of participants.

10.00 – 10.20

Opening of the conference.

10.20 – 11.40

Overcoming the gap between norms and reality: the role of human rights lawyers in ensuring access to justice (European and international context).

Liudmila Ulyashyna, European humanities university, head of Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights

Judith Lichtenberg, Netherlands, “Lawyers for Lawyers”, Observer in the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Lawyers of the Council of Europe.

Representatives of international organizations and international bar associations – **to be confirmed**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What are the main obstacles to the realization of access to the justice system for all European countries?

Will the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on Lawyers lead to an expansion of the circle of “defenders of justice”, which includes human rights lawyers who have been deprived of their status for their professional activities in undemocratic countries?

What is the role of the bar associations established on the territory of the European Union in enhancing access to justice through the activities of human rights lawyers?

What instruments of solidarity and networking between EU lawyers and lawyers in the region exist today, what new ways of communication are needed for more effective interaction?

Moderator: **to be confirmed**

Reporter: **Ulyana Belaya**

12.00 – 13.30

“Lawyers for the rule of law. Education and professional training”: methods, learning outcomes, and alumni collaboration.

EXPERTS:

Natallia Matskevich, scientific coordinator of “Lawyers for the rule of law. Education and professional training”

Lela Metreveli, head of “Lawyers for the rule of law. Education and professional training”

National experts of the programme

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What educational opportunities for human rights lawyers exist in the countries of the region?

Which target groups are in demand for such education?

What are the educational needs for lawyers in the region?

What are the approaches and methods of the “Lawyers for the rule of law. Education and professional training” would you use in your educational programs, and which ones would not?

Are there prerequisites for the creation of the European Association of Human Rights Lawyers based on the currently existing informal community of experts and graduates of legal training programs in Eastern European countries?

Moderator: **Natallia Matskevich**

Reporter: **to be confirmed**

13.30 – 14.30

Lunch.

14.30 – 15.40

Association of Human Rights Lawyers: challenges and prospects.

EXPERTS:

Mary Kolesava-Hudzilina and members of Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Self-administration and ethical standards of the Independent Bar Association: legal standards and validity

Problems and prospects of the Association of Human Rights Lawyers: how is life an independent bar association in exile

Is there a need for an Association of Human Rights Lawyers in democratic countries where national bar associations exist?

Moderator: **Lela Metreveli**

Reporter: **Uladzimir Pylchanka**

PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE

Day 2, April 20th, 2024

FACILITATORS:

Anna Dobrovolskaya, Systemic Solutions, human rights defender, Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights volunteer

Irina Glubokaya, Systemic Solutions, phsycologist, Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights volunteer

10.00 –11:20

Introduction to the day.

Challenges for the legal community in the context of new legal ecosystems (emigration, repression, war) in the context of the crisis of the international human rights monitoring system and the rejection of authoritarian states from their international obligations.

Discussion in small groups.

11.20 – 11.40

Break.

11.40 – 13.00

Challenges for the legal community in the context of new legal ecosystems (emigration, repression, war) in the context of the crisis of the international human rights monitoring system and the rejection of authoritarian states from their international obligations.

Continuation of the group work, fixation and presentation of the results, discussion.

13.00 – 14.20

Lunch.

14.20 – 15.40

Options and opportunities for international cooperation of lawyers as a response to modern challenges.

Work in small groups with further discussions.

15.40 – 16.40

Closure of the conference.