

---

Funded  
by the European Union  
and the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

---

Implemented  
by the Council of Europe

European Union and Council of Europe  
**Partnership for Good Governance 2019-2022**

**Regional Project**  
**“Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards”**

## **CONCEPT PAPER**

“On supporting the youth in the legal profession in the five Eastern Partnership countries  
(Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine)”

**September 2021**

*This concept paper has been produced as part of a project co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of either party.*

*The reproduction of extracts (up to 500 words) is authorised, except for commercial purposes as long as the integrity of the text is preserved, the excerpt is not used out of context, does not provide incomplete information or does not otherwise mislead the reader as to the nature, scope or content of the text. The source text must always be acknowledged as follows “© Council of Europe, 2021”.*

*All other requests concerning the reproduction/translation of all or part of the document, should be addressed to the Directorate of Communications, Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or [publishing@coe.int](mailto:publishing@coe.int)).*

The Concept Paper has been prepared by the international experts of the Project Dr. Remigijus Jokubauskas and Mr. Michail Mittas.

## Table of Contents

BACKGROUND .....	5
I. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING NETWORKS IN THE PROJECT COUNTRIES .....	6
II. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ASSOCIATIONS OF YOUNG LEGAL PROFESSIONALS (YOUNG JUDGES OR YOUNG PROSECUTORS) .....	10
III. EXISTING INITIATIVES/PROJECTS ON STRENGTHENING YOUNG LAWYERS' NETWORKS .....	11
IV. INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS' ASSOCIATIONS.....	11
V. PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT/STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NETWORKS OF YOUNG LAWYERS .....	14

## BACKGROUND

1. The project “*Strengthening the profession of lawyer in line with European standards*” (hereinafter “*the Project*”) is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe within the framework of the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG). The Project is implemented in five countries – Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (hereinafter also “*Project Countries*”) and is focused on strengthening the cooperation between the Bar associations and law societies of the participating countries with a view to improving the internal functioning and independence of them in accordance with the Council of Europe standards and recommendations.
2. Due to the events which ensued in June 2020 after the presidential elections in Belarus, the technical co-operation with Belarus authorities has been suspended in agreement with EU DGNEAR. As a result, all Project’s activities related to the public authorities in this country were fully put on hold. Therefore, online meetings between the experts and the institutions and authorities in Belarus were not held, and the information regarding this country was collected based on desk-study only.
3. The aim of the Concept Paper is to assess the situation of the young lawyers’ associations (organisations) in the Project Countries and provide the benefits and challenges of the regional cooperation perspectives between them. Also, it should be noted that the notion of a *young lawyer* varies among the Project Countries. Often a lawyer is considered *young* during the first period (normally between 3 and 5 years) after receiving their professional license, regardless their age. An upper age limit of 40 years was pointed out as an additional criterion in Armenia and the Republic of Moldova, even though not a necessary one. Such criterion for the notion of “young lawyers” is in accordance with the international standards. For instance, the ABA Young Lawyers Division defines young lawyers as “under the age of 36 or in practice five years or less”.

The information which is used in the Concept Paper was collected through the desk-studies and during the online meetings with the representatives from the Ministries of Justice and young lawyers’ associations from the Project Countries (except of Belarus, where the meetings were not conducted), as well as international associations of young lawyers, such as the European Young Bar Association (EYBA), the European Association of Lawyers (EAL) and the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE). Also, publicly available information was used.

4. The Concept Paper is divided into five parts. First, it assesses the situation of the young lawyers’ networks from the Project Countries. Second, it provides the analysis of cooperation other associations of young legal professionals (young judges or young prosecutors). Third, it focuses on the existing initiatives/projects on strengthening young lawyers’ networks. Fourth, it provides the analysis of the existing international lawyers’ associations and possibilities of cooperation with them. Fifth, it presents the initiatives for development/strengthening the cooperation between the networks of young lawyers’ associations from the Project Countries.
5. The authors of this Concept Paper thank the staff of the Council of Europe for excellent planning and technical support which was essential for the preparation of the Concept Paper. They also appreciate the time and valuable inputs of the representatives from the Project Countries and the international associations which participated in the meetings and enriched the outcomes of this paper significantly.

## I. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING NETWORKS IN THE PROJECT COUNTRIES

### ARMENIA

6. There are few associations of young lawyers in Armenia, namely the Armenian Young Lawyers' Association and the Council of Young Advocates in the Bar of Armenia. There is also an active branch of the European Law Students Association (ELSA) which organises educational events and competitions (such as moot courts). All organisations work independently from each other but may also collaborate in specific projects. There are no associations for other young legal professionals, such as judges, prosecutors.
7. The Armenian Young Lawyers' Association was established in 2016.<sup>1</sup> There are few requirements for persons willing to become a member of this association: i) any lawyer, law student or person from 16 to 35 years, ii) payment of entrance and membership fees, iii) contribution to the statutory goals of the organisation. Also, there is a possibility for volunteering in this association under some conditions.<sup>2</sup> The association is well structured, and the main governing body of the organisation is the general assembly. It works on various projects, such as anti-corruption, transitional justice and organise public events. It has implemented the project Judicial Reforms in Armenia: Key Priorities and Challenges in 2020 and is also implementing the project "*Promoting Direct Democracy for Strengthening Human Rights in Armenia*".<sup>3</sup> The main benefits of a membership in this association are participation in summer schools, connection and networking, facilitation to find a job, educational purposes. This association is not a member of regional or international networks of lawyers. It is exclusively funded by its members' contributions, without any other state or private financial support.
8. Within the Bar of Armenia there is a Council of Young Advocates which was established in 2018 without a separate legal status and revenues of its own. The Bar of Armenia supports young advocates by providing them working places and helping with their integration in the Bar, promotes cooperation between advocates and organises professional trainings. Collaboration between the Council of Young Advocates and the Armenian Young Lawyers' Association has been observed. However, it seems that there are no common projects implemented by these associations. Likewise, there is no information about any other integration project carried out by the organisation. The Council of Young Advocates is not a member of any international young lawyers' networks. However, the need and willingness to participate in regional and international networks was emphasized.

### BELARUS

9. The information collected on the lawyers' associations in this country was done only online.
10. In Belarus the bar system consists of bodies of different level – territorial (Minsk city and regional) bar associations, Belarusian Republican Bar Association (national bar association). There is a Council of Young Lawyers established within the Belarusian

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://ayla.am/en>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ayla.am/en/about-us/volunteering>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ayla.am/en/1048.html>

Republican Bar Association. There are also associations of young lawyers established at least by the territorial bars of Minsk city bar<sup>4</sup> and Gordnensk regional bar<sup>5</sup>.

11. There are certain initiatives to establish and enhance cooperation of young lawyers in Belarus. For instance, in 2018 the Council of the Belarusian Republican Collegium of Lawyers approved the Regulation on the Councils of Young Lawyers which should have a permanent character. The purpose of their creation is to represent and protect the rights and interests of young lawyers in the governing bodies of territorial collegiums and organize their professional training. A council of young lawyers has also been established in the Minsk Regional Bar Association. It consists of a number of lawyers who have not reached the age of 35 and have expressed a will to assist the council of the collegium. Also, it was found that there are ongoing activities of the Councils of Young Lawyers. For example, in 2020 there was the first meeting of the updated composition of the Council of Young Lawyers of the Belarusian Republican Collegium of Lawyers.
12. However, there is no information about the integration projects carried out by the Council of Young Lawyers of Republican Bar or by associations of young lawyers of the territorial bars. These organisations are not a member of any international young lawyers' networks.
13. ELSA Belarus exists as a branch of ELSA Europe which focuses on development of skills of law students and meet fellow students and legal professionals.

## GEORGIA

14. There are few associations which represent young lawyers in Georgia, namely the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and the Committee of Young Lawyers of the Georgian Bar. There are no common projects between these organisations and they do not work on similar projects. ELSA Georgia exists as a branch of ELSA Europe<sup>6</sup> which focuses on organising training events and competitions (such as moot courts) and support to the traineeship abroad scheme (STEP traineeships)<sup>7</sup> for law students.
15. The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association<sup>8</sup> is the main young lawyers' association in Georgia. It has nine offices around the country and up to 800 members, over 100 staff members<sup>9</sup> and a number of partnerships with local and international organizations and donors.<sup>10</sup> Also, it has implemented various international projects in the area of human rights and has an internship programme for law students. It focuses mostly on the organisation of public events, judicial reforms, legislative proposals.
16. The Committee of Young Lawyers' Affairs of the Georgian Bar<sup>11</sup> represents young attorneys. There are 20 members in this association and they are appointed by the Bar. The main activities of this association are representation of young lawyers in the Georgian Bar, promotion of young lawyers' integration into the profession. Also, it

---

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.advokat.by/content/o\\_kollegii/organyi\\_samoupravleniya/sovet-molodykh-advokatov/](http://www.advokat.by/content/o_kollegii/organyi_samoupravleniya/sovet-molodykh-advokatov/)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.advokat.by/content/o\\_kollegii/organyi\\_samoupravleniya/sovet-molodykh-advokatov/](http://www.advokat.by/content/o_kollegii/organyi_samoupravleniya/sovet-molodykh-advokatov/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://elsa.org/about/network/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://step-app.elsa.org/home.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://gyla.ge/en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://gyla.ge/en/page/history>

<sup>10</sup> The list of donors and partners is provided: <https://gyla.ge/en/page/donors-and-partners>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gba.ge/en/committees/Committees/Committee-of-Young-Lawyers%E2%80%99-Affairs>

develops initiatives, proposals, and projects and submits them to the Chairperson and staff of the Georgian Bar.

17. The Young Barrister Association (a non-profit organisation) was founded in 2012. It cooperates with various professional groups, public institutions, private sector, international organizations and diplomats in Georgia. This association focuses on the research activity, implements various projects, prepares conclusions, recommendations, legislative proposals and initiatives, is involved in the assessment of youth policy, democratic institutions and legal reforms.<sup>12</sup> Also, it is a member of various NGOs and national associations such as the Legal Assistance Service working group within the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Alliance for “Economic Fairness and Free Business”, “Alliance of Georgia for Criminal Justice Reform”, Lawyers Rights Protection Commission of GBA, Scientific Advisory Council of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. However, it seems that this association does not implement projects and initiatives aiming the young lawyers and does not participate in regional and international projects.

## **THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

18. The main association of young lawyers in the Republic of Moldova is the Young Lawyers’ Association of the Republic of Moldova. Also, there are few organisations of young judges and young attorneys and NGO’s which work in the relevant areas. Nevertheless, the experts have not found public information of these associations.
19. Young Lawyer’s Association of the Republic of Moldova was established in 2012. It is a part of the Bar of the Republic of Moldova and does not have a separate legal status or revenues of its own. It consists of 40 members. Any lawyer up to 40 years can be a member of this association. No membership fee is collected. The main incentives for becoming a member of this organisation are networking, participation in traineeship programmes, professional activities. It has participated in drafting of various internal regulatory acts, for instance, the Ethics Code of the Bar and the Guide for Training of Lawyers. It became a member of the European Young Bar Association in 2017 and hosted its Spring Conference in 2018.
20. ELSA Republic of Moldova exists as a branch of ELSA Europe.<sup>13</sup> They mainly focus on organising training events and competitions (such as moot courts) and supporting a traineeship abroad scheme (STEP traineeships)<sup>14</sup> for law students.
21. According to the representatives from the Republic of Moldova, implementation of the *ad hoc* activities and introduction of the permanent regional and international networks would be beneficial to increase activities of young lawyers’ associations, training them on professional ethics and human rights. Activities of such associations (networks) should include regional educational programmes (various areas of laws, such as arbitration, international law, digital cyber security, criminal law), seminars by practitioners and educators, study visits for young lawyers from different countries, an electronic platform.
22. Also, it was indicated that the permanent regional network should be based on the common interests of the lawyers for the Project Countries, for instance, common European professional standards for lawyers, provision of better legal services, human

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.barristers.ge/en/page/index/5>

<sup>13</sup> <https://elsa.org/about/network/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://step-app.elsa.org/home.html>



rights, protection of lawyers. Also, it was suggested that the funding of external sources, such as the Council of Europe would be particularly important. Moreover, such projects of regional networking shall not be temporal and instead should last at least a couple of years to enhance cooperation between the associations from the Project Countries. The benefits for international regional associations would be cross-border projects, increase access to justice to citizens, educational perspectives.

## **UKRAINE**

23. In Ukraine there are several associations unifying the young lawyers.
24. The Youth Committee “UNBA NextGen” (UNBA) operates as part of the Ukrainian National Bar Association. It was established in 2018. The goals of this organisation are development of a community of young lawyers, teaching practical skills and networking. To join the UNBA, a person needs to fill in an electronic application. The main goal of the UNBA is to create a platform for sharing experiences, communication, and networking. Currently, it consists of about 1,000 members, including attorneys, attorneys’ assistants, students, and lawyers. The Ukrainian National Bar Association provides organisational and financial support to the UNBA activities. UNBA NextGen has been a member of the EYBA since 2019.
25. ELSA Ukraine exists as a branch of ELSA Europe.<sup>15</sup> They mainly focus on organising training events and competitions (such as moot courts) and supporting a traineeship abroad scheme (STEP traineeships)<sup>16</sup> for law students.
26. The Young Lawyers Forum of the All-Ukrainian Public Organisation “Ukrainian Bar Association”<sup>17</sup> organises and hosts events dedicated to professional and personal development, cooperates with international youth organisations within the forum’s activity and professional organizations which include youth divisions. The goals of this organisation are promotion of young lawyer’s successful career, creation of conditions for communication between young lawyers and their senior colleagues, participation of young lawyers in the activity and development of the Ukrainian Bar Association, increase joining to the Ukrainian Bar Association after high school graduation. The incentives to join this association are discounts on participation in paid events of the Ukrainian Bar Association; discounts on enrolment fee payment; a right to initiate own event within the subject of activity of the forum.
27. Government institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice do not interfere in the activities of the Bar or the young lawyers’ organisations. The main activity of the Ministry of Justice in the area of youth and legal profession is strengthening of lawyers’ participation in the legal aid programmes for the society. It also has implemented the project offering internships of six months at ministry services to law students and young lawyers up to 35 years old.

## **Comparative assessment of the situation in the Project Countries**

28. There are young lawyers’ associations in all Project Countries. However, the level of cooperation between these associations and other national, regional and international organisations, their activities, areas of interests, donors and the number of members vary significantly.

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://elsa.org/about/network/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://step-app.elsa.org/home.html>

<sup>17</sup> [https://uba.ua/eng/forums/forum\\_of\\_young\\_lawyers/](https://uba.ua/eng/forums/forum_of_young_lawyers/)

29. All young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries can be divided into two categories according to their legal status. There are associations which are independent, such as the Armenian Young Lawyers' Association, Young Barrister Association of Georgia, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, the Youth Committee "UNBA NextGen", the Young Lawyers Forum of the All-Ukrainian Public Organisation "Ukrainian Bar Association". Other associations such as the Council of Young Advocates of the Bar of Armenia, the Committee of Young Lawyers' Affairs of the Georgian Bar, the Young Lawyer's Association of the Republic of Moldova, associations of young lawyers of Minsk city bar and Grodnensk regional bar, Councils of Young Lawyers in Belarus depend on the respective Bar.
30. All national Bar associations involved have adopted initiatives for young lawyers, which include the existence and functioning of a separate elected committee which represents their younger members. Nevertheless, these committees are not independent legal entities and do not have revenues of their own, being exclusively funded by the respective Bar. Their functions focus mainly on the training of young lawyers by organising seminars and other educational events, but their priorities are entirely set by the respective bars. Some of them may also develop other initiatives and projects depending mainly on the interest and activeness of their heads. Such example is the Young Lawyers' Committee of the the Republic of Moldovan Bar.
31. The Ministries of Justice of the Project Countries, except the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine which provides the internship program for law students, do not seem to have adopted policies aiming specifically at young lawyers (to increase involvement of lawyers in young lawyers' associations, provide support to them).
32. Different levels of international affiliation have been observed. Young lawyers' committees and associations in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova actively participate in international organisations, such as the European Young Bar Association, and even host key events. However, it seems that the young lawyers' associations from Armenia, Belarus and Georgia have no contact with similar international organisations.
33. Gender equality is one of the fundamental aspects of democratic society, emphasized in the study of the Council of Europe.<sup>18</sup> All young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries provide equal opportunities for men and women to participate in their activities and become members.

## **II. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ASSOCIATIONS OF YOUNG LEGAL PROFESSIONALS (YOUNG JUDGES OR YOUNG PROSECUTORS)**

34. Cooperation between the young lawyers' associations and other young legal professional's associations from the Project Countries is low. It seems that these associations implement different goals and do not cooperate with each other. One exception was observed in the Republic of Moldova in which the associations of young prosecutors and judges exist. It has been observed that there are perspectives for implementation of common projects between these associations and the Young Lawyer's Association of the Republic of Moldova. Nevertheless, there are no common projects by these associations so far. Thus, currently the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries do not cooperate with other networks of young legal

---

<sup>18</sup> Council of Europe Gender, Mainstreaming Toolkit For Co-Operation Projects, 2018.

professionals and focus on their own agenda and goals, even when they are within the same country.

### **III. EXISTING INITIATIVES/PROJECTS ON STRENGTHENING YOUNG LAWYERS' NETWORKS**

35. The experts were asked to assess the existing initiatives of the strengthening cooperation networks of young lawyers, the needs to support them and existing projects focused on developing and/or strengthening these networks (national, regional and international).
36. It should be highlighted that currently **there are no existing** initiatives and (or) projects on strengthening young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries. Thus, the Project should aim namely to establish and enhance cooperation between these associations.
37. Some associations already have donors and participate in various projects. However, the majority of all projects implemented by the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries focus only on domestic legal matters but not international cooperation. Also, a difference in implementation of the projects can be noticed between the associations which are independent and those which are parts of the respective Bar. The associations which operate independently implement various projects related to human rights, legislative reforms. In contrast, the associations which depend on the respective Bar focus primarily on the issues of young lawyers' in the Bar, their integration and representation in the Bar, traineeship and training opportunities.
38. Some young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries participate in the international lawyers' networks, such as the EYBA. Noteworthy the international lawyers' associations also implement or are willing to implement projects aiming to young lawyers in the region of the Project Countries. For instance, the EYBA has organized events in the Project Countries and is willing to cooperate with the lawyers' associations from these countries further. For this purpose, they have implemented discounts on membership fees and have promoted the organisation of their seasonal events in the Project Countries (the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). The European Lawyers Association has also expressed willingness to cooperate with the lawyers and their associations from the Project Countries.

### **IV. INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS' ASSOCIATIONS**

39. During the preparation of the Concept Paper, the experts met with the representatives from the international lawyers' associations. The information and insights provided by the representatives are particularly important and should be used for the implementation of the Project. These associations also support the idea of support to the establishment of cooperation of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries.

### **European Young Bar Association**

40. The European Young Bar Association (EYBA)<sup>19</sup> is an organisation including young lawyers' associations and individual lawyers from Europe. All members of the organisation participating in the EYBA are automatically members of the EYBA. The EYBA also supports and promotes activities and networking between young lawyers across Europe. The EYBA is registered as a non-governmental and non-profit organisation. It is funded by its members' annual fees (500 euros per year) and private sponsorships. There may be more organisations from the same country participating simultaneously.
41. Since 2019 the EYBA focuses on its expansion towards Eastern Europe. It has reduced the annual fee for organisations based on these countries, considering the important economic divergence between them and other (mainly western and central) European countries. So far, only young lawyers' associations from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are the members of the EYBA. The EYBA Spring Conference 2018 was organised in Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova by the Young Lawyers' Association of the Republic of Moldova. Also, the EYBA Summer Conference 2021 was planned to take place in Kyiv, Ukraine, but was finally organised online, due to the pandemic.
42. The European Young Bar Association emphasised that financial support for the creation and enhancement of the cooperation of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries. Also, personal connections and exchange of expertise are needed among lawyers from the Project Countries, as well as other countries of Europe. Development of a website would be an excellent idea to support such cooperation. Participation to the network and the events could include other legal professionals, too, such as the judges. The EYBA would be willing to cooperate with such regional network and also support the existing initiatives of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries.

### **European Association of Lawyers**

43. The European Association of Lawyers (*Association Européenne des Avocats*)<sup>20</sup> was established in 1986. The goals of this organisation are to strengthen links of members (networking), share experience in professional cross-border matters as well as broaden knowledge of European law. This organisation has been organising two or three seminars or congresses each year in different parts of Europe. The members of this organisation can be an individual, a law firm or a Bar. Recently the European Association of Lawyers initiated the Mentorship Programme which would allow an exchange of good practices among lawyers in Europe.
44. The representative from the European Association of Lawyers noted that the creation and enhancement of the cooperation of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries is highly needed and the lawyers from these countries are eager to cooperate. It was also indicated that support from the Council of Europe for the establishment of such a regional network would be necessary. Such support could be, for instance, financial support, organisation of meetings and seminars, establishment of a certain platform. The cooperation of such a regional network should be permanent.

### **Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)**

---

<sup>19</sup> <https://eyba.org/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://aea-eal.eu/>

45. CCBE was established in 1960, aiming at advancing the views of European lawyers and defending the legal principles upon which democracy and the rule of law are based.<sup>21</sup> Only the national Bars may become members of this organisation. Currently 32 Bar associations across Europe are the member of this association and 13 further have observer status. There is no separate body specifically for young lawyers in this organisation. However, the CCBE participates in international projects related to young lawyers, such as the Young Lawyers Contest which is organized with the Academy of European Law.<sup>22</sup>
46. According to the representative from the CCBE, establishment of cooperation of the establishment of young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries is highly needed. Lawyers in the Project Countries especially younger face various challenges. Funding is also a challenging issue. Private sponsors and international institutions could support the organisation of the network and its events by both funding and expertise.

### **Comparative assessment of the international lawyers' associations**

47. In general, all international organisations support establishment of cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries. Involvement of the international organisations in the existing projects of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries would be important and welcomed. As noted, for instance, the EYBA already has showed interests in cooperation with the young lawyers' associations from some Project Countries and created certain incentives to become members of this organisation. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say what kind of support the international organisation could provide in the Project. Thus, their involvement of the initial steps of the Project would be needed.
48. The experience and knowledge of these associations could increase sustainability and effectiveness of the implementation of the Project. They have already implemented programmes aimed at increasing cooperation between young lawyers in the Project Countries. Additionally, their involvement would be an extra motivation for individual lawyers looking for networking and professional partnerships abroad.
49. All international organisations emphasized the need to find the common professional interests for young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries on which the cooperation and possible regional network could be based. Such common professional interests could be human rights, standards of provision of legal services, artificial intelligence, alternative dispute settlement (mediation, arbitration), corporate social responsibility, lawyers' ethics and others. They also highlighted the need to address economic issues impeding participation of lawyers from the Project Countries to international organisations and their events.
50. All international organisations have reliable expert networks and organisational experience on international events. They also have access to extended networks of lawyers and legal professionals across Europe, as well as recognisability, which could offer broad publicity to any initiative of the project. Their involvement seems necessary at organisational and supportive level as well.

---

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ccbe.eu/about/who-we-are/>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.era.int/cgi-bin/cms?\\_SID=02b156d80c4a965cf058f85189f0992cc048cb7300642941793946&\\_sprache=en&\\_bereich=artikel&\\_aktion=detail&idartikel=128915](https://www.era.int/cgi-bin/cms?_SID=02b156d80c4a965cf058f85189f0992cc048cb7300642941793946&_sprache=en&_bereich=artikel&_aktion=detail&idartikel=128915)

## V. PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT/STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NETWORKS OF YOUNG LAWYERS

51. The experts were asked to present the proposals to develop and/ or strengthening the cooperation between the young lawyers' and their professional associations through support to the existing projects or with new initiatives. As it was noted, currently there is no meaningful initiative focused on the strengthening the cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries. Thus, **there are no existing projects** which could be supported and establishment of cooperation between these associations should be based on new initiatives.

### **Benefits and challenges**

52. As it was indicated, some young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries are already members of various international lawyers' organisations/networks and actively participate in them. There are various **benefits** of establishment of cooperation of young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries.
53. **Increase of quality of provision of legal services and protection of human rights in the region.** The exchange of good practices of young lawyers would contribute to the general increase of the quality of legal services and protection of human rights. This exchange of expertise will also have a positive impact on the reforms in different challenging areas of the profession of lawyers in accordance with the European standards.
54. **Increase of educational perspectives for young lawyers.** Education as a possible direction of regional cooperation would enhance the exchange of good practices of different organisations. The study visits and seminars (even online) were indicated by the majority of interviewees as the main benefits of such regional cooperation, especially in the areas such as human rights, arbitration and mediation, standards of the legal profession, ethics, artificial intelligence.
55. **Contacts and organisational support.** The majority of the interviewees noted a lack of personal and institutional contacts with the existing national and international associations abroad. Also, only two out of five young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries have participated in the international networks and organised events on the international level. Bringing other associations to contact with international institutions and associations could both lead to the new bottom - up initiatives and to organisational experience exchange.
56. **Addressing challenges of the legal profession.** In some Project Countries lawyers' professional status and rights face challenges by certain legal reforms and practices. Focusing on professional issues, drawing attention and assuring exchange of good practices could not only increase interest and participation, but also assist to the general effort of upgrading the legal profession in the region.
57. Nevertheless, there are certain **challenges and needs** which should be considered regarding establishment of such cooperation.
58. **Language barrier.** The language barrier has been indicated as a challenge as well. It was noted that the lawyers from the Project Countries may face a language barrier since not all lawyers speak English and (or) Russian. Thus, during the common events and workshops translations may be needed.

59. **Different legal frameworks and understanding.** The regional cooperation of young lawyers' associations should be based on common professional interests which are relevant in all Project Countries. Not all Project Countries are the members of the European Convention on Human Rights (Belarus). The difference of existing legal frameworks in the Project Countries may impact the level of cooperation.
60. **Financial support.** Financial support for the implementation of the cooperation activities would be needed. In some cases, young lawyers' associations do not participate in international associations due to the lack of funding. Furthermore, the members of young lawyers' associations are often at the early stage of their career, meaning that they have to combine professional activities and often voluntary activities in the association.
61. The young lawyers' associations have fewer financial means than similar organisations in other countries in Europe and international organisations limiting their abilities to participate in international events. Geographical distance is another costly factor. These could be addressed by supporting international events organised by international organisations to take place in the Project Countries.
62. **Incentives for individual lawyers.** Some young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries highlighted a low attractiveness of the national young lawyers' associations, and their dependence on voluntary participation by their members. This need may be addressed by giving motivation to individual lawyers. Time and financial costs of such voluntary participation in the associations should be balanced with possible incentives for active participation. Certifications and other CV assets to participants, opportunities for further involvement in the development projects, perspectives of professional partnerships and collaboration are examples of such incentives which should be provided for participation in the regional network of young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries.

### **Proposals**

63. Since there are no existing initiatives and (or) projects on strengthening cooperation of young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries, **only new initiatives** could be proposed to reach the said goals and create (establish) the cooperation between the associations and develop their network.
64. The proposals to develop and support the networks of young lawyers' associations can be divided into two categories:
  - one-time/ad-hoc initiatives, and (or)
  - permanent/full-fledged initiatives
65. **One-time/ad-hoc activities** could be in a form of meetings of the members of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries and (or) representatives from the international lawyers' associations and the Council of Europe. It should also include organisation of seminars, workshops, exchange of good practices and other similar activities. Such activities could take place also in online format and thus would not require significant financial needs and time. The subject of these activities should relate to the common professional interests of the associations as it is proposed in this report. These activities should also serve as a basis for establishment of cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries and involve the international lawyers' associations. The initial exchange of ideas on the situation of young lawyers, exchange of good practices could serve as a foundation for the institutionalised regional networking and development of further cooperation. Also, the level of participation of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries would be an indicator

whether they are willing and ready to cooperate on larger (permanent) level and see the advantage of such cooperation in the future.

66. Under the ad-hoc activities, the initiatives on the closer cooperation with the Ministries of Justice of the Project Countries, and lobbying of the possible state-funded educational and internship programs for law students (on the example of Ukraine)
67. **Permanent/full-fledged initiatives** could be establishment of the regional network the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries. This network should have a permanent structure and represent these associations. It would also require more significant financial support and involvement of financial donors.
68. An important aspect of successful introduction of such regional network is proper planning and cooperative implementation of the planned activities. The Project could set its initiatives following a top – down model, where all activities would be planned and organised by the Project itself. Such planning would lead national associations, individuals and other participants to get involved at execution level only (such as secondary organisational issues, participation on the events etc.), requiring minimum human and financial resources by their side. However, such approach would reduce active participation of associations, their ownership towards the initiative and probably the real involvement of their individual members. Such approach requires human and financial resources almost exclusively by the Project, significantly increasing it's costs. However, a bottom – up approach ensures the maximum involvement of associations and individuals at both planning and organisational level, maximises the prioritisation of real issues concerning young lawyers from the Project Countries.
69. For these reasons, a combination of both approaches is proposed as the least risky and most effective. Top – down planning by the Project is proposed for the general goal setting, milestone events setting and their deadlines, international networking and funding. A parallel bottom – up participation of associations is proposed for co-organisation and coordination of the events (side events) at national and international level, themes and guest selection, networking and co-funding at national level and secondary organisational issues. Side committees aiming at certain side events and projects may evolve if participation is adequate. The Project should gradually transfer competencies to those committees, according to their continuity and effectiveness. Such approach could encounter deficiencies of both approaches, combining their advantages. The central planning, reserved for the Project itself, assures continuity, short – term viability and effectiveness of its events and actions, while the existence of committees provides the Project with real participation at the national level. Such motivation and permanent structures could ensure continuous participation of individuals, therefore the long-term viability of the initiative itself.
70. Since there are no existing platforms of young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries on which the regional network could be built on, it is proposed that establishment of network is implemented in the following order:
  1. **Establishment of an initiative group and a general meeting.** As a first step the project shall initiate the establishment of an initiative group consisting of the members from the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries, which shall act as an executive body of the future regional network. Further a first (general) meeting of the initiative group and the representatives of the Council of Europe should be organised. In this meeting the members of the associations should get acquainted with each other, agree on the needs and goals of the cooperation between the associations, and the common professional interests which will be in the focus of the future regional network. Such meeting can take place online. In case of consensus



a Memorandum of Understanding of the initiative group shall be concluded, which shall specify the further steps on the establishment of the regional network, activities for the first year of the functioning of the initiative group. The outreach of the information about the establishment of the initiative group shall be insured to increase publicity of the initiative and attraction of the international lawyers' associations and donors. This meeting should serve as a basis for the further cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries on the institutionalised level. If the members of the associations reach the consensus on the needs and the goals of the further cooperation, the initiative should be further proceeded to the planning and organisation of the activities for the first year of the functioning of the initiative group.

2. **Planning and Organisation of the activities for the first year** of the functioning of the initiative group (i.e. **study visits, seminars, workshops, participation in international events, hosting of international events etc.**). Cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries could be enhanced by organising events by the initiative group, which would have a general interest for all associations. Most of the representatives of the associations support that such activities could serve as a basis for the further institutionalised cooperation of them and establishment of the regional networks. These general interests could be the standards of lawyers' profession (ethics, conflicts of interests, provision of legal services), human rights, dispute resolution mechanisms (such as arbitration, mediation), protection of lawyers, standards of running of a law firm, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and others.
  3. **Establishment of the regional network.** The final step for the institutionalised cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries should be the establishment of the regional network of the young lawyers' associations. Such network should have a permanent character. Clear, transparent and non-discriminatory requirements for the members of the regional network should be established. Participating associations shall be involved in decision making processes (such as content of potential events, proposal of speakers etc). The network should also have a clear structure of management and all young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries should take part in it. The network should also have the Internet platform (a website) in which all the relevant information about the network and the members could be found.
71. The main rationale behind such gradual establishment and enhancement of the cooperation is to assess the needs of the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries, possible involvement of the financial donors and evaluation of the perspectives of the initiative. Thus, the establishment and enhancement of such cooperation should be gradual and the perspectives of the initiative should be assessed after each proposed step is implemented.
  72. The **sustainability and perspectives** of the proposed intervention toward developing/strengthening the cooperation between the young lawyers' associations from the Project Countries depends primarily on the initiatives of the associations, support and participation of the international lawyers' associations and financial support of possible donors. Therefore, the sustainability and perspectives should be assessed after the implementation of each proposed step.