



European  
Commission



# Modernising EU Justice systems by boosting training of justice professionals

6-7 May 2021

## REPORT



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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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Manuscript completed in July 2021

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PDF

ISBN 978-92-76-40540-5

doi:10.2838/975216

Catalogue number DS-05-21-237-EN-N

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

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## Abstract

On 6 and 7 May 2021, a high-level digital conference entitled ‘Modernising EU Justice Systems by boosting training of justice professionals’ was held. The event was jointly organised by the [Portuguese Presidency of the Council of EU](#), the [Centro de Estudos Judiciários \(CEJ\)](#) of Portugal and the [European Commission](#), and was an important milestone in the dissemination and implementation of the [new European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024](#).

The conference brought together national- and European-level training providers and associations of judges, prosecutors, court staff, prosecution office staff, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs, probation officers, prison staff, legal interpreters and translators, and mediators. Over 200 professionals from across Europe participated in the event, which included 10 working groups and around 60 speakers, moderators and rapporteurs.

The starting point was a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative objectives of [the new European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024](#) adopted on 2 December 2020, as well as the [Council Conclusions on ‘Boosting training of justice professionals’](#). Plenary speakers included Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice, and Mário Belo Morgado, Deputy Minister of Justice of Portugal.

*“The new EU strategy sets ambitious goals designed to further improve the training of justice professionals,”* said Commissioner Reynders. *“It enlarges the training scope to new topics, such as the rule of law, digitalisation, artificial intelligence or ‘judgecraft’ which is the set of skills and attitudes of a justice professional, and it opens up to new professions such as prison staff, and to a wider geographical scope.”*

Central to the conference were the two working group sessions. The first session focused on how the quantitative objectives of the strategy could best be achieved. Five working groups focused on specific justice professions:

- Judges and prosecutors

As the main guarantors of the application of EU law at national level, this group was recognised as a key target group for EU law training. An important question discussed was how to boost the uptake of EU training notably by ensuring the relevance and attractiveness of international training, while catering for the digitalisation of training.

- Lawyers

Quality was underlined as priority over quantity. Nevertheless, while the strategy’s new target of 15 % of lawyers trained yearly on EU law by 2024 is an ambitious target, it was also seen as realistic. The discussion also focused on data collection and access to funding for lawyers’ training.

- Notaries

Notary training is progressing well. Methods for increasing notary participation in EU-supported training projects were discussed to pursue the efforts. The importance of interactive training methodology, language skills training and networking possibilities in cross-border training was underlined.

- Bailiffs

Participants agreed about the importance of robust initial training and experience-based training; the crucial role of EU support for EU law training; and the importance of taking into account both private and public sector bailiffs.

- Other professions (court and prosecution office staff, prison staff, probation officers, etc.).

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The study on court and prosecution office's staff training needs on EU law concludes that 2/3 of all EU court staff require training on EU law. Recruitment methods and qualification requirements for probation officers differ across Europe, which makes setting up EU law training challenging. Prison staff training needs to distinguish between Council of Europe standards and EU law.

This was followed by a second working group session, which focused more on the substance and content of training. Again, five groups were set up. This time, each tackled a specific topic of EU law:

- Rule of law and fundamental human rights

Discussions focused on how to train efficiently and effectively on the rule of law and human rights, in the EU and beyond and what the substance of such training should be. Participants agreed that for a European judicial culture, a common understanding and knowledge of the rule of law and fundamental rights is essential.

- Digitalisation of justice

Different digitalisation tools were presented. Speakers underlined the importance of preparing justice professionals to new digital developments and to make them consider how artificial intelligence tools can be used in practice while making them also aware of the challenges and uses of artificial intelligence applications through training.

- Judgecraft and non-legal knowledge

Participants concluded that judgecraft was essential for the efficiency of justice, for building relationships between different legal systems and for creating trust between practitioners in cross-border areas, as well as with the general public. All justice practitioners need training on non-legal knowledge and skills.

- Security Union

Speakers explored European Security Union strategy for 2020-2025, training needs for EU judicial professionals, training for legal practitioners in contact with victims of crime, plus the challenges of cybercrime and digital evidence.

- Single Market

Obligations of the [Single Market Transparency Directive](#), issues surrounding public procurement, investment protection under EU law, and new challenges for national courts and the impact of the Brexit were examined. Participants concluded that there should be as many common cross-professional training events as possible.

Key findings from both sessions were shared in plenary. There was a strong sense of commitment and drive to reach the new ambitious objectives, improving the participation of justice professionals in training on EU law and the training offered, whether face-to-face, online or hybrid. Justice professionals should gain the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to face new challenges, such as a pandemic. Therefore, training of justice professionals should focus on new topics such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence and professional skills. Sharing experiences and best practices with each other as well as EU financial support were considered to be helpful tools in reaching the new objectives. More judicial staff should be given the opportunity to train in EU law, and blended training could enable greater participation and flexibility while maintaining the benefits of face-to-face interaction.

The second day of the conference focused on training methodology, and what European judicial training will look like in the future. Participants shared examples of best practices, which included: the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN)'s [new Distance Learning Handbook](#); an innovative e-learning platform that simulates realistic scenarios; successful blended learning; and the transition to virtual classrooms, hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The

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concept of e-capsules, short, targeted, e-learning tools of a similar format, contained in the new strategy, was also presented.

There was general agreement that training in the future will likely be multifaceted and make use of a mixture of both online tools and face-to-face/online events. At the same time, potential dangers and risks posed by technologies such as artificial intelligence must be addressed. Gender mainstreaming should also be taken into consideration by training organisers. The [European Training Platform \(ETP\)](#), the third pillar of the judicial training package to modernise EU justice systems, along with the new European judicial training strategy and the annual statistical report, was also presented: this is a search tool for legal practitioners and justice professionals to find training courses or self-study material on all areas of EU law.

The conference successfully brought to light many of the issues contained in the Commission's new strategy, and reflected on what the 'new normal' might look like for judicial training. Judge João Manuel da Silva Miguel, Director of the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), and Peter Csonka, Deputy Director for Criminal Justice in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, concluded that the conference was necessary, important and useful, notably because of the commitment from everyone involved. This commitment is what is needed in the coming years for the successful implementation of the new strategy and to make the necessary adaptations to the new reality.

# Executive Summary

## Plenary session day one

### Welcome

Emmanuelle Cretin-Magand, Team Leader for European judicial training, welcomed the participants to the conference on behalf of **Richard Sonnenschein, Director for Criminal Justice (JUST.DDG.B) in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers**. The ultimate objective, she conveyed, of the conference was to boost judicial training in the EU in order to improve the quality and efficiency of EU justice systems.

*“This conference provides a platform for discussion,” she conveyed. “It will allow participants to be actively involved in working groups that are focused on implementing the [new strategy](#). We will also discuss how we can step up efforts, share findings, learn about the latest good practices and discover the new [European Training Platform \(ETP\)](#). We will reflect on what the ‘new normal’ for judicial training means, what it will look like and how we can build on this.”*

**Judge João Manuel da Silva Miguel, Director of the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ)**, said that the event underlined Portugal’s commitment to training justice professionals. This, he said, was essential to boosting knowledge of EU law among all professionals.

*“This conference is an excellent opportunity to share the experience of trainers, and to share best practices,”* said Mr Miguel.

### The critical role of judicial training

The plenary session of the conference opened with a keynote speech from **Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice**, who noted the wide diversity of professions in attendance. He underlined the importance of the EU’s [judicial training strategy for 2021- 2024](#), adopted by the Commission in December, as part of a bigger package setting common objectives to modernise justice systems in the EU, which also includes the European Commission’s [Communication on the digitalisation of justice in the EU](#).

The Commissioner highlighted the need to modernise justice systems across the EU and prepare justice professionals for new challenges.

*“We must take an ambitious approach to modernising and digitalising the judicial systems, and we must act fast,”* continued the Commissioner. *“During the COVID-19 pandemic for example we have seen a rise in cybercrime. Fair and efficient justice depends on justice professionals with the knowledge, skills and tools to face such challenges.”*

European judicial training can help Europe to respond to such challenges, and ensure that EU law and justice policies are implemented properly. The Commissioner acknowledged European judicial training as an overarching and practical tool in this context and in the context of upholding the EU’s fundamental values such as the rule of law. A lot has already been achieved. Since 2011, 1.2 million justice professionals have been trained on EU law. This meant that the EU was able to reach its target of training half of all legal professionals in EU law by 2020 3 years early.

The Commissioner noted that the [new EU strategy](#) also recognises the need to open up training to other judicial professions, such as prison staff and probation officers. The recent adoption of [Council Conclusions](#) on boosting training of judicial professionals was warmly welcomed.

He reminded participants that European judicial training is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders involved. *“This conference is an opportunity to talk about some of the main challenges, to reflect on these challenges and to provide a flexible response to these emerging needs in EU law,”* said Commissioner Reynders. *“It is about translating*



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*challenges into ambitious goals, and the Commission remains committed to supporting the implementation of the strategy's objectives."*

The Commissioner concluded by noting that the Commission was open to receiving questions and remarks on all of these issues raised.

**Mário Belo Morgado, Deputy Minister of Justice of Portugal**, underlined that modernising the judiciary was a way of ensuring that rights of citizens are respected. This is why the human dimension must be at the heart of training. A key challenge for legal practitioners, he noted, was ensuring that EU law is applied in a uniform manner, while taking into account the complexity of different Member State systems.

*"This is why it is so important to build a European area for justice,"* said the Deputy Minister. *"The strategy for training adopted by the Commission can help to support justice systems, and tackle the challenges of the 21st century. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of this."*

Mr Morgado noted that the Portuguese Presidency has put training at the heart of its priorities. He added that training should be adapted to functional needs, to help ensure that justice is served in a timely fashion for citizens. Training on the use of new technology is also essential, and it is vital that national judges are trained in the EU.

*"Many areas require ongoing training, including consumer legislation, children, the Single Market, the environment etc.,"* said Mr Morgado. *"This will require different methods and techniques for training. This is something to always bear in mind. The Council has invited Member States to strengthen their level of participation in training, and to make use of the financial instruments available to them."*

### Expanding the scope of judicial training

Ahead of the first working group session, Emmanuelle Cretin-Magand, Team Leader for European judicial training, on behalf of **Peter Csonka, Deputy Director for Criminal Justice in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers**, set the scene for the discussions of the first session of working groups. While the previous strategy has been a successful driver of change, there have been different levels of success among different professions and countries. This is one reason the strategy calls for the training of all justice professions, including prison staff, legal translators, interpreters and mediators.

*"This explains why a key focus of the new strategy is on tailoring training needs to professions, and encouraging more professionals to attend training on EU law,"* she conveyed. *"This applies to all justice professionals who apply EU law: judges, prosecutors and other staff."*

The strategy also sets ambitious objectives:

- 65% of judges and prosecutors to attend EU law training by 2024
- 30% of notaries to attend EU law training by 2024
- 20% of bailiffs to attend EU law training by 2024
- 15% of lawyers to attend EU law training by 2024
- 15% of court and prosecution office staff who need EU law competence.

*"The objectives of the strategy are not only quantitative but also qualitative,"* she noted. *"The goal of these sessions is to discuss how justice professionals can attend more training activities, and how we can reach our high objectives together."*

**Key points from the plenary session day one:**

- Modernising and digitalising EU justice systems is an important common goal of the European Commission and the EU Member States.
- Justice professionals play a vital role in this context and need to be prepared for new challenges.
- European judicial training can help to meet new emerging challenges.
- Since 2011, 1.2 million justice professionals have been trained on EU law.
- A key challenge for justice professionals remains applying EU law in a uniform manner.
- The new training strategy sets ambitious objectives to further improve the training of justice professionals.
- The strategy sets out new quantitative objectives tailored for the different justice professions.
- A focus of the new strategy is also to expand the training scope to new topics, to open up to new professions and a wider geographic scope.
- Boosting judicial training in the EU will improve the quality and efficiency of EU justice systems.
- Fair and efficient justice depends on justice professionals having the knowledge, skills and tools to face such challenges.
- Training should be adapted to functional needs, to help ensure that justice is served in a timely fashion for citizens.

## Session 1: Increasing participation and securing roll-out

The first working group session focused on the new quantitative objectives of the [new European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024](#). The session was divided into five working groups, each focusing on a specific justice profession. The working groups discussed:

- Judges and prosecutors
- Lawyers
- Notaries
- Bailiffs
- Other professions (court and prosecution office staff, prison staff, probation officers, etc.).

Highlights from the five working groups were as follows:

### Judges and prosecutors

This working group, chaired by Judge João Manuel da Silva Miguel, Director of the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), Portugal, underlined the fact that judges and prosecutors are the main guarantors of the proper application of EU law at national level. As such, they represent a key target group for training on EU law.

Key questions include how to further boost the uptake of EU training – in both initial and continuing training programmes – among this key group. EU training programmes reached some 55.7 % of EU judges and prosecutors in 2019, up from 24.6 % in 2011. The aim is to take this to 65 % by 2024. Panellists looked at the current methodology, content and monitoring of training programmes for judges and prosecutors in the EU. The focus was on lessons learned and how programmes could best be improved.

Markus Brückner, Judge, and Secretary General of the [European Judicial Training Network \(EJTN\)](#), said that the EJTN was optimistic that the EU will reach its 65 % target. The COVID-19 pandemic has however forced a timely rethink of how training programmes are offered. The pandemic has demonstrated how digital is changing our world, and will continue to do so. In addition to increased digitalisation, the EU should aim to broaden the international appeal of training programmes. This could include welcoming new target groups, such as judges and prosecutors from the Western Balkans, and making cross-border exchanges a standard part of initial training.

Florence Gilbert, Public Prosecutor, Project Manager at the [National School for the Judiciary \(ENM\)](#), France, agreed that international cooperation was vital. If the goal was to create a common judiciary in Europe, it would be necessary to ensure that there are European training programmes to integrate judges into their international environment. On a more practical level, pre-training questionnaires and post-training evaluation could help to encourage participation in programmes. The current health crisis also shows that the list of training programmes has to be adaptable to circumstances and to audiences.

Solvita Kalniņa-Caune, Executive Director of the [Latvian judicial training institute \(LTMC\)](#), agreed with the need to be responsive to events. Judges and public prosecutors will be unlikely to participate in training programmes unless they offer something that is needed and wanted at that moment. Even as more training moves online, it remains important to think about participants' comfort. This means short sessions and making sure people feel involved throughout the event.

Participants made the following points:

- Trainees need to feel comfortable and involved, whether training programmes are online or in person.

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- Smaller breakout sessions can work better than big presentations, with participants more likely to discuss in smaller groups.
- While some felt the shift online would likely be permanent, others pointed out that face-to-face networking was critical for judges and prosecutors in more isolated locations.

### Lawyers

This working group, chaired by Peter Csonka, Deputy Director for Criminal Justice at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, discussed the training needs of lawyers and ways to boost the training of lawyers in EU law from a national and EU perspective, and identified possible obstacles to training. The feasibility of targets, the collection of data and the accessibility of funding were other key points raised.

Nikolaos Koutkias, Chair of the Training Committee of the [Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe \(CCBE\)](#), welcomed the expansion of judicial training and the promotion of more legal knowledge and skills. The most important objective should be to prioritise quality over quantity of training. It was suggested that the [European Training Platform \(ETP\)](#) could be used for data monitoring. Furthermore, ambitious objectives must be accompanied by appropriate resources, including financial ones.

José de Freitas, Lawyer, Member of the Training Committee of the Portuguese Bar Association and former President of the CCBE, said that common sense training that protects our common culture of rule of law and fundamental rights is of the utmost importance. Current training too often maintains boundaries between justice professionals, which does not reflect reality. Without lawyers there is no justice, and no guarantee that citizens have access to justice. Lawyers are in the front line in the fundamental defence of rights and the rule of law.

Rui Simão, First Secretary of the General Council of the Solicitors and Enforcement Agents National Association ([OSAE](#)), Portugal, noted that the OSAE was trying to promote inter-professional training. There is a focus on continuing training: 146 training actions and 600 training hours for some 10 000 participants have been carried out since 2020.

Pierre Henry, Member of the Board of Directors of the French and German Bar associations of Belgium, discussed various tools that are available for the training of lawyers. The first is an EU law module for a certificate of aptitude to practise as a lawyer. The second is the '[Tribune européenne](#)', which provides lawyers with a platform and information on the latest applications of European law. A third tool is the integration of law into summer university programmes, which offer original and effective training in subjects not covered during the term. This can include study days and online courses. A 'train the trainers' initiative to promote the teaching of EU law among French-speaking lawyers has also been launched.

Jean-Philippe Rageade, Director of the [Academy of European Law \(ERA\)](#), said that the Academy can complement what is currently being offered in training. This includes offering lawyers traditional training events as well as tailor-made services covering the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU).

Working group participants also raised the following points:

- The Council of Europe (CoE) [HELP](#) online platform can be a useful resource for lawyers, who can benefit from a wide range of free courses that include both CoE and EU standards on fundamental rights.
- Funding for training must come from a range of sources, including the EU.
- While 15% of lawyers trained in EU law by 2024 is an ambitious target, it was also seen as realistic.
- Training on EU law needs to be defined in a way that can show better results for the lawyers' community.

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- Lawyers should team up cross-country and cross-profession to build products. This would be looked upon favourably by the EU when it comes to funding opportunities.

### Notaries

This working group, chaired by Lena Geckle, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, examined ways to boost training on EU law from both the EU and national perspectives. Notaries play a critical role in supporting EU law in areas that are relevant to individuals and businesses such as succession, mediation, insolvency and money laundering. Notary training is progressing well: figures for 2019 reveal that 26 % of notaries have participated in EU law training actions.

Cindy Foekehrer from the [Austrian Chamber of Civil Law Notaries](#) and a Member of the European Commission's Expert Group on European judicial training, provided an Austrian perspective. Many training sessions specific to EU law have taken place in recent years. In 2019 for example, 134 training seminars were held for 3 089 participants. Courses on English for notaries covering inheritance law, real estate law and company law have proved especially popular. Austria aims to deliver hybrid seminars in the future and develop an online learning platform packed with useful documents and scripts.

Dra. Filipa Maria Marques de Azevedo Maia from the [Portuguese Notary Association](#), stressed that training should be seen as a strategic investment that can build a national and European justice system, capable of responding to the challenges of a globalised world. Training courses need to be both theoretical and practical. There could be value in designing training programmes from scratch that can deepen and share knowledge in matters of European law. Input could come from different countries, particularly for the regulation of cross-border issues.

Marie Vautravers, Legislative Officer for Civil Justice in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, discussed the role of notaries in cross-border judicial cooperation. Notaries look set to play an increased role in areas such as succession regulations and matrimonial property. The European Commission is working on initiatives that will require the expertise of notaries in other cross-border areas, including the recognition of parenthood in all Member States – not just the country of origin. Some practical tools include the [European Judicial Network in Civil and Commercial Matters](#) and the [European e-Justice Portal](#).

Chiara Bacci, Team Leader for Enforcement of the EU Anti-money laundering (AML) and counter terrorist financing (CFT) policy, in the Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, outlined the role notaries play in the fight against money laundering and counter terrorist financing. Notaries are the gatekeepers of the EU's financial system and can identify suspicious financial activities. In some countries, the number of suspicious activities being reported is low in the non-financial sector. More training in this area would help notaries spot problems and report them more effectively. More cross-border cooperation would be helpful, as exchanges of experience can boost understanding of the issues involved.

Lineke Minkjan, Adviser on EU projects, presented a summary of the '[Notaries Beyond Frontiers](#)' project, which ran from 2018 to March 2021. Networking was seen as a key success of the project, helping notaries to understand different national laws. In terms of training, an interactive approach was important, as was language skills training.

Participants made the following points:

- EU-supported training projects can help to develop interactions between national and EU legislation.
- Exchanges of best practice between national notaries should be encouraged.
- More funding for translation and interpretation could help to reduce linguistic barriers.
- New technologies will continue to be important for the roll-out of training measures across borders.

## Bailiffs

The Bailiffs working group, chaired by Wojciech Postulski, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, explored ways to boost the participation of enforcement officers in EU judicial training through national initiatives and pan-European projects. The total number of bailiffs taking part in EU law training of any kind at national/European level rose from 3.5% in 2011 to 16.2% in 2019. This must further increase, as such the European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024 has set a goal of 20% for 2024.

Jacinto Neto, President of the Portuguese Professional Council of Enforcement Agents of the [Solicitors and Enforcement Agents National Association \(OSAE\)](#), presented advantages of the e-learning addressed to Portugal's civil enforcement. Enforcement agents and other Portuguese judicial operators are familiar with new technologies, and often interact electronically. SISAAE, the main IT platform, enables enforcement agents to deal with all procedural transactions. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of e-tools and e-learning. The OSAE held 15 courses over the last year: one on specific EU law ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1393/2007](#) on the service of documents) and another in the framework of the EU co-funded 'FILIT' project' on developing English linguistic skills for EU law.

Dragomir Yordanov, Executive Director of the European School of Enforcement in Bulgaria, noted that Bulgaria's 200 private bailiffs do most of the enforcement work. The system is hybrid, as there are also public enforcement agents working as court staff. Training of Bulgarian bailiffs only started a few years ago, revealing several challenges:

- Initial funding difficulties meant that additional public funding was required.
- Only a few courses on induction training for newly assigned bailiffs have been held.
- Bailiffs require continuing training that focuses on practical problems at work and the potential impact of law changes.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that private bailiffs are working at only 15-20 % capacity. The pandemic has also underlined the need for digitalised training.
- EU law training sessions tend to attract younger bailiffs studying EU cross-border law.

Jos Uitdehaag, Secretary of the [International Union of Judicial Officers \(UIHJ\)](#), explored the international perspectives on bailiff training and provided some practical observations. Many countries for example do not focus enough on initial training for bailiffs, while universities could deliver more courses on enforcement law. The importance of continuing training was underlined. Bailiff courses should focus more on practical cases. Trainers should ideally be drawn from the profession, while more training on cross-border issues and management skills is needed. The UIHJ plans to develop a training platform to help bailiffs develop competence-based training, social skills and professional skills.

Iva Peni, Legal Advisor at the [European Bailiffs' Foundation](#), discussed improvements in implementation of EU law by promoting cross-border activities based on the example of the 'FILIT project', which runs until December 2022. The three main goals (which are in line with the EU's strategy) are to contribute to the uniform application of EU law, build mutual trust in cross-border judicial proceedings, and help develop the EU area of justice. Specific goals are set for bailiffs to keep abreast of developments in EU law and exchange best practices.

Participants made the following points:

- They agreed on the importance of robust initial training and experience-based training, and on the crucial role of EU support for EU law training.
- It is important to take into account both private and public sector bailiffs.

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- The FILIT project was seen as a good model for other training providers for bailiffs.

### Other professions

This working group, chaired by Emmanuelle Cretin-Magand, Team Leader for European judicial training, discussed how training could be extended to cover court staff, prison and probation officers, legal interpreters and mediators, etc.

Judge Raf Van Ransbeeck, Director a.i. of the [IGO-IFJ Belgium](#) judicial training institute, shared the results of a study [launched in 2019](#) by the European Commission on court and prosecutors' office staff training needs regarding EU law. The [study](#) (and its [annexes](#)) found that 182 000 people, or 64 % of all staff in courts, would need some EU law training. Three key provisional recommendations have been made:

- Focus on function as a way to identify future court staff needs.
- Train the trainer courses for court staff trainers should become compulsory, wherever possible.
- Pan-EU training can support court staff training and facilitate further networking opportunities, for instance through exchanges for court staff within the EU or transnational mentoring schemes.

Judge Ana Cláudia Cáceres, Deputy Director in the Directorate-General of the Justice Administration of Portugal, shared the Portuguese experience of court staff training. EU funding has helped to train workers in registrar and prosecution offices. Key challenges in the new digital environment include adapting to innovation, the receptivity of trainees and the effectiveness of training methods. Current online training does not replace face-to-face training, but it enables reaching more participants. Court staff training is critical to court efficiency and quick decision-making.

Dr Ioan Durnescu, Professor at the University of Bucharest and Coordinator of the '[PONT](#)' project ([Probation Observatory Networking and Training](#)), discussed the challenges facing the training of probation officers. Recruitment methods and qualification requirements for probation officers differ across Europe, which makes setting up EU law training challenging. Since 2019 however, there have been [Council of Europe guidelines](#) regarding recruitment, selection, education and development. Regarding EU law, probation officers notably need training on the principle of mutual recognition of supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions and of supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention. The [Confederation of European Probation](#) also sees training as a priority, with online platforms able to deliver experiential training when it is needed.

Cédric Le Bossé, Member of the European Commission Expert Group on European judicial training, representing the [European Penitentiary Training Academies \(EPTA\) Network](#), welcomed the fact that probation staff have been included in the new strategy. According to the information provided by some EPTA members, there is not always a distinction in the existing training offer between Council of Europe standards and European Court of Human Rights case law and EU law. He praised the positive impact of EU-funded projects, which have a good impact nationally, allow for supporting good practices, cross-border training and cooperation of training providers and are a factor of change.

Vítor Peña Ferreira, Head of the Training Division of the Directorate-General of Prison Services of Portugal, presented the training offer for prison staff and probation officers in the country. It is mainly practical and notably covers the main principles of dynamic security, human rights and also training on soft skills. He noted that EU-funded penitentiary training projects can help to clarify and disseminate useful information. These projects help to exert soft pressure to address training gaps and differences in practices. He indicated that Portugal would remain active in such projects.

Discussions within the group touched on the following points:

- Training should focus, among other topics, on the development of soft skills.

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- Legal interpreters and translators are not recognised as professions in the Member States. There is a need to address this situation at the Member State and EU level. Joint training with other professionals in need of interpretation might be one solution. Cooperation with the Council of Europe on legal translation standards could be interesting for promoting the adoption of guidelines, given the increasing number of cross-border cases.
- The administrative burden of taking part in EU projects can limit participation.
- In an ongoing EU co-funded project led by the Academy of European Law (ERA) and the EJTN, levels of legal English often seem higher among (often younger) court staff than judges. Legal English training is a very popular training topic.



## Session 2: Flexible answers to new challenges and training needs

### Good training needs assessment

Ms Silvia Dimitrova, Deputy Director of the [National Institute of Justice \(NIJ\) in Bulgaria](#), presented ideas on good training needs assessment. She noted: *“The pandemic – and rapid digitalisation – have encouraged new ways of working. Newly emerging training needs also mean that it is necessary to increase our capacity as judicial training providers.”*

Adequately conducting training needs assessments requires first knowing your audience and target groups. Ms Dimitrova noted that the NIJ is currently creating competence profiles for judges and prosecutors, with the aim of building a training portfolio based on these competences. Individualising training also requires taking into account specific experiences and the needs of trainees.

### Thematic working groups

The second working group session focused on the substance and content of training. Five working groups tackled a specific topic of EU law:

- Rule of law and fundamental human rights
- Digitalisation of justice
- Judgecraft and non-legal knowledge
- Security Union
- Single Market.

### Rule of law and fundamental human rights

This working group, chaired by Wojciech Postulski, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, looked at how to efficiently and effectively train in the rule of law and human rights in the EU and beyond, and what the substance of such training should be.

Stanislas Adam, Legal Secretary at the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) in the cabinet of the President, Professor of European Union law at Ghent University, underlined that the rule of law means effective judicial protection with judicial independence as its core. It means governance systems that ensure all public bodies make decisions in accordance with the law. The state itself, not just public bodies, is subject to the law. This makes training in the rule of law essential to the work of a judge. The rule of law principle does evolve however. The change of paradigm and ‘constitutionalisation’ of judicial independence through the prism of the rule of law came with the judgment in the case C-64/16.

Lorenzo Salazar, Deputy Prosecutor General to the Court of Appeal of Naples, Italy, said that the rule of law also means that justice should not only be done, but also be seen to be done. Flexible answers are needed in response to new challenges and training needs, when it comes to training prosecutors to uphold the rule of law and fundamental rights. In order to create a genuinely European judicial culture, professionals need to share a common understanding and knowledge of the rule of law and fundamental rights. In this respect, training may be the only opportunity to enable professionals, in their fixed daily practices, to acquire different views from those learned in universities at a national level.

Attracta O’Regan, Solicitor, Rule of Law Advisor to the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and Head of Professional Training at the [Law Society of Ireland](#), noted that the UN had agreed the basic principles for the role of lawyers in 1990. These principles are the basis of the right to a legal defence and the cornerstone of all legal

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rights in a democracy. Ms O'Regan underlined the importance of training on ethics and integrity to preserve the rule of law, and said that lawyers should be crusaders in the field of human rights and the fundamental rule of law.

João Pedro Campos, Chief Technical Advisor on the EU project to support the consolidation of the Rule of Law in PALOP and Timor-Leste ([PACED](#)), noted that there were cases of EU and non-EU judicial training institutes working together to promote justice beyond the EU Member States, for instance in Africa. Such projects can help to strengthen human rights and democracy. This is why, for instance, the EU developed a project to support the consolidation of the rule of law in Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Timor-Leste.

Gabriel Toggenburg, Policy Coordinator for the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights at the [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#), directed participants to the EU [Charterpedia](#). This publication contains details of numerous court cases under headings of dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice and is designed for judges. He gave an overview of the FRA-developed training materials for justice professionals.

### Digitalisation of justice

During this working group, chaired by Katerina Entcheva, e-Justice Legislative and Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, several different digitalisation tools were presented. Speakers underlined the importance of preparing for what is coming in terms of digitalisation, and for the justice professionals to consider how artificial intelligence tools can be used in practice. Above all, professionals must be made aware of the challenges and uses of artificial intelligence applications through training, and balance the additional power they give to judges/prosecutors.

Katerina Entcheva presented the recently adopted recasts of the Service of documents and Taking of evidence Regulations, which bring about the mandatory digitalisation of the communication between the courts and competent authorities of Member States. That means that all communications and exchanges of requests and documents between the courts and other competent authorities will be carried out electronically, through a decentralised IT system composed of national IT systems interconnected by a secure and reliable interoperable solution (e-CODEX). Alternative traditional means of communications can still be used, only as an exception. The upcoming Commission initiative for modernising cross-border judicial cooperation by better use of new technologies was also briefly presented.

Teresa Rodrigues, Computer Specialist, presented the new MAGISTRATUS and MP CODEX systems, court case management software that connects different jurisdictions in Portugal. Importantly, the technology was designed by judges and prosecutors, to be used by judges and prosecutors.

Key features include:

- High security and user-friendliness.
- Landing page that informs judges and prosecutors of what's scheduled for the day.
- Digital certificates issued to judges and prosecutors.
- Search engine for cases, acts, documents, notes, ID numbers, addresses, etc.

António Cluny, National Member for Portugal at the [European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation \(EUROJUST\)](#), discussed agency initiatives designed to boost support regarding serious crime between two or more Member States. The goal of EUROJUST is to achieve criminal justice across borders through interactions between judicial authorities. EUROJUST offers guidelines, tools, a forum and document request templates, and also supports European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) trainees. The agency's website contains annual reports, factsheets and videos that are freely available.

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Simone Cuomo, Secretary-General of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), noted that the digitalisation of justice is one means of facilitating access, achieving cross border e-justice and enabling law firms to run practices more efficiently. It is critical that lawyers are involved in developing justice systems, as they are the main users. The CCBE is helping bars and law societies to access EU training funds, including through various initiatives such as the [AI4Lawyers project](#).

Use of technology in legal practices includes:

- Legal analytics
- Document automation
- Advanced search
- Compliance and due diligence
- Assisted e-discovery, reviewing electronic documents
- Automated filing of documents.

Advantages of digitally empowering lawyers include:

- Avoiding inequality between lawyers and state prosecutors
- And between small and big firms, small and big countries
- Increased awareness of how these tools work and avoidance of bad use, ensuring proper functioning of justice.

Henk Leijenhorst, Senior Advisor for Forensic Education at the [Netherlands Forensic Institute](#), showcased the development of a one-day course on digital forensics for the judiciary in the Netherlands, which started in 2014. To build the course, cybercrime experts were asked about the type of digital crimes they encountered, what tended to go wrong, and what defences they typically encountered. Most common crimes included child abuse material, fraud on eBay and offences such as hacked Facebook accounts. The training approach included the following:

- Focusing on basic knowledge with an introductory video
- Splitting people up into groups to discuss research questions and conclusions
- Combining a communicator with technical trainers.

The [Studiecentrum Rechtspleging \(SSR\)](#), the joint training institute of the Dutch judicial system and the Public Prosecution Service, currently offers four e-learning courses and several courses on cybercrime. Key lessons include the need to focus on the most frequent types of crime, and the most encountered defences ('I was hacked!'), to evaluate and improve, and to make thresholds as low as possible (i.e. use layman's language and encourage questions).

### **Judgcraft and non-legal knowledge**

This working group, chaired by Judge Pedro Raposo de Figueiredo, Trainer for the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), Portugal, noted that judgcraft was essential for the efficiency of justice, for building relationships between different legal systems and for creating trust between practitioners in cross-border areas, as well as with the general public. All justice practitioners need training on non-legal knowledge and skills, provided by the likes of behaviouralists, social scientists and psychologists.

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Professor Jeremy Cooper, retired Judge and Training Consultant, said that judgecraft was in fact a set of high-level skills that are universal, valuable everywhere in the world and at any level. There are three key areas of judgecraft:

- Dealing effectively with evidence. One training strategy would be to make a video, for example of a mock street robbery, where victims and witnesses give evidence. Trainees watch, take notes and write up reports before providing a 5-minute judgment on camera.
- Managing the courtroom. Training sessions could involve actors developing 10-minute scenarios in which they play the role of witnesses and counsel. Each judge in the training is allocated one of these cases. At the end of the session, they all comment on what the judge did well and what could be improved.
- Building self-awareness: Training on recognising personal biases and biases in other people is essential for a judge.

Cristina San Juan from the Judicial Integrity Team at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), presented the UN's '[Global Judicial Integrity Network](#)'. A big priority is training judges in judicial ethics. A package of training tools has been devised and includes the following elements (around 6 800 judges around the world use these training packages):

- E-learning interactive course that allows users to learn at their own pace.
- Self-directed PDF text-based course on judicial ethics.
- Training manual for national trainers to tailor and design their own courses.

Francesca Sorbi, Member of the Training Committee of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), Member of the Italian National Bar, stressed that lawyers need to master skills that go beyond strictly legal matters. Non-legal skills that should be included in the training of EU-based lawyers include:

- Effective use of technology – lawyers need to know how to send their judicial actions and legal documents to court.
- Techniques for helping clients – good lawyers need to conduct negotiations and have the ability to persuade.

The creation of common legal knowledge should be interpreted in a broad way, as it can offer a process that goes beyond the national context to enable the construction of truly European lawyers.

Participants made the following points:

- While training for legal staff could be organised jointly with legal interpreters and translators, the cost of this must be taken into account.
- UN training courses are translated into many different languages.
- More training to develop skills in conciliation and mediation would be useful.
- Sometimes judges do not register for courses because their knowledge of English is not good enough.

### Security Union

The Security Union working group, chaired by Judge Alexandre Oliveira, Trainer in criminal law, procedural criminal law and international cooperation in criminal matters for the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ) in Portugal, examined the EU Security Union from four different training angles. Expert speakers explored its strategy for 2020-2025,

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training needs for EU judicial professionals, training for legal practitioners in contact with victims of crime, plus the challenges of cybercrime and digital evidence.

Angela Bardenhewer-Rating, Legal Officer for general criminal law at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, explained that the EU Security Union is an overarching priority for the European Commission, and that training is vital for the proper implementation of all EU law. Cybercrime (e.g. cyberattacks, Dark Web, etc.) costs reached EUR 5.5 trillion by the end of 2020.

The [Security Union Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#) comprises four strands for action, with training for all legal professionals under 'A strong security ecosystem'. Its strategic priorities are also priority themes for training justice professionals and include, for example, combatting cybercrime, terrorism, organised crime and money laundering, preventing radicalisation to violent extremism and learning to work with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).

Noémi Alexa, Analyst at the [European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training \(CEPOL\)](#), discussed the '[EU Strategic Training Needs Assessment](#)' (STNA) for law enforcement officers. The CEPOL network supports, enhances and facilitates training activities and e-learning products, covering a broad portfolio of judicial topics/activities. It is also mandated to produce a Multiannual Training Needs Assessment, as well as training programmes.

The STNA takes place every 4 years; the next STNA is in December 2021. It aims to:

- Help training providers to develop their own portfolios in areas of crime (e.g. terrorism, migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, cybercrime).
- Place more emphasis on horizontal aspects (e.g. criminal finance, money laundering and asset recovery, criminal networks/corruption, fundamental rights, data protection) and core capability gaps.
- Identify key priorities such as digitalisation skills and knowledge, improved coordination on joint training with prosecutors/judiciary, and capacity building for training outside the EU.

Marieta Tosheva, Legislative Officer for procedural criminal law at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, discussed the first [EU Strategy on victims' rights \(2020-2025\)](#), which provides for wide-scale training of legal practitioners. Its main goal is to ensure that all victims of crime, no matter where in the EU or in what circumstances the crime took place, can full rely on their rights. The strategy has a two-strand approach:

- Empowering victims of crime
- Working together for victims' rights.

A key priority is 'effective communication with victims and a safe environment for victims to report crime'. The strategy focuses on training actions to ensure that all justice professionals who are in contact with victims do a better job explaining victims' rights, etc. The EU Victims' Rights Platform, inaugurated in September 2020, also calls for training for legal practitioners. Its main goal is ensuring a more horizontal approach to victims' rights, by bringing together the main EU-level actors.

Judge Alexandre Oliveira discussed cybercrime and digital evidence challenges. Cybercrime is now a huge threat (e.g. ransomware affecting telecoms, banking or healthcare) and e-evidence was relevant in 85 % of total criminal investigations according to data announced by the Commission in 2018. Legal issues regarding information technologies often concern 'jurisdiction' (e.g. how to access data stored in other countries, how global companies comply with contradictory rules of different countries/regions), advanced encryption and anonymisation.

Key issues for the Security Union include:

- A consistent fundamental rights theory for the data
- Efficient legal tools to overcome jurisdiction problems (e.g. enhanced Mutual Legal Assistance)

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- Safe online exchange of data across borders
- Appropriate EU standards for data copying and digital forensics
- Universalisation of digital legal know-how.

### Single Market

The Single Market working group, chaired by Lena Geckle, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, pointed out that the Single Market is covered by a variety of EU legislation, and like any legal instrument, can only be successful if justice professionals are aware of it and can apply the rules properly. Four presentations were given.

Cecilia Rovelli, Legal and Policy Assistant, DG GROW, discussed the obligations of the [Single Market Transparency Directive](#). Member States are obliged to notify the Commission before draft regulations impacting products and services are adopted in the national system. The objective is to avoid any infringements. In cases of non-compliance, European Court of Justice (ECJ) case law will be applied.

Vítězslava Fričová, Legal and Policy Officer for the notification of regulatory barriers at the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, then discussed issues surrounding public procurement. Three traditional directives are complemented by what are called [Remedies Directives](#), which are designed to make sure that the objectives are achieved. Following a 2017 review, the Commission decided to collect national indicators, such as the number of decisions made by review bodies. A specialised network of first instance public review bodies was also established to share good practices.

Thomas Wiedmann, Legal Officer for capital movements at the Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, discussed investment protection under EU law, and new challenges for national courts. International arbitration tribunals have long been the preferred instrument of investment protection – only in 2018 did the Court of Justice in the EU rule that investment arbitration under bilateral treaties was incompatible with EU law. This means that EU law – instead of international treaties – ensures investment protection. National courts need to be able to handle these issues, and therefore require training in dealing with investment disputes and with an increased workload.

Arnaud Rohmer, from the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement Unit of the Service for the EU-UK Agreements at the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, said that the agreement reflects the UK's decision to base its future relationship with the EU outside the Customs Union. Trade is governed by UK trade law, similar to other international partners. This has wide implications, for example on the question of standards. Mutual recognition no longer applies. When it comes to services, any benefit of the Single Market has been lost. UK migration policy applies, which means there is no automatic right for EU workers to establish themselves in the UK. A key training gap is the fact that professionals dealing with international trade law and Single Market issues tend to have different profiles. Lawyers dealing with UK issues therefore need to accustom themselves with international trade law, the new legal framework for the EU-UK relationship.

Discussions within the group touched on the following points:

- Training in public procurement should also be accessible for public servants and administrators – both must ultimately apply the same rules.
- There should be as many common cross-professional training events as possible, and some of the EJTN activities could be opened up to other justice professionals.
- Existing case law is not always well-known, nor are the obligations imposed on Member States. This should be looked into.

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- UK staff are now third-country professionals, which makes accessing EU funding much harder.
- Post-Brexit recognition of training is an issue. Diplomas granted for training that began before 31 December 2020 however can benefit from withdrawal agreement provisions.

## Plenary session day two

The second conference day focused on training methodology, and what European judicial training will look like in the future.

### Session 1: High quality e-learning – Examples of best practices

Judge Pedro Raposo de Figueiredo, Trainer for the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), Portugal, presented the [EJTN's new Distance Learning Handbook](#) published in 2020, and shared some experiences from his home country. The handbook reflects the increasing demand for knowledge of judicial training methodology, the growing importance of distance learning, and the impact of the pandemic on judicial training.

The handbook discusses how to start distance learning, e-learning training methods, distance learning tools, and how to design an e-course. It includes overviews, practical examples and methods. A fifth chapter discusses how to shift from face-to-face to online.

*"You need a clear picture before investing in e-distance learning,"* notes Mr Raposo. *"Don't forget that resources are limited. Appropriate methods should be chosen for each training format and a brief analysis of tools available conducted."*

Mr Raposo discussed how the CEJ reinvented itself in the face of the pandemic. A modular learning platform was developed, with continuing training turned into distance learning actions. Advantages of digital platforms are that training actions are recorded and freely accessible to those who cannot attend.

The challenges that have arisen due to the pandemic have resulted in the creation of an e-book to help colleagues. This contains several articles covering various areas of the judiciary, and has received around 3 000 downloads to date.

Michiel Hulsbergen, CEO of the **e-learning platform DialogueTrainer**, explained how this innovation based on interactive videos began as a project at Utrecht University in 2013. [DialogueTrainer](#) became a company in 2016, with the Dutch prison system training organisation being the first customer. The platform consists of three key components: the creation of scenarios; the player; and the results facility. One example might be a childcare worker trying to enter a property because of safety concerns.

*"We create experiential learning,"* explained Mr Hulsbergen. *"The platform engages players in simulation with a virtual character, based on validated conversation models. Participants interact with characters and are given feedback on their individual choices. Experiential learning involves intuition."*

Caroline Kennedy, IT Manager for education at the [Law Society of Ireland](#), discussed **blended learning**. The Law Society of Ireland is an Apple Distinguished School, which means it is recognised by Apple as an outstanding school of innovation leadership and educational excellence. In practice, this means notably incorporating iPads in courses.

*"Technological enhancements in teaching and learning are driving innovation,"* said Ms Kennedy. *"These encourage trainees and lawyers to be autonomous, skilled and motivated, and to cultivate an engagement with the learning content. The learner is at the centre."*

Blended learning involves lectures delivered on site and recorded for on-demand use. Some require attendance, while others can be accessed when and where the learner wants to. The Law Society of Ireland uses an open-source platform called [Moodle](#), which encourages interactivity. On-demand lectures are recorded through [Panopto](#). Ms Kennedy confirmed that courses are compatible across all devices, except those involving MultiTouch books, which are only compatible with Apple.



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Judge Gerard Tangenberg, President of the Board of [SSR](#), the joint training institute of the Dutch judicial system and the Public Prosecution Service, discussed the development of **virtual classrooms**. While there had previously been hesitancy among participants over digital e-learning, the pandemic changed all this.

Face-to-face training was not possible, so the SSR adapted. Two virtual classrooms were established to train groups of up to 52 in a secure environment. When it became clear that it was not possible to remain in front of a screen all day, courses were revised to offer blended learning. A training of trainers course for example involves roughly 3 hours of virtual class, and 3 hours of study / group work that can be conducted flexibly.

*"The focus is on stimulating interaction and involvement in a safe environment,"* said Mr Tangenberg.

Wojciech Postulski, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, presented the concept of **e-capsules**, which is mentioned in the Commission's new [strategy](#). The objective is to encourage training providers to make more use of e-capsules to deliver focused e-training targeting immediate needs. The idea is to be simple, fast and effective; a tool to assist those in need of a quick update or a refresher course, for example.

*"E-capsules would address all areas of EU law, and answer the needs of all justice professionals,"* said Mr Postulski. *"Ultimately they should be available in all EU languages, in a uniform e-format that is recognised by users."*

Next steps are as follows:

- Identification of a list of topics for e-capsules
- Identification of an IT environment in which e-capsules will be delivered
- Development of a template for e-capsules
- Delivery of e-capsules that can be easily updated by anyone, beginning with pilots.

## Session 2: The future of judicial training

Peter Csonka, Deputy Director for Criminal Justice at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, reflected on what the future – the **'new normal'** post-pandemic world – may look like. From discussions, it is clear that training in the future will likely be multifaceted, and make use of a mixture of both online tools and face-to-face/online events. E-learning must also be interactive and engaging, and be able to facilitate networking. Hybrid training may indeed become the norm.

*"The Commission's new strategy is also about improving mutual trust between practitioners in different professions, and across borders," he said. "The Commission will therefore continue to support transnational face-to-face events, as well as online and on-site exchanges, e.g. through job shadowing."*

Mr Csonka also underlined the importance of training justice professionals in integrity, conduct and standards. These should remain the foundation for training.

Judge Markus Brückner, EJTN Secretary General, focused on three issues for the **future of judicial training**: training topics of the future; training methods; and how to open the box.

Mr Brückner noted the threat posed by technologies such as artificial intelligence, where human behaviour could potentially be controlled by algorithms and big data. He argued that traditional training on legal topics is not good enough anymore – judicial professionals need to go beyond and understand what is going on around them. Curricula therefore need to be more interdisciplinary.

In terms of training methodology, digital technologies have changed the way individuals receive both public and private news. *"This is changing how we acquire skills and knowledge, and it is simply not possible to teach the younger generation in the same way as before,"* he said. *"Training must come through a variety of media."*

To open the box, bottom-up self-development learning must be allowed, and the exchange of knowledge encouraged. One idea might be to incentivise individuals to train, and then pass on to their peers what they have learned.

Margarete von Galen, President of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), presented a vision of the **future of training for lawyers**. *"Fair justice depends on justice professionals and their knowledge,"* she stressed. *"Professional learning and development, and continuing legal training, are very important."*

She noted that data on anything beyond obligatory training is not recorded, and that therefore getting a clear picture of the level of EU law training is difficult. Nonetheless, the CCBE welcomes the ambitious objectives set by the Commission to train 15 % of lawyers on EU law by 2024.

On content, Ms von Galen agreed that training on soft non-legal and technical skills was crucial for lawyers. Soft skills enable lawyers to support their clients independently and with confidence. She also agreed that digitalisation and new technology must be prioritised.

While increasing the training capacity of lawyers in EU law was critical, Ms von Galen also stressed the importance of funding. Ambitious new targets also mean administrative requirements. She suggested finding new ways of providing and accessing funding, to better meet the needs of bar associations.

Elisabeth White, Policy Officer for gender equality in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, discussed **gender mainstreaming** in training and how this could be applied. In legal training events, this could include being aware of gender differences within the training context, and not being influenced by biases or subconscious gender stereotypes. This is important, especially if training touches on issues such as victims of violence.

*"In terms of gender-sensitive content, organisers and trainers should be aware of gender patterns, of how males and females can be impacted by certain types of crime,"* said Ms White. *"These impacts can influence how to interpret a situation, such as online violence where women are often under attack."*

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Ms White highlighted the collaborative work of the Commission and the Council of Europe on ensuring equal access to justice, and the [Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals \(HELP\) online courses](#) as sources of information and knowledge. She also mentioned the [Brussels Binder](#), which helps improve gender balance in policy debates.

Judge João Manuel da Silva Miguel, Director of the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), contributed to the vision of the **future of judicial training** and stressed the importance of understanding societal developments when thinking about the needs of judicial training. *“The legal profession does not act in isolation,”* he said. *“Better trained judicial staff means strengthened rule of law, the creation of confidence in justice systems and the upholding of fundamental rights.”*

Digitalisation is clearly influencing the quality and efficiency of judicial systems, but also raising issues that must be addressed. Mr Miguel highlighted a case in the US, where a person sentenced on the basis of an algorithm appealed on the grounds that it was their constitutional right to be tried by a person.

Jean-Philippe Rageade, Director of the [Academy of European Law](#) (ERA), pointed out that hybrid training events can be very complex, involving a great deal of time, funding and resources. There are practical considerations too – how the virtual and face-to-face elements are combined. Networking might include equipping those physically present with tablets, for example. It was also pointed out that the Commission may provide financial support for hybrid innovations, across policy areas.

### European Training Platform (ETP)

Lena Geckle, Policy Officer for European judicial training in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, provided a brief presentation of the [European Training Platform](#) (ETP) launched last December. The ETP is a flexible search tool for justice professionals, to help them train themselves on any EU law-related matter, and is targeted at all justice professionals. One new feature will be a notification system, which will alert justice professionals automatically about new courses and training material they are interested in.

*“The ETP also services training providers,”* explained Ms Geckle. *“They will be able to advertise courses and activities and promote training materials on the platform.”*

The ETP is currently in the test phase, and is expected to open up to more training providers. Small improvements are still being made, and Ms Geckle encouraged participants to visit the tool and provide feedback.

### Closing session

Peter Csonka, Deputy Director for Criminal Justice at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, thanked participants for a constructive and successful conference.

*“We have learned a lot from each other on what the future of European justice training should look like,”* he said. *“We have heard a lot of commitment from all sectors of the judiciary, and everybody that is now covered under the wider mandate of this strategy. We are a chain, with one element relying on the other.”*

Mr Csonka said that the Commission would stand by to provide help – including financial help – to support training efforts. A key lesson he said was the need to digitalise and use IT tools across the board. *“We all need to adapt to the new environment,”* he said. At the same time, values such as the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights must remain central to judicial training.

*“It is critical that peers should trust each other,”* he added. *“Training is not only about knowing the law, but developing soft skills and technical skills. The ‘new normal’ should be inclusive, multifaceted, open to cross-professional training and interactive. We want to make our strategy a success.”*

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Judge João Manuel da Silva Miguel, Director of the Centro de Estudos Judiciários (CEJ), closed the conference, calling this a necessary, important and useful event. *“I am proud of the results achieved,”* he said. *“We must continue this work for years to come.”*

### Key points from Plenary session day two:

- Emerging training needs require increasing the capacity of judicial training providers – this is where funding is important.
- A key advantage of digital platforms is that training actions are recorded and freely accessible to those who cannot attend.
- Blended training can help to encourage trainees and judicial staff to be autonomous, skilled and motivated, and to cultivate an engagement with the learning content.
- The e-capsule concept, mentioned in the Commission strategy, could help training providers to deliver focused e-training courses that are targeted at immediate needs.
- Training in the future is likely to be multifaceted and to make use of a mixture of both online tools/events and face-to-face tools/events.
- Training justice professionals in integrity, professional conduct and standards will remain the foundation for all training.
- Potential threats posed by technologies such as artificial intelligence should be addressed in training curricula.
- Soft skills enable lawyers to support their clients independently and with confidence.
- Organisers and trainers should be aware of gender patterns, of how males and females can be impacted by certain types of crime when organising programmes.
- The European Training Platform (ETP) will help all types of justice professionals to train themselves on any EU law-related matter.

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