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EU judicial training policy

Training of justice professionals on EU law is an essential tool to ensure the correct and effective application of EU law, to foster mutual trust among justice professionals in cross-border proceedings and to support the implementation of the EU values and principles, such as the rule of law. It aims to enable all justice professionals (judges, prosecutors, court staff, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs, probation officers, prison staff, etc.) to see the role of EU law in their daily practice, give it full effect and secure the respect of rights and obligations stemming from EU law in national and cross-border judicial proceedings.

European judicial training is essential for all legal practitioners, such as court staff, lawyers, solicitors, bailiffs, notaries and mediators and, particularly, judges and prosecutors.

The Lisbon Treaty granted the European Union (EU) competences to support judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters through the 'training of the judiciary and judicial staff'. Since then, judicial training on EU law has improved the correct and uniform application of EU law and built mutual trust in cross-border judicial proceedings, thus helping to develop the EU area of justice.

In 2011, the European Commission published the **Communication on "Building trust in EU-wide justice, a new dimension to European judicial training", which elapsed in 2020**. The aim of this communication was to give a new dimension to European judicial training and to train half (800 000) of all justice professionals in the EU by 2020. Thanks to the strong joint commitment of the Commission, the Member States, national and EU training providers as well as the individual justice professionals, this goal was already reached in 2017, two years ahead of schedule.

In 2019, the Commission adopted the [evaluation of the 2011-2020 European judicial training strategy](#). It showed that the strategy helped to increase the number of training activities, but also promoted new types of activity, such as exchange programmes. It helped to improve training on EU law for several categories of justice professionals, especially judges and prosecutors. It also built the capacities of networks such as the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) and reinforced EU level networks and training providers.

The **2020 annual statistical report on European judicial training** shows that in 2019, the number of trained justice professionals remained at a remarkably high level with more than 182 000 justice professionals receiving training on EU law. However, differences remain in the level of participation in training across Member States and the various justice professions.

Building on the lessons learnt and new developments since the adoption of the European judicial training strategy for 2011-2020, the European Commission has put in motion a comprehensive judicial training package aiming to support even more justice systems and justice professionals, making them fit for the challenges of the 21st century and the constant developments of EU law:

a new [European judicial training strategy for 2021-2024](#),

the [9th annual report 2020 on European Judicial training](#) of Directorate-General Justice and Consumers,

and the launch of the [European Training Platform \(ETP\)](#) on the European e-Justice Portal.

The new strategy, at the core of the training package, sets new ambitious training goals and new priorities:

The new strategy sets new operational objectives tailored for the needs of different justice profession.

It focuses on a broader target audience and a new geographical scope to address the new challenges in accordance with the needs of justice professionals.

Judicial training should even more promote the common rule of law culture, uphold fundamental rights, upscale the digitalisation of justice and go beyond legal education and support the development of professional skills, while ensuring that new training offers are quickly made available in answer to new training needs.

The priority is training of judges and prosecutors but all justice professionals are concerned: court staff, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs, mediators, legal interpreters and translators, court experts, and in certain situations prison staff and probation officers. In particular, court staff and lawyers' training is lagging behind and should be addressed. Prison staff and probation officers are a new target audience that was not covered by the previous strategy.

The strategy focuses on the EU justice professionals but it also supports Western Balkans prospects of EU membership and non-European countries, in particular in Africa and Latin America, in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The European Commission will support high quality cross-border training projects on EU law using the different EU funds available, such as the future Justice and Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values programmes.

Achieving these new objectives is the **joint responsibility of all stakeholders**. Member States, Councils for the judiciary, [national](#) and [European judicial training bodies](#), and justice professionals at national and European level must be **committed** to integrating EU law and its implementation into national and local training and to increasing the number of training activities in EU law and the number of participants attending such sessions.

Taking action

The Commission will maintain its strong commitment to judicial training in order to secure the continuation of achievements and to address the new challenges in accordance with the needs of justice professionals. European judicial training is an overarching subject and tool securing proper implementation of EU justice policy instruments. It should be reflected in most initiatives in the area of EU cross border cooperation, as well as in the connection with the Rule of Law initiatives.

Information about **EU financial support** for European judicial training projects can be found on the websites of the [Directorate General for Justice and Consumers](#), the [Directorate General for Competition](#), the [Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs](#) and the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).

Complementary to the new Strategy, the Commission has launched the [European Training Platform \(ETP\)](#). The ETP is a search tool that enables justice professionals to find training courses on EU law organised in the EU and training material to train themselves. Justice professionals will be able to search there for training courses on EU law and keep up-to-date on the training activities held in different languages. The ETP is launched as a 1st test phase in 2021 with the participation of the four recognised EU-level judicial training providers: the [European Judicial Training Network \(EJTN\)](#), the [Academy of European Law \(ERA\)](#), the [European Institute of Public Administration \(EIPA\)](#) and the [European University Institute \(EUI\)](#). The Commission contributes to the platform with up to-date and ready-to-use training materials or handbooks produced notably thanks to EU financial support.

Assessing the current situation

The Commission publishes a yearly report in English on the participation of legal practitioners in training in EU law in the European Union:

2023  (5234 Kb) 

2022  (2646 Kb) 

- 2021 [PDF](#) (3912 Kb) [en](#)
- 2020 [PDF](#) (3272 Kb) [en](#)
- 2019 [PDF](#) (2692 Kb) [en](#)
- 2018 [PDF](#) (2588 Kb) [en](#)
- 2017 [PDF](#) (3019 Kb) [en](#)
- 2016 [PDF](#) (1515 Kb) [en](#)
- 2015 [PDF](#) (1742 Kb) [en](#)
- 2014 [PDF](#) (1927 Kb) [en](#)
- 2012 [PDF](#) (2265 Kb) [en](#) (published in 2013)
- 2011 [PDF](#) (512 Kb) [en](#) (published in 2012).

Since 2013, the Commission has been supporting AIAKOS, a two-week exchange programme for new judges and prosecutors managed by the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN). It developed complementary measures, by promoting the supporting role of the European e-Justice Portal and drafting practical guidelines, e.g. on training methodologies and evaluation processes.

In 2013-2014, the Commission carried out the pilot project on European judicial training proposed by the European Parliament to identify best practices in training legal practitioners in EU law. The results are published here:

Study on best practices in training of judges and prosecutors, assigned to the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN):

The report is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (1619 Kb) [en](#). The executive summary is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (593 Kb) [en](#) and [French](#) [PDF](#) (589 Kb) [fr](#).

The factsheets on good training practices are available in the "good practices" section of the Portal. They will help trainers and training providers of all legal professions improve their practice on issues such as training needs assessment, training methodology or evaluation.

Study on the state of play of lawyers' training in EU law, assigned to the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and the EIPA European Centre for Judges and Lawyers:

The report is available in an [interactive magazine](#) [PDF](#) (2857 Kb) [en](#) and in [pdf format](#) [PDF](#) (1807 Kb) [en](#) in English. The executive summary is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (1064 Kb) [en](#) and in [French](#) [PDF](#) (1378 Kb) [fr](#).

The factsheets on lawyers' training systems in all EU Member States are presented in the Portal section on training of legal practitioners at national level. They can help national bar associations and lawyers' authorities assess the training background of any applicant lawyers wishing to exercise his/her right to freedom of establishment in the EU.

Some annexes to the report are available here in English such as:

[annex B - results from the consultation](#) [PDF](#) (2140 Kb) [en](#)

[annex H: questionnaire 1 on training systems](#) [PDF](#) (164 Kb) [en](#) and its [explanations](#) [PDF](#) (163 Kb) [en](#),

[questionnaire 2 on training providers](#) [PDF](#) (286 Kb) [en](#) and its [explanations](#) [PDF](#) (234 Kb) [en](#)

[questionnaire 3 on good training practices](#) [PDF](#) (190 Kb) [en](#) and its [explanations](#) [PDF](#) (62 Kb) [en](#).

The website of the project is accessible [here](#).

Study on the state of play of court staff training in EU law and promotion of cooperation between court staff training providers at EU level, assigned to a consortium of the EIPA European Centre for Judges and Lawyers, Justice Coopération Internationale (JCI, France), the Centro de Estudios Juridicos (Spain), the Krajowa Szkoła Sądownictwa i Prokuratury (Poland) and Saxony's Staatsministerium der Justiz und für Europa (Germany):

The study is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (1379 Kb) [en](#). The executive summary is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (909 Kb) [en](#) and [French](#) [PDF](#) (893 Kb) [fr](#). The study's recommendations to improve court staff training are also available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (938 Kb) [en](#) and [French](#) [PDF](#) (950 Kb) [fr](#).

A summary of EU court staff's main tasks and roles can be found in [this table](#) [PDF](#) (383 Kb) [en](#). The detailed description of the court staff's tasks in each Member State will be published soon on the Member States' pages of the Portal.

The description of the court staff's training systems in the Member States will be published in the section "Training of legal practitioners at national level" of the Portal.

Project to promote the cooperation between judicial stakeholders concerned by European judicial training, assigned to the EJTN:

The report is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (1499 Kb) [en](#). The executive summary is available in [English](#) [PDF](#) (631 Kb) [en](#) and [French](#) [PDF](#) (630 Kb) [fr](#).

The factsheets on the role of the EU-level judicial networks in training are available in the "European training networks and structures" section of the Portal.

Context

In 2006, the European Commission presented a [communication](#) to the European Parliament and the Council on judicial training in the European Union. 2008 saw the adoption of a [Resolution](#) of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the training of judges, prosecutors and judicial staff in the European Union.

In 2009, the European Parliament published a [study on strengthening judicial training in the European Union](#) [PDF](#) (553 Kb) [fr](#), in French.

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 provided a legal basis for activities relating to European judicial training. Articles 81 and 82 list 'support for the training of the judiciary and judicial staff' among the measures required to strengthen judicial cooperation in civil, commercial and criminal matters.

In December 2009 the Council adopted the [Stockholm Programme](#) focusing on the issue of European judicial training for all legal professionals.

In the Stockholm Programme [Action Plan](#) and the 2010 EU citizenship [report](#) the Commission declared European judicial training to be a priority. The European Parliament has also consistently underlined that proper judicial training contributes significantly to improving the operation of the internal market and making it easier for citizens to exercise their [rights](#).

At the end of 2010, the Commission launched a consultation among stakeholders including Member States, members of the Justice Forum, and [European training networks and structures](#) and their members. A summary of the findings of the consultation can be found [here](#) [PDF](#) (192 Kb) [en](#).

On 13 September 2011, the European Commission agreed the Communication "

[Building trust in EU-wide Justice, a new dimension to European judicial training](#)".

In its conclusions of 27 and 28 of October 2011 on European judicial training ([available in English](#)), the Justice and Home Affairs Council encouraged the yearly sharing of information with the Commission on available training in EU law and the number of practitioners trained, and asked the Commission to consider presenting an annual report on European judicial training.

In 2012, the European Parliament proposed a pilot project on European judicial training, with a view to contributing to:

identifying best practices in training of judges, prosecutors and justice professionals on national legal systems and traditions as well as on Union law, identifying the most effective ways of delivering training in EU law and national legal systems to judges, prosecutors and justice professionals at local level and promoting the dialogue and coordination between EU judges and prosecutors,

encouraging EU judicial training providers to share ideas on best practice and disseminate them across the EU, and

improving cooperation between the EJTN and national judicial training institutions. This will involve training providers such as the Academy of European Law, and the European-level professional organisations such as the European Network of the Councils for the Judiciary, the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts, the Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions and the Network of the General Prosecutors of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU.

In November 2013, Vice-President Reding delivered a speech in English at the European Parliament's workshop on

["Legal training: an essential tool for European judicial excellence"](#).

In June 2016, the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) adopted nine judicial training principles, both as a foundation for the judiciary to manage their training needs and as a framework for the training providers to plan and deliver training for judges and prosecutors. The principles address issues such as a right to judicial training during working time, a responsibility for providing the necessary resources, compulsory initial training at the beginning of the career, use of modern training methods and inclusion of techniques and non-legal issues among the training topics. The text of the principles and background information can be found here in [English](#) and in [French](#).

In 2019, the Commission adopted the [evaluation of the 2011-2020 European judicial training strategy](#). The evaluation and the 2019 edition of DG JUST yearly reports, with statistics and figures on the participation of justice professionals in training on EU law, show that the objectives were overall achieved in an efficient manner. The evaluation shows that:

The 2011 Communication's main objective, that half (800.000) of all EU justice professionals should attend training on EU law between 2011 and 2020, was already reached in 2017, two years ahead of schedule.

Over the years, almost all the categories of justice practitioners targeted reached the annual 5% target of trained practitioners per profession.

The strategy has not only helped to increase the number of training activities, but also promoted new types of activity, such as exchange programmes.

The objective of 1,200 judicial exchanges per year was surpassed and the number of training activities constantly increased.

The success of the AIKOS programme represents substantial progress towards the objective that all newly appointed judges and prosecutors should take part in an exchange organised by national judicial training institutions.

The strategy led to almost doubling the total funds made available to train justice professionals through EU programmes.

And has helped built the capacities of networks such as the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) and reinforced EU level networks and training providers such as the Academy of European Law (ERA) and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA-Luxembourg).

Related studies

[Strengthening judicial cooperation in the European Union](#)  (1694 Kb) , 2009, in French

[Judicial training in the EU Member States](#), 2011, in English

European Parliament workshop on "the training of legal practitioners: teaching EU law and judgecraft":

[Session I – Learning and Accessing EU Law: Some Best Practices](#) and [Session II – Improving Mutual Trust](#) (in English), 2013

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