



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**Commissioner Jourová**

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality

## **Video message**

**DRAFT**

### **Message to Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) on European Lawyers' Day**

Brussels, 10 December 2014

Recording:

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to speak to you on the occasion of the first European Lawyers' Day.

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe represents more than 1 million lawyers in Europe. Today we are celebrating your profession's essential role in upholding the rule of law. Thanks to you, legislation agreed at EU level is used in practice and rights become reality for citizens and businesses.

I shall continue building trust across the justice systems in the EU. This requires high quality, independent and efficient justice systems. Our different cultural and legal traditions should not be an obstacle to freedom, justice, or the Single Market. We must develop solutions together that respond to the challenges faced by European citizens and businesses.

Cooperation between legal practitioners is fundamental to achieve this goal. I would like to see a stronger and more structured collaboration with the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters. I shall ensure that there are

effective channels for you – the experts in your field – to give your feedback on how EU instruments function in practice.

European law has an increasing impact on the daily lives of citizens and businesses. This requires national legal practitioners to be knowledgeable about EU law and capable of applying it. As you know, the Commission has set the target of having 50% of all legal practitioners trained in EU law by 2020. I encourage you and your colleagues to participate in this important cross-border training.

I am ready to support your efforts in developing tools to modernise justice. Certain tools that you have developed are, or soon will be, part of the European e-Justice Portal – for example the "Find a lawyer" tool or the European Training Platform, a search engine enabling you to find the training activities to match your needs.

I know that for this first European Lawyers' Day you have chosen the topic of lawyer-client confidentiality and mass governmental surveillance.

Lawyer-client confidentiality - now regulated in criminal proceedings through the Access to a Lawyer Directive - and protection of client information and personal data are key components of your role in upholding of the rule of law.

Our proposed Anti-Money Laundering Directive will also pay particular attention to these issues. Without trust and confidentiality, access to justice and the rule of law cannot be guaranteed.

The proposed EU data protection reform will shape the way personal data are processed in the EU over the next decades. It will ensure that individual rights are protected, and that one common and effective set of rules is applied throughout the Single Market.

On behalf of European citizens and businesses, I am counting on you to work together with us to continue building a true European area of justice. We must work to meet citizens' expectations and create an environment that can foster

sustainable growth, and provide justice, protection and fairness for our citizens.

I wish you success for today's event and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

**Word count: 504**