



# Historic opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer

On 13 May 2025, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) participated in the **opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer**. This event, held in Luxembourg, marks an historic milestone for the rule of law, the legal profession, and the CCBE.

The CCBE was represented by its President, Thierry Wickers, and the Chair of the CCBE European Convention Working Group, Laurent Pettiti, accompanied by CCBE Legal Advisor, Nathan Roosbeek.

**This is the first international, legally binding instrument dedicated to protecting the free and independent exercise of the legal profession.** Its adoption is a landmark achievement, providing a robust legal framework to uphold the independence of lawyers and to guarantee their ability to carry out their professional duties free from intimidation, interference, or reprisals.

## The CCBE's leading role



The CCBE, which represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers, has played a pivotal role in making this Convention a reality. **The idea for such a binding instrument initially emerged within the CCBE in response to growing threats to the independence and safety of lawyers.** As an observer member of the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Lawyers (CJ-AV), the CCBE actively contributed to shaping the Convention's content, ensuring it reflects the realities and needs of the profession. The CCBE European Convention Working Group, chaired by Laurent Pettiti, was a driving force behind the project, working in close partnership with Council of Europe bodies and national Bars and Law Societies.

## A new era for the legal profession

The Convention establishes, for the first time, binding legal standards and a monitoring mechanism **to protect lawyers' independence, safety, and professional rights**. Key provisions include:

- ✓ Guaranteeing the independence and autonomy of Bars and Law Societies
- ✓ Safeguarding lawyer–client confidentiality
- ✓ Enabling lawyers to perform their duties without fear of attack, threat, harassment or intimidation, or any improper hindrance or interference
- ✓ Ensuring fair access to the profession and transparent disciplinary procedures



The Convention also introduces a **monitoring mechanism** to ensure effective implementation and provides for **urgent procedures** in cases of serious violations.

## The need for widespread signature and swift ratification

It is crucial that the Convention is signed and ratified by as many countries as possible to ensure its effectiveness and the broadest possible protection for the legal profession. Once in force, it is equally important that as many non–Council of Europe member states as possible accede to the Convention, extending its protective reach and reinforcing the rule of law globally.



As CCBE President ,Thierry Wickers, stated:

*“This Convention is not only about protecting lawyers; it is about safeguarding the very foundations of the rule of law. When lawyers can work freely and independently, everyone’s rights are protected.”*

## The way forward

The CCBE will continue to promote the Convention and support its implementation, reaffirming its commitment to defending the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law and the rights of citizens throughout Europe and beyond.

For further information, please consult the [Explanatory Note](#) and the [CCBE webpage](#) on the Convention.

### About the CCBE

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers.