

(Honourable Conference!)

Dear Guests!

Dear Colleagues!

It is an honour for me to say welcome our new and returning guests here at the Hungarian Academy of Justice in Budapest. The National Office for the Judiciary hosts the International Conference on Justice and Communication for the seventh time. Over the last 6 years, the conference series has attracted around 600 participants from many European countries. I am delighted that this year the participants came from 18 countries.

When we set up this series of conferences, we wanted to create an interactive international professional forum. A forum where we have the possibility to learn about the various methods used in the external and internal communication of courts throughout Europe. We also considered it important to be able to share professional experiences, good practices, and to discuss controversial issues and their possible solutions.

Mr. Ferenc Deák, who was a prominent Hungarian statesman and known as the "wise man of the nation," said in 1834: "Happy is the country, where the judge's adjudgment not only brings justice but also reassures the parties through the trust placed in his office and person." The message is simple and important: "trust in the court and person of the judge"! Public trust is still essential today: judges, courts are the key to efficient operation, judges and courts can be successful if their activities gain confidence. Public trust strengthens the acceptance of judicial decisions at individual and social levels, increases the willingness of citizens to cooperate, simplifies decision-making and promotes stable institutional operation. At this year's conference, we would like to discuss the issue of public trust in the judiciary in terms of what we can do with the tools and methods of communication to increase trust.

First, we are going to focus on the communication of judgments. Although these cases represent only a small proportion of the cases before the courts, they are at the centre of the public interest, public awareness and these determinate public discourse about courts. The question is how these proceedings can be communicated in such a way that public confidence can be maintained towards courts.

After communicating the judgment, we are going to deal with the cultural mission of courts. I believe that the judiciary can only be successful if it does not hide into an ivory tower but is brave enough to undertake its social role as the third branch of power, governed by the rule of law. In this regard, there are many historical and

present examples in Hungary. The National Office for the Judiciary has recently launched a new brand program focused on preserving our sustainable values.

Communication and trust within the organization will be discussed after external communication, and "external" public trust. 11,000 people, including 3,000 judges work in the Hungarian court system. Every day, it's a challenge to pass on information to every single member of our staff about the operation of courts and administrative decisions.

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Dear Colleagues!

The judiciary must develop a balanced communication which - while providing broad information - preserves judicial independence and protects their prestige, and contributes to increase the level of public trust at the same time.

Following the lectures, tomorrow, the workshops will also provide an opportunity to discuss problems and challenges and solutions found, as the main aim is to develop better and better practices.

Please have a good time, gather experiences, make friends, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!

Thank you for your kind attention!