

Courts and Communication Conference
Hungarian Academy of Justice
COURTS' MISSION TO PROMOTE VALUES WORKSHOP
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Workshop leader:
William Valasidis, European Court of Justice

Workshop secretary:
dr. Johanna Kotsis, trainee judge, Regional Court of Budapest

Group 1

The participants briefly introduce themselves.

W. V.'s question is whether the court should promote values or not, how does it work in the participants' countries?

Albania: they are promoting values and strengthening public trust. They are on the way to create a 'press judge' to handle press through a judge.

Armenia: the courts' mission is to promote values.

Bulgaria: the court actively works with media, giving lectures on different topics, organizing different events, having a Facebook-page, having a judge for these tasks.

Czech Republic: the main goal is to speed up cases, communication is a key for that. They promote values such as protection of fundamental human rights.

Hungary: NOJ promotes values of jurisdiction: family friendly workplace, ethics of the profession, lifelong learning, open court projects etc.

Lithuania: promotes independence and transparency of courts, but it's a little bit problematic these days.

Macedonia: doesn't promote values at this moment, they defend themselves in the media. They don't have a strategy yet how to appear in the media. It's very important to show citizens the decision-making process.

Montenegro: they try to promote their values through the court's website, but they should improve in that area, show people the everyday work of the court and form this information into statements.

Poland: media's expectation are like for politicians, they expect opinions, but the court should be impartial and only work with facts.

Romania: they promote values, the judges participate in trainings on how to communicate without giving legal advice. Court transparency, admissibility: there is a program now to promote these values. They have guidelines for communication with media, they are on the right path.

Turkey: there is no legislation on which values to promote, but it is very important, they promote impartiality, equality etc.

Ukraine: The public trust in courts is on a very low level. Since 2016 they have been working on this problem, they have press judges, use social media, beside livestreaming, it is allowed to record trials. They have different events for citizens, students etc. promoting e.g. healthy lifestyle by participating in sport events.

W. V. talks about the ECJ and its journey on promoting values and court communication. Should promoting values be done centrally or individually?

Macedonia: every court has a spokesman and an office, but they don't have a common strategy. Supreme Court should handle it and create directives on who to approach the public.

Romania: a few years ago there was no central handling. Now every court has its own spokesperson. Now every judge or prosecutor can be appointed to be a spokesperson without their consent. Press has to understand that the court has rules, they give information on the case as soon as they can, there is no point for them to hide anything, but the spokesperson always has to cross-check with the president of the court and it takes time. They need a national strategy on communication.

Hungary: NOJ is responsible for central communication projects. It's a good system, the more openly you work, the more trust people will have in the judiciary. The courts also promote values on their own, e.g. Court of Miskolc have a connection with the University of Miskolc. It's both: central and individual, there is no miscommunication, because then NOJ can handle those situations.

Lithuania: Courts try to be open, they have a national program, not one by one.

Czech Republic: every court has its own spokesperson, there is no central vision how to handle media. Constitutional Court has a division for communication, but it is only 4 persons. Judges can speak to journalists, so they promote values as well.

Armenia: it is not centralized, judges are limited on what to communicate to the public, they are not allowed to speak to media or use social media.

Romania: why shouldn't judges use social media?

Armenia: they shall not give their opinion on political issues, just on legal questions, but it's hard to talk about cases totally impartially.

Ukraine: judges can use social media, but according to their code of ethics they shall be very careful: what friends they have on FB, which pages they like. They have guidelines, but it's very general.

W. V.: should communication be handled by professionals or lawyers?

Macedonia: it should be joined forces.

Romania: spokespersons should be magistrates, so legal issues can be communicated by lawyers to be accurate.

Ukraine: agrees, but it has its risks not being clear.

W. V. tells about the 'right to be forgotten' case. Sometimes judges are too much into the case and don't know how to explain it clearly to the public, but it's easier to have a law degree and then to improve in communication than the other way around.

What values should be promoted?

Czech Republic: independence, authority, transparency, protection of human rights.

Macedonia: accountability which means the judges' work on a specific case. Also to promote that it's a noble profession.

Poland: human factor to show that the judge is also a citizen.

Ukraine: human-centred process for 'clients' to know what they can expect from the process.

W. V. speaks about the basic values of ECJ to promote, e.g. multilingualism, modernity, being ecological. The question is how to communicate values: through social media, written etc.?

Romania: all of them, it depends on the information: if it has to be quick then social media, if it is more serious, give a press release.

Hungary: you have to be consequent, for example to reach the youth, use social media.

W. V. tells about the Poland-case and how they use #ruleoflaw in communication of that issue.