

Courts and Communication Conference
Hungarian Academy of Justice
COURTS' MISSION TO PROMOTE VALUES WORKSHOP
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The participants briefly introduce themselves.

W. V.: Should the courts promote values?

Albania: their Council is only 10 months old, they deal with communication. They are in crises management mode now, since more than 50 judges have just left court. Courts should promote values, it should be proactive, inform the public what they do and also be more open to the public. They are open for universities, but it should be for everyday people as well, so they would know that judges are normal people too.

Armenia: It's the same situation. Courts should promote values. The Communication Council was also established last year.

Croatia: judges promote values by doing their job, it's a more conservative way of thinking. The role of the spokespersons is to simplify the case for the society to understand, they have to be a bridge between society and the court.

Court should promote values, they have a vision for communication, it's a work in progress.

Georgia: now there is a process for selecting judges for the council, it is livestreamed in the parliament which is good, because it's transparent, but also shows that there are some inappropriate questions being asked them. The main communication form of courts are well-reasoned decisions, but the lack of public trust is still a big problem.

North-Macedonia: it is a work in progress. Judges are separated from 'normal people' in society. The very end of the selection process is not public and it reduces public trust.

Hungary: the Kúria tries to communicate, it gives press releases, have a press breakfast twice a year. It has projects and programmes to promote values. Hungarian Supreme Court uses its traditional name, 'Kúria', trying to build a brand by communication. They have e.g. a conference on Law and Moral this year. Moving back to the old building of Kúria also represents the separation of powers by standing in front of the Parliament.

Poland: courts promote universal values, such as human rights, not political ones, which could cause misunderstanding.

Romania: it is important to promote values by the court, to be transparent.

Spain: the reputation of an institution is reached by transparency and communication, seeing media as an ally. Communication can help to educate people about justice.

Turkey: it is currently discussed in Turkey, since there is no legislation for it. It is their motto that 'judges speak through their decisions'.

W. V. talks about the ECJ. Judges speak through their decisions, but they realized that someone has to explain those decisions, now they have a department for that. It is more than institutional communication. The next question is whether promotion of values should be centralized or judges themselves should deal with it?

Georgia: there are more instances in their court system. In high profile cases each court decides to give a short press release on it. They also have judges who are spokespersons.

Croatia: there is no public trust in jurisdiction. First there should be analysis of the problem, then they should make a strategy and then act on it.

Poland: values should be promoted but it is not defined what they are exactly. If it left for the courts individually to decide what to promote, it has a risk it's not consequent.

Spain: courts work 24 hours a day. It should be consequent in what to show and communicate.

Hungary: on the cases each court should communicate themselves, but on the court system itself or common values should be communicated centrally.

W. V. tells which values they promote at the ECJ. First and most important is the rule of law which is not a political statement, it is the core value of every court system. They are the court of the citizens. Multilingualism is also a very important value, it helps to bring the citizens closer to the court. Another value is modernity, such as digitalisation. Social responsibility is a key value along with ecological solutions.

Croatia: isn't it a political question? Being ecological?

W. V.: it is a legal question since there is a directive on it.

Participants discuss which values are political and which are legal. They also have a discussion on what if e.g. there is a legal reform and a judge does not agree considering the principle of rule of law, whether he should express his opinion.

Poland: judges should be careful in media what they say because it can be interpreted as a statement in the name of judiciary.

W. V. asks which forms should be used to promote values.

Albania: the question is how, which form of media? Communication should be handled by the press office. Except when a judge feels to explain the decision in details. If the social media is the fastest way to react, then it is the solution.

Spain: the best way is a team with lawyers and journalists.

W. V. says we have to distinguish between different breaches of social media, since it is very complex and for instance Facebook is not the main social media platform anymore, since today's youth don't use it anymore, they use Instagram.