

# Workshop II. regarding the internal regulation of press and communication activities of the judicial organisations

Summary

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Participants from Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Turkey

In our workshop 15 countries were represented. We discussed the topic of the press and communication activities of the judicial organisations. First of all I would like to emphasize and appreciate the sophisticated and active attitude of the workshop participants. Thank you for this!

Generally we can conclude that our work was productive and together we gathered a lot of good practices and experiences.

As the content of the inquiries were published I won't present all the answers, but give some flash regarding the problem of the spokespersons.

The group came to an understanding regarding the following: "Either the courts communicate or the parties and other characters will do instead of the court system." There is an enormous power in the communication which can influence the image of the court system. We have to have a proactive approach and not only stand on the defensive.

Dealing with the media requires special skills, and knowledge. The courts have to have their own faces, in the meaning of having a spokesperson.

For example in Hungary the spokespersons gather together in a network, they are meeting twice a year, they are sharing knowledge, brainstorming, they have organised trainings where communication professionals give them practical advises, for example how to translate a decision to the common language.

The spokesperson network has an own intranet site where they are sharing the best practices, have interactive forum topics and send messages and comments to each other.

The National Office for the Judiciary has created the status of the press secretary. They are usually trainee judges or court secretaries. They are reducing the workload of the Spokespersons with editing the court's webpage and fulfilling administrative tasks.

Contrarily to the before mentioned the system The Netherlands follow strictly the general rule: Individual judges don't speak about the ongoing cases. So they apply communication professionals in every court's Communication Department, who are in contact with the media. In case of inquiry they are gathering information from the concerned judge and on the base of this request they are preparing the press release. The concerned judge has the possibility to supervise the press release before publishing it.

The Finnish system is similar to the before mentioned, as they employ communication officers at the Helsinki District Court.

So we can declare that all the participating countries have various systems for the contact with the press and we couldn't define the common ideal one.

On the other hand we came to an understanding regarding the importance of the good relationship between the courts and the press. It is crucial for example in the case of crisis communication. Everybody agreed that the media is not an enemy, they can be our friends and trustees. We have to find the way to reach this ideal level of good relationship.

The most preferred way to build this kind of relationship is the personal contact and the proactivity towards the media.

There was a general consensus regarding the importance of the training our spokespersons by communication experts from the world of the media. For example in Hungary there is a so called exchange program, where the judicial spokespersons visit the national television to get an insight to the daily routine of the media.

We are sure that everybody could benefit from the discussion of the workshop. The written material will be available on the website of the conference.