

**Third Annual European Conference on Courts and Communication,
Budapest, 15-16 October 2015
Questionnaire**

Image and Sound Recording at Courts

1. What type of legislation regulates the image and voice recording at courts in your country and in what way?

It is regulated by the adopted rules of “**The Information about Court Activities and Cases Offering for Public Information Organizers**” by the resolution No. 13P-51-(7.1.2) of the Judicial Council of 28 March 2014.

Information organizers are allowed to film, to take photographs, to make sound and image recordings at the trial hall until the beginning of the trial or after the trial finishes. It is forbidden to film, to take photographs, to make sound and image recordings and to use special technical tools during the trial, except the cases provided for by law.

Before a judge or the judicial college come to the trial hall, the representative for the Court Public Relations or any other employee of the court has to inform the information organizers about the prohibition to film, to take photographs, to make sound and image recordings before the trial starts and to ask to be ready to switch off or, whenever possible, to carry out the image and sound recording equipment from the trial hall and give conditions for the judge or the judicial college to come into the trial hall unmolested and start the trial.

Before the judge or the judicial college come into the trial hall, all usable technical tools to fix sound and (or) image must be switched off in order not to disturb the beginning of the trial. During the trial the equipment of image and sound recording of information organizers must be switched off and, whenever possible, carried out from the trial hall.

Generally speaking, in civil, criminal and administrative trials only the court is allowed to use any cameras or other sound and image recording equipment as the part of the case material (minute) and for court administrative purposes.

2. Is there a separate provision (legislation, recommendation, regulation, etc.) regarding image and sound recording at courts, court buildings, court hearings, court events?

Look at the answer No. 1.

3. Is the practice relatively uniform regarding image and sound recording at different courts in your country? If not, what characterizes the types of recordings and what are the possibilities?

The rules mentioned above are applicable to all courts of the Republic of Lithuania.

4. If recording is permitted, how is this applied in practice? Where is it permitted (in front of the building, in the court room itself, on the corridor, etc.)?

The rules are applied in practice without any significant problems.

5. Are there any common problems relating to image and sound recording and if so, what are these?

Look at the answer No. 4.

6. Is a contribution required from the subject in order to record image and/or sound? Is there a difference in this aspect between public figures (judge, prosecutor, policemen, etc.) and others attending the trial (parties, witnesses)?

No contribution is required no matter what subject is.

7. In case the recording takes place at the court room, who decides about how the recording is done (location and movement of the press in the court room, who can be recorded, what is the time frame of the recording)?

According to the rules mentioned in No. 1, the representative for the Court Public Relations or the other representative of the Court explains the rules on image and sound recording and decides on the location and duration of the recording.

8. Do courts keep the press informed on current cases or substantive decisions? If so, are there any specific rules?

The representative for the Court Public Relations harmonized the information about cases with the judge who hears or has already heard the case (in the case of the collegial case hearing the information about cases has to be harmonized with the chairperson of the college or the other member of the college indicated by the chairperson of the college) or with the assistant indicated by the judge, gives the information about cases to the court chairperson, and the chairperson gives it to the information organizers or the judge who hears or has already heard the case (in the case of the collegial case hearing – the chairperson of the college or the other member of the college indicated by the chairperson of the college) and has informed the representative for the Court Public Relations before or in his absence – the court chairperson, gives the information about cases to the information organizers.

9. Is the recorded material made available to the subjects before it is published? If yes, in what way?

As a rule, no.

10. In case incorrect information is published about the courts, or the content of a statement changes in the course of post-production, are any measures taken? If yes, what are the means of correction?

The representative for the Court Public Relations must assess the information given to the information organizers and by necessity to make certain that it would be correct, objective and would not mislead the society. The representative for the Court Public Relations also must supplement or specify the information until its publication.

By request of the information organizers, when the given information is published publicly, it is recommended for the representative for the Court Public Relations, or in those cases when the information organizer indicates the means of mass communication in the information society in which the court given information will be published, to look through if the information is correct, objective and does not mislead the society.

Having noticed that the information published in the means of mass communication in the information society is not correct, objective or misleads the society and such information infringes the interests of process participants and the court or it may impede for the court to hear the case, the representative for the Court Public Relations immediately has to inform the court chairperson and the Division of Administration Communication and according to demand and legal acts to specify or deny such information by appealing to the information organizer who published the information and (or) to prepare and distribute a press release.

Strengthening of Court PR: New Trends of Communication

1. What type of social programmes is organized by your court in order to bring the public closer to the court?

The Annual Programme on Communication is created every year. There is a list of events and actions for all courts of Lithuania. As a tradition, these events are included in the list: the open days in the courts for general public, the Day of the European Civil Law, the Day of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. We have organized the awards of amateur video on mediation. This year we have also announced drawing competitions on how courts protect people. Furthermore, every court usually has its own programme of communication.

2. What kind of CSR programmes are organized by your court in the framework of corporate social responsibility?

Usually judges take part in the actions organized by Lithuanian municipalities such as cleaning the environment, collecting products and other essential things for vulnerable part of the society.

3. Are the programmes focused on a specific field of law? Are there significant programmes and events for given field (e.g. domestic violence)?

Although we do not make any special publicity campaigns, however the National Courts

Administration of Lithuania implementing Norway Grants projects fulfilled various commitments devoted to aggrieved parties and witnesses (made booklets, the virtual trial hall, organized special trainings, and publicity events – conferences).

4. Are there programmes designed for specific groups of society (e.g. rights of children, helping the disabled)?

There are some projects devoted to younger generation – pupils and students. Recently we have announced the drawing competition for children on how courts protect people. There are also some actions devoted to students – moot courts, the special “Day with a Judge“, amateur video competition on mediation, trainings in the court office, etc. A special programme for witnesses and victims is ongoing as well.

5. Is there cooperation with partner organizations, non-governmental organizations relating to these programmes?

Yes, there is. The programme for witnesses and victims is organized in cooperation with NGOs. The aim of this programme is to provide the initial psychological aid and support for people who are invited to give evidences in the court hearing in order to feel more confident and to be able to give more valuable and exact evidences. The programme is organized by the National Court Administration of Lithuania. Moreover, some district courts make agreements with colleges in order to delegate students to the court to provide assistance to the witnesses and victims.

6. How and where are said programmes and results communicated?

The information is usually published on the Internet. The results of the programmes are discussed in the conferences which are organised at the end of a particular programme.

7. What are your courts international relations? In order to maintain them, do you have programmes, invite partner judges or send your own judges and experts to partner courts?

The courts of Lithuania participate in the activities of the Judicial Training Network. Judges take part in the trainings; some of them have already been organized in Lithuania. Some courts also have relations with the same level of courts in the EU.

8. Is your country or court involved in international scholarship programmes, Exchange programmes or study visits?

Yes, Lithuania is in the Judicial Training Network.

9. Is there a separate platform for the communication of international relations-foreign website, etc.?

There is an English version of the Internet site of Lithuanian courts: <http://www.teismai.lt/en/>.

10. Does your country or court use social media surfaces, if yes, what type of events are published?

Yes, we have the account on *Facebook* of Lithuanian courts.

Means and Measures of Crisis Communication

1. How is a crisis defined in the life of a court?

There is no exact definition of a crisis in current internal legal regulations of the courts of Lithuania. Recently the new document has been prepared: a methodological publication “Manual on the Court Communication“. The manual is on final stage of discussions and later it will be proposed as a tool for the courts. The definition of a crisis is included in the manual: a crisis may be understood as a threat to court employees, visitors, property or reputation that arises in view of a shortage of time to pass a decision or verify the information.

2. Is there a crisis communication plan at your court?

A crisis communication action plan is included into the manual.

3. If you do have a plan for crisis communication, what is the content?

The list of rules how to behave in case of crisis are stated in the manual rather than a plan. It is stated that having identified a crisis it is of utmost importance to immediately convene a meeting of the management group and pass decisions regarding the crisis management and communication. The principal responsibility in view of a crisis of the press officer is to set up a crisis management group, which will pass of the following three decisions: 1) Act autonomously and inform the Communication Unit of the NCA of the result; 2) Inform the Communication Unit of the NCA and wait for recommendations; 3) Inform the Communication Unit of the Council of Judges and wait for the instructions. Functionally, the press officer is responsible for the coordination of the activities of the group and contacts with journalists, therefore in all cases the press officer must have a list of telephones and electronic mail addresses of journalists.

4. Is there a declaration order in case of a crisis? If so, what is this order?

There is no such a rule, but it depends on the situation and on the type of crisis.

5. What are the primary surfaces for the communication in case of a crisis?

As it is stated in the Manual, a crisis management group in the court consists of the Chairman of the court, the assistant of the Chairman of the court for public relations, the press officer and the deputy of the Chairman of the court.

6. What are the main messages in case of a crisis?

Even in the clumsiest situation it is highly advisable to follow the 3S Rule which will enable to think of a proper commentary being guided by a clear cut system: CONCERN -> UNDERTSANDING -> SOLUTION. Often the very first commentary determines the entire course of the communication.

7. What basic principles need to be followed during crisis communication?

It is stated above.

8. How are the publications documented and followed during a crisis?

It is recommended for representatives of courts to analyse what information and to what extent is required for the media, participate in evaluating the situation and passing the decisions, prepare the information and disseminate to external target groups and internally in the judicial system. When evaluating the communication it is worthwhile to consider the public opinion, follow the information disseminated on the radio and TV programmes, notices on the Internet, statements of different institutions, conversations between employees of the court, etc. The data on the monitoring and analysis may be obtained from the Communication Unit of the NCA (National Court Administration).

9. Is there any communication after the crisis and if yes, what is it like?

The Manual recommends for the crisis management group of the court, the NCA and the Council of Judges to take a decision at the end of the crisis. When the crisis situation ends, it is important to gradually decrease the flow of the information being provided, assess the targets achieved, and summarise the conclusions having regard to the experience acquired, adjust the plans, instructions, make necessary changes in the lists of journalists and other procedures for internal information.

10. How can a crisis be prevented? What crisis preventing strategies are used?

The most important method used in the management for crisis prevention is an identification and assessment of potential crises and their scenarios. This method enables the parties affected to prepare themselves for possible scenarios and decrease the risk of the unexpected. The same methods should be used in the courts system.