



JOURNALISTS MATTER

Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists

Concept Note

Training of Trainers on SLAPPs for Judicial Institutes

Journalists Matter Campaign – Prosecution Pillar

Dates: 9–10 October 2025

*Location: Government Palace, Hrzánský palace, Loretánská 177/9, 118 00 Prague, Czechia,
generously hosted in cooperation with the Czech Government*

As part of the 2025 activities under the [Journalists Matter Campaign](#), the Prosecution Pillar focuses inter alia on enhancing the ability of judicial professionals to address Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)—a growing tool used to silence independent journalism through abuse of legal systems. Judges and prosecutors play a critical role in safeguarding press freedom by ensuring that courts are not misused to intimidate journalists.

To ensure sustainable, peer-led change at the national level, the Council of Europe, **in cooperation with and generously hosted by the Czech Government**, is organising a *Training of Trainers (ToT)* for judicial training institutes from member States. The event will take place on **9–10 October 2025 at the Government Palace (Hrzánský Palace) in Prague**.

This initiative will:

- Equip representatives of judicial institutes with the necessary knowledge to deliver national-level trainings on SLAPPs.
- Enable participants to identify and recognise SLAPPs
- Go in depth into the [Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of the right to freedom of expression in the context of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), by examining and explaining the guidance it contains and its relevance for judicial training, and application in national contexts.
- Promote exchange and collaboration among judicial institutions from Council of Europe member states.
- Raise awareness among the public and policy actors through participation in the *Press Play Prague Film Festival*. The cultural programme, organised in cooperation with the festival and with the support of the Czech Government, will further connect the professional discussions with a broader public dialogue on the protection of journalists.

By supporting national institutions in integrating SLAPPs into their training curricula, this activity aims to build long-term capacity in judicial systems to protect journalists' rights and more widely media freedom and freedom of expression.

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (“SLAPPs”) are legal actions that are threatened, initiated, or pursued with the intent to harass or intimidate their targets, aiming to prevent, restrict, or punish free expression on matters of public interest and the exercise of related rights. SLAPPs can significantly affect not only the individuals targeted but also the broader democratic space by suppressing watchdog activities, investigative journalism, and civic participation.

These lawsuits have serious consequences: they can stifle individual expression and undermine the free exchange of ideas essential to a democratic society. SLAPPs often result in self-censorship, as individuals and organisations refrain from publishing information or pursuing investigations due to the legal and financial risks involved. As a result, the public may be deprived of access to information of significant public value.

To address this threat, the European Union and the Council of Europe adopted key instruments in 2024:

- EU Directive 2024/1069 on the protection of persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 on countering the use of SLAPPs

Building on these instruments, the Council of Europe has developed the first European Curriculum on Countering SLAPPs, a comprehensive training resource designed for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, journalists, and civil society actors. The curriculum is grounded in both EU and Council of Europe standards, including the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

As part of efforts to promote the effective implementation of these standards, a Training of Trainers (ToT) session will take place on 9–10 October 2025. This training is specifically designed for trainers affiliated with national judicial institutes who will be in a position to deliver further trainings on SLAPPs at the national level. The objective is to equip these trainers with the legal knowledge, tools, and pedagogical strategies necessary to raise awareness among judges, prosecutors, and other legal professionals about SLAPPs and how to address them using the latest European legal instruments and jurisprudence.

The training will be delivered by Council of Europe consultants Ms Flutura Kusari and Ms Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska.

AGENDA

Day 1 – Training

Trainers: Flutura Kusari, Council of Europe Consultant; Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultant

08:30 – 09:00 Registration of participants

09:00 – 09:30 Introduction, objectives, and methodology of the training

- *Council of Europe representative*
- *Flutura Kusari & Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultants*

09:30 – 10:30 Module 1 – The Right to Freedom of Expression and the Role of Media and Other Public Watchdogs

Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultant

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 11:45 Module 2 – SLAPPs and Human Rights: An Introduction

Flutura Kusari, Council of Europe Consultant

11:45 – 13:00 Lunch break

13:00 – 14:30 Module 3 – European Instruments on Countering the Use of SLAPPs – Presentation

Flutura Kusari, Council of Europe Consultant

14:30 – 16:00 Presentations from each participant on the state of implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on SLAPPs and the EU Directive on SLAPPs

Moderated by Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultant

16:00 – 16:30 Wrap-up of the first day

16.45- 18.45 Networking Cocktail

Evening – Official Opening & Film Screening ***In cooperation with the Press Play Prague Film Festival***

Venue: *IFF Atlas Cinema Ke Štvanici 4 186 00 Prague*

19.30-20.00 Opening remarks:

Rodica CIOCHINA, Policy Advisor, Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division Council of Europe

Klára Šimáčková LAURENČÍKOVÁ, Government Commissioner for Human Rights, Czechia

Press Play Prague Festival representative

20.00-21.30 Screening of *Big Boys Gone Bananas* – Documentary on a landmark SLAPP case

21.30-22.15 Debate & Q&A

Frederik GERTTEN, Director of Big Boys Gone Bananas!

Flutura KUSARI, Legal adviser at the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) and a member of the European Commission's expert group on SLAPPs

Giulia LUCCHESI, Co-Secretary CDMSI, Freedom of Expression and CDMSI division, Directorate for Democracy, Council of Europe

Viktor KUNDRAK, Director of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities, Office of the Czech Government

Moderated by Jakub PATOČKA, editor-in-chief of Deník Referendum

Day 2 – Training

08:30-09.00 Welcome coffee and registration

09:00 – 09:30 Council of Europe Training Programme on Countering the Use of SLAPPs

Flutura KUSARI, Council of Europe Consultant

09:30 – 10:30 Module 5 – SLAPP Indicators – Presentation

Flutura KUSARI, Council of Europe Consultant

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 12:15 Module 4 – How to Identify and Recognise a SLAPP Lawsuit? (Group Work Exercise)

Flutura Kusari & Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultants

12:15 – 14:15 Lunch break

14:15 – 15:15 Modules 6 & 7 – Procedural Safeguards & Legal Remedies Against SLAPPs – Presentation

Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Council of Europe Consultant

15:15 – 16:15 Modules 8 & 9 – Support for SLAPP Victims and Targets, and Documentation of SLAPPs on Various Platforms

Flutura Kusari, Council of Europe Consultant

16:15 – 16:45 Evaluation of the training and conclusion
