

VIDEOCONFERENCING IN SUPPORT OF REMOTE ACCESS TO COURTS

April/May 2020

OVERVIEW

This webinar series is part of the CEELI Institute's program with the Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network. The Network, which has been going since 2012, is comprised of some of the best and brightest young judges, from eighteen countries, who gather regularly to share best practices on issues of judicial independence, integrity, accountability, and court management. As international in-person meetings are likely to be limited for some time to come, the webinar series ensures that the network can continue to meet its mandate to improve judicial integrity and court efficiency in Central and Eastern Europe,

despite the global lockdowns resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. The topic – Videoconferencing in support of Remote Access to Courts – is particularly relevant to the judiciary in the current climate, but also has on-going relevance beyond the current extraordinary circumstances. This series, which was recorded bi-weekly between April 7 and May 19, 2020, and is available on-demand to all Network members through the CEELI Online platform, provides participants with a greater understanding of the potential for, and limitations of, using videoconferencing and other technologies in the courts.

WEBINAR #1

TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2020
(50 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

REMOTE JUDGING
AND VIDEOCONFERENCING
IN THE COURTS – A JUDGE'S
EXPERIENCE

In this first session, one of the Network members shares his experience of adapting to the state of emergency and judging during a stay-home order.

SPEAKER:



JUDGE LEVENTE SIMON,
Hungary

WEBINAR #2

TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2020
(75 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

VIDEOCONFERENCING
IN THE COURTS –
SAFEGUARDING RIGHTS
AND ENSURING ACCESS TO
JUSTICE AND FAIR TRIALS

This session begins with an exploration of potential effects of videoconferencing on access to justice and upholding rights to public hearings. It emphasizes hearing rights and transparency amongst other issues, and reviews potential issues for various vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities and people who require an interpreter. Participants are also introduced to fair trial safeguards in remote criminal procedures and provided with an overview of the recent publication by [Fair Trials](#) of a guide for remote justice procedures, as well as an update on the Ukrainian experience of remote hearings.

SPEAKERS:



**RT HON LORD JUSTICE
McCLOSKEY,**
President,
Northern Ireland High Court



ILZE TRALMAKA,
Legal and Policy Officer,
Fair Trials



ROMAN KUYBIDA,
Deputy Head of the Board,
Centre of Policy and Legal Reform,
Ukraine

WEBINAR #3

TUESDAY 5 MAY 2020
(75 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR
USING VIDEOCONFERENCING
IN THE COURTS

This week's webinar begins with a summary of emergency measures introduced by various states regarding the functioning of the courts and judicial proceedings during the Covid-19 crisis, as well as an overview of the approach to videoconference hearings and some of the challenges and pitfalls presented. Participants are then introduced to relevant European case law presented by [International Commission of Jurists](#). Finally, participants hear about the first-hand experience of a judge conducting videoconference hearings; the practical technological preparation required; and how they aim to safeguard the rights of the parties in such hearings.

SPEAKERS:



ANDREA HUBER,
Deputy Chief, Rule of Law Unit,
OSCE Office for Democratic
Institutions and Human Rights



MATT POLLARD,
International Commission
of Jurists – Senior Legal Adviser,
UN Representative, Centre for
the Independence of Judges
and Lawyers



JUDGE JANIS NEIMANIS,
Latvia

WEBINAR #4

TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020
(75 MINUTES)

TOPIC:

THE TECHNICAL
REQUIREMENTS FOR USING
VIDEOCONFERENCING
IN THE COURTS

This session begins with a focus on some of the technical problems, program options and challenges with virtual hearings faced in the U.S. Courts, followed by the judicial experience in using video conferencing technology at the trial court level. Finally, the session is concluded by an overview of the legal basis for videoconferencing in courts in England and Wales, human rights, and some practical issues with videoconferencing.

SPEAKERS:



JUDGE LYNN WINMILL,
U.S. District Court
for the District of Idaho



Mr. BOB SMITH,
Assistant Circuit Executive
for Information Technology
in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court
of Appeals



Mr. STEPHEN MASON,
Barrister

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We began filming our second installation of the webinar roundtable discussion series on June 2, 2020. If you wish to participate in this, or future sessions, please email freda.grealy@ceeli.eu. These sessions take place in the English language. Following each session, there is a summary of outcomes and recommendations. In addition, the webinar series is hosted on our learning platform, CEELI Online, together with other supporting material or slides referred to by the speakers, as well as an archive containing many other resources and relevant links. Access to this closed, password-protected group is provided for members of the CEE Judicial Network. Those that wish to secure access can email freda.grealy@ceeli.eu. A discussion forum within the learning platform will also support conversation and peer-to-peer engagement beyond the limit of the actual webinars. You might also be interested to listen to our podcast series – 'CEELI talks' - which touches on many of these subjects and is available to all at www.ceeliinstitute.org