

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PROFESSION OF LAWYER

Factsheet for states not members
of the Council of Europe



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

WHAT ARE THE BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION?

Lawyers hold a central role in the good functioning of justice systems in democratic societies by ensuring effective access to courts for their clients to see their rights upheld. They are therefore essential to public trust in justice systems.

The [Parliamentary Assembly](#) of the Council of Europe established a worrying increase in the number of attacks on lawyers practising their profession, whether in the form of harassment, threats or attacks, or interference in the exercise of their professional responsibilities.

In response, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the [Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer \(CETS No. 226\)](#) on 12 March 2025. It was subsequently opened for signature on 13 May 2025 in Luxembourg and, as a result, is often referred to as the Luxembourg Convention.

WHO CAN JOIN THE CONVENTION?

The Luxembourg Convention has become the first international, legally binding instrument fighting for the protection of the profession of lawyer, recognising their unique contribution to the rule of law, in particular access to justice and the right to a fair trial.

Signature and entry into force

The Luxembourg Convention is open for signature by Council of Europe member states, non-member states that participated in its elaboration (Mexico), and the European Union.

It will enter into force upon ratification by eight countries, of which at least six must be Council of Europe member states. As of 26 January 2026, 26 member states have signed it (Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom).

Accession by non-member states

Following entry into force, any state worldwide will be able to accede to the Luxembourg Convention and become a state party to it (Article 18 of the convention). A state that expresses interest in joining the convention may be invited to accede by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, upon consulting the parties and obtaining their consent.

WHY JOIN THE CONVENTION?

The Luxembourg Convention is the only international treaty that:

- ▶ recognises and protects lawyers' independence and freedom to practise without undue interference;
- ▶ applies to all lawyers and their professional associations;
- ▶ calls for protective measures to tackle threats, harassment and arbitrary detention;
- ▶ protects confidential communication between lawyers and their clients;
- ▶ sets up a monitoring mechanism to keep under review its implementation.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE CONVENTION?

- ▶ The entitlement to practise (such as admission to practise based on law and without discrimination).
- ▶ Professional rights (such as the right to meet or communicate with clients confidentially).
- ▶ Freedom of expression (such as taking part in public discussions on draft legislation).
- ▶ Professional discipline (such as grounds for disciplinary action against lawyers based on professional standards of conduct as prescribed by law).
- ▶ Protective measures for lawyers and professional associations (such as lawyers being able to practise without being the target of threats or attacks).

HOW IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION MONITORED?

— An important feature of the Luxembourg Convention is the monitoring mechanism set up to supervise its implementation. It consists of two pillars and is based on an ongoing dialogue with states parties. Any non-member state will have to contribute financially to the running of this monitoring according to the arrangements established by the Committee of Ministers (Article 18 of the convention).

Group of Experts on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer (GRAVO)

— Composed of independent experts, GRAVO will periodically evaluate the implementation of the convention in each state party. This involves sending targeted questionnaires to the authorities on the implementation of the convention, as well as exchanging with the authorities and relevant partners, including, where information cannot be reliably obtained in another manner, with onsite visits. GRAVO can also deal with possible serious violations of the convention through an urgent procedure. Based on the information gathered, GRAVO will prepare a report with conclusions for each state party. Civil society and professional associations will play a key role in contributing to the monitoring procedure and advocating for compliance with the convention.

— GRAVO will also provide guidance on themes and concepts connected to the convention.

Committee of the Parties

— This political body is composed of the representatives of the states parties to the convention.

— On the basis of GRAVO's reports and conclusions, the Committee of the Parties will address recommendations to each state party concerning the measures to be taken to follow up on GRAVO's reports.

INFORMATION

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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