FBE BULLETIN

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR MEMBER BARS

QUARTERLY BULLETIN



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WELCOME

to the First Edition of the FBE Bulletin



It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first issue of the FBE Bulletin. Its aim is to strengthen the connection between the FBE and its member Bars, providing regular updates, insights, and news on our common work and values.

The Bulletin will be published quarterly, and we kindly ask all FBE Bar members to share it widely among their members. Each individual Bar is of great importance to the FBE, and we want every Bar to feel part of this European community.

The FBE is always ready to support its members—wherever and whenever needed—in defending the rule of law, promoting solidarity, safeguarding the independence of the legal profession, and representing the voice of European regional and national Bars before international and European institutions.

We warmly invite Bar representatives to actively participate in the work of the FBE, to contribute to discussions at our Congresses and events, and to engage with the projects carried out by our Commissions. We strongly believe that only when united will the voice of lawyers in Europe be heard with strength and clarity.

Enjoy your reading!

With best regards,

Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe



Interview with the FBE President:

Dr. Michael Griem on priorities, challenges, and the future of the Federation

t a time when the rule of law is under increasing pressure across Europe and beyond, the role of lawyers and legal institutions has never been more vital. In this interview, the newly elected President of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE), Dr. Michael Griem, shares his vision for the organisation's future. He speaks candidly about the challenges facing the legal profession, his priorities for the FBE, and the importance of defending justice, human rights, and the independence of the legal profession in the face of growing populist threats.



What are your main objectives for your term as President of the FBE?

M.G.: We are living in times when the rule of law is being questioned by populist governments, and with it, the very role of lawyers in society. Today, more than ever, the FBE must act as a guardian of the rule of law—defending the independence of the legal profession and safeguarding the core values of justice for the benefit of lawyers and citizens across Europe. These challenges are not confined to Europe alone, as recent developments in other parts of the world, including the United States, have shown us.



Are there any specific initiatives or areas you plan to prioritise during your presidency?

M.G.: Yes. My priorities include strengthening our focus on the rule of law, human rights, and access to justice. I also want to build closer cooperation

with European organisations of young lawyers, because they are the future leaders of our Bars. Their voices must be heard, their perspectives valued, and their well-being supported. By investing in them, we are investing in the resilience and continuity of the profession.



In your view, what are the most pressing challenges currently facing the legal profession across Europe?

M.G.: The most pressing challenges are the ongoing attacks by populist governments on the judiciary and the independence of Bars. Lawyers are being targeted precisely because we stand for the rule of law and for citizens' rights. It is vital that we promote and explain the rule of law to society at large, so that people understand that it is not an abstract principle, but a guarantee of their freedoms and security.



How can the FBE support Bar Associations and lawyers in navigating these challenges?

M.G.: The FBE must stand in solidarity with Bars under pressure. For example, when members of the Istanbul Bar Council faced criminal proceedings, we made it our duty to raise the issue and call for action. At our meetings, such as the one in Frankfurt, we give visibility to these threats and collectively discuss concrete steps that can be taken. By bringing issues from individual Bars to the European stage, we can mobilise support, increase awareness, and apply pressure where needed.



Can you tell us a bit about your professional background?

M.G.: I am a construction lawyer, providing both consultancy and litigation services. Earlier in my career, I completed a PhD in inheritance law in the 1980s, focusing on cross-border cases—a particularly demanding subject, as it required analysing the complex factors that determine the applicable law in succession matters. This academic work trained me to navigate complexity and to look beyond national boundaries, which has been invaluable throughout my professional life.



What motivated you to become involved in the FBE?

M.G.: I was first introduced to the FBE by a former president who invited me to accompany him. From the very beginning, I was struck by the unique

role the FBE plays in making national and regional Bars truly international. This is particularly important for smaller Bars, which gain access to a network of more than 200 members across Europe. As Dean of the Frankfurt Bar, I have seen firsthand how the FBE serves as a vital forum for exchanging ideas, building partnerships, and finding inspiration in how colleagues across Europe respond to common challenges.

Looking back, were there any defining moments in your career that prepared you for this leadership role?

M.G.: Certainly. My many years of service as Dean of the Frankfurt Bar were decisive in preparing me for the presidency of the FBE. The Frankfurt Bar is one of the largest and



most active in Germany, with a strong tradition of international engagement. Leading such an institution meant not only managing its internal affairs but also representing its members in national and international forums. Through this role, I gained first-hand experience in defending the independence of the profession, fostering dialogue with public authorities, and supporting lawyers in their daily challenges. It also gave me the opportunity to strengthen ties with other Bars in Europe and beyond, which naturally led to deeper involvement with the FBE. In many ways, the work at the Frankfurt Bar was the foundation on which my European engagement has been built.

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How do you see your presidency contributing to the legacy of the FBE?

M.G.: I want to ensure that the FBE's foundational values—independence, solidarity, and the defense of the rule of law—remain not only relevant, but vital for the next generations of lawyers. In today's digitalised and rapidly changing world, these principles must be carried forward as guiding lights. My hope is that my presidency will strengthen this legacy and inspire young lawyers to understand that the rule of law is not only a professional duty, but also a societal mission.



n 31 May in Berne, Switzerland, the FBE General Assembly elected new members of the Presidency, while expressing gratitude to the outgoing President, Marc Labbé (Switzerland), and Treasurer, Monique Stengel (France), as they completed their terms of office.

We now present the current Presidency team and give each of them the floor to explain what it means to serve in the leadership of the Federation of European Bars—why they stood for office and why they chose to dedicate their work to the FBF.

Dr. Michael Griem: President

(Frankfurt Bar Association, Germany)

Serving as President of the FBE means carrying forward its core values—independence, solidarity, and the defense of the rule of law. I chose to stand for office to strengthen our common voice as European lawyers and to ensure that these values continue to guide and inspire our profession across borders.



Dr. Michael Griem is a founding partner of SMNG Rechtsanwaltsgesellschaft mbH in Frankfurt, specialising in construction law, and active as mediator and arbitrator. Since May 2025 he has served as President of the FBE, following his terms as 1st and 2nd Vice President. He is also President of the Frankfurt Bar Association, where he has held leadership roles since 1997, and chairs several foundations supporting the legal profession and social causes. He studied law in Gießen, London, The Hague and Toronto, and earned his doctorate in 1987.

Rajko Marić: 1st Vice-President

(Vojvodina Bar Association, Serbia)

As the 1st Vice President of the FBE, I see leadership not only as an honor, but as a duty to advocate for our Bar associations and the wider legal community.

Rajko Marić is a commercial lawyer with more than 20 years of experience and founder of Law Office Marić. He has held key roles in the Serbian and Vojvodina Bar Associations, serves as Hon-



orary Consul of Slovenia in Serbia, and chairs the Legal Committee of the World Federation of Consuls. Internationally active, he works to strengthen cooperation between the legal profession and wider civil society.

Michele Calantropo: 2nd Vice-President

(Palermo Bar Association, Italy)

To lead within the European Bar Federation is to stand as a guardian of justice, uniting colleagues across borders in the defense of the rule of law.

Michele Calantropo is a Supreme Courts lawyer from Palermo with extensive experience in criminal, corporate, and international law. He heads International Relations and the Human Rights



Commission at the Palermo Bar Association and is a frequent lecturer on the rule of law, migration, and human rights. His work has been widely recognized in leading international media and academic forums.

Patrick A. Dillen: General Secretary (Brussels Bar Association, Belgium)

The FBE is a wonderful family, doing excellent work. We should make it stronger, better resourced and where possible more effective in supporting our members.

Patrick A. Dillen is a cofounder of DWL-Law in Brussels, specialising in criminal and disciplinary law. Since 2019 he has served as Secretary General of the FBE. He is Deputy President of the



Brussels Disciplinary Chamber for Lawyers, former Chair of the Brussels Bar, has been or is active in the IBA, CCBE and the ICC in The Haque and is judge in the probation commission in Brussels. He also teaches professional rules at the BUBA courses for beginning lawyers. He speaks Dutch, French, English, Spanish and German.

Bertrand Christmann: Treasurer

(Luxembourg Bar Association, Luxembourg)

After serving on the Luxembourg Bar Council and as President of the Young Bar, I became active internationally, particularly within the FBE and CCBE. For nearly a decade, I represented the Luxembourg Bar at the FBE, chairing the Commission on the Future of the Profession. The FBE's commitment to core values and its spirit of genuine camaraderie deeply resonate with me—which naturally led to my role as Treasurer.



Bertrand Christmann is the founding partner of Christmann. Legal S.A.S. in Luxembourg and a member of the Bar since 2002. He specializes in civil, real estate and commercial law, alongside academic teaching in Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Within the FBE, he has chaired the Commission on the Future of the Profession and is also an expert on mortgage law for the Verband Deutscher Pfandbriefbanken in Berlin.



A Few Words from the Immediate Past President, Marc Labbé

This year, the FBE General Congress was held in Bern, the capital of my country, Switzerland.

With these words, Marc Labbé, Immediate Past President of the FBE, looked back on the 2025 General Congress, which gathered delegates from across Europe in Bern from 29 May to 1 June.

The conference on Friday, 30 May 2025, addressed highly topical issues, including the new Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer and the future of the profession.



"Through the first topic the FBE fulfilled its fundamental mission of liaising with national and regional bar associations in order to convey the crucial content of this new convention, which represents a very big step in safeguarding lawyers, codifies the essential principles of our profession and embodies its unwavering role in defending the rule of law and its proper functioning."



The Congress also highlighted FBE's commitment to the next generation of lawyers, focusing on themes such as access to the profession, knowledge transfer, and equipping young lawyers with the tools they need for the future.

Reflecting on his term, Marc Labbé stressed that this Congress marked the end of his presidential year, one "characterised by continuing our Federation's constant commitment to dialogue with our members and to ensuring the preservation of the core values of our profession and the challenges of its evolution."





A Taste of Legal London:

FBE at Westminster & Holborn Law Society Anniversary

rom 5–7 June 2025, the Westminster & Holborn Law Society (WHLS) hosted a very special edition of its "Taste of Legal London" event, coinciding with the Society's 25th Anniversary.

As the WHLS is a very active member of the FBE, the presence of the FBE representatives was well-justified.

The programme **combined professional visits with unique opportunities to explore** London's legal landmarks and to strengthen ties between colleagues from the UK and across Europe.





The Federation of European Bars (FBE) was proudly represented by Michele Calantropo. Second Vice-President, and Izabela Konopacka, Past President. They joined colleagues for a rich agenda which stretched from the Old Bailey and Royal Courts of Justice to the Middle Temple—surrounded by gardens reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland-and to renowned London law firms such as Dawson. Cornwell

Like any journey, the event was full of inspiring encounters. Participants had the honour of meeting Dana Denis-Smith OBE, Vice-

President of The Law Society of England and Wales (of Romanian origin), who will become its first foreign-born President in 2027. They also met Alderman Gregory Jones KC, one of the two Sheriffs of London and listened to a fascinating history of one of the most famous criminal court in the world-the Old Baley.

The event was also a joyful occasion to reconnect—so soon after the FBE Congress—with many friends of the Federation, including Aitzol Asla Uirbe, Chair of the FBE Ethics Committee, and Calin luga.

The strong bonds of fraternity between WHLS and European Bars were once again evident.

Special thanks were expressed to the WHLS International Committee for their outstanding organisation—in particular to Professor Sara Chandler KC (Hon) and Professor Coral Hill—under the leadership of WHLS President Nicola Wainwright.

As the Federation was reminded once again, beyond casework and courtrooms, it is the connections we build across borders that truly strengthen the legal profession. The FBE warmly congratulates WHLS on its 25th Anniversary and wishes the Society continued success in its mission to serve justice.



The Legacy of Leadership:

Past and Present Presidencies of the FBE in Oxford

he Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE) is shaped not only by its current leadership but also by the experience, wisdom, and collegial spirit of its past presidents. Meetings of the past FBE presidency are more than reunions—they are moments of continuity, where history meets the present, ensuring that the values and traditions of the Federation are preserved and strengthened for future generations. By bringing together those who once guided the Federation with those who lead it today, these gatherings embody the legacy of the FBE and its enduring mission to foster unity among European bars.

The Past Presidency Meets in Oxford

From 4 to 7 September, the past Presidency of the FBE gathered in the historic university city of Oxford, UK, a setting perfectly suited for reflection and exchange. The meeting was graciously **organised by Sara Chandler**, who introduced the group to the city's rich heritage. Oxford, the world's third oldest university after Bologna and Paris, unfolded before us with the expert guidance of Alison Hook, past Director of the International Department of the Law Society of England & Wales.

The visit began with a warm welcome at Oxford's well-known Old Bank restaurant "Quod", and culminated in an exceptional dinner at Magdalen College, where the academic atmosphere underscored the city's centuries-old legal and intellectual traditions. The group also explored landmarks such as the Ashmolean Museum, the Botanic Gardens, the Cherwell Boathouse, and the Bodleian Library.

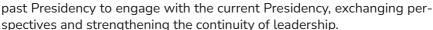


while learning about Oxford's unique "town and gown" rivalry—the age-old contrast between townspeople and university students.

A highlight of the formal dinner was the address by Simon Davis, Past President of the Law Society of England & Wales and a former student of Magdalen College, who shared insights from his career and connection to the institution.

The final day brought a lighter moment: the group ventured onto the Cherwell River in traditional flat punts, creating both amusement among participants and curiosity among onlookers.

Beyond the cultural richness, this reunion served its deeper purpose: providing an informal yet meaningful opportunity for the



The gathering in Oxford reaffirmed that the FBE is not just an institution, but a living community of lawyers across Europe, bound by shared values and a common vision.



We look forward with anticipation to next year's meeting—this time in Verona.







FBE Atumn Congress in Frankfurt Am Main

BE bar members' representatives are set to gather in Frankfurt am Main from 25–27 September 2025 for an intensive and inspiring programme, combining substantive legal debate, international exchange, and memorable social events. The meeting will not only address some of the most pressing challenges facing the legal profession in Europe but will also provide opportunities to connect and strengthen the FBE community.

This year's agenda (available at: https://fbe-ffm-2025.de/en/konferenzprogramm/) reflects the dual mission of the FBE: defending the rule of law and ensuring the wellbeing and development of lawyers. By addressing independence of the legal profession, international cooperation, the challenges of young practitioners, and mental health, the Frankfurt meeting captures the breadth of issues

confronting European bars today.

In addition to substantive debates, the social programme—from the Welcome Evening to the Gala Dinner—ensures that representatives have time to build the relationships and trust that underpin the FBE's work.

With such a comprehensive programme, Frankfurt 2025 promises to be an exceptional meeting point for the FBE family—one where continuity, solidarity, and vision for the future all come together.





his autumn, members of the FBE and bar representatives from across Europe can look forward to three exciting events that highlight the Federation's commitment to the rule of law, innovation, and the next generation of lawyers.

International Conference "AI: Balancing Freedom, Security, and Democracy", II Edition

10-11 October 2025, Lucca

he city of Lucca will once again host the International Conference "AI: Balancing Freedom, Security, and Democracy", now in its second edi-

tion. The event is organised under the patronage of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE), IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, the Faculty of Law—University of Trento, Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK), and the Ordine degli Avvocati di Lucca (FBzr).

This year's discussions will bring together academics, practitioners, and policymakers to reflect on the challenges of artificial intelligence for democracy, the rule of law, and the legal profession. Participants can expect high-level debates on the delicate balance between innovation, individual freedoms, and collective security.



International LegalTech Competition:

Final Round in Lucca

9 October 2025, Lucca Bar Association

he road to the International LegalTech Competition (ILTC 2025) final is now complete! After the first stage, 12 outstanding finalists have been selected to compete for the title in Lucca on the eve of the Al Conference.

This year's theme, "Legal Reasoning in the Age of GenAl", challenges participants to demonstrate how generative Artificial Intelligence can enhance reasoning, ethics, and innovation in legal practice.

The competition is proudly organised by three FBE commissions: the New Technologies Com-



mission, the Intellectual Property Law Commission, and the Access to Justice Commission.

The Lucca final will be a showcase of creativity and talent, bringing together some of Europe's most promising young legal minds.

FINALISTS (in alphabetical order):

- Jana Brezovicova
- Gracia Castro
- ◆ Iñigo De la Puerta Zapata
- Jacopo Dirutigliano
- Ricardo Gandarias Tena
- Michalina Gdula
- Daniel Kula
- Mateusz Lato
- ◆ Raúl López Gil
- Martvna Mielniczuk-Skibicka
- Sandra Montaner Tendero
- Rafał Skibicki



6th International

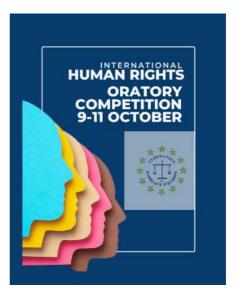
Human Rights Oratory Competition, Antwerp

9-11 October 2025, Antwerp

he FBE Human Rights Commission warmly invites young lawyers and law students (up to 35 years old and up to five years qualified) to take part in the 6th International Human Rights Oratory Competition in Antwerp.

This unique event offers participants the chance to:

- ◆ refine oratory and legal English skills,
- present arguments before an international jury,
- exchange views with peers from across Europe, and
- enjoy the vibrant setting of Antwerp.



The debate topic for this edition is: "Can the United Nations develop an effective international strategy to solve the current levels of migration?"



Selected participants will prepare a **10-minute speech**, with finalists advancing to a live debate on a new theme.

* * *

Together, these three events—in Lucca and Antwerp—demonstrate the vitality of the FBE community: committed to defending democracy and the rule of law, open to innovation in legal practice, and dedicated to empowering young lawyers.





ne protection of human rights is one of the core objectives of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE). Through its Human Rights Commission, chaired by **Artur Wierzbicki** (Poznań Bar Association) and with Professor **Sara Chandler** (WHLS) serving as Commission Secretary, the FBE has taken decisive action on some of the most urgent challenges facing the legal profession worldwide between June and September 2025.

C* Turkey

For many years, the FBE Human Rights Commission has supported lawyers in Turkey in the face of arrests, detentions, and systemic harassment. In 2025, the situation worsened when the Dean and the entire Board of the Istanbul Bar Association were arrested. The FBE responded with strong statements and an active presence at trials, ensuring international scrutiny that compels courts to respect due process.

To underline this solidarity, FBE Vice-President Rajo Marić visited the Istanbul Bar last spring, expressing support on behalf of the FBE for the Dean and Council members at a critical moment.

 In June, the FBE condemned the arrest of Mehmet Pehlivan, counsel to Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, denouncing the reprisals against lawyers defending politically sensitive cases. Commission members observed trials in September against lawyers including Firat Epözdemir, Ramazan Demir, and Avse Acinikli, where sentences of up to 10 years are being sought. Verdicts are expected in October.



- ◆ The trial of the Istanbul Bar President and Council has been postponed to Januarv 2026.
- ◆ On 7 October, the FBE will monitor the trial of Siar Risvanoğlu (Adana Bar Association), arrested under unlawful conditions and denied proper access to defense.



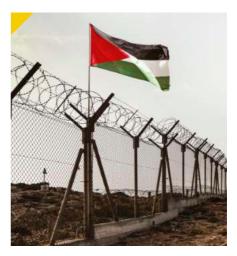


Colombia

The FBE joined international voices condemning threats against judges, prosecutors, and human rights lawyers, particularly those who pursued proceedings against former President Uribe.



In July, the FBE Human Rights Commission issued a statement on Gaza. By 11 June, 210 Palestinian lawyers had been killed, while bar association offices in Gaza City, Khan Younis, and Rafah were destroyed, along with vital case files. Legal services in the region have been brought to a standstill.







In August, the FBE supported a joint international statement calling for an end to executions of political prisoners in Iran, highlighting the persecution and imprisonment of lawyers who defended clients in politically sensitive cases.

2025 International Fair Trials Day

The 2025 International Fair Trials Day (14 June, Brussels) **focused on Tunisia**. Tunisian lawyers described widespread violations of fair trial rights, while UN Special Rapporteur Margaret Satterthwaite highlighted the rapid deterioration of judicial independence. The focus country for 2026 will be announced soon.





Standing Firm for Human Rights

Through its Human Rights Commission, the FBE continues to demonstrate that **defending lawyers means defending democracy itself**. By monitoring trials, issuing urgent statements, visiting threatened bar associations, and mobilising international solidarity, the FBE ensures that lawyers at risk are not left alone—and that the rule of law remains a principle defended across Europe and beyond. \triangleleft



Spotlight on FBE Commissions:

New Technologies Commission

n every issue of the Bulletin, we will present the work of one or more FBE Commissions. The Commissions are at the heart of the Federation's mission: they provide a forum for dialogue among European lawyers on the most pressing legal matters of our time, fostering cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and innovation across jurisdictions.

FBE New Technologies Commission

The FBE New Technologies (NT) Commission is a dynamic network of legal professionals from across Europe, united by a shared commitment to innovation and the responsible use of technology in law. It is chaired by Maria Dymitruk (Wrocław Bar Association), with Vice-President Francesco Tregnaghi (Verona Bar Association), and Secretary Ludmila Glembozkuy (Bilbao Bar Association).

Its members include practitioners, academics, and tech-savvy lawyers from countries such as Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Ireland—each bringing valuable expertise and diverse perspectives.



Maria Dymitruk, Chairman



The Commission's work has **already made a tangible impact**. Among its landmark initiatives are the FBE Guidelines on Generative AI (May 2023), the first of their kind in Europe, which have reached tens of thousands of lawyers and set a benchmark in the debate on ethical and responsible AI use. The Commission also organises the International LegalTech Competition (ILTC), which has become a flagship event for showcasing innovation and creativity in legal practice.

Beyond these projects, the NT Commission actively contributes to the European and global debate on new technologies. It collaborates with









key institutions such as the European Commission, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), while also engaging in academic research and policy development. Its work addresses critical issues including digitisation of the public sector and the regulatory challenges of AI, always with the aim of supporting lawyers, improving access to justice, and shaping the legal frameworks of tomorrow.

The Commission continues to grow and welcomes motivated professionals who want to take part in shaping the future of law in Europe.

The NT Commission embodies the FBE's role as a driver of legal innovation in Europe, ensuring that our profession remains prepared for the challenges of the digital age. <





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