



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF YOUNG LAWYERS**

## **Leaders of international lawyers' organisations remind of the importance of self-regulation and the independence of the legal profession**



**Brussels, 6 June 2019.** *'Self-regulation and independence of legal professionals ensure the trust and protection of citizens, and provide guarantees for the rule of law.'*

The message comes from the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA), the Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) and the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) in response to the growing deregulation movement and immediate threats to lawyers' independence. During their latest L5 meeting, they analysed the current status of the legal profession, particularly lawyers' safety and independence and self-regulation as an essential safeguard of the rule of law. Together, they concluded that deregulation poses serious threats to public interest and democracy. Any reform leading to deregulation risks hampering the quality and integrity of the delivery of legal services and above all, citizens' access to effective justice and legal protection.

The meeting was held in Barcelona this month and organised by AIJA. It also included contributions from two other members of the L5, namely the International Bar Association (IBA) and the American Bar Association (ABA).



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“No Lawyer, No Justice”. The role of lawyers and the practice of law may be changing and adapting to the current times but deregulation and loss of independence are not the solution. Our citizens and our democracies need independent and self-regulated lawyers. Regulation should focus on fostering innovation and improving access to effective justice’, says Xavier Costa, AIJA President and Partner at Roca Junyent (Spain).

During the discussions, the leaders of the three international lawyers’ organisations also recognised the role of bar associations in steering the legal profession into the future and the importance of ensuring high professional standards in the delivery of legal services to citizens.

‘The capacity of lawyers to regulate themselves and remain independent is today at stake. The role of the bar associations will be to find new ways for lawyers to show their value and ensure that the public interest remains a priority’, adds José de Freitas, CCBE President and Partner at Cuatrecasas (Portugal).

‘Lawyers are advocates for citizens. And the purpose of regulation is to protect their fundamental and basic rights to effective justice. Without the right regulatory environment, the biggest impact would be on them and their trust in the legal services market’, concludes Issouf Baadhio, UIA President and Avocat à la Cour (Burkina Faso).

During the meeting, the three leaders also issued a common statement requesting the immediate and unconditional release of Iranian Human Rights Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh who has been recently sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes for national security related offences.

### **About the L5**

The so-called ‘L5’ is the annual meeting held by the leaders of the main international Associations of Lawyers and Bar Associations (in alphabetical order: ABA (American Bar Association), AIJA (International Association of Young Lawyers), CCBE (Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe), IBA (International Bar Association) and UIA (Union Internationale des Avocats). During the meeting the leaders update each other on the main developments on the legal profession and discuss how to best ensure and promote the rule of law.

### **About AIJA**

Established in 1962, AIJA is the only global association designed by and dedicated to lawyers and in-house counsel below 45 years old. Today, AIJA has over 4,000 active members in more than 90 countries worldwide, including strongly established roots in Europe and a growing presence in the Americas, Asia and the Middle East. The activities of AIJA are coordinated by 20 scientific commissions, in charge of organising our events all around the globe and keeping members up to the date in their respective areas of practice.





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AIJA is committed to defend and take active part in promoting core legal principles, such as the rule of law and human rights principles. While respecting the integrity of each civilized society of the world, a particular aim of AIJA is to advance cross-cultural understanding between members and other participants in the legal profession as a whole. [www.aija.org](http://www.aija.org)

**About CCBE**

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), founded in 1960, is an international non-profit association which has been, since its creation, at the forefront of advancing the views of European lawyers and defending the legal principles upon which democracy and the rule of law are based. [www.ccbe.eu](http://www.ccbe.eu)

**About UIA**

Established in 1927 and with members in over 110 countries, the UIA is a global and multi-cultural organization for the legal profession that facilitates professional development, stimulates learning and networking, and promotes the Rule of Law. [www.uianet.org/en](http://www.uianet.org/en)

