

INITIATION TO LAW FOR PUPILS
PLAFORM RAISES LEGAL AWARENESS OF KYRGYZ YOUTH



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In October 2015, the EU - Central Asia Rule of Law Platform launched an **"Initiation to law for pupils"** of the Kyrgyz Republic. This initiative aims at helping pupils becoming aware about their rights, duties, the rule of law, and at providing them with the ability to fend for their rights throughout their lives, becoming responsible citizens, therefore contributing the **development of legal awareness of society**.



Mr. Stéphane Catta, French Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan and Mrs. Elvira Sariyeva, Minister of Education and Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic expressing support to the initiative at the round table on 27 October 2015

This activity underpins the strategy pursued by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic concerning the protection of youth and raising the legal awareness of the population, which is embodied in the policy plans of several governmental

bodies, including the **Coordination Council for Juvenile Justice under the Government**, the **Ministry of Education and Sciences**, and the **Ministry of Justice**.



Mr. Ulan Dootaliev, Deputy Minister of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic

This strategy is reflected in normative acts such as the Decree of 4 July 2013 of the Interagency Coordination Board for **"Implementing the Human Rights Education Programme for 2013-2020"**, which provides *inter alia* for the development of the teaching of human rights in secondary schools. The Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Sciences and the Ministry of Justice have offered their high patronage to this initiative, which also

follows the recommendations of the **Ministers of Justice of the EU and Central Asia**, which “*expressed their interest in improving access to law and justice, notably by introducing best practices in providing free legal aid to the public, ensuring the availability of laws and regulations, the wider availability of legal literature, raising people’s awareness about their rights and increasing public trust in the judicial system*“ at the **Fourth Conference on Rule of Law** in Astana on 14-15 October 2014.

1.000 French lawyers are associated on a *pro bono* basis. It has been successfully applied in 18 European Union Member States.



Mr. Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Operations Section, says "the Delegation of the European Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic considers important and very timely the introduction of legal education at school level"



The group of 9 trainers, teachers of the Apas Jumagulov School in the Chuy Oblast and representatives from the Paris and Kyrgyz pause at the outset of the initiative kick-off week

Initiation to law for pupils consists in the following simple concept: a legal practitioner visits pupils twice per academic year to introduce **cases to which they can relate, imagine outcomes and solutions, and eventually “own” them.** Thus their awareness to law arises based on mutual respect.

On 27 October 2015, a round-table attended by the **Minister of Education and Sciences**, the **Deputy Minister of Justice**, the **French Ambassador**, representatives of the **Delegation of the EU to Kyrgyzstan**, the Deputy Chair of the **Kyrgyz Bar**, directors and teachers of Kyrgyz schools, and representatives of the **Paris Bar** and other institutions kicked-off Phase I of the initiative. On this occasion, the objectives and main features of the initiative were introduced.

Overtime, a **network of lawyers** is created, having been **trained as trainers**, and **modules for pupils of Kyrgyz schools from age 9-18** have been designed and deployed by the trainer-lawyers in schools.



This method was developed by the **Paris Bar** and currently operates through 16 bar associations, 30 Regional Ministry of Education Representative Offices and network of 40 “other partners” (specialised newspapers, NGOs, etc.) in France. Over

Facilitator Mr. Etienne Lesage conveys to the Kyrgyz trainers the methodology developed by the Paris Bar

During the two days following the round-table, Mr. Etienne Lesage, Member of the Board of the Paris Bar, along with Mrs. Gulnara Sheyshekeeva, Deputy Chair of the Kyrgyz Bar, held a **two-day training session for lawyers and staff of the Ministry of Education and Sciences**. Modules themes were selected by the trainees, most of them Members of the Kyrgyz Bar, by age group and related to specific court cases the trainees identified in their own legal practice. **Six modules** were developed, presented and finalised, reflecting some of the current issues requiring raising the awareness of Kyrgyz youth.



Mrs. Gulnara Sheyshekeeva and Mr. Arthur Tashibekov, Deputy Chair and Board Member of the Kyrgyz Bar

On the last day of the "**kick-off week**", two modules were deployed in two pilot schools: a Russian-speaking school in Bishkek and a mostly Kyrgyz-speaking school in the Chuy Oblast, reflecting the **diversity of the Kyrgyz society**.



Mr. Tashibekov delivering for the first time the module he developed on "corruption" for a class 30 pupils of the 11th degree, in School N°4 in Bishkek (urban environment)

Phase I or "**Pilot Phase**" of the initiative will continue during a period of six months during which the **nine trained lawyer-trainers** will deliver in Kyrgyz schools the six modules they designed, in agreement with the Ministry of Education and Sciences, and coordinated by Ms Nazira Sopubekova, Member of the Kyrgyz Bar and Professor of Criminology at the Kyrgyz State Law Academy.

In the spring of 2016, Phase II or "**National Deployment Phase**" will start with an assessment week led by a representative of the Paris Bar. This will enable to assess the results of the of Pilot Phase. The trainers will report on their experience in Phase I. Lessons learnt will be drawn at an assessment workshop, modules will be improved and better adapted to the circumstances of the Kyrgyz Republic, if needed, new modules will be developed by trainers members of the **branches of the Kyrgyz Bar in all the regions of the country**, in order to deploy the initiative nationally.



Mrs. Jamila Sadykova, lawyer specialised in criminal law and procedure, presents her module to a class of 50 pupils of the 9th grade in Apas Jumagulov School in the village of Jok-Jar, Alamedun district, in the Chuy Oblast (rural environment)

Real cases are presented in a recreative mode, where pupils are invited to **simulate real situations, identify to parties, analyse and argue both sides** of a hypothetical legal issue adapted to their age group, modeled after those employed in real cases. These simplified **moot courts** or **mock trials** are entertaining and

children enjoy interacting while becoming aware of their rights.



Group of pupils from the Apas Jumagulov School preparing a role game following the delivery of a module on "What side are you on? (drug abuse)" prior to presenting a case they have imagined themselves to their fellow classmates

The role of the Ministry of Education and Sciences is key: it provides **access to schools** and **module accreditation**, therefore "owns" the initiative, along with the Kyrgyz Bar. The **capacity of the newly-created Kyrgyz Bar will be strengthened**, a network of rule of law specialists developed, and the legal profession which role in defending rights is inherent to a democratic system will be further "legitimized" in the eyes of the Kyrgyz civil society.



16-year-old schoolboys imagine possible legal outcomes during the captivating presentation of a case by a lawyer