

EU RULE OF LAW INITIATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA

Regional Seminar on Legal Training in the 21st Century

Bishkek / Kyrgyz Republic, 26 - 28 October 2009

Recognizing the friendly relations existing between the countries of Central Asia and the Member States of the European Union and considering the importance of legal training for the advancement and further development of the rule of law and democracy, the seminar participants have at the end of fruitful discussions drawn up the following recommendations:

1. Up-to-date teaching materials (e.g. commentaries and textbooks) and the publication of court rulings are of great importance for the development of law. Support should therefore be provided for the production of national teaching materials. Teaching materials and legal texts from the Member States of the European Union should also be translated into the respective official languages of Central Asian countries and/or Russian.
2. Legal training centres in Central Asian countries play a major role in training legal professionals. They should do more to share their experience and growing expertise with relevant institutions in other Central Asian countries. This can be done through e.g. seminars, conferences or reciprocal visits.
3. There should be greater cooperation and exchange between Central Asian legal training centres and relevant training institutions in the European Union.
4. A network should be established to enable legal professionals in Central Asian countries to share experience on thematic and professional issues. In every country a contact point should be appointed by 1 December 2009 to coordinate such exchanges, which should be supported also by international organizations.
5. A Central Asian legal information platform (e.g. Internet, journals) should be created to promote dialogue and information-sharing between the region's legal professionals.
6. All participants agree that practising lawyers have an important function to perform in the justice system and contribute to developing the rule of law in Central Asia. In this

connection there needs to be greater investment, having regard to the financial resources available, in training practising lawyers.

7. Through national and international conferences and seminars dealing with different aspects of the work of practising lawyers (e.g. function in the justice system, creation where appropriate of independent chambers of lawyers, requirements for admission, training contents and funding issues), regular exchanges should be initiated between practising lawyers themselves as well as with judges, public prosecutors and other legal professionals.
8. Through national and international conferences and seminars dealing with different aspects of the work of judges and public prosecutors (e.g. function in the justice system, creation where appropriate of independent associations, requirements for appointment, training contents and funding issues), regular exchanges should be initiated between public prosecutors on the one hand and judges on the other, as well as with judges, public prosecutors, practising lawyers and other legal professionals.
9. Through close partnerships with practising European lawyers as well as chambers and associations of lawyers, efforts should be made to promote the further development of the profession e.g. as regards the establishment of independent chambers of lawyers.
10. Existing cooperation between judges, public prosecutors and practising lawyers should be further intensified. All three groups should e.g. consult and cooperate closely, albeit without neglecting their own particular perspective, on proposed legislation or matters of common concern with regard to training.
11. Despite the progress made in recent years, university and academic training still needs to be improved in two respects. Firstly, teachers should introduce modern teaching methods and, secondly, course content needs to be modernized and made more practice-oriented, e.g. through “legal clinics”.
12. With a view to making legal training more practice-oriented, there should be greater cooperation between universities and judicial institutions. One way to do this is for relevant institutions to conclude cooperation agreements.

13. Steps should be taken to promote and strengthen partnerships between Central Asian universities on the one hand and European universities on the other, in order to intensify professional dialogue through e.g. internships or work placements.
14. With a view to fostering and intensifying international legal relations, the possibility of including, in an appropriate form, the comparative study of Central Asian and European law in university curricula should be considered.
15. With a view to intensifying exchanges between judges, public prosecutors, practising lawyers and other legal professionals, more opportunities should be provided for them to learn and use on the job new language skills.