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The program on the Training of Judges in the EU Charter has been completed

For two years, a team of the Faculty of Law of the Sofia University, in partnership with European Public Law Organisation (EPLO), Athens, and the Faculty of Law of the Bucharest University, implemented an unprecedented project for training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers from Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.

The project is funded by the EU Justice Program and the most significant results are the trainings conducted in the 3 countries and the creation of a large-scale web-platform (website) for an in-depth study or a brief introduction to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

At the beginning of the project, the Sociological Agency "Gallup" conducted a large sociological survey of over 300 Bulgarian lawyers and more than 150 law students across all the country, the findings of which were presented in a public discussion in September 2018 in Burgas and served to determine in detail the training methodology and the content of the training web-platform, the selection of the participants and the promotion of the main issues regarding the poor understanding and application of the Charter.

Twenty main participants (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) from each of the 3 countries as well as many other jurists took part in the trainings carried out in the three countries involved. The Closing seminar for exchange of good practices held on November 21 to 24 in the Bulgarian Government Residence "Boyana" in Sofia was attended by 30 key participants from the 3 countries (10 per country) and more than 120 Bulgarian jurists.

The web-platform created under the project www.eu-hub.eu contains over 1,500 pages of scientific and teaching materials and a total of over 3,000 pages of other materials (in English, French, Bulgarian, Greek and Romanian) concerning:

- Defining the field of application of the Charter (*When can I rely on the Charter?*)
- The specifics of applying the Charter (*What can I claim for under the Charter and from whom?*)
- The obligations of the state authorities and the jurisdictions arising from the application of the Charter (*citizens' rights in relations with the state and in courts, including an emphasis on the common problem of refugee and migrant rights in the three countries*).

The project was implemented with the official support of the Supreme Judiciary Council of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ombudsmen of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, and in partnership with magistrates' schools and lawyers from the three countries.

As a result of the implementation of the project, 60 magistrates and lawyers from the 3 countries were trained and 5 video lectures, 6 e-books and 30 specialized scientific and training materials were created, as well as 7 popular explanations for citizens of the basic provisions on the application of the Charter in the EU Member States.



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The official opening of the Closing international seminar for exchange of best practices brought together the elite of the Bulgarian judiciary: the Minister of Justice Danail Kirilov, the Representative of the SJC judge Boyan Magdalichev, the chairman of the Supreme Bar Council adv. Ralitsa Negentsova and the Ombudsman Prof. Diana Kovacheva spoke of the enormous importance of the Charter and such training forums. This unprecedented forum for the 3 countries was welcomed personally by the Ambassadors of Greece – Dimitrios Chronopoulos and of Romania – Prof. Ion Galea, the latter even delivered his speech in brilliant Bulgarian and got long applodisments.

A special greeting from the President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev was read by his Legal Secretary Prof. Emilia Drumeva.

The project manager and judge at the Bulgarian Constitutional Court Prof. Atanas Semov, Jean Monnet Chair, and the Dean of the Law Faculty of Sofia University Prof. Daniel Valchev spoke about the importance of vocational education for legal practitioners and especially the importance of the Charter as a legal source.

The main lecturers in the trainings carried out in the framework of the project in the 3 countries were the Honorary Director of the Legal service by the Council of the EU Prof. Jean-Paul Jacqu , the Honorary President of the Strasbourg University Prof. Florence Beno t-Rohmer, the Honorary Director of the European University Center in Nancy, France, Prof. Jean-Denis Mouton (all three – Doctors Honoris Causa of the Sofia University), the r f rendaires at the EU Court of Justice Dr. Angela Ward and Dr. Kathleen Guttman, prof. Corneliu-Liviu Popescu from the Faculty of Law of the Bucharest University and the Constitutional Judge Prof. Atanas Semov, Jean Monnet Chair.

All of their training materials are available on the web-platform, which will continue to function after the end of the project as a main tool for the professional training of the jurists in Greece, Romania and Bulgaria and for keeping the citizens in the three countries informed on the matter.