



Date:	1 October 2014
Place:	Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Subject:	Declaration of Establishment

- 1- European Legal Research & Training Network strongly supports the idea that the integration of the Western Balkan region cannot be complete without regulating and improving the legal profession by increasing the professionalism among lawyers. Its aim is to promote a European professional culture among early career lawyers and young professionals in the Western Balkan region and assist them gradually integrate and enter the European job market with dignity one day.
- 2- In fulfilling these goals, our wish as organization is to see these young professionals come out of their comfort zone, become active and get involved into the process of improving and enhancing the entire legal system in their countries. Our mission is to further contribute to their professional growth and improvement through behaviour & skills training, improvement & capacity building, legal understanding & interpretation, research, and networking on a national, and regional level.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EUROPEAN LEGAL RESEARCH & TRAINING NETWORK

THE SIGNATORIES,

Considering that democracy, rule of law and justice and the importance of maintaining and protecting them within the Western Balkan region as a universal value enshrined in European and International laws,

Considering that democracy is a constituent part of European history, as endorsed by the European Union referred to in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, and the principles that shall guide the European Union's action on the international scene contained in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union;

Recognising the historic importance and the need to support democratisation in countries and societies that are going through a period of transition or are considering and applying for EU membership;

Recognising that integration of the Western Balkans cannot be complete without the gradual integration, harmonization, and approximation of the professional level of lawyers in these countries,

Recognizing the need of a Regional Networking Platform to help and assist legal professionals of any background and legal area, to improve, grow professionally;

DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

A European Legal Research & Training Network, hereinafter referred to as "EUROPEAN LEGAL" shall be created. The Network shall have legal personality under the Dutch and EU Law and shall operate as an autonomous non-profit organization (NGO). The seat of the Network shall be in The Netherlands.

The objective of EUROPEAN LEGAL will be to foster and encourage a European legal professional culture among lawyers in countries and in societies struggling for democratisation, with initial, although not exclusive focus, on the European Integration.

The Network will function primarily as an organization and will deliver its support through direct professional improvement and investment in the benefit of lawyers in the six Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia), in cooperation with relevant partners, i.e. civil society organizations, lawyers, EU, governments, and its members.

The beneficiaries of the Network which will be supported in a non-partisan manner, will include activities such as trainings, movements, research, networking, awareness campaigns and many other activities suitable to lawyers, according to their interests, needs and priorities in each one of the countries.

European Legal Research & Training Network is dedicated to fostering a genuine European legal culture among lawyers in the Western Balkans, by promoting, safeguarding, and increasing professionalism among young legal professionals on a national and regional level in line to the EU standards at an early stage of their career. It is an organization especially created to respond to the needs legal professionals have in these countries, based on the principle of comparison, improvement, growth, and integration.



European Legal operates from two main levels, a national level, and the European one, and aims to become a bridge between two entirely different standards in the Balkans. On the one hand, it contributes lawyers there to evaluate their current situation, analyses it and understand the issues they touch upon daily. On the other hand, however, it encourages, motivates, pushes, and assists these young professionals to move forwards, towards a better, richer, higher level of professionalism in line to the EU standards.

The contribution this organization aims to bring among Balkan lawyers isn't just in terms of professionalism but also to contribute to the entire legal profession and its improvement, and better function, and thus to the entire legal system in these countries. European Legal is devoted to bringing the legal profession and lawyers to the next level and transform into legitimate academy of research, training, and networking among lawyers in the Balkans, adding value to their professional background, bringing back the lost dignity as legal professionals and restoring the faith in the entire legal profession and legal systems there.

EUROPEAN LEGAL will have a lean structure, with low operational costs in relation to its activities and rules enabling it to take and implement decisions flexibly and rapidly. Its financing will be transparent, while preserving the confidentiality of beneficiaries, where appropriate. The organization will engage in regular consultations with relevant national, and regional or EU institutions and other actors, as appropriate, avoid duplication and ensure complementarity and added-value to EU instruments.



The Network will comprise two main organs but not only: An Executive Board and an Executive Committee or Secretariat. Furthermore, additional organs will be created to support its mission and daily functioning such as Advisory Boards, working groups and Committees in each of the countries it operates.

The Statutes of EUROPEAN LEGAL shall establish the details of the rules of functioning, the competence of the main organs and all other necessary provisions for the organization to deliver its mandate in the most agile and flexible and efficient manner.

The organization will be financed through funding from the EU budget or other relevant sources, partnerships and collaborations and other sources such as a Law Magazine, publications or activities organized by the Network. Funds received from the EU budget shall be used in full conformity with the EU financial rules and regulations.

FINAL PROVISIONS

The founders of this organization agree that the present Declaration may be open for signature upon specific invitation, providing they are willing to agree to the principles governing the establishment of EUROPEAN LEGAL and to contribute financially to this organizations and its activities in any form. The statutes of the Network shall also specify the terms under which other third parties can provide financial support.

The present Rules of Procedure were approved on October 2014

Done in Rotterdam, The Netherlands,