



**THE EUROPEAN LAW FACULTIES ASSOCIATION**

At its Annual General Meeting held in Brno on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017

Adopted the following RESOLUTION on

**LEGAL EDUCATION IN CHANGING EUROPE:**

Whereas Law Faculties in Europe and elsewhere find themselves faced with continuing challenges as to their future development to respond to changes in the demand for and type of legal services provided to European Citizens and other market participants;

Whereas the proper safeguarding of legal systems governed by the rule of law demands well-educated law graduates who are capable of understanding and responding to changing developments in society;

Whereas the independence of the judiciary and a high level of expertise of the judiciary are essential to the proper functioning of the rule of law;

Whereas the independence of the judiciary has been under serious attack in certain Member States of the Council of Europe

Whereas the academic freedom of Central European University in Budapest has been seriously threatened by recent legislative developments;

**The EUROPEAN LAW FACULTIES ASSOCIATION**

Calls upon its members and all European Law Faculties:

- to ensure that respect for the rule of law and for the independence of the judiciary is emphasized in law teaching;
- to emphasize the need for judges to be highly competent and properly trained;
- to set a good example in mootings, particularly at national and international level by ensuring that those judging moots are highly competent in the subject-matter under discussion;
- to take full account of the need to ensure that law graduates are properly educated to a high intellectual standard;
- to press for adequate funding of law faculties to ensure that law students are properly educated in critical legal skills;
- to ensure that new law faculties which open are properly staffed by highly qualified law teachers, and that the value of the title 'University' is not compromised;
- to ensure that their legal education is either subject to an accreditation system recognized as conforming to best practice or, where such a system is not yet available, that their legal education curriculum and delivery responds at least to the requirements of their national (or regional in federal systems) judiciaries and Bar Councils (without preventing the curriculum from including a wider range of legal subjects and allied subjects) and is externally evaluated;
- to encourage joint and double degrees, both with law faculties in other countries and with faculties in other disciplines, recognizing that law graduates do not operate in a vacuum and that increasing internationalization and the development of transnational relations faces legal education with new and exciting challenges;
- to ensure that law graduates understand the role of whistleblowers in uncovering abuses that go to the heart of the integrity of the legal system and the rule of law;
- to ensure that law graduates are well-equipped with an understanding of the challenges of the digital age, and of the need to respect individual privacy;

- to encourage law graduates to stand up for the freedom of speech and democratic society in the terms recognized in the European Convention of Human Rights.

Calls upon the Institutions of the European Union and of the Council of Europe and the Member States of both of these bodies:

- to continue to strive for respect for and maintenance of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in all European countries, and to take all legal steps available to react to actions by governments which threaten these core values of European integration and cooperation;
- to ensure that legal education is provided in universities which are entitled to full academic liberty to encourage freedom of thought and expression as well as academic mobility;
- to ensure that in their funding programmes projects designed to foster the rule of law and respect for the fundamental rights of individuals receive a high priority;
- to ensure that European funding is available to complement action by the Member States to maintain and develop the highest quality of legal education in European countries as an essential contributor towards the maintenance of the rule of law;
- to take appropriate steps to ensure that university academic freedom is not diminished by politically motivated interests.

Calls upon the Bar Councils and Law Societies of Europe and major law firms

- to fund or continue to fund new initiatives in legal education aimed at responding to the changing nature of the provision of legal services and to the changing nature of legal instruments affecting individuals and business, which are increasingly European in origin and pan-European in their consequences;
- to do all in their power to ensure that access to justice remains affordable, open to all, and that the right to effective remedies is not eroded.