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ANNUAL REPORT

2016

ERA

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PREFACE

to the 2016 Annual Report of the Academy of European Law

For the Academy of European Law (ERA), 2016 marked another year of excellence both in creating the opportunity for high-level and thought-provoking debate on a wide range of topics relating to the future of the European Union (EU) and also in the provision of quality training directed to those who are involved in the application and implementation of EU law, whether as individuals or as officials working for public authorities in the Member States.

As 2016 came to a close, Latvia acceded to the ERA as its 26th Member State and the official signature of the accession document in December was an important landmark for the Academy, broadening its scope to incorporate the distinctive legal tradition and experiences of that Member State. That significant accession has enhanced the ability of the ERA to achieve its objectives by serving as a genuinely pan-European forum for deepening the public understanding of the EU's political, administrative and legal structures both through dialogue and through its numerous teaching programmes. The broad and diverse scope of ERA's activities, including conferences, training seminars and e-learning courses, means that it is able to reach out to a great number of different groups of professionals and citizens.

At a time when change comes upon us ever more rapidly and where the EU faces serious challenges, both internally and externally, there is a particular need for dialogue and debate in Europe in order to ascertain – as Yves Mersch, a Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank, put it during his excellent keynote address at the ERA's annual reception in Luxembourg in June – "what laws, rules and institutions we need to put in place to strengthen the integrity of the Union". Earlier in the year, at an ERA conference on the subject of the European Commission's proposals concerning contractual rules for the supply of digital content and online sales across the EU, the European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra Jourová, delivered a speech in which she provided a specific example of the sort of rules to which Yves Mersch referred. Her intervention, followed by in-depth discussions involving representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament as well as other stakeholders, is precisely the sort of high-level, tightly focused event for which the ERA is renowned and, in that sense, epitomises its valuable contribution to the process of European integration.

Moreover, with a view to providing an even more comprehensive programme, both of events that serve to equip national judiciaries for their essential role in applying and implementing EU law, and of seminars that contribute in themselves to the development of that law, the ERA has further strengthened its research and training activities in 2016 through cooperative arrangements with other like-minded organisations.

On the training side, the ERA has prepared, together with the European Judicial Training Network and Ecorys, a major study for the European Commission's DG Competition on national judges' requirements for training in the fields of EU competition law and State aid law. I wholeheartedly welcome this new initiative. Indeed, from my own perspective as President of the Court of Justice of the EU, the work done by the ERA, among others, in training both legal practitioners and judges in matters of EU law is of particular importance as it has a considerable impact on the quality of the judicial dialogue that takes place between the Court of Justice and the national courts of the Member States within the framework of the preliminary ruling procedure.

On the research side, the Academy has signed an important Framework Agreement on cooperation with one of the world's foremost research institutions, the European University Institute in Fiesole, Italy. That agreement's purpose is to stimulate the process of integration in Europe by the holding of joint conferences on topics relating to European law and politics and I wish both sides every success in that shared enterprise.

It is with great pleasure that I look forward, first and foremost as a member of ERA's Governing Board, to continuing to support the Academy's many and varied activities in the years to come. I commend the ERA for its valuable work and would suggest that those with an interest in EU law take the time to explore this rich record of its achievements in 2016. ●

KOEN LENAERTS

President of the Court of Justice of the European Union

PRESIDENT OF THE
GOVERNING BOARD

JACQUES SANTER

Former Prime Minister of Luxembourg,
former President of the European Commission, former
Member of the European Parliament, Luxembourg

CHAIR OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD

PAVEL SVOBODA

Member of the European Parliament,
Chairman of the Committee on
Legal Affairs, Brussels/Strasbourg

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PAULIINE KOSKELO

Judge at the European Court of Human Rights, former President of the Supreme Court of
Finland, Strasbourg/Helsinki

"ERA has developed impressively thanks to the staff and management and also to the contributions of all the members of the Board of Trustees. ERA is a unique institution, which helps to figure out the distinction between law in the books and law in action. Indeed, the law in action matters a lot, and depends on the know-how of people involved in its application. In the EU, it depends on the application at the level of each Member State. ERA's contribution is precisely to this penetration of knowledge, so crucial for citizens and economic operators. ERA's role is dual: it promotes training and know-how in EU law, but it is also a forum for debate. This is reflected in the annual report: ERA provides a solid programme of training in classic fields of EU law, but it also has updates on current relevant issues. In both these aspects, the Board of Trustees is key. ERA relies on the knowledge of each individual, in different functions and fields. The board members are capable, and willing, to make a contribution: but more, they are ambassadors for ERA, promoting it in national and international circles.

I am a great admirer of ERA and hope you all appreciate the work done here."

The ERA Board of Trustees at work:
"Ignorance about EU law is still a problem – and it is a constant challenge to make people aware of EU law. Here, ERA's activity is unique: it brings people across borders, disciplines, professions, levels. These interactions are crucial for progress." *- Pauliine Koskelo*

INTERVIEW WITH WOLFGANG HEUSEL

Director of the Academy

1. The new four-year term of the Board of Trustees started in 2016. Why is this Board important for ERA?

Section 9 of the ERA statute stipulates that "the The Board of Trustees shall advise the Executive Board and Management Board particularly with regard to the planning of the programme of events".

In other words, the key role of the Board of Trustees (in German, "Kuratorium") is to provide advice, guidance and assistance, and while the statute refers to programme planning in the first instance, the Board's support has been instrumental in much wider a field from the outset. The Board and its members have always made crucial contributions to devising ERA's development strategy, helped to build trust and credibility with regard to Member States and target groups, and guided us in identifying training needs and conceiving new product lines.

This was already the contribution of the first Board appointed in 1993, following the establishment of the ERA Foundation in 1992. Appointees were members and staff of EU institutions, nominees of the (then 12) Member States and representatives of the legal professions, business and the judiciary. This Board helped conceive the first fully-fledged annual programme of activities and assisted in making first contacts with ERA's target groups in the Member States and the then candidate countries.

The work of the Board became even more focused and diversified when, in 2000, subcommittees were introduced. Subcommittees have since been appointed either ad hoc or on a permanent basis, covering fields such as (specific) programme planning, judicial training, the preparation of major congresses, business strategy (originally marketing), fundraising, or as the editorial board for ERA's European law journal, the *ERA Forum.*

Following the appointment of the new Board in 2015 for the term 2016-2019, a modified work concept was introduced with regard to programme planning: Specific "focus groups" consisting of specialised experts will be consulted on clearly defined areas of law in response to requests from the ERA lawyers in charge of these areas, essentially by means of electronic communication.

2. Who is represented in the Board of Trustees?

In a strategic perspective, it is important to ensure that Board members represent the European institutions which propose, adopt, interpret and apply European law as well as legal professionals called to implement and enforce it. Parliament, Council and Commission, the European courts both in Luxembourg and in Strasbourg, EU agencies like OHIM/EUIPO, as well as associations and stakeholders representing ERA's core target groups – such as the CCBE for the lawyers in private practice or the European judges' associations – have hence been invited to nominate representatives for the Board.

In a more technical perspective, top-level experts from a wide range of areas of European law have been approached individually to be appointed and we are very grateful for the most relevant expertise they provide. Representatives of partner institutions with which ERA cooperates closely form a third group of members. Among these I would like to mention in particular the European Judicial Training Network at EU level and the Portuguese Centre of Judicial Studies at national level.

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Fourth, there is the group of honorary trustees appointed for life in recognition of their particularly important personal contribution to ERA's work and development.

Finally, I would like to pay a special tribute to the Board's Presidium currently composed of its chair Pauliine Koskelo and deputy chairs Zuzana Fišerová and Marc van der Woude, as the Presidium has always been available to provide strategic advice to the management on a continuous basis.

3. Focusing on business development, do you think 2016 has been a successful year in terms of events and participation rates?

On substance, and despite a decrease of 8.9% in the number of events organised, 2016 has been as successful in terms of events and participation rates as 2015, given that the average number of participants per event remained stable. The reasons for having organised fewer events than in 2015 are manifold and basically not worrying: first of all, the number of co- and fully funded events went down by 28%, an effect of the timing of EU calls and programmes which is beyond ERA's control, but which allowed us to raise the number of open events by 22%. Moreover, fluctuation of our legal staff due to personal reasons remained high (five lawyers left ERA in 2016 without being replaced immediately), and some colleagues reduced their working hours temporarily. Moreover, ERA's production of e-learning modules and training materials further grew in 2016 and absorbed capacities no longer available for traditional face-to-face events.

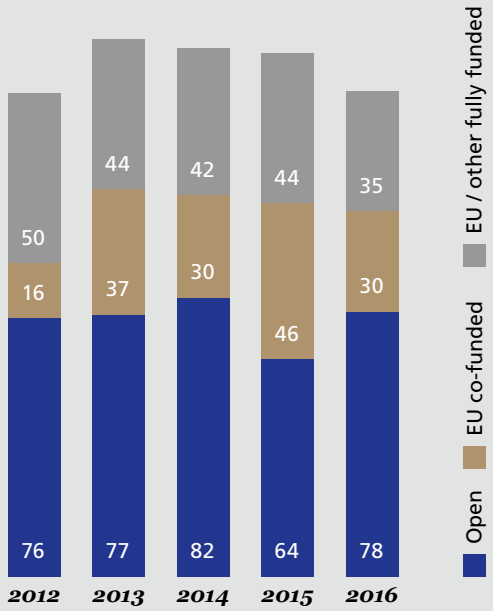
Otherwise, 2016 was particularly successful with regard to tenders and project applications submitted to the European Commission. ERA won project grants for all proposals it had submitted under various funding programmes and will organise five series of events training some 1,200 legal practitioners on the EU Regulations in family and succession law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, cyber criminality, procedural safeguards and countering terrorism and preventing radicalisation in prisons. In parallel, ERA successfully submitted follow-up tenders on the training of judges in European environmental law and on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Further successes of 2016 include the delivery of a study on judges' training needs in the field of European competition law, ERA's re-election to the Steering Committee and as Convener of the Working Group Programmes of the EJTN and, last but not, Latvia's accession to ERA as a new patron of our institute. ▶▶

4. The Friends of ERA association has grown, and the Scholarship Programme and the ERA Jubilee Fund supported new participants. Why is this social commitment initiated by ERA of importance?

The Friends of ERA have grown in members and activities, thanks to the untiring stimulation of their chairwoman Jettie Van Caenegem supported by various national chapter conveners. The support provided by the association and by other donors is increasingly important, as scholarship grants and assistance for outreach training activities allow less privileged practitioners to participate in legal debates with colleagues from other Member States or to engage in special EU law events which otherwise they could not afford to attend. For our common European project to succeed, it is crucial not to leave anyone behind who can help make European law better known and more effectively enforced wherever their workplace and whatever their financial situation may be. ▸▸

ERA EVENTS 2016



50% of events in 2016 were organised by ERA alone and 50% with partners.

GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS

5. Last year was a challenging year for the European Union. The United Kingdom referendum on leaving the EU of 23 June 2016 has been a major issue in the European debate and will change the EU. How will Brexit affect the work of ERA?

The result of the Brexit vote was certainly the saddest event in my professional career. At this moment, it is impossible to grasp the immense loss that Brexit will mean for both the EU and for Britain. It is naïve to think that, without the Brits, it will be easier for the others to steer the EU into a brighter future and to deepen integration on all fronts. At best, Brexit provides the momentum to reconsider the concept and objectives of European integration, an exercise for which the Commission's recent White Paper offers a starting point.

Having enjoyed working with UK lawyers for more than 25 years, and having highly regarded their knowledge of EU law and their professional standards both as speakers and as practitioners, I fear that their practical expertise will gradually diminish and their interest in EU law will fade. This regrettable development will of course affect ERA's work, but I am delighted to state that the UK's (and Scotland's) presence in ERA will exclusively depend on their own stance – having become patrons of our institute once, they are entitled to stay forever, and we will be happy to cooperate as long as they wish.

6. The migration and asylum policy of the EU still lacks support from some Member States and decisions taken at EU level are not implemented by all. Is this the result of a lack of solidarity between EU members, is EU law ineffective or does the EU need more competences?

Article 80 TFEU clearly states that the EU migration and asylum policies "shall be governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility … between the Member States".

The Treaty also provides the competences to adopt the legal measures necessary to achieve this goal. However, the European asylum system in its current shape no longer provides a fair and solidary sharing of the burden, and Member States so far have failed to amend the Dublin framework accordingly. The problem does not lie with a lack of legislative competence but with a lack of will to legislate.

Hungary and Slovakia were certainly entitled to challenge Council Decision 2015/1601 of 22.9.2015 adopted on the basis of Article 78 (3) TFEU to relocate 120,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to other Member States before the CJEU. The non- or unbearably slow implementation of the Decision by many other Member States, however, is also a sign of non-respect for EU law that risks severely damaging its authority. ▶▶

7. Many observers consider the rule of law under threat, notably in Poland and Hungary. How can ERA help legal practitioners to apply EU law effectively notwithstanding conflicting national law?

In 2016, the first activity of the new Polish chapter of the Friends of ERA was a public discussion in Warsaw on "European values in times of crisis". With good reasons they wanted to discuss current threats to our common values, as enshrined in Article 2 TEU, among which the rule of law figures prominently.

The rule of law can never be taken for granted, and recent developments in some European countries in- and outside the EU have made the threat concrete and obvious. The rule of law is the foundation on which the authority of EU law rests – this is why we will address this topic explicitly in the programme of our jubilee congress on 19/20 October 2017. I am confident that the ongoing dialogue with our colleagues in the Member States concerned, and their involvement in our training events and professional networks, will help to ensure the effectivity of the rule of law throughout the European Union and, I hope, beyond.

ERA IN NUMBERS 2016

6,354 participants

from 53 countries

at 144 events

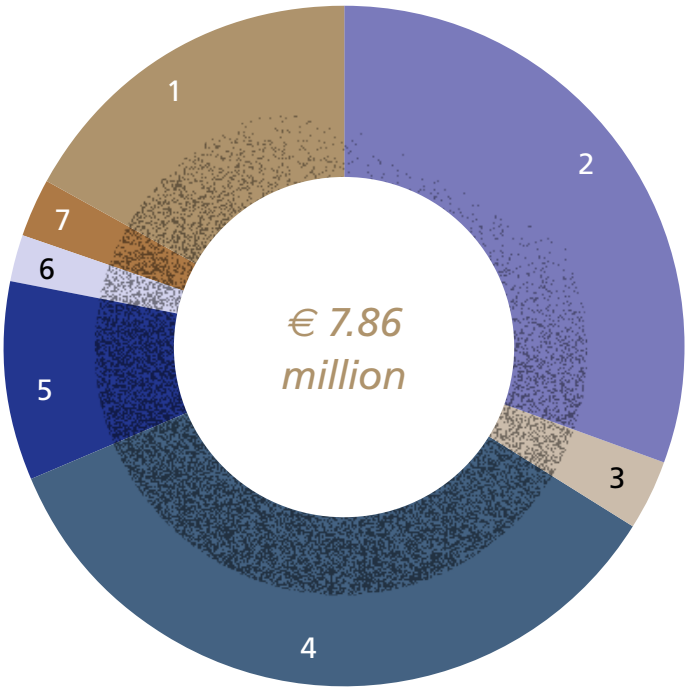
23,305 training days in total

in 24 venues and 10 languages (including sign language)

ERA EVENTS IN 2016

Barcelona, Spain
Berlin, Germany
Brussels, Belgium
Bucharest, Romania
Budapest, Hungary
Copenhagen, Denmark
Cracow, Poland
Dublin, Ireland
Hamburg, Germany
Leuven, Belgium
Lisbon, Portugal
London, United Kingdom
Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Madrid, Spain
Paris, France
Parma, Italy
Prague, Czech Republic
Sofia, Bulgaria
Strasbourg, France
Thessaloniki, Greece
Trier, Germany
Vienna, Austria
Vilnius, Lithuania
Zagreb, Croatia

OPERATING INCOME 2016



1 Participation fees and sales **17%**

2 EU-funded projects **30.6%**

3 Other projects **3.5%**

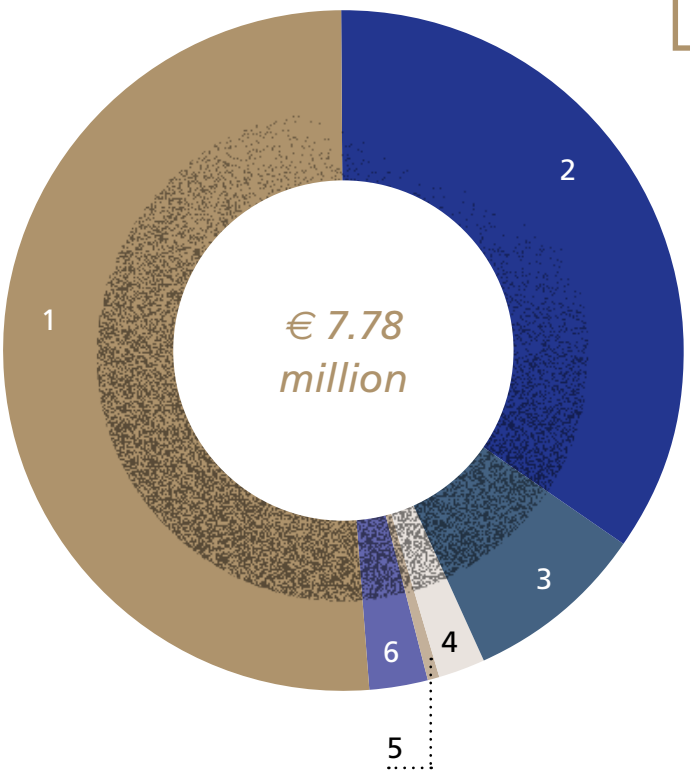
4 EU operating subsidy **34.7%**

5 Rhineland-Palatinate subsidy **9.4%**

6 ECC rental **2.2%**

7 Other income **2.6%**

OPERATING EXPENDITURE 2016



1 Personnel **51.2%**

2 Direct costs of training events **34.8%**

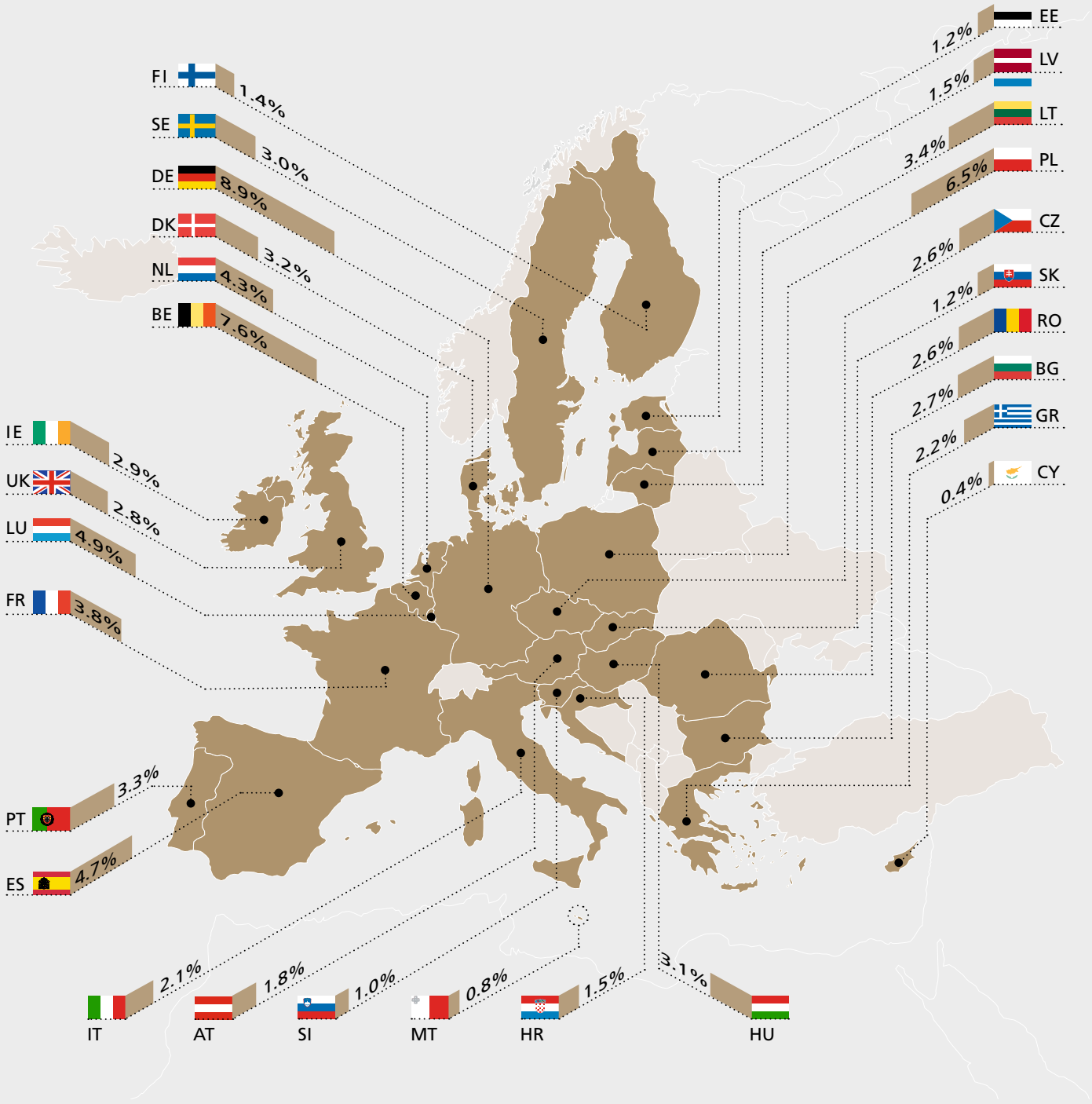
3 Administration **8.5%**

4 ECC **2.2%**

5 Equipment **0.7%**

6 Other costs **2.6%**

COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE OF PARTICIPANTS AT FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS



EU officials

2.5% *EEA countries*

0.9% *Candidate countries*

1.9% *Other countries*

CONFERENCES AND LEGAL POLICY DEBATE

A comprehensive programme of annual conferences

The challenge for ERA over the years has been to maintain diversity and breadth in its conference programme despite the ever-increasing number of areas in which EU law applies and despite the growing 'Europeanisation' of domestic law. Updating, deepening and enlarging the programme to match the growing training needs and expectations of legal practitioners have been a key element of our strategy.

Evidence of these programme developments can be seen in the wide range of 'annual conferences', where the main aim is to cover the most recent developments in a specific area of EU law.

In 2016 this successful formula covered, inter alia, banking law, border management, company law, copyright law, criminal law, environmental law, food law, insurance law, pharmaceutical law, patent law, public procurement, social security law, trade law, trade mark and design, and VAT law.

These highly technical events, aimed at specialists who wish to keep up-to-date in a specific field, can gather each year a high number of legal practitioners from all over Europe. This was once again the case in 2016 with the annual conferences on asylum law, consumer law, data protection law, family law, labour law, migration law, which all gathered more than 70 practitioners each.

Annual Conference on EU and WTO Trade Law, Brussels.

For these events, ERA regularly welcomes judges of the Court of Justice of the EU or the European Court of Human Rights, as well as high-ranking EU officials, as speakers. For example, the Annual Conference on European Media Law 2016 was opened by Commissioner Tibor Navracsics and the Annual Conference on EU State Aid Law benefited from the contribution of the European Commission's Deputy Director General for State Aid Gert Jan Koopman.

Annual Conference on EU Media Law, Brussels.

Annual Conference on EU State Aid Law, Trier.

In 2016 ERA launched an Annual Conference on Countering Terrorism. This first edition, which took place in Trier and gathered some 60 specialists – mainly defence lawyers, law enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors – aimed at offering an overview of the latest developments in the European Union's response to the threat of terrorism, with a focus on the new EU Directive on combating terrorism, the European Agenda on Security, as well as the European Commission's latest proposals to tackle violent radicalisation leading to terrorism.

Events on very specific topics

Complementary to its annual conferences, ERA offers ad hoc events on very specific topics. For example, 2016 saw ERA organising two conferences on electronic evidence in criminal proceedings. The first event, which was organised in Lisbon in cooperation with the Portuguese

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Centre of Judicial Studies (CEJ), aimed at promoting advanced knowledge and the exchange of experience and best practices between judges, prosecutors and lawyers in private practice who deal with criminal proceedings involving e-evidence. The second event, entitled "The life cycle of electronic evidence: obtaining the evidence, presentation in court, continuity of evidence", was organised in Barcelona in cooperation with the Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB). It discussed the foundations of electronic evidence (direct and indirect evidence, primary and secondary evidence, ownership of digital data, video-recorded and tape-recorded evidence), the challenges posed by encrypted data, the chain of custody and the jurisprudence of the ECtHR. Altogether the two events were attended by some 130 legal practitioners from all over Europe.

Also in the field of criminal law, ERA organised in May 2016 a conference on double prosecution and conflicts of jurisdiction in cross-border criminal proceedings. The conference was addressed at judges and prosecutors to look jointly at the respective EU legal framework, case law and support offered by Eurojust. Questions such as how to identify and coordinate parallel investigations, how to decide which jurisdiction should prosecute and how to transfer criminal proceedings in the EU were at the heart of the event. Furthermore, the principle of *ne bis in idem* was explained and analysed with reference to the case law of the CJEU. Finally, future legislative options were discussed, including the rules in the draft Regulation for the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

In the same vein, over 60 legal professionals and compliance officers from 16 countries took part in a conference addressing the current European anti-money laundering landscape and focusing on the changes implemented since the adoption of the fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive. The event also dealt with the EU Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing and its various elements designed to prevent money laundering.

Further such events in 2016 dealt with insolvency law, successions law, freezing of bank accounts, geographical indications, improving transparency within the EU, EU agencies, migrant smuggling, the regulation of derivatives, as well as the EU legal framework on freezing, confiscation and recovery of assets.

2016 saw ERA continue its work in the field of financial supervision by organising a conference that aimed to provide a better understanding of the challenges currently faced in the supervision of market abuse in the EU. The conference informed practitioners about best practices in market monitoring, investigations and enforcement of the legal rules on market abuse. Through examples from various Member States, participants also gained new insights into supervision in this field.

Several conferences were implemented in cooperation with prestigious partners, such as an event in April 2016 entitled 'Same-sex Relationships and Beyond: Gender Matters in the EU', organised in Hamburg in cooperation with the Bucerius Law School, which explored the challenges and controversies concerning the recognition of LGBT relationships across the EU through the lens of EU legislation, the case law of the CJEU and ECtHR, as well as recent national developments.

Evening Debate at the University Club of Washington DC in the context of the IBA Annual Conference.

In spring 2016, the Law Society of Ireland, the Irish Centre for European Law and ERA joined forces with the support of the Irish Attorney General for the organisation of a conference in Dublin Castle on legal challenges and solutions in fighting cybercrime.

In October 2016, shortly before the end of the transition period for the transposition of the Directive on Antitrust Damages, which aims to strike a better balance between public and private enforcement of antitrust rules in the EU, ERA cooperated with the French Court of Cassation to organise a conference in Paris looking into the complex issues of implementation and the challenges to be faced by national judges, and legal counsel for defendants and claimants in antitrust damages litigation.

Last but not least, on the margins of the IBA Annual Conference 2016 in September, the University Club of Washington DC and ERA held an evening debate on "European (Dis-)Union and Brexit". This

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very well-attended event allowed for an animated exchange between DC and European lawyers on the current threats to democracy in the EU, as well as on the impact of Brexit for business after the June referendum. The debate was conceived and organised by the international writer Ioana Lee and moderated by the attorney Max J. Trujillo, both members of the International Committee of the University Club.

A platform for the discussion of legal policy

In line with its Statute, ERA does not confine itself to the dissemination of European law via training, but also serves as a European platform for the discussion of legal policy. In so doing, ERA attaches great importance to remaining neutral and independent, for example by not becoming directly involved in the drafting of specific legal policies. ERA's neutrality and independence have given it a role in a number of topical and fundamental debates at European level. The aim of such events is to stimulate reflection on future political developments in a field of law or, where future legislation is already at an advanced stage, to put forward practical considerations from legal practitioners and stakeholders for the evaluation of proposed legislation.

On 9 December 2015 the European Commission published two proposals for Directives covering harmonised rules for the supply of digital content and mandatory contract rights for online and distance sales of goods in order to unleash the potential of e-commerce in the Digital Single Market. Central issues in these highly controversial proposals were discussed during a conference organised by ERA in Brussels at an early stage of the legislative process.

Conference on new EU rules for digital contracts, Brussels.

"The level of protection for consumers will be better in the EU if a common rule applies to contract law when shopping online", said Justice Commissioner Věra Jourová in her keynote speech opening the ERA event.

Conference on new EU rules for digital contracts, Brussels.

Axel Voss MEP explained his views as vice-chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs in the European Parliament: "Europe needs to adapt to the high speed of developments in the global digital environment". The event provided an opportunity to explain and debate the impact of the legislative proposals. This one-day high-level expert discussion was attended by 75 participants from the EU institutions, associations, ministries and private practice.

Conference on the adoption of the EU directive on trade secrets, Brussels.

In 2013, the European Commission proposed a Directive on a harmonised definition of trade secrets and common measures to prevent the disclosure of confidential commercial information. Following the EU

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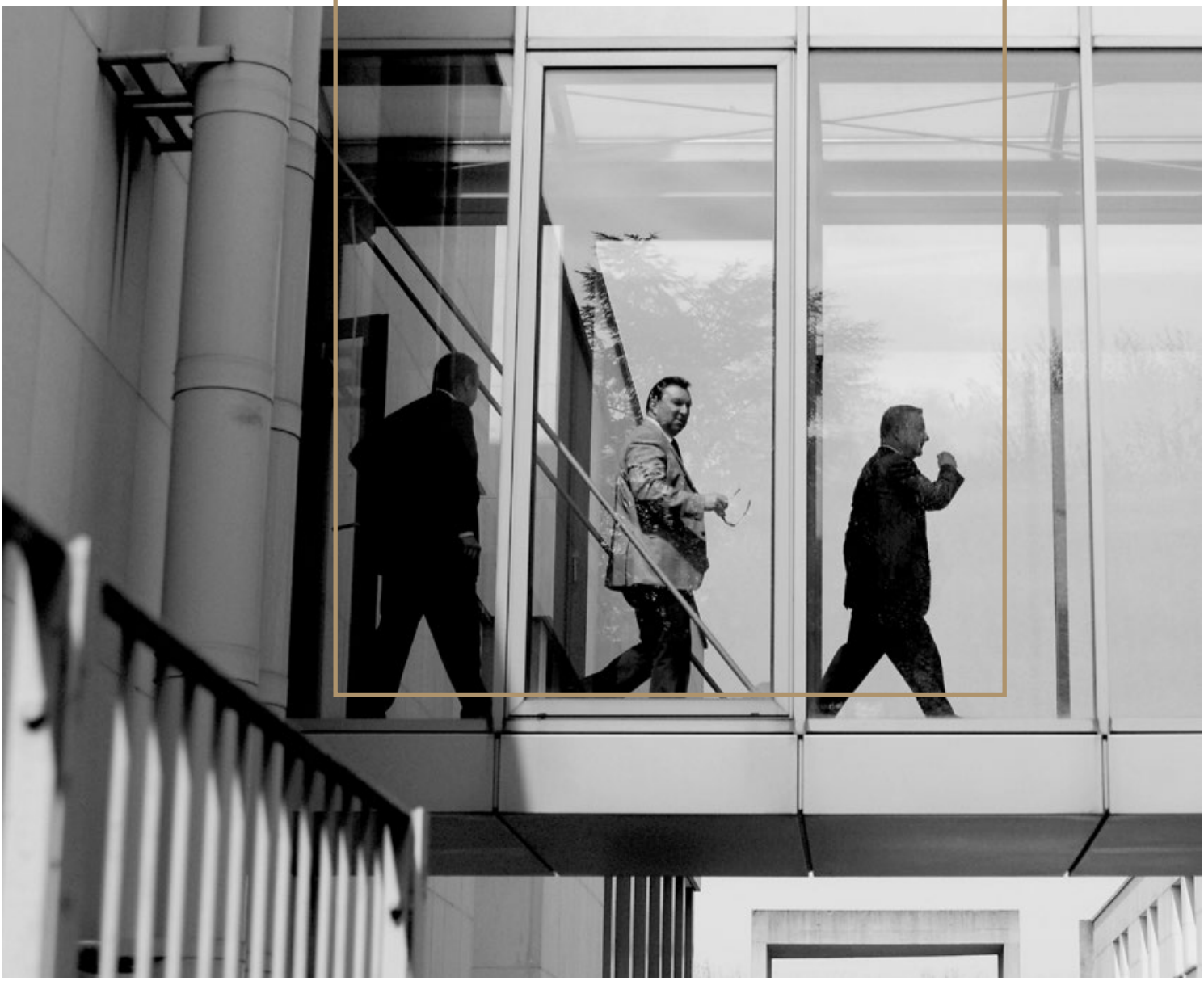
tripartite institutional negotiation in December 2015, ERA put in place a one-day event in Brussels on 16 June 2016 in order to offer a platform for discussion on the Directive and its implications in practice.

The seminar took place one day after the publication of the Directive in the Official Journal, leaving Member States two years to transpose the Directive into their national legal orders. The programme was therefore mainly aimed at offering legal practitioners an update about the adopted text and a chance to discuss the extent to which current national systems should be adapted to the new requirements of the EU Directive. After an introduction to the definitions proposed by the text, the seminar focused on the impact of the measures adopted by the Directive in order to act preventively, to facilitate civil redress for victims, and to put in place specific safeguards for employees, their representatives and, last but not least, whistle-blowers. In addition, a substantial part of the discussion was dedicated to court proceedings involving trade secrets and the duty imposed on national judges to maintain the right balance between fair trial and respect of confidentiality. ●



PRACTICAL TRAINING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

Legal training for young professionals

In terms of practical training ERA has considerably intensified its programme in recent years in order to meet better the needs of practitioners. This concerns in the first instance its range of intensive five-day summer courses aimed at young professionals and non-specialists.

Besides summer courses on competition law, criminal justice, environmental law, institutional law, intellectual property law, labour law, mediation, ADR and ODR, tax law, trade law, and on the regulation and supervision of financial markets, ERA offered two more comprehensive introductory courses in 2016, respectively on 'public procurement law' and 'data protection law'.

All of these courses include case studies, practical workshops and role-playing to allow participants to put into instant practice the knowledge they acquire. Participants also have the opportunity to attend a hearing at the Court of Justice in Luxembourg. A total of 391 practitioners participated in these courses in 2016.

Participants at the Summer Course on European Intellectual Property Law.

Large-scale training projects

The development of long-running large-scale training projects has become a very efficient means for ERA to achieve its mission of promoting and disseminating knowledge of EU law among legal practitioners across Europe. These ambitious projects, which aim at broad geographical and professional coverage, usually share common features: (i) they are implemented not only in Trier but also in various Member States; (ii) they are built on a large pan-European partnership generally composed of members of the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) and of national bars, which facilitates their implementation and ensures that awareness will be raised throughout the EU; (iii) they are multilingual; (iv) they encompass more than face-to-face training, as they are complemented by subsites offering training materials, a comprehensive library, audio and video podcasts, sometimes e-learning modules; and (v) finally, they are funded partly or entirely by the European Union.

Among the most prominent examples of such projects in the ERA programme are two long-running training programmes on 'EU Anti-discrimination Law' and 'EU Gender Equality Law'. These projects, with twelve seminars per year bringing together some 600 judges, legal practitioners and academics from all EU Member States, EEA/EFTA and candidate countries, have been implemented on behalf of and in cooperation with the European Commission under the 'PROGRESS Programme' and the 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020' respectively. Most seminars aimed at judges were held outside Trier in 2016: two training events on EU anti-discrimination law were implemented in Barcelona and Copenhagen in cooperation with the Spanish Judicial School and the Danish Court Administration respectively, while two seminars on EU gender equality law were implemented in Vilnius and Budapest in cooperation with the National Courts Administration of Lithuania and the Hungarian National Office for the Judiciary.

In order to make the information provided at the seminars available to an even wider audience, an extensive online documentation (including presentations, an e-learning course, e-presentations, etc.) of the two series can be accessed for free on special

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ERA subsites. This documentation was extended and updated extensively in 2016.

Since the beginning of ERA's cooperation with the European Commission in the framework of the two series, the first of which has run since 2003, ERA has contributed to the training of some 5,800 legal professionals – more than half of whom were members of the judiciary – in the field of EU equality law.

In the same vein, 2016 saw ERA awarded another service contract dealing with continuous training on "EU Disability Law and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". This Convention, as the first human rights treaty the EU has ratified, is an important tool in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. It seeks to elaborate and clarify existing obligations setting out legal standards on disability rights, it changes and affirms the status of persons with disabilities in human rights law and it strengthens the EU legislation adopted on disability issues and advanced via the European Disability Strategy.

The EU's ratification of the Convention serves an important function by consolidating the protection of persons with disabilities in EU law more specifically than

Participants at a seminar on EU Disability Law and the UNCRPD.

was previously the case and it provides an additional source of legal authority and interpretational assistance for practitioners working in this area. More than 200 legal professionals were trained by ERA in cooperation with the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the European Foundation Centre (EFC) in 2016 within the framework of the REC Programme (2014-2020). A total of six seminars were designed to raise awareness among legal and policy practitioners, members of the judiciary and other judicial officials, as well as members of NGOs, disabled persons' organisations and academics. One live-streamed event with International Sign Language interpretation and closed captioning allowed for the remote participation of more than 300 persons in the training seminar online.

Of increasing relevance in ERA's programme are its activities in the field of cybercrime. Since 2012 ERA has implemented various multi-annual projects with the financial support of successive European Commission programmes (ISEC, Criminal Justice and Justice Programmes). The first, entitled 'Training Centre on Cybercrime for Judges and Prosecutors' consisted of eight seminars in Trier. It comprised basic training courses on the legal and technical aspects of cybercrime to provide some 500 judges and prosecutors from all Member States with the essential skills necessary to cope with internet-related offences. The second project, entitled 'Fighting the Illegal Use of the Internet', consisted of a series of six seminars in Lisbon, Madrid, Vilnius, Stockholm, London and Sofia. Each of them had a specific focus, such as fighting child pornography online, online financial crimes, and fraud committed with electronic means of payment. These two initial training projects dealing with the challenges that the judiciary faces with the use of new technologies were supplemented by two more, respectively entitled 'The Impact of Internet, New Technologies and Social Networks on EU Criminal Justice' (2012-2014) and 'Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating Criminal Cases in the Online World: Challenges (and Opportunities) posed by the Internet'. This last project, consisting of seminars in Budapest, Madrid, Lisbon, Cracow and Trier, was to a large extent implemented in the course of 2016. All in all, some 1,200 legal practitioners (mainly judges and prosecutors) took part in these four projects by the end of 2016.

A similar large-scale approach has been chosen for other specific legal topics with long-running multilingual series of events throughout Europe over the last years, for example on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and on the role of the CJEU in criminal matters since Lisbon.

In addition to a multi-year project in the field of detention

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law, ERA joined the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM) in Vienna in an important EU-funded project that aims to strengthen cooperation between the judiciary and national mechanisms for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment in the EU, as well as to contribute to the correct and consistent implementation of the European Arrest Warrant and other mutual recognition instruments relating to detention with full respect for fundamental rights.

Cybercrime Mock Trial, Trier.

Broad training offer on traditional areas of EU law

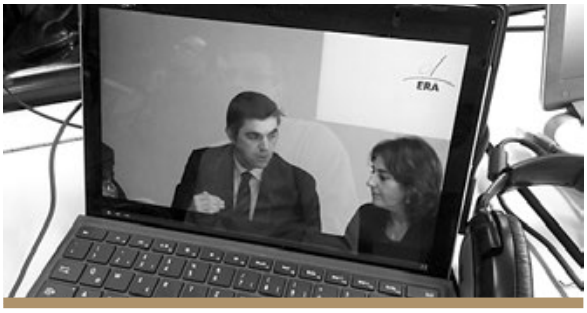
Training on 'classic' EU and Single Market law topics has remained very strong in the ERA programme. For example, ERA continued in 2016 the training format of advanced half-day EU competition law workshops in Brussels, which had been launched three years before. These workshops aim to provide a deep analysis of key concepts of European antitrust law and focus on the latest trends in CJEU case law, legislative developments and European Commission practice.

Three such workshops were organised in 2016 on 'Cartel Enforcement in the EU: Liability, Fines, Settlements', 'Access to Documents and Protection of Confidential Information in EU Competition Law', and 'EU Competition Law and the Sharing Economy in the Age of Uber & Airbnb'. All these workshops were also live streamed.

In addition to these seminars, which mainly targeted specialised lawyers in private practice, in-house counsel and national competition authority representatives, ERA continued its longstanding work for the judiciary in this area and was awarded EU funds for two important training projects to be implemented over the next two years. The first training project aims to equip judges who deal with competition law cases with the tools to understand economic principles and notions, conduct complex economic assessments and handle economic evidence and experts. The second one will see the development of an interactive online training course to offer national judges comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of current substantive and procedural issues concerning European State aid rules and their implementation. In the field of State aid law, ERA offered practical training in Brussels on procedural issues for practitioners involved in State aid cases as well as its Annual Conference, which in 2016 edition gathered more than 80 participants.

Training on legal terminology for the judiciary

In 2016, ERA launched an innovative two-year project entitled 'Enhancing judicial cooperation in civil matters: organisation of a series of interactive language training events'. The project is being developed in close cooperation with eleven partner institutions from eight EU Member States and with the financial support of



the Justice Programme of the European Union. It aims to organise a series of eight training events combining practical legal and linguistic training on one of the following topics: (i) cross-border civil litigation: the Brussels Ia Regulation, or (ii) European family law: the Brussels IIa Regulation.

The seminars aim at improving the four basic language skills (reading, writing, speaking and oral

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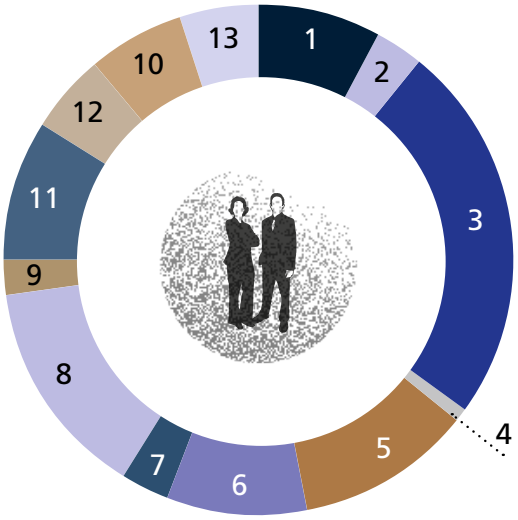
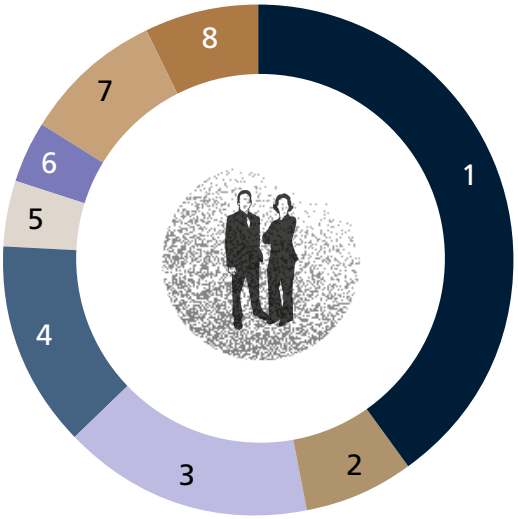
understanding) in terms of legal terminology in English. To ensure the completeness and practical relevance of the materials to be dealt with during the linguistic part of the events, ERA entrusted an experienced linguist with the development of a manual including language exercises on legal terminology. As the events comprise English language training on the one hand, and training on existing EU civil justice instruments on the other, participants are assessed and divided into groups depending on their strengths and weaknesses. This guarantees a workable number for in-depth training and also allows parallel sessions during which one group receives legal training and the other language training, thus enabling all essential aspects to be covered during three days. In 2016, three seminars were organised in Croatia, Poland and Romania. The remaining five, to be held in France, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania, will be implemented by the end of 2017. ▶▶

PARTICIPANTS BY PROFESSION AT OPEN EVENTS 2016

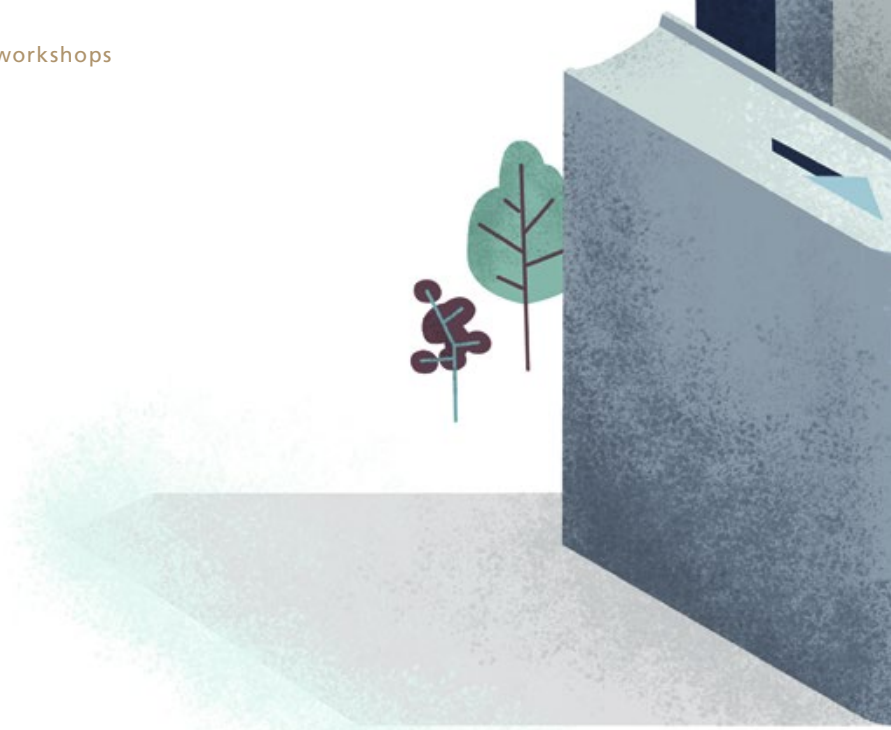


1 Judge **8%**
2 Prosecutor **3%**
3 Private practice **24%**
4 Notary **1%**
5 In-house counsel **11%**
6 Ministry official **9%**
7 Regulator **3%**
8 EU official **14%**
9 Police **2%**
10 Other civil servant **9%**
11 NGO **5%**
12 Academic **6%**
13 Other **5%**

PARTICIPANTS BY PROFESSION AT CO- AND FULLY FINANCED EVENTS 2016



1 Judge **40 %**
2 Prosecutor **7%**
3 Private practice **16%**
4 National civil servant **13%**
5 EU official **4%**
6 NGO **4%**
7 Academic **9%**
8 Other **7%**



Tailor-made training for lawyers in private practice

Lawyers in private practice belong to ERA's principal target groups for training and professional exchange. Large parts of ERA's open programme are of relevance for them – if not exclusively. Events of particular importance for private practitioners in 2016 included the 'Annual Conference on European Family Law', the 'Annual Conference on VAT Law', 'Cross-border Insolvency Proceedings' and 'Update on the EU Anti-Money Laundering Framework'. Of great relevance for lawyers in private practice is the recently launched series of one-day events in Strasbourg aiming to provide an update on the most recent case law of the ECtHR in various fields. Three such training events were implemented in Strasbourg in 2016 and covered the Court's case law in family matters, labour law matters and criminal matters. Finally, lawyers in private practice regularly take part in the numerous 'Legal English' courses ERA offers in Brussels and Trier each year.

Large parts of ERA's programmes co-financed or fully-financed by the EU are also open to lawyers in private practice. In particular, ERA was awarded EU funds to organise a series of five tailor-made seminars for practising lawyers in English and French on practical aspects of litigation before the Court of Justice of the European Union. Each seminar consists of one day of sessions in Trier at ERA's premises followed by a visit to the Court and attendance at a hearing. The aim of the project is to improve lawyers' knowledge of the proceedings before the Court and therefore contribute to the effective and coherent application of EU law. It also renders the lawyers more knowledgeable and self-confident in the area of EU law and thus more effective in their submissions to the Court, which helps to guarantee real access to justice. In the course of 2016, some eighty lawyers took part in these seminars. For this project, ERA cooperates with the European Lawyers Foundation, as well as the Spanish National Bar, the Athens Bar Association, the National Council of Legal Advisers from Poland, the Bar Council of Ireland, the Law Society of Ireland, the Finnish Bar Association, the Haute Ecole des Avocats Conseil, the Ecole Régionale des Avocats du Grand Est and the Délégation des Barreaux de France in Brussels.

Another form of training implemented by ERA and targeted at the practical needs of lawyers in private practice are short courses related to specific EU law topics – such as corporate tax, VAT, cross-border insolvency proceedings, public procurement – in different European cities in cooperation with local bar associations. In doing so, ERA aims to complement what is offered by national providers by bringing – in contrast to their own programmes – a genuine European dimension and perspective to these events, in terms of both the contents and the expert speakers. In 2016, ERA organised such a joint seminar on the impact of Brexit on commercial dispute litigation in London with The Bar Council and The European Circuit of the Bar of England & Wales. It also organised a basic training course in Cracow on legal and technical aspects of cybercrime and e-evidence together with the Polish Bar Foundation (Fundacja Adwokatury Polskiej) and with the sponsorship of top-tier Polish law firms.

Besides its cooperation with bars, ERA also works frequently with associations or networks of individual

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lawyers or law firms. In 2016 it organised its fourth annual joint seminar in Brussels with the European Employment Lawyers Association (EELA). ERA also welcomed a delegation of some 70 Danish lawyers from the Association of Danish Labour Law Attorneys ("AnsættelsesAdvokater") for a seminar in Strasbourg on social rights in Europe combined with visits to the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament. A long cooperation also exists with the Norwegian Center for Continuing Legal Education ("Juristenes Utdanningssenter", JUS), founded by the Norwegian Bar Association and the Norwegian Association of Lawyers, with whom ERA cooperated for the 13th time in 2016 with an event in Brussels devoted to EU/EEA labour law addressed to 40 Norwegian lawyers.

It is often crucial for lawyers in private practice that their participation in one of ERA's training events meets the compulsory professional development (CPD) requirements that have been introduced by many national bars and law societies. ERA makes every effort to ensure that participation by lawyers from all over Europe in its events is recognised under the various national schemes. Despite the diversity of regulations, attending a two-day ERA event meets the annual CPD requirements in most jurisdictions.

In-house training on request

Training requests from private and public actors at national and EU levels represent an important part of ERA's activities. ERA is particularly valued for its training expertise, its network of experts, and its ability to deal with complex and very specific training requests. For example, for the second year in a row, the Centre de Formation de la Juridiction Administrative (CFJA), part of the French Council of State, asked ERA to organise a 1.5-day seminar in Trier on procedural issues, combined with a visit to the Court of Justice, for a group of 60 future administrative judges as part of their initial training.

For many years, EU Institutions and agencies have regularly commissioned seminars from ERA for their own staff or for third parties. In 2016 the European Parliament's DG Personnel entrusted ERA with the conception of a two-day seminar in Brussels on EU financial services regulation. Key topics covered were the principles of financial services regulation, the European Financial Supervision System, relevant regulations and directives (MiFID II, PRIIPs, UCITS and AIFMD), as well as future developments in financial services regulation, such as the Capital Markets Union and the regulation of shadow banking. The European Commission's DG Translation also contracted ERA for the conception and organisation of two seminars on EU environmental law for their staff in Brussels and Luxembourg. ●

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING MATERIALS

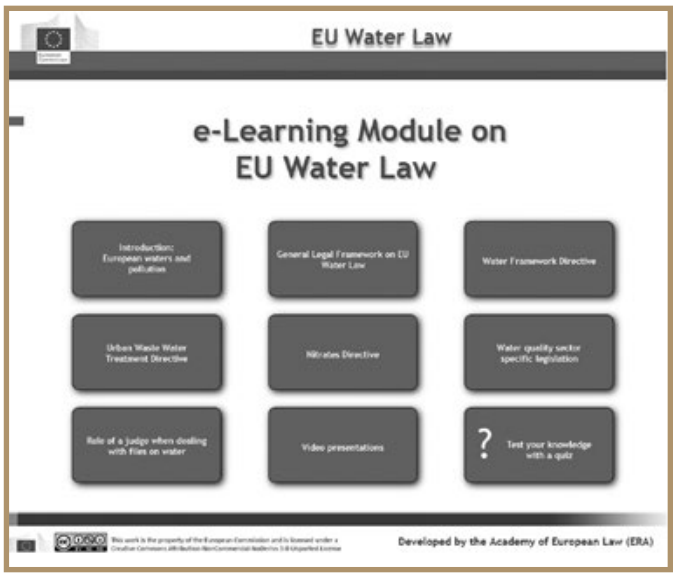
In addition to implementing training programmes itself, ERA has in the last five years devoted more and more resources to the development of standardised training materials and other resources that can be re-used by third parties.

Training modules on behalf of the European Commission's DG Environment

In 2016 ERA continued its major project on behalf of the European Commission's DG Environment entitled "Cooperation with National Judges in the Field of EU Environmental Law", which aims to develop training modules on various topics of EU environmental law as well as to organise workshops for judges.

This project has led to the development of comprehensive standardised materials which promote interrogative and participative learning methods and are easily reusable. The entire training packages are accessible by any party or institution interested in organising future training in these areas of law. The materials are addressed to both end users and training providers. The so-called "user's pack" includes the traditional documentation with the related legislation and jurisprudence of the CJEU to be distributed to end users in advance of the training in the form of an introductory e-learning course.

Blended learning as a methodological tool ensures initial familiarisation with the scope and objectives of the training and a level playing field for all participants, whilst at the same time constituting a resource for future reference as it remains freely available after the completion of the training event. Although a significant part of the training relies on the provision of information on different legal instruments through face-to-face presentations, the "user's pack" is complemented by workshop exercises (case studies, IT-supported training sessions, role-play) requiring the active contribution of the participants. In addition to the materials included in the "users' pack", training providers have access to the "trainer's manual", which explains how best to navigate through the materials available and how these may be integrated into future workshops by providing information on their structure, content and methodology. Further to this, information on the organisational aspects of a training event, such as guidelines on how to identify possible trainers, select the participants or evaluate the training event, have been included.



After developing training modules on "EU Law on Industrial Emissions" and the "Interaction between the EIA and the Nature Directives" in 2013, "Participatory and Procedural Rights in Environmental Matters" in 2014, "EU Air Quality and Noise Legislation" in 2015, ERA was asked to design two more training modules in 2016 on "Biodiversity and Wildlife Trafficking" and "EU Water Law". The last two modules were tested and subsequently improved in the framework of a series of 2.5-day workshops held in Madrid (in cooperation with the Centre of Legal Studies, Ministry of Justice), in Barcelona (in cooperation with the Judicial School of the General Council

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of the Judiciary) and in Thessaloniki (in cooperation with National School of Judges), as well as twice in Trier.

This type of project seems to meet the expectations and needs of national judicial training actors. Evidence of this can be seen, first, in the fact that ERA secured the partnership of the judicial training bodies of fifteen jurisdictions (Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England and Wales, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain), as well as the support of the Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union (ACA-Europe) and the Association of European Administrative Judges (AEAJ). Secondly, institutions that were not part of the initial consortium also accepted to host and co-organise workshops in 2016 to test the training modules.

Case studies on EU civil justice instruments

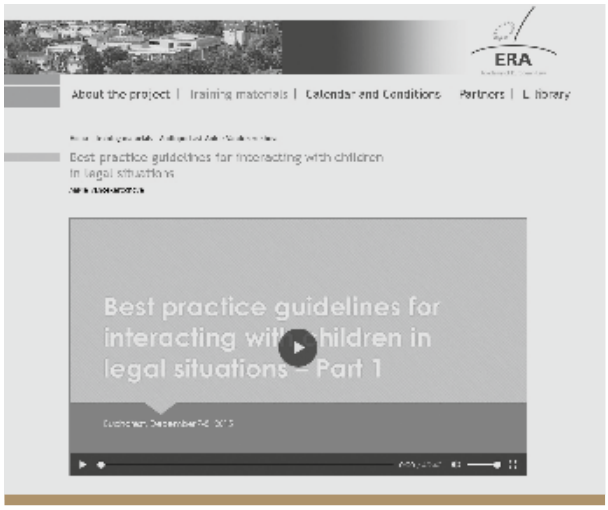
ERA also concluded in 2016 a large-scale two-year project in the area of cross-border cooperation in civil matters with the financial support of the Commission's Justice Programme. This project was implemented in partnership with sixteen national judicial training bodies and bar associations from fifteen EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and United Kingdom).

The creation of an innovative and sustainable training package that can be employed to set up interactive seminars on EU civil justice instruments was achieved by developing training materials on the basis of practical case studies which were tested, evaluated and improved in the framework of a coordinating meeting with EU and national experts as well as through the implementation of 23 seminars at national and pan-European level, which were attended by more than 500 legal professionals. The project covered the following three main topics of high practical relevance: (i) cross-border civil litigation, (ii) European cross-border procedures, and (iii) conflict of laws. All case studies were made available from the beginning in three of the most frequently used languages in the EU: English, French and German. The project partners successively translated parts of the training materials into their national languages, making it possible to provide the materials in 14 official languages of the EU. The entire training package, including a multilingual e-library with links to the most relevant legislation and jurisprudence in the area of EU civil justice, is freely accessible on ERA's website.

Having received very positive feedback on the methodology and results of this project and building on the knowledge and experience gained, in late 2016 ERA started a similar project focusing on better applying the EU Regulations on family and succession law. The case studies developed will cover the following topics: (i) cross-border divorce and maintenance, (ii) parental responsibility in a cross-border context, including child abduction and (iii) cross-border succession. An innovation in this project will be the creation of two sets of case studies per topic that will allow for the provision of training at both initial/basic and more advanced/continuous levels. Twelve decentralised test seminars for c. 360 legal professionals will be organised over a period of 14 months in order once more to ensure high quality, practicability and sustainability of the developed training package. The project is co-financed by the European Commission and is implemented together with fifteen partners from eleven EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain). ▶▶

Training materials on child-friendly justice

Another project, which aimed to create a standardised training package to be re-used for the organisation of multidisciplinary seminars, dealt with "The rights of the child in practice". This two-year project, which was completed in December 2016, was co-financed by the European Commission and developed together with the judicial training bodies from Croatia, France, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain (Judicial School), the Justice Ministries of Bavaria, Baden Wurttemberg, North-Rhine Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, as well as with the support of the Honorable Society of King's Inns, the Council of Europe, the Child Rights International Network and EJTN.



Renowned EU experts developed comprehensive introductory presentation materials and interactive workshop materials on three aspects: (i) general principles: international and European instruments protecting children's rights in justice settings; (ii) the right to be heard in legal proceedings involving children (Art. 12 CRC); and (iii) best-practice guidelines for interacting with children in court and other legal settings. The main characteristic of the training package is that it ensures awareness of the existing EU acquis and resources that may be particularly relevant in this field (including legislation, jurisprudence, studies, projects, etc.) whilst at the same time facilitating the exchange of different national experiences and the perspectives of different professionals concerned with children in the justice system. The training materials were tested, evaluated and improved in eight seminars that were organised across Europe for more than 220 legal professionals. The various language regimes of the seminars ensured that professionals from every region of the EU were reached. It also allowed for the provision of the training materials in seven official EU languages. The specially developed project subsite contains all language versions of the training package as well as relevant videos on the rights of the child and audio podcasts of selected presentations given during the seminar series, thus enlarging the circle of the project's beneficiaries.

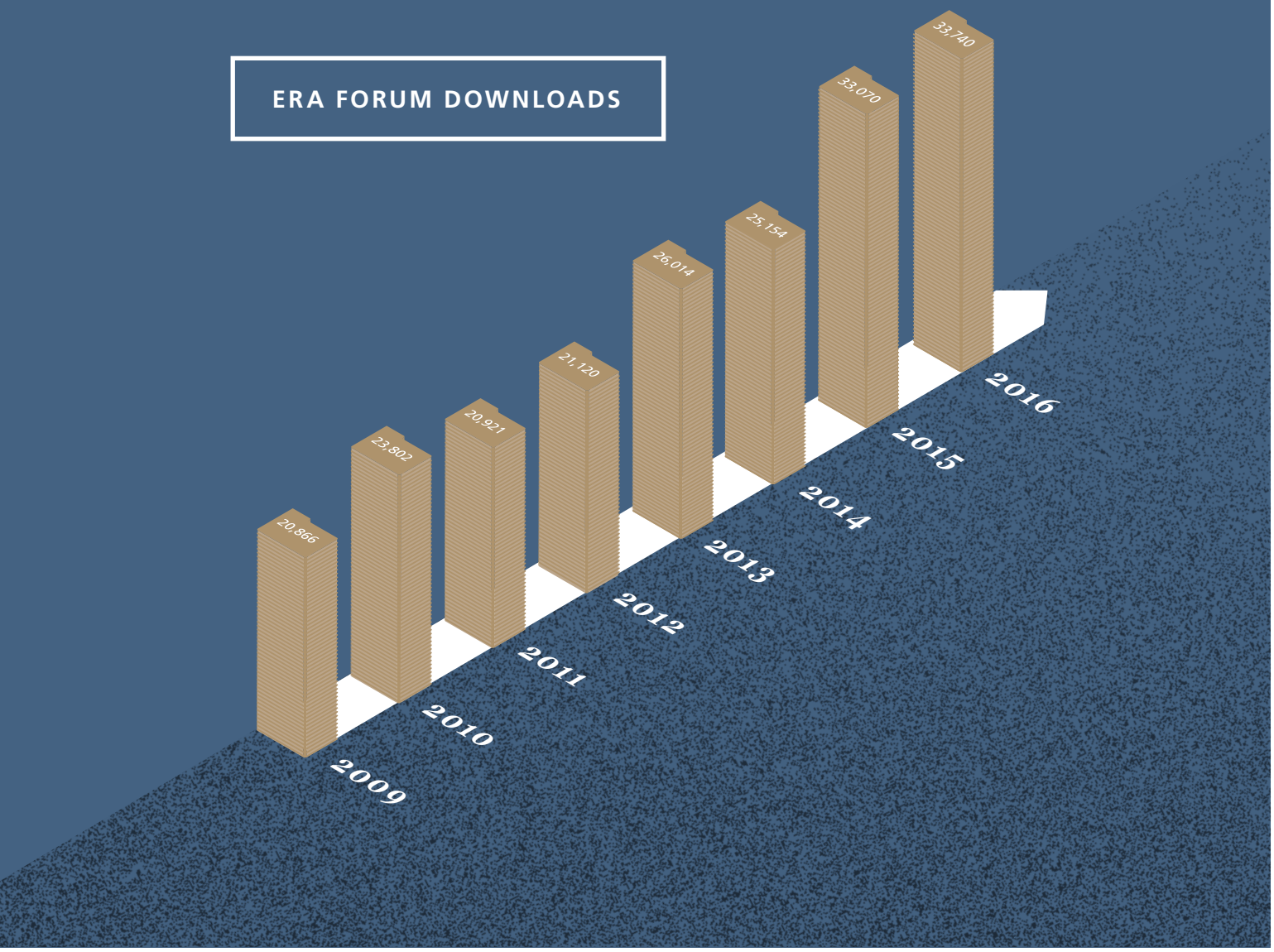
ERA FORUM

ERA Forum – Journal of the Academy of European Law is published in cooperation with Springer Science + Business Media (Heidelberg/Berlin/New York). The journal can be accessed in several ways: through individual article downloads, in the form of an annual subscription, or as part of an online package available to institutional subscribers around the world.

Articles from the journal were downloaded a total of 33,740 times in 2016, a 2% increase on the previous year, during which article downloads had jumped a huge 30% on the year before.

Papers published in the journal – which are based on the most outstanding presentations delivered at ERA's conferences – touched in 2016 on issues as diverse as anti-discrimination, border management, Brexit, cybercrime, intellectual property, money laundering and market abuse, shareholder rights, the status of LGBT couples, and the "Uber economy". There were also the regular reports by ERA lawyers on the case law of the CJEU.

The authors were drawn from ERA's diverse pool of experts from academia, private practice and the EU institutions. ●



DISTANCE LEARNING

ERA's distance-learning programme consists of training materials, e-learning courses and audio-visual resources developed either for the general legal public or in the framework of EU-funded projects. An overview is available at

www.era.int/elearning

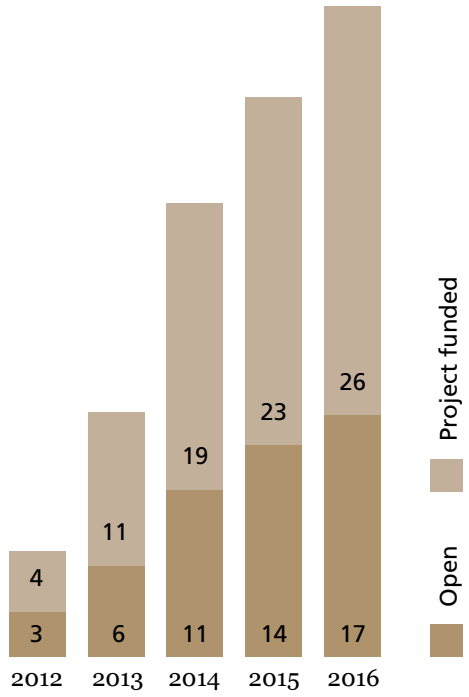
Streaming

An innovation in ERA's online training offer in 2016 was the launch of regular live streams of selected ERA conferences and workshops. ERA has streamed events before on a one-off basis, but as of 2016, all ERA's competition law workshops in Brussels have been live-streamed, as well as individual events such as a seminar on "The Adoption of the EU Directive on Trade Secrets". Participants receive all the necessary background documentation, can interact with speakers through a chat function, and have the option to replay a recording of the stream after the event.

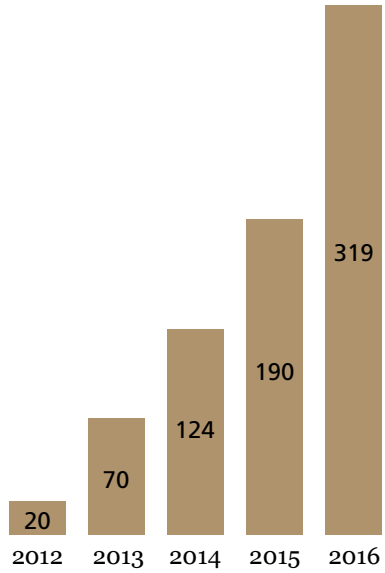
e-Learning

ERA's range of online learning resources expanded in 2016 with the addition of two new e-learning modules developed as part of a project funded by the European Commission's DG Environment on "EU Environmental Law for National Judges" and one new course funded by the European Commission's DG Justice on the "The International and EU Framework on Disability Law". ERA also produced a course for the French Conseil d'Etat on "The Role of the National Judge as a European Judge of Common Law and their Relationship with the CJEU". All ERA's online courses are updated on an annual basis, and in 2016 the course on "The General Principles of EU Law as Applied by the CJEU to Criminal Justice" was also translated into French and German. ▶▶

E-COURSES



E-PRESENTATIONS



e-Presentations

The number of e-presentations – video recordings of speakers at ERA events combined with embedded background documentation and a self-assessment quiz, available in different technical formats – rose significantly from 190 to 319 packages, each dealing with a specific and current issue of European law. Following an evaluation of ERA's e-learning programme in 2015, the concept of the e-presentations was amended in 2016: for each e-presentation, there is now a basic version available for free.

As of 2016, ERA has begun distributing the basic version of its e-presentations on YouTube. The ERA YouTube Channel is freely accessible and contains numerous playlists gathering the latest e-presentations in different areas of EU law:

www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanLawERA

The premium version, with added functionality, including the possibility to obtain a certificate to meet continuing professional development (CPD) obligations, is available on the ERA website for a modest fee.

Online resources

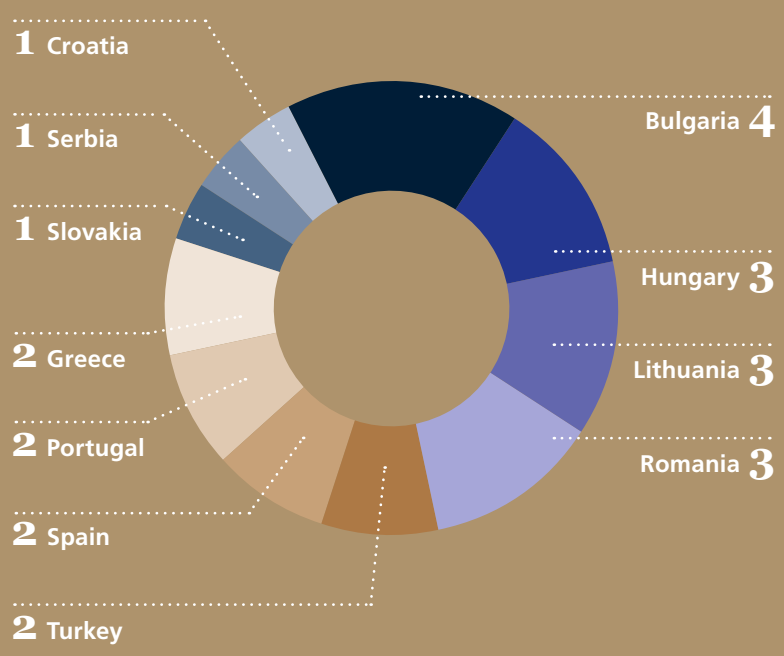
In recent years, ERA has put increasing efforts into the creation of user-friendly project subsites in order to ensure accessibility and therefore widespread use of the materials developed in the framework of large-scale projects. Training materials, documentation libraries, e-learning courses, audio podcasts and video recordings from no fewer than 34 EU-funded projects in diverse areas of European law – including anti-discrimination law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, competition law, criminal law, disability law, environmental law and gender equality – are available for free in a section of ERA's website entitled "Resources & Projects". A major addition to this offer in 2016 was a collection of interactive case studies developed in the framework of the project on "Using EU Civil Justice Instruments".

THE ERA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

ERA runs a scholarship programme to enable practitioners of law who would not otherwise be able to afford to participate in its programmes to do so. The programme is supported solely by donations, mainly from the Friends of ERA Association and its Jubilee Fund, launched in 2012 with the aim of providing equal opportunities for training to legal practitioners from all regions of Europe.

In 2016, the Association made a donation of € 20,571 to support the scholarship programme. Further funds of € 2725 (up 40% compared to the previous year) were raised from individual and corporate donations for this purpose.

Out of 62 applications, 24 scholars were selected to participate in a variety of courses and seminars covering European business, private and public law. The scholars came from 11 different countries. The scholarships enabled the legal practitioners who benefited to understand better how national laws and procedures converge with the European mainstream, in some cases to prepare for their own country's accession to the EU, and to build mutual trust with practitioners from neighbouring countries and the wider EU. ●



THANKS TO:

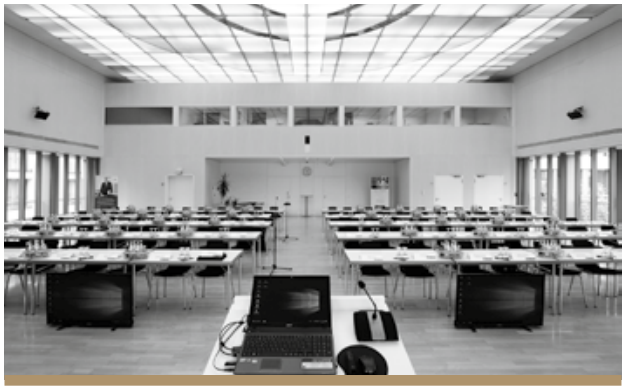
- Friends of ERA Association
- Deutsche Bundesbank Mainz
- Sparkasse Trier
- Sebastian Cobler Stiftung, Frankfurt
- Gergana Ilieva
- Sophia Koukoulis
- Domagoj Stimac
- Christian Morgenroth
- Carlo Schockweiler
- Taru Spronken
- Horst-Peter Kreppel
- Merijn Chamon
- Peter Vajda
- Jackie Jones
- Marco Sussi
- Diane Le Grand de Belleroche
- Paola Balbo
- Wilfried Derflinger
- Fiorella Dal Monte

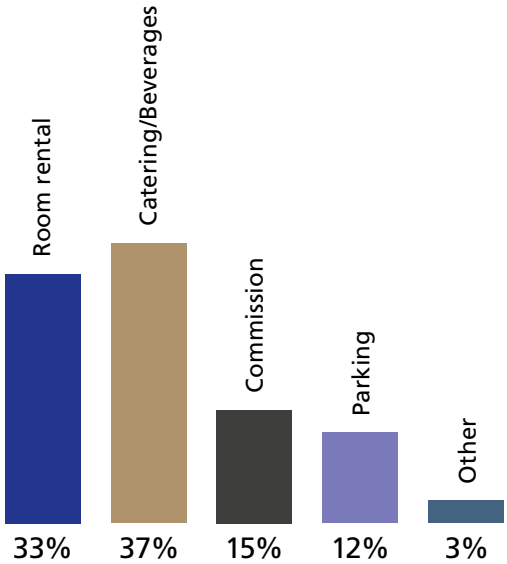
THE ERA CONFERENCE CENTRE

The number of activities organised by external clients at the ERA Conference Centre (ECC) facilities did not significantly change compared to previous years. There were fewer large-scale events in 2016, however. The corresponding decrease in income from rent, beverages and food had a negative impact on the margin as the catering service is the primary source of revenue for the ERA Conference Centre.

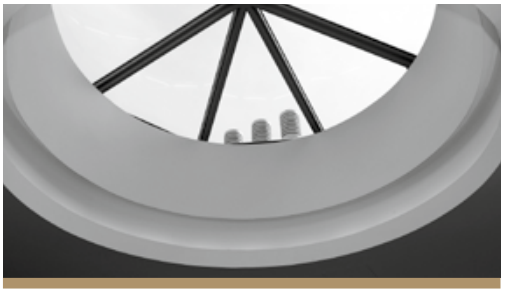
The ECC has benefited from a general trend in Germany to move government meetings from the capital to the provinces. In spring 2016, the EU working group of the Gesundheitsministerkonferenz (Conference of Health Ministers of the German Federal States) was hosted in our premises. The 10th Trier Anaesthesia Conference on 'Conflict areas: patient safety, care quality, efficiency and profitability' organised by one of the city's largest hospitals also took place in the ECC.

A further highlight was the organisation of the 34th annual meeting of the Bund Deutscher Rechtspfleger (BDR, Federation of German Judicial Officers). The three-day conference focused on 'e-Justice: human or machine – who decides in future?'.





Revenue Mix

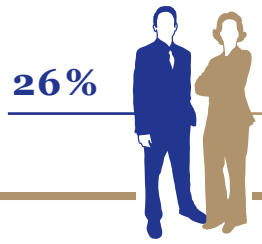


Among international clients, the International Quantitative Linguistics Association (IQLA) organised its QUALICO conference in Trier with the aim of strengthening exchange and networking among its members from all over the world. IQLA used our premises for the third time.

The immediate objective of the ERA Conference Centre is to revive the positive development of turnover that started in 2012. It is important in this context to retain our constant ambition to offer a first-class location for conferences, meetings and public events and to provide a friendly and courteous service to our clients and their guests. The positive feedback we receive is encouraging for the future strength of our conference centre.

THE TEAM

The ERA staff is composed of 77 staff from 14 countries



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THE FRIENDS OF ERA

2016 was a successful year for the Friends of ERA (Association for the Promotion of the Academy of European Law). By the end of year, our member list contained 215 individual members from 25 European countries (23 EU Member States alongside Turkey and Switzerland), representing an increase of 14% compared to the previous year. The Association was honoured to welcome in 2016 the Supreme Judicial Council of the Republic of Bulgaria as a new institutional member, bringing the total to 14 institutional members. We soon hope to have members in all 28 EU Member States. ●

Interview with
JETTIE VAN CAENEGEM

Chair of the Friends of ERA

1. In 2016 the Friends of ERA Association has grown. What makes the association special?

People who have attended ERA seminars or lecture there per se believe in the European idea.

The Friends of ERA and in particular the chapter meetings give us all the opportunity to share this commitment in a friendly environment and to discover like-minded people with whom European challenges can be discussed.

This in and of itself is a good enough reason to join, but knowing that our membership contributions also allow ERA to carry the European law message to scholars from the newer member states is an added bonus.

2. In five EU member states you have established chapters. How will this develop in future?

I strongly believe in the Chapter model but it is challenging as even within one member state the ERA Friends live in far-flung places.

Keeping the balance between a place for friends to meet and the link to the purpose of supporting ERA is an important factor. I look forward to more Friends of ERA chapters being created, in the bigger countries probably centred around several cities where many ERA attendees live and/or work. ●

Membership activities

Our new national Chapters expanded from two into five countries: alongside the Belgian and Luxembourg Chapters, in 2016 local branches were established in Germany, Poland and Spain. On a more or less regular basis, the meetings of the national Chapters bring together individuals who value the personal contacts and exchange of ideas and experience that this active networking allows. The Chapter meetings often attract many non-member participants who share a common interest in European law and a commitment to support ERA's work. The positive feedback from our members shows that this initiative has value for members both new and old. ●

SPANISH CHAPTER
Madrid, 15 March

LUXEMBOURG CHAPTER
Ehnen, 9 July

POLISH CHAPTER
Warsaw, 9 September

GERMAN CHAPTER
Hattenheim im Rheingau, 17 November

LUXEMBOURG CHAPTER
Luxembourg, 1 December

BELGIAN CHAPTER
Brussels, 7 December

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CONCEPT & DESIGN
markenmut.AG
www.markenmut.de

PRINTING PRESS
Bastian Druck GmbH
www.bastiandruck.de

ILLUSTRATION
Lukas Bischoff
www.artill.de

PHOTOGRAPHY
Rainer Langer Photographie, Trier
www.rainerlanger.de
Photo Koen Lenaerts (page 5)/ CJEU
Linda Blatzek, pages 7, 42-44, www.lindablatzek.de

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Druck | ID 53126-1709-1001

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The Academy of European Law is funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.