

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Warsaw Human Dimension Conference



Global Pressures on the Legal Profession: A Threat to the Rule of Law

October 14, 2025 | 8:30 - 9:30 AM | Meeting Room 4 - Opera

Description:

Across the globe, legal professionals are facing escalating threats that undermine the very foundation of democratic governance and the rule of law. Lawyers are being harassed, disbarred, and prosecuted for defending clients in politically sensitive cases or challenging state authorities. Alarming, this phenomenon is no longer confined to transitional democracies. Even in established legal systems judges, prosecutors, and lawyers face politicized retaliation, online harassment, and threats to their independence. These converging trends indicate a global crisis for legal independence and threaten the rule of law in OSCE member states.

This side event, co-organized by the Lawyers for Lawyers and American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights (ABA/CHR), brings together international experts and practitioners to explore national and global patterns of increasing repression, make comparative analysis between regional trends, and offer concrete policy recommendations for OSCE members. The discussion will underscore the importance of protecting legal professionals as a cornerstone of a healthy, functioning rule of law system.

Introductory remarks:

Ms. Sophie de Graaf
Ms. Ginna Anderson

Executive Director, *Lawyer for Lawyers*
Associate Director, *ABA/CHR*

Speakers:

Ms. Melissa Hooper
Ms. Anara Ibraeva
Mr. Maksim Polovinko

Senior Fellow, *German Marshall Fund*
Director, *Public Association "Dignity"*
Human Rights Lawyer

Closing Remarks:

Ms. Fernanda Nicola

Professor of Law, *American University*

Moderator:

Ms. Jasmine Cameron

Senior International Consultant, *ABA/CHR*