**The European Bars Federation/**
**Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe**
Strasbourg

# RESOLUTION

## ON THE ROLE OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS IN PROTECTING THE RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EUROPEAN VALUES IN TIMES OF GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE

**The General Assembly of the Federation of European Bars (FBE), ANTALYA, TÜRKİYE,October 2026**

**Considering** the fact that Europe and the international community are facing profound geopolitical, security, social and technological changes which pose serious challenges to democratic institutions, human rights, legal certainty and the rule of law;

**Recalling** that the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the independence of the legal profession, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and equal access to justice are inseparable elements of a democratic society;

**Affirming** that an independent legal profession constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the rule of law and that bar associations, as independent professional institutions, have a particular responsibility to safeguard the integrity, independence and freedom of the legal profession;

**Emphasising** that the right to legal assistance and representation is not merely a professional matter concerning the legal profession, but one of the fundamental means of ensuring and protecting human rights and access to justice;

**Underlining** that a lawyer, in the performance of his or her professional duties, must be protected against threats, violence, intimidation, pressure, unjustified interference and other forms of obstruction of his or her work, regardless of the nature of the case or the interests being represented;

**Convinced** that the protection of lawyers in the performance of their professional duties constitutes an integral part of protecting the rights of the citizens they represent, and that undermining the independence or security of lawyers directly threatens the right of defence, the right to a fair trial and effective legal protection;

**Recognising** that equal and effective access to justice must be guaranteed to every individual and that no person may be deprived of the opportunity to protect his or her rights and freedoms before independent and impartial judicial authorities;

**Affirming** the specific role of lawyers in protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the right of defence, the right to a fair trial and the right to an effective remedy;

**Emphasising** that the legal profession is not merely a profession, but also one of the key institutional safeguards protecting individuals against unlawful or arbitrary action by public authorities and other forms of violation of their rights;

**Aware** that, in circumstances of geopolitical crises, armed conflicts, migration, security challenges and accelerated social and technological change, there is an increased need to preserve legal certainty, institutional independence and the full protection of fundamental rights and freedoms;

**Affirming** its commitment to European legal and democratic values, founded on human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, human rights and the rule of law;

**ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

**1.** The FBE General Assembly confirms that an **independent legal profession and independent bar associations are inseparable from the rule of law** and constitute one of the institutional safeguards of the democratic order and the protection of human rights.

**2.** The FBE General Assembly strongly affirms that a **lawyer must be free and safe in the performance of his or her professional duties.**
No lawyer shall be subjected to pressure, threats, intimidation, violence, discrimination or any other form of impermissible influence on account of providing legal assistance, representing a client or performing his or her professional duties. (S)He should never be identified with the client.

**3.** The FBE General Assembly emphasises that **the protection of lawyers is not a privilege of the legal profession, but a prerequisite for the protection of citizens' rights.**
When a lawyer is prevented from representing his or her client independently and freely, the client's right of defence, right to a fair trial and right to effective legal protection are likewise put at risk.

**4.** The FBE General Assembly confirms that **equal access to justice constitutes a fundamental element of the rule of law.**
Every person must have the opportunity, on equal terms and without discrimination, to have access to an independent and impartial judiciary and to receive appropriate legal assistance and representation.

**5.** The FBE General Assembly emphasises that **lawyers have an indispensable role in defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.**
Through the day-to-day representation of citizens, the provision of legal assistance and the protection of the right of defence, lawyers constitute a direct and practical safeguard for the effective enjoyment of human rights.

**6.** The FBE General Assembly reaffirms its enduring commitment to **promoting and protecting the rule of law.**
The rule of law is not merely a principle governing the organisation of the State and the legal system but also represents a concrete right of every individual to legal certainty, equality before the law, independent and impartial decision-making, and effective legal protection.

**7.** The FBE General Assembly emphasises that **bar associations constitute an important pillar of civil society and an institutional safeguard of the rule of law.**
Their independence and their ability to protect the professional integrity of the legal profession are of particular importance during periods of political, social and geopolitical crisis.

**8.** In times of geopolitical change, the FBE General Assembly confirms that **human rights, access to justice, the independence of the legal profession and the rule of law must not be questioned or weakened on account of extraordinary political, security or other circumstances.**
The protection of fundamental rights, particularly in times of crisis, is one of the most important measures of commitment to democratic and legal principles.

**9.** The FBE General Assembly confirms its commitment to a **European legal profession based on professional independence, mutual solidarity, the protection of human dignity, equality before the law and the rule of law.**
The FBE will continue to serve as a forum for cooperation, dialogue and joint action among European bar associations in defence of these principles.

**10.** The FBE General Assembly calls upon European bar associations, each within the scope of its respective competences and in accordance with its national legal order, to continue to make their full contribution to the **protection of lawyers, equal access to justice, the defence of human rights, the preservation of the independence of the legal profession and the promotion of the rule of law.**

**11.** The FBE General Assembly confirms that an **independent, free and protected legal profession will remain one of the key pillars of the European legal order and democratic civil society.**
In times of geopolitical change, the FBE reaffirms its responsibility, together with its member organisations, to safeguard and promote the principles upon which European legal and democratic traditions are founded.

**12.** By this Resolution, the FBE General Assembly confirms that there is **no rule of law without an independent legal profession, no effective protection of human rights without a free and safe lawyer, and no genuine access to justice without equality before the law for all.**
These principles constitute enduring values of the European legal profession and the foundation of its contribution to a democratic society governed by the rule of law.

**Adopted by the General Assembly of the Federation of European Bars (FBE).**

**FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN BARS, STRASBOURG President**
**Rajko MARIĆ**