



# Overview of the CCBE's structure and roles

6 MINUTES



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## What is the CCBE?

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), established more than 60 years ago, represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries, and through them, more than 1 million European lawyers.



+1 Million European lawyers



58 Bars & Law Societies

46 Countries

## Our core missions

- ✓ The protection of the rule of law and human rights is at the centre of all the CCBE work.
- ✓ The CCBE contributes to the innovation and the digitalisation of Justice, remaining vigilant that the use of technology in justice remains ethical, fair, and human-centred.
- ✓ The CCBE strives to guarantee the highest quality of legal services, including through deontological rules and high-quality training for lawyers.
- ✓ The CCBE provides information on how to offer legal services in another EU country and acts to ensure that all lawyers can freely practise their profession without harassment or hindrance.

## How we work

### Presidency

The CCBE is led by a Presidency composed of one President and three Vice-Presidents. Each member of the Presidency is elected for a **one-year term**.

### Secretariat

The CCBE daily work is done by a Secretariat composed of a team of 15 staff members lead by a Secretary-General. The Secretariat is based in Brussels and works in close cooperation with the Presidency.

### Members

The CCBE members are the national Bars and Law Societies of the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland, the UK (affiliate member), as well as Bars and Law Societies from Council of Europe countries.



The CCBE works in close cooperation with the EU institutions, such as:

- the European Commission;
- the European Parliament;
- the Council of the EU;
- the Court of Justice.

Moreover, the CCBE collaborates with other leading institutions, such as the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.



### Committees & working groups

More than 600 lawyers from across Europe have been designated by our members to take part in the work of one or more of the **27 CCBE committees and working groups**. These committees and working groups help to prepare the CCBE policies and actions which are then discussed and approved by the CCBE decision-making bodies (see below).



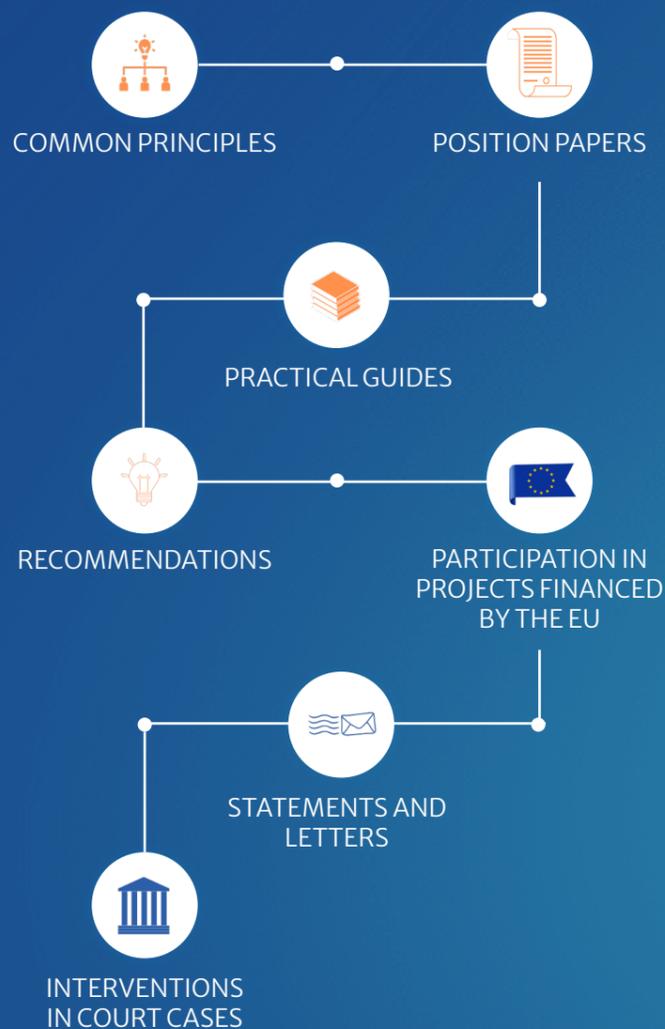
### Decision-making

The CCBE decision-making bodies are:

- The **Standing Committee** composed of the Heads of delegations which meet 4 times a year to take policy decisions;
- The **Plenary Session** composed of all the members of the national delegations which meet 2 times a year and decide on the most important issues.

# The CCBE's actions

The CCBE's work can take multiple forms, such as:




**→ Common principles**

like the CCBE Code of Conduct which contains a set of common rules applicable to all European lawyers in relation to their cross-border practice, as well as the CCBE Charter of Core Principles.

[Read more](#)



**→ Practical guides**

to assist bars and law societies as well as individual lawyers. For example, the CCBE published guidelines on free movement of lawyers within the EU, a reference guide to assist EU defence practitioners, and questions and answers for lawyers intervening before the European Court of Human Rights.

[Read more](#)



**→ Participation in projects financed by the EU**

for example, the CCBE created the "Find-A-Lawyer" search engine available in the e-Justice Portal of the European Commission. This tool facilitates access to justice in a cross-border context by allowing citizens and legal practitioners to easily locate a lawyer in any country of the EU and the European Economic Area.

[Read more](#)



**→ Interventions in court cases**

which raise an important issue affecting the core values of the legal profession. Some of these interventions led to landmark decisions, such as in the AM&S case where the EU Court of Justice recognised the client's right to confidentiality as a fundamental right protected by EU law.



**→ Position papers**

to make the voice of lawyers heard towards the EU institutions, especially when a legislative initiative is launched. The CCBE positions can cover many different topics, such as: access to justice, anti-money laundering, criminal law, data protection, migration, European private law, company law, international legal services, human rights, etc.

[Read more](#)



**→ Recommendations**

to assist lawyers in their daily practice. For example, the CCBE published considerations on the legal aspects of artificial intelligence, and recommendations on the protection of client confidentiality within the context of surveillance activities.

[Read more](#)



**→ Statements and letters**

to alert decision makers on vital matters. For example, the CCBE sends numerous letters to national authorities worldwide in support of endangered lawyers, and grants each year a Human Rights Award.

[Read more](#)

# What is my role in the CCBE?

**i** This part of the Overview of the CCBE's structure and roles seeks to provide an explanation of the main roles regarding various positions within the CCBE. It is for information purposes only and must be read in conjunction with the [CCBE Statutes and Bye-Laws](#).



HEADS OF DELEGATION



INFORMATION OFFICERS



MEMBERS OF DELEGATION



## Heads of delegation

The Head of delegation is the main representative of their respective national member delegation to the CCBE, under whose authority the members of the national delegation act and collaborate within their respective interactions with the CCBE. The main role of the Head of delegation is to lead and manage the overall involvement of their national member organisation(s)<sup>1</sup> within the work of the CCBE, and to ensure the expression of positions and votes of their national delegation during CCBE Standing Committees and Plenary Sessions, as well as in relation to electronic votes on urgent matters and other consultations submitted by the CCBE Secretariat.

To ensure that the list of CCBE members of delegations, committees, and working groups remains up to date, Heads of delegation should ensure that the CCBE Secretariat is informed of any changes in this regard as soon as possible.

Heads of delegation are expected to monitor the participation of members of committees and working groups from their respective national member organisation(s) so that a new member may be appointed in case members are not (or no longer) participating, contributing, or fulfilling their role as described below. At the end of the year, the Secretariat shall provide an overview of the participation of the members in the various CCBE committees and working groups.

<sup>1</sup> Some countries have a number of members which form part of the national delegation.



## Information Officers

The Information Officers are responsible for all communications between their delegation and the CCBE Secretariat, and with the other CCBE delegations. They are, therefore, mainly expected to act as a liaison between their delegation and the CCBE Secretariat and other delegations, as well as to channel any relevant information circulated by the CCBE Secretariat, or other delegations, to their respective national member organisation(s). Moreover, acting under the authority of their Head of delegation and being subject to any specific tasks assigned to them by their respective national member organisation(s), the Information Officers coordinate the involvement of their national member organisation(s) in the work of the CCBE, particularly by ensuring that information and comments are provided within given deadlines, such as in the context of consultations submitted by the CCBE Secretariat in relation to the work of CCBE committees and working groups.



## Members of delegation

The Members of delegation are considered to be representative of their respective national member delegation acting under the authority of their Head of delegation. Subject to the specific role assigned to them by their respective national delegation, their main role is to assist the collaboration of their national member organisation(s) in the work of the CCBE.

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CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS



VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS



MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS



## Chairs of committees and working groups

The role of the Chair of a committee or working group is to provide leadership and direction to their committee or working group on the basis of their expertise in the relevant field of law/practice area. The Chair should aim to assist the CCBE in its policymaking and enable the CCBE Presidency and Secretary-General to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the CCBE. To this end, the Chair is expected to take initiatives for the drafting of policy papers, and, when called upon, to represent the CCBE at outside events on issues that fall within the scope of the relevant committee or working group.

The Chair's role involves working in partnership with the CCBE staff in order to achieve the aims of the organisation and to optimise the relationship between the members of the committee or working group.

The Chair should ensure that their committee or working group complies with any relevant internal rules and ensure that it pursues its objects in compliance with CCBE policies.

During meetings (physical, virtual and hybrid), the Chair should ensure that there is full and balanced discussion of the issues on the agenda. The Chair should facilitate consideration of issues by the committee members by providing explanation and clarification of the topics raised, correcting possible misunderstandings, and when necessary, raising points to the discussion. In order to increase the level of active engagement and participation of members of committees or working groups, Chairs are

encouraged to proactively request views and input during meetings or online discussions. Practice has shown that collecting the opinion of all participants during a meeting and requesting specific contributions increase the involvement of members in the work of the committee which in turn enhances the quality of discussions and committee papers.

When necessary, the Presidency will arrange to meet with the Chairs to discuss common issues of importance to Chairs and their work, and also to ensure that there is coherence in the work produced in the various committees and working groups.

More detailed information on the role and duties of the Chair are set out in the [CCBE internal guidelines for Chairs of CCBE committees and working groups](#).



## Vice-Chairs of committees and working groups

The role of Vice-Chairs is to provide assistance to the Chair's role in accordance with the latter's instructions and requests, and to replace the Chair in case of his/her absence during a meeting or unavailability for a certain period.



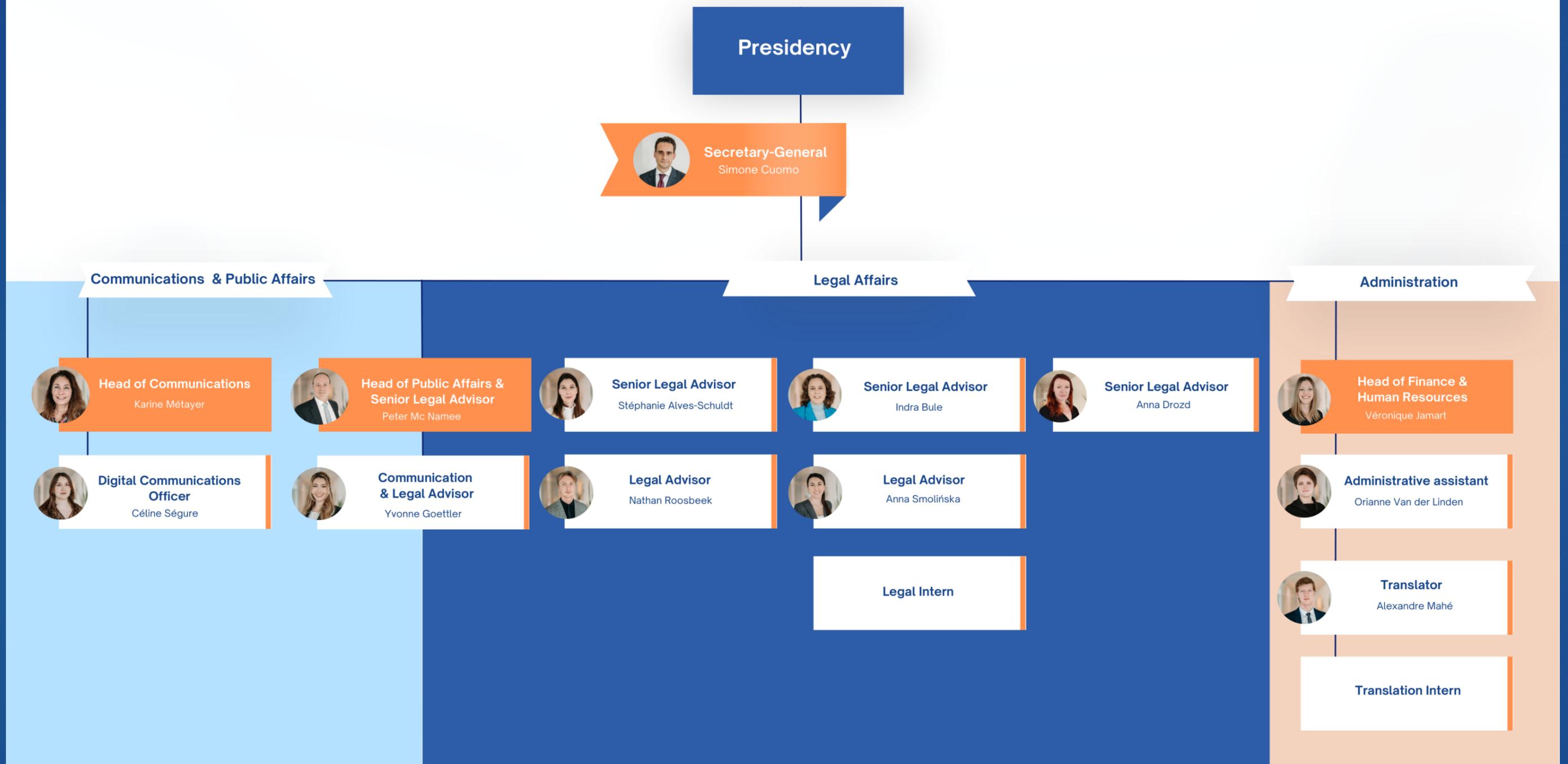
## Members of committees and working groups

The role of members of committees and working groups is to contribute to the work of the relevant committee or working group on the basis of their expertise in the relevant field of law/practice area. Their general aim is to provide the necessary knowledge for the committee or working group to achieve its objects. To this end, members of committees or working groups are expected to actively contribute to the drafting of documents, participate in the discussions during meetings, and respond to requests for comments or feedback within the given deadlines. They are also encouraged to coordinate the input they provide to the policy work with their respective national delegation in order to ensure that the latter are kept abreast of the discussions and can coordinate its positions accordingly.

Members of committees and working groups who are no longer in a position to participate, contribute, or fulfil their role as described above, are expected to inform the Head of their respective national delegation so that a new member may be appointed.

All internal CCBE documents and other information which is not publicly available and that is shared in the context of the work of committees or working groups are in principle confidential and may not be shared with third parties who are not members of the CCBE, unless agreed with the Secretariat.

# The CCBE Secretariat organisational chart



## Contact the CCBE Secretariat

 The CCBE Secretariat is happy to assist you should you have any questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us!

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Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe  
*The voice of European Lawyers*

Conseil des barreaux européens  
*La voix des avocats européens*

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