

French Presidency Put Access to Lawyer on Agenda

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News

Against the background of continuous attacks on lawyers, the French Council Presidency initiated a debate on protecting access to lawyers and the rule of law. In a [discussion paper of 17 February 2022](#), the Presidency stressed the importance of the independence and professional integrity of lawyers for the rule of law, outlined issues of increasing disrespect to the legal profession and referred to the current (binding and soft law) instruments that are designed to protect the legal profession. On this basis, the French Presidency posed the question of whether a European statute for lawyers, guaranteeing independent practice of the profession, could help to ensure respect for the rule of law. In addition, the Presidency wishes to learn more about the challenges that lawyers face in the EU in their efforts to defend the rule of law, and how the EU could help to address them.

At the [JHA Council meeting of 3-4 March 2022](#), the Justice Ministers had a first discussion on the issues. The French Presidency will further reflect on possible further future steps.

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