

## Joint Nordic Statement in relation to the Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyers

On May 13th the first-ever international treaty aiming to protect the profession of lawyer will be signed. This means that we are closer to a Europe where everyone's ability to defend their rights, access justice and trust in the legal system can be strengthened for future generations.

Lawyers play a vital role in society. They help people defend their rights, access justice, and uphold fairness. However, many lawyers around the world face threats, harassment, and interference simply for doing their job. Without lawyers working independently and safely, everyone's access to justice is at risk. This Convention aims to protect lawyers so they can continue their essential work, which benefits all of society.

We therefore call upon the governments and elected representatives in our respective countries to stand in solidarity with the Nordic Bar Associations, to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights by actively working to ensure that the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer will be signed.

The Convention establishes clear rules to ensure lawyers can carry out their duties without fear or restrictions, such as:

**Private and confidential legal advice.** Lawyers will be able to meet and communicate with their clients in private with full confidentiality, without the risk of surveillance or exposure. This will ensure that everyone can seek legal advice securely without fear of reprisal by the State as well as non-State actors.

**Safety for lawyers.** The Convention aims to protect lawyers from harassment, threats and/or attacks linked to their professional duties. It also guarantees that lawyers will have legal support if their own rights are violated.

**Fair representation.** Lawyers will have the right to represent clients effectively in all proceedings, including challenging impartiality where necessary. This guarantees fair and due process for everyone.

**Independent profession.** The Convention ensures that lawyers can join and work within independent professional associations, free from government interference. These associations are key to upholding professional standards and protecting the public's trust in justice. It will also ensure the quality of representation and advice provided by lawyer to everyone.

**Equal access to the profession.** Admission to the legal profession must be fair and based on transparent criteria. This ensures that qualified individuals can become lawyers, and decisions about their careers are made fairly and can be appealed.

This Convention is about everyone's right to fair and independent legal representation. It safeguards people's ability to defend their rights, access justice, and trust in the legal system. It ensures that lawyers can work without fear, allowing them to focus on protecting the individuals as well as entities in need and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer is a vital tool to defend democracy, justice, and human rights. When lawyers are safe and independent, society as a whole benefits. This Convention is a commitment to ensuring access to justice for all and preserving the rule of law for future generations.

The Swedish Bar Association

The Danish Bar & Law Society

The Finnish Bar Association

The Icelandic Bar Association

The Norwegian Bar Association