

Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia
Nikol Pashinyan

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
Srbuhi Galyan

Copy:

Chairman of the Chamber of
Advocates of the Republic of Armenia
Simon Babayan

Brussels, 4 November 2025

Dear Prime Minister,
Dear Minister of Justice,

I am writing in my capacity as President of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers.

The CCBE represents European Bars and Law Societies in their common interests before European and international institutions and regularly acts as a liaison between its members and the European institutions, international organisations, and other legal organisations around the world. Access to justice, the promotion and defence of the core values of the legal profession, the defence of the rule of law, human rights and democratic values are the most important missions of the CCBE. The Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia is an observer member of the CCBE.

With 65 years of commitment to these core principles and a broad membership, the CCBE is widely recognised—by the European Union, the Council of Europe, and other international institutions—as the voice of the European legal profession.

Lawyers play a crucial role in democratic societies. They are not only defenders of individual rights and freedoms but also guardians of the rule of law. Their independent function in the administration of justice is essential to the proper functioning of a democracy. The role of lawyers in society has been recognised by the Council of Europe Recommendation Nr. R (2000) 21 on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer of 25 October 2000, by the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers of 14 December 1990 and the [Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer](#) adopted in May 2025.

The CCBE has been informed by the Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia of serious concerns regarding the growing workload of public defenders providing state-guaranteed legal aid. According to the information received, the Office of the Public Defender has faced a substantial and sustained increase in number of cases in recent years, while the number of state-financed public defenders has been reduced.

Legal aid is a cornerstone of access to justice. For this reason, the CCBE considers it essential that governments ensure adequate and sustainable funding for legal aid, and that legal aid providers are meaningfully consulted in the preparation of the legal aid budget.

This principle is explicitly highlighted in the [CCBE Recommendations on Legal Aid](#), in particular Recommendation 4.3.

In addition to the reduction in the number of public defenders, which is already a deeply worrying development for access to justice in your country, the CCBE has also been made aware of recent amendments to the Tax Code of the Republic of Armenia concerning legal services provided by advocates. These amendments, in force since the beginning of 2025, impose a significantly heavier tax burden on providers of legal services, making legal assistance less affordable for citizens and thereby further undermining access to justice.

As the CCBE has been informed that these amendments were introduced without prior consultation with the Chamber of Advocates or the wider legal community in Armenia, as well as not taking into account opinion of other relevant stakeholders such as the Human Right's Defender. Such an approach is also inconsistent with the recently adopted Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer. Article 4.3 of the Convention requires signatory states to "ensure that professional associations are consulted in a timely and effective manner on proposals by government for any change in legislation, procedural and administrative rules directly affecting the professional activities of lawyers and the regulation of the profession."

The CCBE considers it unacceptable to adopt legislative changes impacting the work of advocates in the Republic of Armenia without meaningful consultation with the Chamber of Advocates. We therefore urge the competent authorities of the Republic of Armenia to ensure the full involvement of the Chamber of Advocates in any legislative initiatives directly affecting the professional activities of lawyers, including those relating to tax changes, to address their concerns and to make revisions where necessary.

In addition, the CCBE encourages the Armenian government to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer without delay. By doing so, Armenia would demonstrate its firm commitment to the rule of law, to the protection of the legal profession, and to the principles enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Such

a step would also strengthen public confidence in the justice system and contribute to ensuring that all citizens enjoy genuine and equal access to justice.

Yours faithfully,



Thierry Wickers

CCBE President