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Annual report 2021 – the Danish Bar and Law Society

1. The impact of Covid-19

On 1 February 2022, all restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic were removed in Denmark. Hence, from this date onwards, the Danish Bar and Law Society (DBLS) has, by and large, been able to conduct its activities as it used to before the pandemic.

However, although a new epidemic disease act has been adopted, Denmark is not yet sufficiently prepared for possible future pandemics. The entire question about compensation during future pandemics will be discussed and examined separately, and this work has not yet been completed.

2. Anti-money laundering

The DBLS has a dedicated AML team which in 2023 has been increased with three full time employees. The AML team focuses on three main areas, including awareness, cooperation with authorities and international stakeholders, and AML inspections.

The two main awareness projects in 2023 were the preparation and drafting of a revised AML guide for attorneys and the preparation and conduct of two-day AML training programmes in the Faroe Islands and Greenland in cooperation with other AML supervisory authorities such as the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority and the Danish Business Authority.

The DBLS spent 2023 strengthening the cooperation with other Danish supervisory authorities through the Danish Anti-Money Laundering Forum and in bilateral meetings with authorities and the Association of Danish Law Firms.

Furthermore, it provided opinions on the EU AML package to the EU (through the CCBE) and to Danish authorities.

Throughout the year, a number of AML-specific inspections of larger law firms in Denmark was conducted, and the themed inspections will continue in 2023.

3. Best practice on counsel investigations conducted by attorneys (CI)

In 2021, the council of the DBLS established a working group for the purpose of drafting a guide for attorneys on best practice in conducting CI's. During its work, the working group consulted with a number of experts and stakeholders, including attorneys with expertise in CI's and law professors.

The background to this work is the criticism and debate which the use of CI's has given rise to over a period of time. Especially the use of CI's in cases regarding alleged sexual harassment (#metoo) has been criticised as the media and people in general often refer to the conclusions of these CI's as if they were court rulings.

The new guide to attorneys were published in September 2022 together with a reader-friendly guide to persons who get involved in CI's. The guide to the attorneys includes partly best practice in relation to the conduct of CI's and partly the ethical framework for the conduct of these CI's.

The guide has been well received by both attorneys, experts and stakeholders. In addition, the Danish Minister of justice has informed the Danish parliament that the minister, after this work by the council of the DBLS, does not see any reason to propose legislation regarding CI's.

4. Committee on fundamental rights

On the basis of the many issues and questions about constitutional rights, human rights and international conventions which have arisen during recent years - especially issues which have emerged as a consequence of legislation adopted in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic - the DBLS established the committee on fundamental rights in January 2022.

5. Threats and harassment against attorneys

The DBLS has continued its focus on threats and harassment against attorneys in 2022 and has continuously received inquiries from attorneys who have been exposed to threats or harassing behaviour.

In June 2022, the DBLS, together with The Association of Danish Law Firms, the National Association of Defence Attorneys and Danish Family Attorneys, participated in a meeting with the Danish Ministry of Justice on the possibilities of legislatively protecting attorneys better against threats and harassment. The DBLS is awaiting feedback on the meeting from the Ministry of Justice.

6. Assistance to Ukrainian refugees

The DBLS has, together with the Association of Danish Law Firms, established a network of attorneys willing to provide legal assistance to Ukrainian refugees. Furthermore, the DBLS has reached out to Ukrainian lawyers taking refuge in Denmark to assist with information and network regarding using their legal competencies in Denmark. In this regard, the DBLS has been working together with the NGO Aid Ukraine Denmark.

7. The Disciplinary Board - digitisation

The case handling of the Disciplinary Board was digitised in 2021. Hopefully, phase two, which includes error correction and possible further digitisation, will be initiated during 2023.

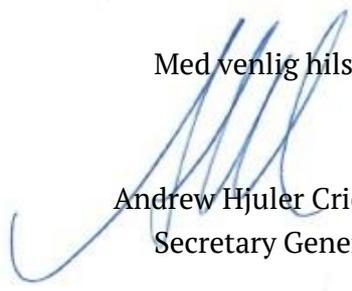
8. Facts about the DBLS and its members

As of January 6, 2023, the DBLS had 7,290 attorneys as its members in total, out of which 2,052 were employed as in-house attorneys. 1,640 assistant attorneys were employed by the 7,290 attorneys, and 2,880 of the attorneys were women.

The age distribution among the attorneys was as follows: 26-39 years: 2,336, 40-49 years: 2,078; 50-59 years: 1,596 and 60+ years: 1,280.

(The age distribution is sorted by calendar year. This means that the age distribution 60+ also includes those who turn 60 later this year, 40-49 also includes those who turn 40 later this year etc.).

Med venlig hilsen



Andrew Hjuler Crichton
Secretary General