



**ΠΑΓΚΥΠΡΙΟΣ ΔΙΚΗΓΟΡΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ**  
**CYPRUS BAR ASSOCIATION**

# **54th European Presidents' Conference 2026**

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**CYPRUS BAR ASSOCIATION REPORT FOR 2025**

## **I. Introduction**

At the last European Presidents' Conference held in Vienna in 2025, the Cyprus Bar Association (CBA) presented an overview of institutional developments, justice reform initiatives, and the ongoing digitalisation of judicial procedures in Cyprus. That report reflected the situation as it stood in early 2025, during a period marked by ambitious reform plans and transitional institutional arrangements.

The present report aims to update and supplement the Vienna 2025 Report, incorporating significant developments that have occurred since then, with particular emphasis on developments during 2025.

This update is provided in the spirit of transparency, institutional responsibility, and constructive engagement with European partners. It seeks not only to describe reforms, but also to identify structural challenges and areas where further progress remains necessary in order to strengthen the rule of law, judicial efficiency, and access to justice.

In this context of ongoing engagement at European level, the Cyprus Bar Association will host the CCBE Standing Committee meeting in March 2026 in Limassol, reaffirming its commitment to active participation in the work of the European legal profession and to constructive dialogue on matters concerning the rule of law and the independence of lawyers.

## **II. Institutional Developments within the Cyprus Bar Association**

Since the Vienna Conference, the Cyprus Bar Association has continued to operate as a central institutional stakeholder in justice reform and legal policy-making. Its governance structures, including specialised committees and working groups, have remained active and engaged in legislative consultations, parliamentary processes, and dialogue with executive authorities.

A significant development during this period has been the expansion and consolidation of the regulatory role of the CBA, particularly in areas intersecting with public law and European compliance obligations. The CBA has increasingly been entrusted with supervisory and regulatory responsibilities, while consistently emphasising the importance of

professional independence, self-regulation, and the safeguarding of legal professional privilege.

At the same time, the CBA has demonstrated its willingness to engage critically with government initiatives where such initiatives risk undermining the independence of the legal profession. This dual approach — cooperation combined with principled resistance where necessary — has become a defining feature of the Association's institutional posture.

### **III. Rule of Law and Justice System Reforms**

#### **A. Judicial Structure and Constitutional Developments**

One of the most important developments since the last Presidents' Conference concerns the reconfiguration of judicial administration following constitutional amendments. The Administrative Court, the International Protection Court, and the Administrative Court of Appeal have been placed under the administrative authority of the Supreme Constitutional Court, rather than the Supreme Court.

In parallel, a new Judicial Council has been established for these courts. This body is composed of the judges of the Supreme Constitutional Court, the Attorney General, the President of the Cyprus Bar Association, and two lawyers nominated by the CBA. The Council is vested with powers relating to the appointment, promotion, and dismissal of judges of the aforementioned courts.

These changes aim to enhance institutional coherence and specialisation. However, their long-term impact on judicial independence and efficiency will depend on their practical implementation and on the transparency of decision-making processes within the new structures.

#### **B. Prosecution Reform and Accountability**

Progress has continued — albeit cautiously — in relation to the reform of the Law Office and the envisaged establishment of an Office of the Public Prosecutor. During 2025, several bills were submitted to Parliament with the objective of transferring criminal-law related powers currently exercised by the Attorney General to an independent prosecutorial authority.

In addition, a bill approved by the Council of Ministers introduces a review mechanism for decisions to suspend criminal prosecutions. If adopted by Parliament, this mechanism would constitute an important step towards enhancing accountability and aligning national practice with European standards concerning prosecutorial discretion.

Nevertheless, these reforms remain incomplete and pending, and their ultimate effectiveness will depend on the final legislative framework and on the guarantees provided for prosecutorial independence.

### C. Independent Authorities and Anti-Corruption Framework

Further legislative action has been taken to strengthen the Independent Authority against Corruption. Amendments adopted in 2025 address staffing procedures, confidentiality obligations, and the Authority's operational capacity, including the use of secondments and service contracts.

While these measures constitute a positive development, challenges remain with regard to resources and institutional consolidation. Continued monitoring and follow-up will be necessary to ensure that the Authority can perform its mandate effectively.

## IV. Independence of the Bar and Legal Professional Privilege

A particularly significant development since the Vienna Conference concerns the sanctions and restrictive measures framework and its interaction with the legal profession.

In July 2025, the Establishment of the National Sanctions' Implementation Unit and the Application of Restrictive Measures and National Sanctions of the Republic of Cyprus Law of 2025 (Law no. 150(I)/2025), entered into force. Following intensive engagement by the Cyprus Bar Association during the legislative process, the final law explicitly safeguards legal professional privilege, limits reporting obligations accordingly, and designates the CBA as the sole sanctions regulator for practising advocates.

Importantly, provisions that would have allowed the executive to unilaterally issue secondary legislation limiting the powers of self-regulatory bodies were removed. The resulting framework strikes a careful balance between effective sanctions enforcement and the preservation of fundamental principles underpinning the independence of the legal profession.

By contrast, the CBA has expressed strong reservations regarding ongoing governmental plans to establish a centralised overarching supervisory authority for anti-money laundering and sanctions supervision. While coordination and advisory mechanisms are not opposed in principle, the Association has consistently stressed that self-regulation and legal professional privilege cannot be compromised.

## V. Digitalisation, Efficiency and Access to Justice

### A. Digitalisation of Judicial Procedures

Since 2024, developments in digitalisation have been marked by both progress and setbacks. Following the collapse of the original e-Justice project, an upgraded version of the i-Justice system was activated in 2025 as an interim solution. This platform enables electronic filing and certain administrative functions, and continues to be upgraded with the aim of completion by 2026. The Cyprus Bar Association is represented on the committee responsible for the upgrading and completion of the system, ensuring that the practical needs of Advocates and access-to-justice considerations are taken into account throughout the development process.

However, digitalisation remains partial and limited. Key elements such as comprehensive case management, interoperability, digital recording of court proceedings, and the elimination of manual procedures have not yet been implemented. Moreover, there remains a notable reluctance within parts of the judiciary — particularly at first instance level — to adopt technological solutions such as remote hearings or digital case handling.

### B. Efficiency and Structural Challenges

The efficiency of the justice system continues to be adversely affected by several structural issues:

- delays in the establishment and operation of the Commercial Court and the Admiralty Court, despite the relevant legislation having been adopted in 2023,
- limited effectiveness of the new civil procedure rules in reducing adjudication times,
- and persistent difficulties in the enforcement of judicial decisions, which undermine public confidence in the justice system.

The lack of adequate infrastructure and staffing, particularly in Nicosia, further exacerbates these challenges.

### C. Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Role of the Cyprus Arbitration and Mediation Centre (CAMC)

In parallel with court reform efforts, the Cyprus Bar Association continues to promote alternative dispute resolution as a means of enhancing access to justice and alleviating the burden on the courts. The Cyprus Arbitration and Mediation Centre (CAMC), operating under the auspices of the Cyprus Bar Association, provides institutionalised arbitration and mediation services in both domestic and international disputes, ensuring procedural neutrality, enforceability of outcomes, and confidentiality. Through ongoing awareness

initiatives and cooperation with institutional stakeholders, CAMC contributes to the development of a modern, efficient, and diversified justice ecosystem.

## **VI. Training of Lawyers and the Academy of the Cyprus Bar Association**

A major positive development in 2025 has been the operational launch of the Academy of the Cyprus Bar Association, marking a decisive shift towards a structured and quality-driven system of continuous professional training.

Under the new framework:

- advocates are required to complete 12 hours of verified training annually,
- training programmes must be approved and verified by the Academy,
- and a five-category structure has been introduced to ensure thematic clarity and quality control.

While the transition has required cultural and practical adjustment, particularly for practitioners accustomed to a more flexible system, the reform significantly enhances professional standards and aligns Cyprus with European best practices in lifelong legal education.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Since the last European Presidents' Conference in Vienna, the Cyprus Bar Association and the Cypriot justice system have undergone important institutional and regulatory developments, while continuing to face persistent structural challenges.

Reforms in judicial governance, prosecutorial accountability, professional regulation, and legal education demonstrate a clear commitment to strengthening the rule of law. At the same time, delays in digitalisation, enforcement of judgments, and court specialisation underscore the need for sustained effort and political will.

The Cyprus Bar Association remains committed to constructive engagement at both national and European level, to the defence of professional independence and legal professional privilege, and to the continuous improvement of justice delivery in line with European values and standards.