

judges@europe

JUDGES@EUROPE FORUM 2026, CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) is honoured to invite judges of the European Union to the **fifth edition** of the judges@europe forum, to be held from **3 to 6 November 2026** at the **Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights in Syracuse, Italy**.

Application is open only to national judges from Member States of the EU (except Denmark*), irrespective of their specialisation or their years of experience, through a self-application process ([here](#)). We kindly ask judges who have attended any previous edition of the Forum to refrain from applying, as priority is given to first-time participants. Participants are selected by drawing of lot, with care taken to ensure a balance of gender, seniority and nationality, and a maximum of three participants per Member State.

The fifth edition will focus on **“Well-being and Welfare of Judges in Connection with Judicial Independence and the Rule of Law”**. This theme reflects a growing recognition that the personal and professional well-being of judges is not a peripheral concern, but a structural condition for the integrity of justice systems across Europe. Across the continent, judges face mounting pressures — from increased public scrutiny and media exposure, to rising workloads driven by digitalisation, to the emotional toll of constant exposure to difficult material. The forum creates a space to name these pressures openly, share experiences across borders and explore practical responses, both individual and institutional.

The forum will explore the theme through five key topics:

- **Working conditions, careers and financial security** — salary, pensions, security of tenure, career predictability, transparent promotion systems, gender equality in appointments and work-life balance.
- **Protection, safety of judges and peer support** — the impact of public scrutiny and media pressure, delegitimisation narratives, social status, risks of personalisation of judicial decisions and anti-SLAPP measures.
- **Leadership and court management** — the role of court leadership in promoting well-being, participatory governance, mentoring, prevention of workplace harassment and gender-sensitive leadership.
- **Digitalisation, workload and stress** — the hidden workload generated by digital tools, acceleration of proceedings, disconnection rights, information overload and the use of AI in case management.
- **Burnout prevention and training to foster well-being** — workload regulation, stigma around mental health in the judiciary, peer support and confidential psychological services, and integrating well-being into judicial training programmes.

The forum will combine panels and keynote speeches by renowned experts with highly interactive breakout workshop sessions in five rotating groups, allowing all participants to engage with every

theme. The event will conclude with a collective reporting session aimed at translating shared experiences into concrete conclusions for the European judicial community. The forum operates under the Chatham House Rule.

The fifth edition of the judges@europe forum continues building upon the Council Conclusions “Boosting Training of Justice Professionals” of 8 March 2021. The European Commission entrusted EJTN with organising a forum fostering dialogue among judges, facilitating exchanges between them on topics relating to the rule of law as well as integrity, accountability and independence of the judiciary.

The activity will be conducted in both English and French, providing simultaneous interpretation. Participants are expected to arrive on Tuesday 3 November by 17:00 and to depart on the morning of Friday 6 November. Accommodation and catering will be fully provided, a transfer service will be arranged from Catania Airport, and EJTN will reimburse the airplane ticket costs of selected participants. The call for applications is open **from 5 June to 28 August 2026**.

You will find all information on our [dedicated website](#). The detailed programme and the list of invited speakers will be available in due course.

We would like to ask you to disseminate the invitation as widely as possible in your judiciary and among your judges.

We thank you for your support,

**Denmark is not participating in the Justice Programme therefore they are not eligible for this activity.*