

ECBA COUNTRY PROPOSAL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE ENDANGERED LAWYER 2026

Proposal: designating **the United States of America** as the Focus Country for the International Day of the Endangered Lawyer.

1. Justification based strictly on verifiable facts

In the current year, the legal profession in the United States has faced a **systematic and unprecedented wave of attacks**¹. These include:

- **Executive orders** issued in February and March 2025 by the U.S. President targeting lawyers and law firms for political reasons, such as revoking security clearances and restricting access to federal buildings for firms involved in politically sensitive litigation or pro bono representation.
- A **deteriorating climate** reported by the American Bar Association (ABA), which in March 2025 publicly denounced efforts to undermine the courts, the profession, and the ABA itself. The ABA has highlighted rising harassment, threats, and professional reprisals against lawyers for fulfilling their duties².
- **Discriminatory policies** that interfere with law firms' internal governance and undermine principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring practices³.

The **targeted firms**⁴ include but may not be limited to:

¹ For a comprehensive overview, see Bloomberg Law, *Susman Godfrey Sues Trump to Fight 'Unconstitutional' Order*, Justin Henry, Tatyana Monnay, April 11, 2025; Reuters, *Trump withdraws order targeting Paul Weiss, says law firm promised free legal work*, Jasper Ward, Mike Scarcella, March 20, 2025; The Guardian, *White House buoyed up by submission of major law firm attacked by Trump*, Hugo Lowell, March 22, 2025; BBC News, *Trump rescinds order targeting law firm after it makes \$40m promise*, Ali Abbas Ahmadi, March 21, 2025; The Washington Post, *Trump targets Jenner & Block in latest executive order aimed at law firms*, Mike Scarcella, David Thomas, March 25, 2025; The New York Times, *Paul Weiss Deal With Trump Faces Backlash From Legal Profession*, Danielle Kaye, Lauren Hirsch, Maureen Farrell, March 22, 2025; Reuters, *US judge in Huawei criminal case questions Trump order against law firm*, May 15, 2025; Business Insider, *Two attorneys at a Big Law firm targeted by Trump have lost security clearances*, May 14, 2025; The Guardian, *US judges who rule against Trump are being barraged with abuse and threats, experts warn*, May 17, 2025; CT Insider, *After threats of violence to U.S. jurists, 500 CT lawyers sign a 'recommitment to the rule of law'*, May 16, 2025; Time, *Exclusive: Inside Trump's First 100 Days*, May 14, 2025.

² American Bar Association, *The ABA rejects efforts to undermine the courts and the legal profession*, March 3, 2025.

³ Reuters, *US civil rights agency targets 20 big law firms with demand for DEI data*, Daniel Wiessner, March 18, 2025.

⁴ Time, *The Law Firms Trump Has Targeted, Why, and How They've Each Responded*, Chad de Guzman, April 1, 2025.



- **Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP**, identified in U.S. media reports as representing clients critical of the administration;
- A **D.C.-based firm** sanctioned for defending **transgender rights cases**⁵;
- Legal teams associated with **the Office of the Special Counsel** in high-profile federal investigations⁶.

2. Active participation in drafting the report

The **European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)** which is among the signatories of the March 2025 Joint Statement⁷, expresses its willingness to contribute actively to the drafting of the report.

3. Reliable local contacts

The ECBA has direct and reliable contacts within **U.S.-based legal bodies and organizations** which have consistently documented violations, supported affected lawyers, and are able to provide verified primary-source information.

4. Potential positive impact

Focusing on the United States would **send a powerful message**: that even legal systems with global influence are not immune to authoritarian tendencies. An international spotlight could pressure U.S. authorities to cease politically motivated sanctions, strengthen the independence of the legal profession, and **reaffirm the universal application** of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. It would also **empower and protect lawyers** currently facing political retaliation for upholding the rule of law and defending fundamental rights.

We urge the Coalition for the Endangered Lawyer to endorse this proposal and to mobilize all available resources to make this year's observance impactful and transformative.

SIGNATURE

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⁵ CNN Politics, *Trump signs order suspending security clearances for employees of Perkins Coie, citing DEI practices*, Samantha Waldenberg, Katelyn Polantz, Devan Cole, March 6, 2025.

⁶ The New York Times, *Trump Targets WilmerHale, Citing Law Firm's Connection to Robert Mueller*, Chris Cameron, March 28, 2025.

⁷ *Recent targeting of legal professionals by the US Government*, Joint Statement, March 18, 2025.