The CEELI Institute was greatly honored to have had Czech President and Nobel Laureate Vaclav Havel formally dedicate the renovated Villa Grébovka as our home, in 2007, together with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. Their legacies continue to inspire us. Havel’s remarks at the dedication ceremony remain as meaningful today as they were then:

“I come here to congratulate the CEELI Institute for the completion of this beautiful building, and for the new seat of this institution. It also seems important to remind us how difficult it is and how much time it takes to build the rule of law, especially in a country which was long ruled by a totalitarian regime. Law is to serve justice. In a country where people were accustomed to injustice and a lack of human dignity, it is very difficult to build a new system. Everyone knows that the judiciary is one of the three pillars of a democratic state. They say so, but it is not clear whether this is what they really believe. I very often encounter situations in which the executive power seems to believe that the judiciary is subject to them. I appreciate the CEELI Institute, which devotes energy in many countries to the education of judges so that they become really independent and just judges. So I wish your Institute much success in your future work.”

Václav Havel
The CEELI Institute
June 8, 2007
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WHAT’S IN A NAME:
We are often asked, “What does CEELI stand for?” Our acronym reflects our roots and our history: “CEELI” stands for the Central and East European Law Initiative, a pro bono public service project started by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 1990 shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The CEELI project was intended to advance the rule of law by assisting the law reform process in the aspiring democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. More than 5,000 American lawyers, judges, and legal scholars, as well as distinguished professionals from Canada and Europe, served without pay as CEELI volunteers in more than 30 countries and have provided nearly $190 million in pro bono legal services and assistance. Today, the CEELI Institute proudly carries on that legacy, not just in Central and Eastern Europe, but throughout the world.
A Message from the Chair and Founder

Homer E. Moyer, Jr.
Founder and Chairman of the Board
The CEELI Institute

It was unforeseen 19 years ago, when the Institute conducted its first training programs in temporary, borrowed space in Prague, that the Institute’s most active year of programming and other rule of law activities would coincide not only with weakened commitment to the rule of law in several countries around the world, but also with challenges even in the United States, historically the leading advocate of the rule of law and the principles it embodies. The passionate insistence on the rule of law by countries emerging from Soviet rule a generation ago has in some cases softened or dissipated as these countries have also faced pressures from globalization, technological changes, and migratory flows from countries in which the rule of law has failed. These issues have added to the not insubstantial challenges of re-writing constitutions and statutes, building new legal institutions, and developing a public culture that understands and trusts the rule of law, and appreciates its many benefits.

The absence of linear progress in changing the habits, expectations, and societal attitudes have dispelled any notions that such transformative change would be simple or inevitable. It also underscored, however, the importance of the mission and far-reaching impacts that the CEELI Institute is having today. In 2018, the Institute expanded the reach and diversity of its programming, developed new course curricula, and entered into new partnerships. These various initiatives have enhanced and strengthened the Institute’s core areas of focus, namely, promoting judicial independence and integrity, skills training for lawyers, combating corruption, and reinforcing civil society support for the rule of law.

The Institute continues to benefit from long-term collaborations with the International Bar Association, the International Legal Assistance Consortium, and the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative. In addition, this year began a new partnership with IFES, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, working with stakeholders in targeted countries in Eastern Europe on issues essential to the integrity, financing, and implementation of free and fair elections. We continue our partnership with the Indian National Judicial Academy, in Bhopal, India and have initiated a new partnership with the Association of Croatian Judges. And, as an international institution based in the Czech Republic, we this year received our first project funding from the European Commission.

2018 also ushered in the second decade of the Conference of Chief Justices of Central and Eastern Europe, one of the Institute’s signature initiatives. This past year’s successful session in Vilnius, Lithuania will be followed in 2019 by a conference hosted by the Supreme Court of Slovakia, which will be celebrating its centennial year. The Institute’s judicial training programs continue in the Middle East and Asia as well as Central and Eastern Europe, reaching judges in India, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia, as well as Syrian judges in exile. Some programs now focus on conducting trials for terrorism-related crimes. Our judicial training on EU Criminal Law Directives includes training on a defendant’s guaranteed right to counsel and right to information prosecutors intend to use at trial.

Lawyer training programs this year included our ongoing work to aid Burmese lawyers representing victims of government repression and seeking policy reforms. We also conducted training on substantive and procedural practice before the European Court of Human Rights. And our work with civil society organizations in Central and Eastern Europe continues to include support for human rights lawyers working in countries where such work is difficult.

Finally, our highly-regarded, regularly over-subscribed anti-corruption training program, “Investigating and Prosecuting Official Corruption,” is now complemented by a new offering on effective corporate anti-corruption compliance for lawyers in countries that have little compliance program expertise. Anti-corruption training is also an element in most of the Institute’s judicial training programs and will be a part of our election law programs with IFES. Plans for 2019 also include a roll-out of a new advanced training program for prosecuting official corruption.

With the Institute’s 20th anniversary on the horizon, the Institute is well within reach of its goal of permanent sustainability. As always, however, for this and for continued growth of the Institute and its international reach, we depend on the generosity and commitment of the many individuals, foundations, corporations and funding organizations that support our work.
A Message from the Executive Director

Christopher Lehmann
Executive Director

I am very happy to report that the CEELI Institute continues its vital mission to serve those on the front lines in defending and advancing the rule of law. We remain a haven in Central Europe for those in need of a safe, comfortable and congenial space in which to gather and work. The Institute, comfortably ensconced in the Villa Grébovka and the free and open city of Prague, continues to fulfill its promise to serve as a place of respite, study, training, advocacy and engagement. Last year we brought together over 1200 participants for programs; through them and their ongoing work, we touched thousands more in countries where the rule of law, transparency, and even basic democratic values are under assault.

Increasingly, we provide a home for those who cannot easily or freely convene meetings in their home countries. We help them to formulate legal strategies in response to repression, to strengthen coalitions and partnerships, to maintain their organizational viability, and to increase their advocacy. Such efforts have now been characterized by the Funders Initiative for Civil Society, and others, as “resistance and resilience strategies.” We are heartened to be part of a broader European movement responding to repressive government measures through the employment of such strategies.

This year, we also expanded our curricula and broadened our partnerships. We increased our staff, bringing further substantive, linguistic and regional diversity to our team. And we have also continued to diversify our funding, with support from new private foundation partners, new public donors, and new corporate supporters — reflecting the broad private-public constituency that is committed to protecting and promoting the rule of law.

Over the past year, we have been delighted to have increasingly showcased expert faculty in our programs from the Czech Republic and the broader CEE region. Our faculty included some of Europe’s leading experts on effective use of the legal instruments of the European Union and the Council of Europe; on the application of innovative anti-corruption efforts; and on impassioned response to pressing challenges facing the judiciary.

Our name says Central Europe, but our reach is global. The CEELI Institute will continue to be a place where those working to advance the rule of law can gather in furtherance of that cause.
Since its founding, the CEELI Institute has engaged over 10,000 participants from over 45 countries worldwide. In 2018, we conducted over 60 individual programs, reaching over 1200 participants, from over 40 different countries. CEELI engaged over 150 volunteer faculty members, from over 20 different countries.

Programs conducted in: Austria, Burma, Croatia, Czech Republic, India, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, and Turkey.

Participants/Faculty: Algeria, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, the UK, Ukraine, and the USA.
CEELI engaged over 150 volunteer faculty members from 20 different countries.
STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY
The Conference of Chief Justices of Central and Eastern Europe (2018 Lithuania)

In 2007, the CEELI Institute helped launch the Conference of Chief Justices of Central & Eastern Europe, which brings together the senior judges from the region’s highest courts to share and develop strategies and best practices to promote judicial integrity and accountability, to improve court management, and to combat corruption in the courts. The CEELI Institute’s efforts have supported the work of the Conference since its inception.

The Conference was launched in Prague, at the Institute, with support from the U.S. Department of State, and with personal involvement and commitment of United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

The Conference is now a self-sustaining body that meets annually in one of the countries represented. The Conference continues to flourish and rotates between member states, each year hosted by a Chief Justice from a different country. Conferences over the past several years have been hosted by Chief Justices from Albania (2012), Montenegro (2013), Georgia (2014), Croatia (2015), Serbia (2016), Hungary (2017), and, most recently, Lithuania (2018). The Supreme Court of Slovakia will host the conference in 2019.

The CEELI Institute continues to provide guidance and expertise to the Conference, led by the efforts of CEELI Institute Board member, Judge John M. Walker, former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Judge Walker is joined in this effort by Judge Clifford J. Wallace, former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, whose extensive experience includes establishing a similar conference for the countries of Asia and the Pacific.

Among the notable achievements of the Conference was the signing, in 2015, of a Statement of Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary (known now as the Brijuni Statement after the name of the seaside Croatian town where the document was drafted). The Brijuni Statement represents a reaffirmation of a long-held and shared belief amongst its signatories in judicial independence as critical to upholding the rule of law. As of 2018, 18 courts have signed the Statement, and it has been translated into six languages.

THE BRIJUNI STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

The “Brijuni Statement of Principles,” signed by the judges of the 18 participating courts of the Conference of Chief Justices, now stands alongside the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, the 1995 Beijing Statement of Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary, and other key international instruments which provide a foundation in international law for the concept of an independent judiciary as fundamental to the rule of law. As the Brijuni Principles themselves state: “The implementation and protection of all rights depends on the existence of a competent, independent, and impartial judiciary.” The CEELI Institute is gratified to be able to support the publication and distribution of the Brijuni Statement of Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary. The Statement has been published and is also available on the CEELI Institute website at www.ceeliinstitute.org. It has been widely circulated throughout the region and beyond. The original, signed copies of the Brijuni Statement will continue to be preserved and maintained by the Supreme Court of Croatia.
Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network

The CEELI Institute is now in its seventh year of support for the Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network, comprised of some of the best and brightest young judges from eighteen countries in the region who have come together to share best practices on issues of judicial independence, transparency, accountability, efficiency, and ethics. The judges are increasingly concerned about coping with the external pressures—political, societal, media—that work to undermine judicial independence in the region. To date, the Network has brought together over 100 young, reform-minded judges from across the region on an ongoing basis to pursue projects designed to promote judicial independence and institutional reform.

Among the specific topics addressed within the Network are judicial ethics; management of conflicts of interests and outside activities; comparative procedures for discipline and dismissal of individual judges accused of corruption or malfeasance; appropriate communication with the press and the public; the impact of social media on the judiciary; the degree to which judges as public officials must sacrifice some degree of privacy in the interest of transparency; the implications for judges of asset disclosure requirements; the manner and degree to which judges should be required to disclose their personal information; and the standards and conditions for lustration procedures.

CEELI Publications:
The Network’s Manual on Judicial Independence

The CEELI Institute is proud to have worked with judges from the Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network to create “The Manual on Independence, Impartiality and Integrity of Justice: A Thematic Compilation of International Standards, Policies and Best Practices.” The Manual – first conceptualized by the Network judges themselves – represents a systematic effort to survey relevant international standards applicable to the judiciary. The judges have undertaken a comprehensive review of more than 140 relevant international instruments, and organized the material according to thematic areas.

The Manual constitutes an easy-to-use reference tool to facilitate day-to-day work of judges both in the region and worldwide. It is particularly useful in societies still undergoing transitions, and where the judiciaries are still struggling to assert and establish their full independence. The Manual provides easily accessible, substantive legal support for issues related to the status, work, rights, and responsibilities of judges. It has proved useful to judges who are pushing back against governmental infringements on their functions. For example, Section II of the Manual assembles all relevant international standards which establish and clarify the principle of judicial independence in the administration of justice. Judges needing to justify their role in administration can quickly access the necessary underlying legal support.

The Manual represents an extraordinary commitment of time and effort by the Network judges who participated in this project. They undertook extensive independent research and editing, coming together periodically at the Institute to coordinate and collaborate on their work. The Manual is a “living document” which is continually updated to incorporate relevant new source material. The judicial exchange network project has been made possible through the support of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) at the U.S. Department of State.

“In many parts of the world today, sufficient institutional safeguards are not in place to ensure the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary. Judges and court officials must continue to work to ensure greater respect for these core principles governing the judiciary. In that context, the Manual serves as an invaluable resource.”

Roger Bilodeau, Registrar, Supreme Court of Canada
The work of CEELI’s Judicial Network has increasingly attracted attention across Europe and the world. In April, the CEELI Institute was invited to participate in the United Nation’s launch, in Vienna, of its Global Judicial Integrity Network; CEELI was one of only a handful of non-governmental organizations selected to join judges from around the globe at the event. CEELI’s contributions to the launch event included organizing and moderating a panel on the new professional and ethical challenges for judges raised as a result of the increasing use of social media by members of the profession. This topic is one that CEELI has explored in depth within the context of its ongoing Central and Eastern European Judicial Network. CEELI was joined on this panel by Network Judges from the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Romania. In particular, we drew special attention to the efforts by the Czech Union of Judges to draft and promulgate concrete guidelines on the subject.
The CEELI Institute was proud to partner this year with the Association of Croatian Judges to deliver a series of continuing legal education programs for judges from Central and Eastern EU member states on relevant EU instruments and directives governing the application of criminal law—norms which are often disregarded in national courts. The project was designed particularly to strengthen judicial respect and protections for the legal rights of defendants in criminal proceedings by promoting greater understanding among judges charged with applying the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights in the field of criminal justice; training specifically addressed the right to information in criminal proceedings (Directive 2012/13/EU), and the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings (Directive 2013/48/EU). This effort was particularly significant in that it made language accommodations for non-English speaking judges from Croatia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Judges from Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovenia also participated. The partnership on this project with the Association of Croatian Judges was a natural extension of our long cooperative relationship, which has included collaboration by the Institute and the Association on an ongoing series of international judicial conferences in Croatia.

This project was funded by the European Union, representing the first time CEELI has directly implemented European Commission funding—an important milestone for the Institute.
CEELI worked closely this year with the Lithuanian Courts and Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas) to organize a major international event addressing the use of new technologies in the administration of justice, and the challenges posed by them. The ambitious program addressed issues surrounding the increased automation of the law, and the benefits and challenges this presents for the judicial profession. Those challenges include maintaining the individual’s right to a fair trial as procedures become increasingly automated.

The CEELI Institute was delighted to welcome the Hon. Beverley McLachlin to Prague, as the keynote speaker for our Annual Meeting in late June. Justice McLachlin recently completed her 17 year term as Chief Justice of Canada; she was the first woman to hold that position, and was also the longest serving Chief Justice of Canada. Justice McLachlin spoke eloquently about the current challenges to the establishment of the rule of law, the trends towards its “unraveling” in certain regions, and the need for effective responses to that trend. She promoted the notion of a shared international value and understanding of the rule of law, as something that transcends even national values.

“The CEELI Institute stands as a testament that the rule of law offers the best way forward.”

The Hon. Beverley McLachlin, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
Providing Lifelines for Syrian Judges in Exile

The CEELI Institute continues to partner with the Swedish-based International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) to deliver programs that offer a professional lifeline to Syrian judges who are now in exile in Turkey, but who hold on to the hope of one day returning to their country to rebuild the justice system. Many of the exiled judges remain actively involved with international organizations that are working with refugees in Turkey, for example, by assisting with efforts to maintain basic public records of births, death, and marriages, in the absence of any formal mechanism for recording such crucial life events. All of these Syrian judges are looking ahead to possible scenarios that might occur in Syria after the conflict ends.

The Institute has convened several programs in Gaziantep, Turkey, to facilitate discussions among the judges and to explore core issues related to their role in the emerging post-conflict society, where both the rule of law and democratic values will not be firmly established. Our goal is to promote discussion and engagement on the challenges Syrian judges face, and on the ways in which the judges can begin to prepare for their roles in an immediate post-conflict environment. Topics that have been addressed include: restitution of housing, land and property rights, reestablishment and reinstatement of a legitimized judiciary after a conflict, and the creation and management of judicial associations.

At present, the Syrian judges feel cut off and removed from the larger world. Our efforts are intended to support their morale, and to provide opportunities for them to engage with networks of judges from other countries that have emerged from conflicts.

Ultimately, the success of post-conflict processes in Syria will depend on the expertise and readiness of Syrian actors, such as these judges, who are prepared to lead reform efforts. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Administration (SIDA).
Working With Judges to Bolster Counterterrorism Adjudication

In 2018, the CEELI Institute continued its multi-year program to engage judges handling complex cases involving issues of terrorism and national security, including the increasingly serious threats posed in Europe by the transit of foreign fighters. In particular, the program has aimed to promote understanding and use of relevant international good practices for judges on these matters, including, most notably, the Global Counterterrorism Forum’s (GCTF) The Hague Memorandum Good Practices for the Judiciary in Adjudicating Terrorism Offenses. The program effort has been undertaken in partnership with the Malta-based International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), and with funding from the U.S. Department of State. Participating judges are drawn both from the Western Balkans and from the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) regions.

In light of the increased terrorism across Europe, the vast transit of refugees to Europe from Syria, the continuing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and the particular burdens this puts on both the Western Balkan countries and countries throughout MENA, the issues encompassed by the GCTF “Good Practice” documents are more important than ever. Judges across both regions benefit from greater training and preparation on how to handle cases involving both domestic terrorism and the new phenomenon presented by returning foreign fighters.

Programs were conducted both at the CEELI Institute facility in Prague and at the IIJ facility in Malta, and included intensive three-day workshops that aim to familiarize the judges with the “Good Practice” documents and expand on their meanings, implications, and relevance to cases the judges might find themselves presiding over. International experts from both Europe and the United States have participated throughout the project to help create a thorough, yet understandable curricula that enables participant judges to gain a solid understanding of relevant best practices and how to incorporate them into their future work.
In 2018, the CEELI Institute continued a multi-year partnership with the National Judicial Academy (NJA) of India and the U.S. Federal Judicial Center (FJC), to promote exchanges between U.S. and Indian judges on issues related to the adjudication of complex cases involving terrorism and national security crimes. As with our work in MENA and the Balkans on this subject matter, the Institute based the curriculum and exchange around the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum’s The Hague Memorandum on Good Practices for the Judiciary in Adjudicating Terrorism Offenses. The document is particularly useful in this context, as both India and the U.S. are members of the GCTF, both participated in the drafting, and both approved The Hague Memorandum (the CEELI Institute is also proud to have participated in the drafting of The Hague Memorandum, which was approved in plenary by the GCTF in 2015).

In September 2018, the Institute facilitated a second international exchange between Indian high court justices and U.S. federal judges. Sessions were held at the FJC in Washington, and at the U.S. District Court in Orange County, California. The exchange built off earlier engagements which CEELI organized at the NJA in Bhopal, India, and addressed challenges facing the Indian judiciary in the context of high-profile terrorism cases. The assembled Indian justices will next undertake the task of creating the first India-specific counterterrorism curriculum to be used at the NJA. Using The Hague Memorandum as a framework for the effort, the new curriculum will be used to reach a much wider cross-section of Indian trial court judges on the frontline in handling terrorism cases. In 2019, the Institute will help the NJA launch its counterterrorism program with the curriculum currently in development. Three iterations of the program are planned for the calendar year and will allow NJA, FJC, and CEELI representatives to work together on refinement of the curriculum, which is intended to last far beyond the completion of this project.

Facilitating Judicial Exchanges: India
Judges and Social Media

The CEELI Institute has taken a leading role in developing guidelines on the use of social media by the judiciary. This reflects the forward thinking on this subject in the Czech Republic, where the Czech Union of Judges is among the first judicial groups anywhere to have developed “Guidelines on Social Media Use for Judges.” Social media is a significant presence in the daily lives of younger judges who have come of age in a digital world. Participation in various forms of new media by judges, however, gives rise to special ethical concerns and challenges. These include the propriety of content posted by judges, the unintended demonstration of bias by a judge, and the unintended consequences arising from judicial interaction with third parties. The behavior of judges on social media is visible to the public, and the activities of judges in their private life can harm public trust in the judiciary and raise questions as to its impartiality. On the flip side, social media can be an effective tool for outreach and public education. CEELI is working with judges to identify and address some of the fundamental ethical implications of maintaining an online presence or using social networking, and to provide recommendations and guidelines for judges on how to use social media ethically and responsibly. Contrary to some current guidance, we do not believe that an admonition to simply “stay off social media” is a realistic directive in the current age.

BURMA: JUDGING IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

In 2018, the CEELI Institute conducted its signature course, “Judging in a Democratic Society,” at locations across Burma. The course was initially developed for delivery in Eastern Europe as those countries transitioned to fully democratic societies with independent judiciaries. More recently, the course was successfully adapted for the Tunisian judiciary. The program addresses issues common to judiciaries in countries aspiring for a more democratic order, including: judicial independence, relations with other branches of government, relations with the public and the media, judicial ethics, the role of judicial organizations, case management, and court administration. There is particular emphasis on human rights law, both domestic and international. The course design is one of facilitated discussion, rather than lectures. Participants explore a number of hypothetical situations, and are tasked with applying numerous international democratic standards and to explore practical ways to address problems that they encounter. The Burma sessions were held over a multi-week period in Yangon, Nay Pyi Daw, and Mandalay, with over 100 judges participating.
FIGHTING CORRUPTION
Intensive Anti-Corruption Training Programs for Prosecutors, Investigators, and Judges

The CEELI Institute’s highly acclaimed training program on “Investigating and Prosecuting Official Corruption” continues to be in high demand. The Program is now in its sixth year, and the Institute again conducted spring and fall sessions of the week-long course. The program brings together an extraordinary faculty line-up consisting of some of the world’s most experienced anti-corruption prosecutors, forensic accountants, and practitioners.

The CEELI Institute anti-corruption programs are designed as highly interactive trainings which walk participants through the actual investigation of a case involving official corruption in the public procurement process. Participants work in small groups to develop their own investigation strategy, learning to use time-tested investigative tools along the way, and ultimately making a recommendation to the larger conference on whether this was a case they would pursue to prosecution or not. The course is designed to develop and improve practical skills as the participants pursue the investigation, augmented by expert guidance and instruction.

This year’s programs drew together investigators and prosecutors from a number of countries in the region, and beyond, including Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine. Participants were funded by a number of donors interested in promoting anti-corruption efforts, especially as official corruption has emerged as one of the most prevalent and pernicious threats to the rule of law around the world. Sponsors included the United Nations, the U.S. Department of State’s INL Bureau, USAID funded projects, and various U.S. embassies in the region.
Supporting Anti-Corruption Activism

Official corruption undermines public trust in democracy and the rule of law, strengthens oligarchies and autocracies, bolsters populist responses, harms state institutions, and weakens legal and judicial systems. In response, the Institute supports civil society organizations, journalists, and lawyers striving for greater public accountability and transparency in Central and Eastern Europe. CEELI efforts tackle the problem from two angles. First, we work to train journalists, civic advocates, lawyers, and civil society organizations on methods of conducting research about governmental activities, on finding and collecting publicly available data, and on using that data in the design of advocacy efforts to highlight and expose official corruption. We support activists in their development of anti-corruption campaigns to promote public accountability, including public interest litigation. Second, because successful efforts by activists often draw retaliation from powerful public officials or from oligarchs, we also work to equip lawyers to effectively represent bloggers, activists, and investigative journalists who are exposing corruption and who are attacked as a result of their efforts. CEELI’s efforts engage civil society participants from the Visegrad, Baltic, and Balkan regions, as well as the Eastern Partnership countries.
FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS:

“Great opportunity to meet new colleagues and build professional relationships.”

“Absolutely outstanding course; exceptionally well-conceived.”

“One of the best experiences of my professional life.”

“This is the best training I have ever participated in. I really admired the step-by-step approach through hypothetical cases, continued on through the mini-lectures and experiences of the faculty and the group.”

“I appreciated the balance between practical and theoretical parts of the seminar.”

“Relevant, well-structured, balanced training course.”

“The knowledge gained will have a great impact on the quality and effectiveness of the practice of investigating corruption crimes and will help solve a lot of the problems we face.”

“This was an exceptional experience. There was complete understanding among participants, regardless of the differences between legal systems, and we all share a mutual goal of preventing corruption through efficient and proactive investigation.”
The CEELI Institute was delighted to partner with the International Foundation Electoral Systems (IFES) in 2018 on a new project to strengthen the implementation of anti-corruption standards in Europe, with particular focus on Bulgaria, Romania and Montenegro. The project will focus first on the identification of priority substantive anti-corruption reform recommendations, and then on steps to assist local stakeholders in pursuing actual implementation of those reforms; for example, the project will assist in addressing as of yet unmet recommendations arising out of the evaluation processes undertaken by the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). CEELI has helped to assemble an impressive consortium for this project, and will work with domestic stakeholders and influencers in the three countries to identify, prioritize, and create action plans to tackle relevant anti-corruption reform recommendations. This latest project continues long-standing collaborative work between CEELI and IFES, which has included organization of a number of joint roundtables at the Institute in Prague, as well as the hosting of IFES regional events.
The CEELI Institute launched a new curriculum in 2018 designed to train practitioners on effective corporate compliance with international anti-corruption standards, including the operation of the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), the UK Anti-Bribery Law, and the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). The program is targeted at individuals who are responsible for advising their clients or employers on internal corporate compliance, including compliance officers and in-house lawyers. CEELI recognized a growing demand for such training, particularly for practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. In-house advisors are increasingly required to have detailed knowledge of industry practices, relevant anti-corruption statutes, and the broader international context in which multinational corporations must now function. Avoiding corporate liability for corrupt practices is now critical to business operation, yet many lawyers in the region have had limited experience with international anti-corruption laws and with corporate compliance mechanisms.

The first session of this program was held in Prague, at the CEELI Institute, in January 2018. The program examined various situations which present corruption risks, and explained how a good compliance program is a risk-reduction tool that can help manage corruption risks and reduce the likelihood of improper conduct and violations of law. Based on the enthusiastic participant response, we look forward to making this program a regular component of our anti-corruption program offerings.
BUILDING LEGAL SKILLS AND CAPACITY
The CEELI Institute continued and expanded its long-term program in Burma. Building on a five-year track record, CEELI - together with partner organization Burma Center Prague - continues to provide support and mentoring to networks of independent human rights lawyers engaged in pro bono defense. CEELI provides considerable training to the Myanmar Lawyers Network, the Union Lawyers, and the Paralegals Association. Legal Training programs in 2018 were organized in Yangon and Mawlamyine. To date, the CEELI Institute has undertaken training programs in 11 different cities around the country. This program has been generously supported by the Czech Foreign Ministry’s Transition Program.

In 2018, the CEELI Institute also continued its efforts to support opposition members of the Burmese Parliament who are working to reform a range of outdated and repressive legislation. Many of these Members of Parliament are former dissidents and political prisoners who are now adjusting to their new roles as legislators and drafters. Progress in changing these laws and paving the way for a genuine democracy is critical to securing democratic changes in Burma. A special focus of this work has been to educate new parliamentarians on their little-understood constitutional rights to bring cases to the Constitutional Court. While the current constitution, drafted by the previous military regime in 2008, contains many provisions that can be used to restrict a democratic environment, the largely inactive Constitutional Court has broad powers to interpret the Constitution in ways that are more compatible with a modern democracy. The court is an underused resource, and one that the parliamentarians are capable of using to more democratic ends. While there are also political obstacles to using the court fully, the parliamentarian’s understanding of their potential role is crucial for a better-functioning legislative body. In 2018, the CEELI Institute also organized legislative roundtables in Yangon, Mawlamyine and Bago for members of both union and regional parliaments, focusing on better understanding of the recently amended anti-corruption legislation in Burma, and best practices in setting up well-functioning and systemic anti-corruption efforts. Apart from parliamentarians, these roundtables also included lawyers, providing a platform for better coordination and building trust among actors of different backgrounds.
Practicing Law Before the European Court of Human Rights: CEELI Launches a New Three-Part Training Series on Preparation and Handling of Cases

In 2018, the CEELI Institute, working in cooperation with the Centre de la Protection Internationale (Strasbourg), launched the first session of what will ultimately be a three-session course for young lawyers seeking to deepen their competency to work on cases involving violations of the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, and seeking to perfect appeals of those violations to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), in Strasbourg. The ECtHR is currently among the most important avenues of international appeal and review open to citizens seeking redress from final judgments in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Such redress is particularly important for citizens of European countries which are not members of the European Union, such as Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia.

This course curricula is delivered in three separate, interactive sessions, each lasting five days. The sessions are spaced out over a seven month period, and require a commitment from participants to attend each session. The final session will include a moot court hearing in Grand Chamber in the ECtHR, in Strasbourg. Faculty consists of attorneys working in the ECtHR’s Administration, as well as former ECtHR judges or lawyers, who have been working in the ECtHR for decades, and who are well qualified to explain the peculiarities of the Convention based on their own cases.
Supporting Defense Lawyers

The legal profession itself remains under duress in many countries in the region; challenges are particularly great for members of the criminal defense bar who represent human rights activists, journalists, or other unpopular defendants. Our programs continue to bring together criminal defense lawyers from regions and countries where the conduct of their profession is under stress. Programs address current challenges to the independence of their profession, mechanisms for maintaining the rule of law, strategies for providing defendants with access to counsel, and tools for using international law as a check on repressive domestic actions. The CEELI Institute also worked to bolster technical legal skills and assist in developing effective litigation strategies for questioning repressive laws.

Substantive Legal Skills Training

Since our inception, the Institute has worked to provide relevant in-service training and education for legal professionals. These efforts continued in 2018, with the organization of substantive legal training programs for practicing lawyers from the region. Using a comparative law approach, programs this year again addressed personal insolvency law for an audience of bankruptcy lawyers.
SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY
The CEELI Institute conducts a wide range of workshops for lawyers and civil society representatives, focusing on mechanisms for enhancing government accountability to civil society, strengthening the public’s capacity to demand transparent government, and supporting efforts of lawyers engaged in representing and defending NGOs and journalists.

The Institute’s efforts are designed to support civic-minded organizations in their efforts to access and obtain public information, to undertake public oversight activities, and to use such information to conduct advocacy campaigns, investigative efforts and legal actions aimed at increasing government accountability. The Institute puts particular emphasis on developing capacity to successfully request and obtain public records from government sources, and to use that information in creative public information campaigns designed to present public information in clear and accessible formats. The Institute also provides support for lawyers who are defending such NGO efforts, often against increasing public pressures.

Human Rights Lawyers’ Respite and Sabbatical Program

With generous support from a variety of donors, the CEELI Institute is continuing its program, begun in 2015, to provide respite, fellowship, and sabbatical opportunities in Prague for human rights lawyers and civil society activists working under stressful and challenging conditions in their home countries. Our program is designed to help mitigate the damaging effect of the severe stress and untenable workloads carried by many among the community of human rights lawyers and activists. Often working in hostile and authoritarian environments, these lawyers work tirelessly to defend their clients – often at great risk to themselves and their families. Participants in the program have included lawyers working on difficult cases of human rights abuse, and those defending NGOs and civil society activists, who came for short-to-medium term stays of up to three months. This year, the program was also expanded to include investigative journalists and others in need of respite. The specifics of each sabbatical or fellowship are tailored to the individual needs of the participants.
CEELI CONVENES
CEELI Convenes

Throughout 2018, the CEELI Institute was pleased to work with a cross-section of diverse, implementing organizations to host a wide variety of events devoted to fighting corruption and to advancing the principles of the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. These included:

• Journey: An International Journalism Bootcamp, a two-week program for internationally selected university students, sponsored by the Bakala Foundation, Prague (August)

• Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Training for Lawyers (March)

• Political Finance Roundtable, organized by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (September)

• Continuing Legal Education Programs for Eurasian Lawyers, a series of training programs organized by the American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative (ABA/ROLI) (ongoing)

• Young Policy Advisors from the Western Balkans, a training program organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) (November)

• Medical Law in the Czech Republic, an ongoing, monthly series of programs for Czech lawyers addressing legal and bioethical issues, organized by the Czech Academy of Health Care Management (ongoing)

• Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism Initiative, National Coordinators Meeting, (European Union) (June)

• International Foundation for Study Abroad, ongoing foreign-exchange student events (ongoing)

• Emory University, Clinical Legal Education Program—International Partnerships (June)

• Radio Free Europe, workshop (July)

• Czech Winemaker of the Year, Industry Workshop, The Czech Wine Archive (August)

• The CEELI Institute Annual Meeting, in June, is always a highlight of the year, bringing together the Institute’s U.S. and Czech board members, along with prominent judges, lawyers, civil society representatives, and diplomats from throughout the region. This year’s panels addressed key rule of law development issues, including “Rule of Law Reform Under Threat in Central Europe” and “Litigation as Law Reform: Using Strategic Litigation as a Tool for Social and Legal Reform.” CEELI Institute programs were also highlighted. The meetings were rounded off with a number of social events.

• CEELI Institute staff participated as experts on panels organized across Europe, including: the UN Global Judicial Integrity Network Launch Event (Vienna), the Use of IT Tools in Support of Human Rights Defenders, organized by Internews (Dublin); the OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Points Network (Vienna); the Human Rights Center at the University of Galway (Ireland); the World Movement For Democracy (Dakar, Senegal); and the Salzburg Seminar, in Austria.
Villa Grébovka

The CEELI Institute is housed in the historic Villa Grébovka, an Italian Renaissance revival masterpiece, located above a vineyard in the historic Prague neighborhood of Vinohrady. It is considered one of the finest 19th century villas in Bohemia, dating from 1871.
In a unique partnership, the CEELI Institute has leased the Villa from the city of Prague 2 for 50 years. In return, the Institute has renovated the building back to its original pre-war splendor.

The CEELI Institute completed the Villa’s transformation into a state-of-the-art conference and residential center in June 2007. The renovations were made possible with a seed grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development and key financial support from individuals and corporations, including the construction firm SKANSKA (Czech Republic), which also served as general contractor. In 2014, the city of Prague 2 completed its own stunning renovation of the surrounding park, which serves as the setting for the Villa.
In addition to its substantial classroom and function space, the Villa has a residential capacity for 44 guests, and an on-site dining facility. All Villa facilities are fully handicap accessible.
The CEELI Institute frequently opens its doors to the surrounding community and to Prague’s not-for-profit community for a wide range of programs and events. This year’s activities included jazz and classical concerts, documentary films, architectural tours, and theatre productions, all of which brought the community into the Villa. Larger events included the City of Prague 2’s annual wine festival, educational programs, and several gourmet food festivals. The Villa and surrounding park are also becoming increasingly popular for use as film sets; 2018 saw a number of feature film productions and marquis stars at the Villa.
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