VISION
Globalization of the rule of law

MISSION
The mission of the CEELI Institute is to advance the rule of law in the world in order to: protect fundamental rights and experience; promote transparent, incorruptible, accountable governments; lay the foundation for economic opportunity and growth; and encourage peaceful resolution of disputes.

IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION
The Institute implements its mission by:

- Providing world-class, interactive training and skills development to legal professionals and others committed to the rule of law, both at the Institute’s state-of-the-art facility in Prague and locally in other countries, as requested,

- Convening professional conferences, exchanges, and retreats and serving as a private venue for international meetings, discussions, and negotiations,

- Continuing its historical readiness to respond promptly to emerging threats to the rule of law and a willingness to partner with other organizations that complement the Institute’s resources and further its mission,

- Remaining committed to the pro bono ethic of the Institute’s founders and distinguished faculties, and

- Maximizing the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the Institute’s programs.
A Message from the Chair and Founder

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

Looking back over the Institute’s 20 years, the list of rule-of-law heroes who made it all possible is long indeed. It includes Czech friends and supporters, such as Constitutional Court Justice Vojtěch Cepa; Jiri Rask, board member Jitina Novakova; and Prague’s mayor Michal Baisch, all of whom supported the vision of a global rule of law center in Prague. The vision they embraced was supported by a series of U.S. Ambassadors to the Czech Republic; determined Institute Executive Directors, among them Bill Meyer, Joel Martin, Michael Diedring, Karen Mathis, Quin O’Keeffe, and Christopher Lehmann; loyal, hard-working Institute staff; partners and government program funders in the United States and Europe; and numerous far-sighted corporations and individuals who have provided essential financial support, as noted elsewhere in this report. They all understand the enduring benefits of the rule of law and have generously supported it.

Even countries with totalitarian governments that brutally suppress dissent for change, continue to be confronted by mass protests and discontent from people determined to achieve greater freedom, responsive government, and human dignity.

In 2023 and beyond, there is much to look forward to, including the resumption of in-person training. Coming in the first half of the year are important transitions about which we are all excited. Mark Ellis, the Executive Director of CEELI over its first 10 years and the current Executive Director of the International Bar Association, will succeed me as Chairman of the Institute, and Julia Framhawy will take the baton as Executive Director from Christopher Lehmann. Both Mark and Julia are superbly qualified for their positions to head the CEELI Institute in coming years.

The Institute will also continue to benefit from strong boards of directors, for both CEELI and I, the Czech governing entity, and Friends of the CEELI Institute, the U.S. non-profit corporation that founded it, continue to support it for the United States. Villa Grebovka, the Institute’s headquarters in Prague, is not only completely renovated, but also available to the Institute for another 30 years under its current lease. With ample classrooms and lecture halls, administrative offices, dining facilities, and residential capacity for more than 40—all in a beautiful setting—Villa Grebovka is both highly functional and elegant. We are proud to be its custodians.

Finally, with a mission of advancing the rule of law and a vision of scaling the rule of globalized, the CEELI Institute is a promoter of principles that have enduring, irresistible appeal. A look back over the history of CEELI and the CEELI Institute provides some data points on this ambitious agenda. We know that fundamental societal reform, such as embracing the rule of law, can take time and be uneven, marked by breakthroughs, setbacks, and successes. Some tallies of democracy’s recent track record have not been encouraging. The 2021 “Freedom in the World,” annually compiled by Freedom House, declared that democracy is “under siege” and reported a 6-year decline in “global freedom.” Exacerbated by the negative impact of COVID and a continued decline in the ranking of the United States and other prominent democracies, write laws behind closed doors, control the media, abuse human rights, and are feared and loathed.

Because core principles of the rule of law—limited government, independent courts, equal treatment before the law, free speech—are shared by governments and corporations alike, these things make clear that much remains to be done.

At the same time, a slightly broader perspective on this issue may provide helpful, somewhat different insights. The number of countries in which CEELI worked and on which the CEELI Institute historically focused its work, we can recall, first, that the 30, all were countries or republics controlled by a totalitarian, communist regime. In 2021, by contrast, Freedom House reports that of the 25, only 2 are today “Not Free.” Eleven are now “Partly Free,” and ten are “Free.”

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Dr. Mark Ellis
Executive Director,
International Bar Association

I very much look forward to taking up the leadership of the CEELI Institute’s Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting, in May 2022. It is a great honor for me to be able to carry on the work of the Institute’s founder, Homer Moyer, and to carry forward his legacy and vision for the Institute.

I hope my ongoing involvement with the Institute will serve me well as I undertake these new responsibilities. I had the honor of participating in the founding of the Institute in 2000, in my then role as Executive Director of the American Bar Association’s Central and East European Law Initiative (ABAJCEELI). I have continued my involvement as a board member of the Institute ever since.

During the early years, I saw the Institute undertake the monumental effort of acquiring and renovating its headquarters in Prague at the Villa Grebovka into the state-of-the-art conference facility it is today. I also witnessed the extraordinary work by the Institute’s staff to expand the Institute’s ever-growing portfolio of programs designed to bolster democracy, combat corruption, protect human rights and advance the Rule of Law.

As we look ahead to the future, in a world where the rule of law suffers regular assault, the challenges are greater than ever. I believe the need for an entity like the CEELI Institute, located in the heart of Central Europe and dedicated to the advancement of the rule of law, is crucial to meeting those challenges. I feel that it is imperative that the Institute continues to fulfill its promise to serve as a place of respite, study, training, advocacy, and engagement; I will work to ensure this mission.
A Message from the Executive Director

Christopher Lehmann
Executive Director

2022 will be a year of transitions for the CEELI Institute. In March, we look forward to welcoming the Institute’s new Executive Director, Julia Fromholz, who will be taking over the reins here in Prague.

Reflecting on my own eight years as Executive Director, I am happy to report that the Institute has grown and matured in countless ways. We have a larger and more diverse portfolio of grants, reflecting an expanded roster of donors and funders. Our staff has grown both in number and in depth. We have expanded the scope of our curricula and have, more importantly, become an incubator for innovative program concepts. The Institute is now also a substantive thought leader on issues related to the rule of law, and the accountability of public institutions. We produce an ever-increasing roster of publications. We have eliminated, once and for all, the ever-increasing roster of publications.

The future of the CEELI Institute is bright. And that will serve us well in our never-ending work to defend, maintain and advance the rule of law in Europe and beyond.

The CEELI Institute was greatly honored to have had Czech President Václav Havel formally dedicate the renovated Villa Grebovka 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.

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Since its founding, the CEELI Institute has engaged over 15,000 participants from over 50 countries worldwide. In 2021, the Institute reached over 1,800 participants from 45 different countries through in-person and online programs.

Participants/Faculty:
Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, France, The Gambia, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Syria, Tanzania, Turkey, the UK, Ukraine, and the US.
Overcoming Pandemic Restraints and Embracing Distance Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented both challenges and opportunities for the CEELI Institute, as it did for most organizations dedicated to fostering international education, training, and exchange. Yet we are emerging from this phase of the pandemic with a more sophisticated curriculum development process, and state-of-the-art online platforms for education and outreach. Indeed, the pandemic has served as a catalyst to long-held Institute aspirations to strengthen our online presence and resources.

Our team moved quickly in Spring 2020 to transition its programs for remote delivery. Curricula were modified for online access via a variety of formats, including online courses, webinars, and podcasts. We ultimately created a single platform for our programs, CEELI Online — our dedicated eLearning platform and management system. CEELI Online is designed to be user-friendly, and now provides program participants and faculty with easy access, via a simple log-in, to all relevant learning materials on one site. CEELI Online additionally enriches the experience of the Institute’s traditional in-person courses, providing a useful and practical platform to share and discuss materials outside of the classroom.
Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network

For almost a decade, the CEELI Institute has fostered and supported its Central and Eastern European Judicial Exchange Network, comprised of some of the best and brightest rising judges from twenty-one countries in the region who regularly come together to share best practices on issues of judicial independence, transparency, accountability, efficiency, and ethics. The Network facilitates career growth and development for the judges, fosters peer engagement, and produces concrete tools to better assist the judges in performing their duties. Network judges often undertake innovative projects in their own countries, and the CEELI Institute supports them in their efforts. To date, over 350 judges have directly participated in Network events and projects.

The Network offers judges the space to freely engage with one another about the most pressing professional issues they face. In 2021, Network members were increasingly concerned about how to keep their courts functioning during the pandemic, conduct remote hearings, ensure access to justice despite unprecedented conditions, and continue to guarantee the rights of citizens to open and fair hearings. This is in addition to the ongoing external pressures—from politicians, society, and the media—that work to undermine judicial independence in the region. Among the specific topics addressed within the Network are remote judging; judicial ethics; management of conflicts of interests and outside activities; procedures for discipline and dismissal of individual judges accused of corruption or malfeasance; appropriate communication by judges with the press and public; the impact of social media on the judiciary; the implications for judges of asset disclosure requirements; and standards for lustration procedures.

The Network judges themselves drive the agenda. Network activities include substantive roundtables, in-country events organized by Network members, and the drafting of practical judicial tools to address needs identified by the Network, including our latest Guidelines on Remote Judging. The Institute also mentors individual Network members, and incorporates them as faculty in a wide range of the substantive programs offered by the Institute.

Digital Justice: Exploring Options for Remote Access to the Courts

“Excellent program, easy to follow and engage, very useful for practitioners, it’s from the professionals for the professionals. Congratulations on excellent work and organization.”

“The technical team of the program was just excellent, supportive, quick to respond to participants’ concerns and very well prepared. Thank you very much for organizing this brilliant course.”

“It was a great experience. Thank you very much for organizing the course. All the topics mentioned were important and very useful.”

“Everything was wonderful. I am very thankful for this opportunity and hope it will be continued.”

Throughout the pandemic, the CEELI Institute has supported judges who were struggling to continue court functions by using technologies that enable remote judging. Remote judging upends traditional courtroom procedures and potentially interferes with the rights of the parties. At the same time, many courts are coming up with creative solutions to the challenges. To this end, the Institute launched a five-month online certificate course for judges on Best Practices for Remote Judging. As a result of the course, we developed a peer-reviewed publication, Practical Guidelines for Remote Judging, which provides realistic solutions for handling such cases. In 2021, the CEELI Institute also organized its first large-scale online course on Digital Justice, to provide a concise yet incisive overview of the challenges and solutions that technology can provide for courts.

“CEELI TALKS”: An Auditory Rule of Law Experience

As part of our efforts to expand and broaden our outreach, the CEELI Institute launched its own podcast series, CEELI Talks, in 2020. Our initial four-part podcast series, Safeguarding the Rule of Law in Challenging Times, focused on the challenges judges face in keeping courts functioning remotely during the pandemic. This year, we launched a second series which reviewed the opportunities and benefits presented by the recent digitalization of justice. This series, entitled Digital Justice, features interviews, conversations, and reports with judges, civil society actors, and representatives of European institutions that advance the rule of law and provides a platform for discussion of pressing matters and questions arising from the unique circumstances imposed by the pandemic with leaders and experts in the legal field.
In 2007, the CEELI Institute helped launch the Conference of Chief Justices of Central & Eastern Europe, which continues to annually bring 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 the personal involvement and commitment of United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. The Conference continues to be a self-sustaining body that meets annually in one of the participating countries. Conferences over the past several years have been hosted by the Chief Justices of Albania (2012), Montenegro (2013), Georgia (2014), Croatia (2015), Serbia (2016), Hungary (2017), Lithuania (2018), Slovakia (2019), and Azerbaijan (2020). The 2021 Conference was hosted at an in-person event by the Supreme Court of Slovenia. Front and center among this year’s discussions were the ongoing challenges to judicial independence that continue to be seen and felt across the region. This included the evolving role of Judicial Councils and their not-always positive impact on judicial independence. Attention was also given to the ways in which the region’s courts have responded to the pandemic and maintained operations despite constraints that it has imposed.

“The Brijuni Statement represents the unwavering commitment by the Judiciaries of Central and Eastern Europe to the rule of law, and to a shared belief in judicial independence.”

Branko Hvratin,
Former President,
Supreme Court of Croatia

Engaging EU Leadership in Responding to Attacks on the Independence of European Judges

The CEELI Institute continued its work in 2021 to draw attention to threats to judicial independence in Europe. We focused in particular on attacks to judicial independence in Central and Eastern Europe, directing special attention towards the situation facing the judiciary in Poland and the role that the European Union can play in supporting the judiciary there. Out program efforts included a well-publicized roundtable, organized in partnership with the Czech Union of Judges, and featuring as keynote speaker Vera Jourova, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency, who is at the forefront of current EU efforts to defend the rule of law in Europe in response to attacks on the judiciary. The Institute also continues to closely coordinate its efforts with other relevant organizations across the continent, including the OSCE/ODIHR, the European Association of Judges, the International Association of Judges, the judicial organization MEDAL, and judicial associations from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia. In step with these partner organizations, we advocate for the EU to impose real costs and consequences for European governments that fail in their obligations to uphold the rule of law and that actively undermine the independence of their own judiciaries.

The Conference of Chief Justices of Central and Eastern Europe 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.

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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 it 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. Nineteen Supreme Courts have now signed the Statement, and it has been translated into six languages.
Promoting Judicial Application of EU Law and Directives: Partnering with the Association of Croatian Judges

The CEELI Institute continues our partnership with the Association of Croatian Judges to deliver a series of legal education programs for judges from EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) on relevant EU instruments and directives governing the application of both civil and criminal law norms which are often not fully applied in national courts. The project is designed to promote greater understanding among CEE judges on the appropriate application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as selected EU directives in both civil and criminal law. Simultaneous interpretation into Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, and Romanian facilitates broad participation by non-English speaking judges from across the region. This project reflects our well-established partnership with the Association of Croatian Judges, which has included collaboration by the Institute and the Association on an ongoing series of international judicial conferences in Croatia and the Czech Republic. This project is funded by the European Commission. This project also resulted in publication of monographs on application of EU instruments in both criminal and civil cases, available on our website.

Launching an African Judicial Network

In 2021, the CEELI Institute received State Department funding to launch a Judicial Network project aimed at supporting the career development of rising trial judges across Africa’s common law jurisdictions. This newest venture builds on CEELI’s many years of work in nurturing a similar network of rising judges in Central and Eastern Europe who regularly gather to share knowledge and experience on issues such as judicial independence, transparency, accountability, efficiency, court management, and ethics. Such networks facilitate career growth and development for the judges, foster peer engagement, and can result in the creation of concrete judicial tools such as manuals and guidelines to better assist judges in performing their duties. In 2021, we conducted initial needs assessments and roundtables in east and west Africa (in Nairobi, Kenya, and Accra, Ghana), which were instrumental in identifying priority issues for judges in the region and lay the basis for further 2022 project efforts.

India: Judicial Exchanges and Curriculum Development

The CEELI Institute continues our multi-year partnership with the National Judicial Academy (NJJA) of India and the US Federal Judicial Center (FJC), to promote exchanges between US and Indian judges, and to develop practical curricula focused on issues related to adjudication of cases involving complex transnational crimes. Previous outcomes of this partnership included development and roll-out of the first India-specific counterterrorism curriculum to be used at the NJJA, designed for Indian trial court judges on the frontline in handling terrorism cases. That curriculum reflects Indian national legislation and judicial practice, while at the same time incorporating internationally accepted good practices and a modern, interactive pedagogical approach. Over 80 Indian trial court judges have now completed that training, and the NJA is continuing to deliver the course remotely to judges from across India. Over the next two years, we plan to expand on this successful partnership, enlarging the scope of relevant course curricula, and engaging with additional members of the Indian judiciary from across the subcontinent. Current cooperative projects include delivery of training programs focused on adjudicating cybercrimes and human trafficking cases. We will continue working in 2022 with a cadre of participant judges from those programs to hone their skills as judicial educators.
Intensive Anti-Corruption Training Programs

The CEELI Institute is a leader in the delivery of effective, interactive anti-corruption programs. Institute programs are designed to engage all the key sectors and stakeholders in combating corruption, including actors from government, civil society, journalism, and business. Participants work in small groups to develop their own investigation strategies, learning to use time-tested investigative tools along the way. The course is designed to develop and improve practical skills as the participants pursue the investigation, augmented by expert guidance and instruction.

The CEELI Institute puts great emphasis on designing and conducting programs that use case-based, interactive curricula. Using practical case scenarios as a learning tool demands that participants take an active role in the workshop. With each session, participants are presented with additional facts and legal obstacles to confront and overcome as the fact pattern becomes more complicated. Participants start with a few red flags, indicating a possible case involving corrupt activities, working in small groups to pursue their investigation. Case studies are designed to expose participants to all aspects of an investigation – initial allegations or suspicions, preliminary inquiries, development of an investigation plan, collection and analysis of documentary materials, forensic accounting analysis, interviews of witnesses and targets, and preparation for trial or other disposition. The use of a case-based scenario as a teaching tool allows the participants to form close bonds as the training progresses, challenging their intellect and expanding their skills and knowledge base as they are exposed to new approaches in the investigation and prosecution of complex high-level corruption cases.

Training is augmented by relevant faculty presentations on key topics, and our highly experienced faculty also provide one-on-one mentoring throughout the program.

Recent programs have drawn participants from several countries in the region and beyond, including Armenia, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

In response to the pandemic, the CEELI Institute successfully modified our anti-corruption curricula for online delivery, and we continue to develop new courses and programs. This includes a five-week online course tailored specifically for investigative journalists and anti-corruption civic activists, providing them with an intensive look, from a law enforcement perspective, at how official corruption cases are investigated, assembled, and prosecuted. Our goal is to overcome misconceptions about the role and function of law enforcement, so that journalists and civil society can become better watchdogs of that process. A faculty comprised of former law enforcement officers and prosecutors with specialized experience asks participants to step into the role of law enforcement as they investigate the mock case. The training provides journalists and activists with knowledge of what comprises legally actionable material for law enforcement. At the end of the program, journalists have a better sense of how admissible evidence is identified, collected, and used.

Online training is demanding, requiring a serious commitment of time and energy of participants. Courses normally meet twice a week for 90-minute sessions, and participants are expected to do additional work outside of the scheduled class times. Yet we have far more applicants for these programs than we can accommodate. Programs include group activities and opportunities for individual faculty mentoring. Participants who successfully complete the course receive a certificate of completion from the Institute.
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 promoting 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 across Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

Advanced Anti-Corruption Training

Recognizing the increasing demand for more sophisticated anti-corruption training, the CEELI Institute continues to develop and debut intensive, specialized anti-corruption curricula (“Anti-Corruption 2.0”) that build off our introductory programs. These focus more in-depth on selected aspects of anti-corruption investigation and prosecution, including issues related to complex procurement fraud, forensic accounting, data analytics, use of metadata in investigations, use of open-source intelligence, multi-jurisdictional investigations, money laundering and asset recovery. We continue to use an interactive, case-based teaching methodology. These advanced programs are designed primarily for participants who seek to deepen their skills in these specific areas, including investigators, prosecutors, judges, investigative journalists, and representatives of civil society. Programs are offered both in-person and online.

Identifying Unexplained Wealth of Public Officials: CEELI Assists Civil Society in Developing New Anti-Corruption Tools

The CEELI Institute is working closely with NGOs from across Central and Eastern Europe to develop tools to more effectively monitor politically exposed persons (PEPs), a category that includes parliamentarians, the judiciary, and senior government officials. PEPs, in most countries, are subject to enhanced legal requirements to publicly disclose their assets. The Institute supports efforts of NGOs (and of the lawyers and journalists that work with them) to develop searchable public databases and other public advocacy tools that can be used to draw public attention to official corruption and highlight cases of unexplained wealth. Such tools and advocacy campaigns represent a new, more aggressive approach to documenting and publicizing public corruption; findings related to substantial unexplained wealth can be shared by NGOs with financial intelligence units (FIUs), banks, and law enforcement agencies. NGOs in Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine are currently among those at the forefront of these efforts. CEELI’s efforts include sessions in Prague designed to facilitate coordination of ongoing regional efforts, exchange of best practices, and development of technical and systemic improvements to current databases. Specific issues include review of the ideal content and organization of PEP databases, considerations related to privacy protections and protection of personal data; standards for collecting data from public registers; assuring information reliability; best practices for triggering responsive reactions by foreign law enforcement agencies; analysis of financial records; identification of beneficial owners; and technical solutions for problems encountered by end users of PEP databases, including website security. CEELI is also working with partner organizations to explore ways of developing regional or global PEP databases.
On December 8, 2021, the CEELI Institute formally celebrated its 20th Anniversary at a reception at The Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. The event was highlighted by speeches from two longtime friends of the Institute, retired Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This moving occasion brought together CEELI Institute boards, alumni, friends, colleagues, and supporters from the past 20 years. The evening was an opportunity to celebrate two decades of efforts by the CEELI Institute to advance the rule of law, but also provided a stark reminder that the Institute’s mission is as important today as it was at its founding in 2000, as we continue to fight backsliding and threats to judicial independence, to transparent governance, and to human rights. While these challenges are formidable, the CEELI Institute remains a lifeline for legal professionals, reformers, and activists who fight against authoritarianism, kleptocracy, and corruption. As noted by Secretary Albright in her speech, the CEELI Institute’s work is “more important than ever,” and we are prepared to tackle it head on.
Feedback from Participants of our Anti-Corruption Trainings:

“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.”

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

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

“Absolutely outstanding course: exceptionally well-conceived.”

“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.”

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

“The knowledge and the certificate that I gained from the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Money laundering course will go a long way and it will be very helpful in my future endeavor.”

“I want to extend my deep appreciation for organizing such a wonderful course.”

“The instructors are amazing experts in their field.”

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

“I can assure that the knowledge gained will further strengthen me to combat corruption and money laundering. I look forward to future programs.”

“I am very glad that I’ve participated in this training and I can assure that the knowledge gained will go a long way and it will be very helpful in my future endeavor.”

“Great opportunity to meet new colleagues and build professional relationships.”
Public corruption must be addressed through private and corporate mechanisms, as well as through government action. To this end, in 2018, the CEELI Institute launched its unique curriculum designed to promote effective corporate compliance with relevant international anti-corruption standards. The program is targeted at individuals in transitioning countries who have responsibilities for advising their clients or employers on internal corporate compliance. CEELI recognized a growing demand for such training, particularly for practitioners in countries where corruption is still a major concern. In-house advisors are increasingly required to have detailed knowledge of relevant anticorruption statutes, as well as the broader international context in which multinational corporations must now operate. Avoiding corporate liability for corrupt practices is critical to business operations, yet many lawyers have had limited experience with international anti-corruption laws and with corporate compliance mechanisms. In designing this program, CEELI has again called on its exceptional roster of private-sector anti-corruption experts. This program examines various situations which present corruption risks. It explains 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 the law. Attention is given to the operation of well-known anti-corruption instruments, 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 has been run several times, and based on the enthusiastic participant response, we look forward to offering it again in 2022.

The CEELI Institute is delighted to continue its partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to strengthen the implementation of anti-corruption standards in Europe, with particular focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, and since 2021, Kosovo. The project focuses on assisting local stakeholders in implementing anti-corruption recommendations made by relevant international observers and evaluators, for example, addressing as of yet unmet recommendations arising out of the evaluations undertaken by the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). CEELI has helped to assemble an impressive consortium of local partners for this project and is working with domestic stakeholders and influencers in each of the partner countries to pursue reforms.

A second project, initiated in 2019, expands the same model beyond Europe, working with partner organizations in Armenia, The Gambia, Malaysia, and, previously, Ethiopia. In 2022 we will expand the project even further, securing new partners in Algeria and Morocco. Both programs continue long-standing collaborative work between the CEELI Institute and IFES, which has included the organization of a number of joint roundtables at the Institute in Prague, as well as hosting IFES regional events. Funding for these projects is provided by the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).

Public corruption in the healthcare arena has taken on increasing importance as a result of the prolonged health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated opportunities for corruption as public expenditures for healthcare increased, and oversight lagged. Corruption in healthcare takes many forms including informal payments, bribes, fraudulent billing practices, and procurement fraud. There are also numerous instances of conflicts of interest on the part of individuals appointed to senior positions in public health ministries. Accordingly, the CEELI Institute continues our efforts to foster greater government accountability in the management of public resources for healthcare expenditures by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to identify and call attention to instances of public corruption. The Institute has assembled a consortium of local partners: the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives (BILI), K-Monitor in Hungary, Expert Forum in Romania, and Transparency International Slovakia. We provide support and share tools to assist them in (1) monitoring and identifying public procurement fraud and other financial crimes; (2) implementing relevant EU anti-corruption directives at the national level; and (3) monitoring appointments and identifying conflicts of interest at healthcare sector ministries and institutions. This project is funded by the U.S. Department of State.
Working with Human Rights Lawyers and Parliamentarians in Myanmar

The CEELI Institute, in partnership with the Czech NGO Burma Center Prague, has extensively trained and supported human rights lawyers in Myanmar since 2013. Since 2015, we also worked with members of both Union and regional parliaments, focusing on areas such as legislative process during political transformation, interaction between the legislature and the judiciary, and constituency relations. After the seizing of power by an illegitimate military junta in February 2021, our focus shifted to directly supporting lawyers who remain active and represent politically persecuted clients in the current uncertain environment. We also conduct series of webinars for parliamentarians, legitimately elected in the 2020 election, who now find themselves displaced from their positions, residing both inside the country and in exile. The goal of the webinars is to keep these individuals professionally engaged, prepared to tackle key legal issues likely to feature prominently in the country’s post-coup future and better equipped for international advocacy. CEELI also coordinates with the exiled National Unity Government’s Ministry for Human Rights to provide legal expertise and training.

Practicing Law Before the European Court of Human Rights: Training on Preparation and Handling of Cases

The CEELI Institute, working in cooperation with partners such as the Centre de la Protection Internationale (Strasbourg), offers a variety of training courses for lawyers seeking to handle cases involving violations of rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, and seeking to perfect appeals of cases involving those violations to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in Strasbourg. The ECHR is currently among the most important avenues of international 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 who may not be able to secure adequate relief from their national courts. The CEELI Institute helps to prepare and train lawyers so that they can better pursue these appeals. We meet the needs of such lawyers with curricula that is highly interactive and is offered both at online and in-person sessions. Issues addressed in our programs include the handling of cases involving the rights to life and personal liberty, fair trial, privacy, freedom of expression and assembly, and the right not to be subjected to torture. Our faculty consists of highly experienced attorneys practicing before the Court, as well as judges and attorneys working at the Court itself.
Trial Skills Training at the CEELI Institute

The CEELI Institute continues to provide advocacy skills training for young lawyers. These week-long programs are designed to build the confidence and trial skills of young legal professionals in areas that are most relevant to human rights advocacy, including oral presentation and argument, motion practice, and persuasive speaking. Programs involve daily activities, including witness testimony and evidentiary exercises, and culminate in a mock trial. Participants receive detailed feedback from faculty mentors throughout the program, enhanced by the small size of the class and high faculty-student ratio. Faculty include a roster of highly experienced international trial skills trainers and the courses reflect tried and true interactive components developed for use in clinical legal education programs, including the international programs run by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA). Young lawyers respond to these opportunities with enthusiasm, often noting that the practical aspects of the workshops are something they have never experienced in their prior legal education opportunities.

Supporting Defense Lawyers

The legal profession itself remains under duress in many countries in the region, including Kazakhstan and Turkey. Challenges are particularly great for members of the criminal defense bar who represent human rights activists, journalists, and other unpopular defendants. Our programs continue to bring together criminal defense lawyers from regions and countries where the conduct of their profession is under attack. 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 (including the European Court of Human Rights) as a check on repressive domestic actions. The CEELI Institute also works 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 include the organization of substantive legal training programs for practicing lawyers from the region. Using a comparative law approach, ongoing programs address intellectual property rights; personal insolvency law for bankruptcy lawyers; small and medium law firm management; effective corporate compliance; and a variety of criminal law issues, including search and seizure and illegal detention.
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 workshops are designed to support civic-minded organizations and individuals in their efforts to 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 also seeks to support those seeking to advance the rule of law and strengthen human rights protections.

Supporting Civil Society Advocacy in Central and Eastern Europe

Faced with increasing government crackdowns on their work, civil society organizations across Central and Eastern Europe need to perfect the skills necessary to fight back. Accordingly, the CEELI Institute continues to initiate and deliver programs to promote legal advocacy by and on behalf of civil society organizations in the region. CEELI’s workshops focus on how to effectively use a myriad of available EU laws and instruments to hold national member states accountable. Participants have examined how to enforce the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights; how to pursue legal remedies in the European Court of Justice; how to lobby EU agencies charged with enforcing relevant EU laws, directives and regulations; and how EU laws, instruments and case laws can be used in their domestic courts. Participants have also examined best practices for preparation and use of effective fact-finding reports documenting attacks by national governments on civil society, including their use in lobbying efforts in Brussels. Finally, participants have discussed future possible coordination among regional civil society actors, and the formation of more effective links among existing groups defending civil society space in the region. These efforts reflect the need to organize aggressive civil society responses to a litany of repressive governmental actions seen across the world.

Respite and Fellowship Program for Human Rights Lawyers and Civil Society Activists

With generous support from a variety of donors, the CEELI Institute continues its program, begun in 2015, of providing respite, fellowship, and sabbatical opportunities for human rights lawyers and other activists working under stressful, challenging, and sometimes dangerous 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 and activists work tirelessly to defend their clients and advance human rights—often at great risk to themselves and their families. Participants in our program have included lawyers working on difficult cases of human rights abuse, and those defending NGOs. Fellowships provide opportunities for participants to enrich their work in international settings or simply offer respite to those in need of opportunities for rest, recuperation, and safety. The specifics of each fellowship are tailored to the individual needs of the participant. Fellows come for short-to-medium term stays of up to six months. Many are hosted by the Institute in Prague, but we have also expanded this program to provide fellowship opportunities at partner organizations across Europe, including Charles University, King’s College London, and organizations in France, Germany, Ireland, and the UK.

Safeguarding Treatment of Human Rights Defenders under EU Visa Policy

Current European Union policies on multiple entry and long-stay visas raise substantial barriers for human rights defenders (HRDs) seeking to come to Europe for limited periods of time for fellowships, workshops, study, respite, and in some cases, security. These are not asylum seekers; these are individuals who are engaged in work in their home countries, and who fully intend to return home after their stays in the EU. The CEELI Institute has developed and published recommendations for reform of current EU visa policies in ways that would improve the treatment of HRDs and ease their access to visas. This project is an outgrowth of our HRD respite and fellowship program.

Our research included a comprehensive survey of HRDs from nine countries in Eurasia as well as in-depth interviews with HRDs on their travel and visa application experiences. This work has illustrated some of the legal and practical barriers that HRDs face when applying for visas to enter Europe and clarified the need for systemic and administrative changes to EU rules that could improve the visa procurement process. To broaden the visibility of this important project, the CEELI Institute has also developed an interactive website which displays the survey results, key recommendations, as well as testimonies from HRDs. Already, this work has captured the attention of key officials at the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. We hope this research will be useful to European policy makers as they review this complex area of EU law and regulation with an eye to better accommodating the work of HRDs.
The CEELI Institute continues to produce and publish a wide range of substantive tools, guidelines, and monographs on topics of current relevance to judges, lawyers, and human rights defenders across Europe and beyond. Among them:

- Application of EU Instruments in Civil Justice
- Application of EU Instruments in Criminal Justice
- Speaking Up: Protecting Whistleblowers in Central and Eastern Europe
- Piercing the Veil: Using Peer Reviews in the Fight against Corruption – A Guide for Transforming Analysis into Action
- Practical Guidelines for Remote Judging in Central and Eastern Europe
- Human rights Defenders in EU visa policy: Recommendations for Reform
- Practical Guidelines on Use of Social Media by Judges: Central and Eastern European Context
- Brijuni Statement of the Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary
- Manual on Independence, Impartiality and Integrity of Justice
The CEELI Institute is headquartered in the Villa Greboka, a large and lovingly renovated 19th century villa in a historic neighborhood in central Prague. Our setting, inside one of Prague’s most beautiful parks, offers a peaceful environment for study, exchange, and convening. The Villa is rich in history, having served as a Habsburg playground during Austro-Hungarian times, and later as the home of the Young Pioneers during the communist era. The surrounding neighborhood is one of Prague’s nicest, providing leafy avenues, stately 19th century architecture, and a wide variety of restaurants and cafes. There are also easy transportation links to all parts of the city. The Villa is a safe space that nurtures those who stay with us.
The CEELI Institute completed the Villa’s transformation into a state-of-the-art conference and residential center in June 2007. Today, it is an extraordinary, self-contained training and residential facility with lecture halls, classrooms, dining facilities, a fitness center, and residential accommodations for up to 44 guests. All Villa facilities are handicap accessible. The on-site accommodation and conference space encourage “dawn to dusk” conversation among participants and faculty that is not easily fostered in a hotel setting. The setting also provides additional layers of security in an extremely safe city. Additional accommodation is available at reasonably priced hotels within walking distance.

Prague’s location in the heart of Europe, and its extensive air connections, make it easily accessible to visitors from across the globe. Visitors will find that the city is easy to negotiate. Prague is one of Europe’s most beautiful and historic destinations, yet also offers visitors all the vibrancy and benefits of a world-class, cosmopolitan city. English is widely spoken and there is excellent public infrastructure. Prague offers a rich variety of cultural attractions and is also undergoing a gastronomic resurgence. Prices remain reasonable and are lower than in comparable neighboring locales in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.
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“The CEELI Institute stands as a testament that the rule of law offers the best way forward.”

The Hon. Beverly McLachlin,
former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada