

12-13 January 2024
New Bulgarian University
21, Montevideo Str., Sofia, Bulgaria
Room 205, corpus 1

Effective Human Rights Law Teaching: Train the Teachers Course

Context of the project

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) have been working with the New Bulgarian University (NBU) and the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice to build up the capacity of Bulgarian universities for the introduction of human rights legal education with practical orientation. In such cooperation, the Government Agent's Office at the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice, the Department of Law at the NBU, and the NCHR have undertaken a series of capacity building measures to ensure that international and European human rights law are taught effectively, by qualified academic staff, and with consideration to its domestic law dimension.

Expert review of existing curricula

As part of the activity, NCHR experts carried out a review of the existing curricula. Through cooperation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice and the New Bulgarian University, they collected information from university management, academic staff and students, respectively. They also reviewed relevant documents and other sources. As a result, the team has drafted guidelines on the implementation of human rights in horizontal training (included in other disciplines) and vertical training (as a compulsory subject and/or specialised Master's program).

Introduction of human rights in the mandatory legal education

The Project actively advocated for the introduction of Human Rights as a compulsory study in the legal higher education curricula. In July 2022 that has been achieved by the passing of a new Ordinance on the Unified State Requirements for Acquisition of a Higher Education in Law.

Drafting of an model PhD program in Human Rights

Academic staff from the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and the New Bulgarian University have drafted PhD courses for the establishment of an accredited human rights doctoral program at a Bulgarian university. The PhD courses were thoroughly discussed during a work visit to Oslo on 14-15 June 2023 and several times through email. Upon completion of the Project in April 2024, the

program shall undertake its course to acquire accreditation before the competent Bulgarian national authority.

Trainings of teachers

Another key aspect of the project activity is the support to training initiatives aimed at strengthening the teaching capacity of the academia. Offered in this respect were short-term participations in study visits at the University of Oslo. These trainings are a logical continuation of ensuring mutual transfer of knowledge and teaching practices among Norwegian partners and their Bulgarian counterparts. As part of the training of teachers' component of the project, a one-week training was organized in Oslo with Bulgarian teachers on 25-29 September 2023. Two trainings are planned to be held in Sofia, respectively on 12-13 and 26-27 January 2024. These trainings are aimed at addressing various forms of teaching, quality assurance and student assessment, curriculum building, and experiential legal learning, especially legal clinics and human rights moot courts.

Speakers:

[Gentian Zyberi](#) is a Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights. He has 20 years of professional experience in the field of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and public international law. Professor Zyberi has been a member of the UN Human Rights Committee (2019-2022); member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Netherlands (2016-2028); and Defense team member at the ICTY (2004-2012). He is a member of the Scientific Committee of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency for the period 2023-2028.

[Siena Anstis](#) is a Doctoral Fellow at the University of Oslo's Faculty of Law. Her primary research interests touch on international law, human rights law, migration, and law and technology (with a particular interest in technology and government surveillance of human rights defenders, journalists, and other members of civil society). Her doctoral project examines the regulation of transnational repression under international law. Siena holds an LL.M. from the University of Cambridge, a BA and LLB from McGill University (Montreal), and a BA in Journalism and Anthropology from Concordia University (Montreal). She has worked in the area of technology and human rights, as well as practiced as a refugee lawyer in Toronto and as a litigator in New York City.

[Malcolm Langford](#) is a Professor of Public Law, University of Oslo and Director of the Centre on Experiential Legal Learning (CELL), a Centre for Excellence in Education (SFU). He is also an Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Bergen. A lawyer and social scientist, Malcolm's publications span human rights, international investment and development, comparative

constitutionalism, law and technology, and the politics of the legal profession. He sits on the University of Oslo's Pedagogy Academy, acts as an advisor to various UN bodies, governments and NGOs, a board member of the European Implementation Network (EIN), JustLabs and Hahdi Africa, and is a member of the Norwegian national expert group on learning analytics.

Denitza Toptchiyska is an Associate professor of Law at the New Bulgarian University since 2016 lecturing on General Theory of Law and Information Society Law. She has published in the fields of legal theory, philosophy, and topics concerning technological regulation, data protection and freedom of expression. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Toptchiyska has practiced as a legal expert at the Communications Regulation Commission from 2001 to 2007, and as a legal consultant for non-profit organizations since 2007. She has also been involved as a leader and consultant on international projects since 2003. Dr. Toptchiyska has been a research fellow at the Information Society Law Center (ISLC) at the University of Milan, Italy since 2022. She was also a visiting researcher at Panthéon-Assas University in Paris, France in 2020, and a research scholar through the Fulbright program at Notre Dame University, USA in 2021. She was invited as a guest professor at Lyon 2 University, France in 2023 and 2024.

Nikolay Kolev is a full-time lecturer in property law and commercial law at the Law Department of New Bulgarian University lecturing the courses of Property Law, Commercial Law, Banking Law, Insurance Law. He is active also as Research Fellow in Civil and Commercial Law at the State and Law Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as he also chairs the Scientific Council of the said Institute. Dr. Kolev has a significant experience as attorney-at-law advising Bulgarian and foreign companies in the field of commercial and administrative law and litigation.

Petya Adzhopova is a PhD candidate in the field of Human Rights Law at Sofia University. She has been a participant in the Erasmus Program and twice a coach of the team of Sofia University for an international law competition.

Draft program

First day, Friday, 12 January 2024

Training will be delivered in English

Moderator: *Assist. Prof. Ekaterina Tsvetanova, director of School of Professional and Continuing Studies, New Bulgarian University*

9.00-9.30 Registration

9.30-10.00 Introductory session

- Welcome by Ms. Milena Kotseva, Director of the Government Agent's Office and Project Leader
- Welcome by Assist. Prof. Emilia Dimitrova, Vice-Rector "Research and Creative Activity", New Bulgarian University
- Welcome and introduction to the training schedule by Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights

10.00-11.00 Human rights legal education in Norway (bachelor, Master, PhD level)

- *Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

Human rights legal education in Canada (bachelor, Master, PhD level)

- *Siena Anstis, PhD candidate, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

11.00-11.15 Coffee break

11.15- 12.15 Building legal skills through experiential learning: Clinical legal education

- *Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

Clinical legal education, some personal reflections (Canada)

- *Siena Anstis, PhD candidate, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

Lunch break – 12.45-13.30

13.30 – 14.30 Human rights legal education in Bulgaria (bachelor, Master, PhD level) and forms of international collaboration in teaching human rights

- *Assoc. Prof. Denitza Toptchiyska, New Bulgarian University*

14.30 – 14.45 Coffee break

14.45 – 15.45 Human Rights Moot Courts – a general overview and some Norwegian experiences

- *Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

Human Rights Moot Courts – some experiences from Bulgaria

- *Petya Adzhopova, PhD candidate, Sofia University*

15.45 – 16.00 General discussion and summing up

End of first day

Second day, Saturday, 13 January 2024

9.30-10.30 Teaching without Teaching: Six Principles for Developing a Culture of Learning

- *Prof. Malcolm Langford, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo*

10.30-11.00 Individual Reflection and Group Discussion

11.00-11.15 Coffee break

11.15-11.45 Transformative Incrementalism and Human Rights Legal Education

- *Prof. Malcolm Langford, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo*

11.45-12.15 Exercise on Course Development and Evaluation

12.15-12.30 Presentation and Discussion

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-14.30 Conversation on curriculum building for various human rights courses

- *Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights and Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Kolev, New Bulgarian University*

14.30-16.00 Reading and collecting relevant materials on building a Human Rights draft course curriculum (EXERCISE)

- *Exercise instructions by Prof. Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Center for Human Rights*

End of the second day and of the seminar

MAIN READING MATERIALS

Human Rights Legal Education

- Hadi Strømmen Lile, The Realisation of Human Rights Education in Norway, 37(2) Nordic Journal of Human Rights (2019), pp. 143-161.
- [Master Program in the Theory and Practice of Human Rights](#), University of Oslo.

Clinical legal education

- Eva Brems and Stijn Smet, ‘The Human Rights Law Clinic at Ghent University’, in Alberto Alemanno and Lamin Khadar (eds), *Reinventing Legal Education: How Clinical Education Is Reforming the Teaching and Practice of Law in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 209-229.
- Lynn Welchman, ‘The International Human Rights Clinic at SOAS’, in Alberto Alemanno and Lamin Khadar (eds), *Reinventing Legal Education: How Clinical Education Is Reforming the Teaching and Practice of Law in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 247-271.
- David I.C. Thomson, *Defining Experiential Legal Education*, 1(1) *Journal of Experiential Learning* (2015), pp. 1-27.
- Shin Imai, *A Counter-pedagogy for Social Justice: Core Skills for Community Lawyering*, 9(1) *Clinical Law Review* (2002), pp. 195-227.

Human Rights Moot Courts

- [Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition](#)
- [Nelson Mandela World Human Rights Moot Court Competition](#)
- Eric Baskind, *Mooting: the definitive guide* (Routledge, 2017).
- Christopher Kee, *The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Martin Kopa and Tereza Skarková (eds), [Mootology and Mooting Skills](#) (Olomouc 2012)

Various Teaching Methods and Quality Assurance

- Paulo Freire (1970), [Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#), chapter 2.
- J. Biggs, (1996). [Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment](#). *Higher education*, 32(3), 347-364.
- Center for Engaged Learning, [What is SoTL?](#)