

# London Declaration of Lay Judges in Europe

The participants of the Third Lay Judge Forum taking place on 22 - 24 July 2011 in London representing organisations from the following European countries:

Austria  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
England/Wales  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Italy  
Portugal  
Scotland  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland

have agreed the following declaration as a result of their meeting:

1. The participation of lay judges<sup>1</sup> is an essential element of any justice system which wishes to be transparent and comprehensible.
2. In many countries the participation of lay judges is founded in a tradition going back hundreds of years. In a world which is becoming more and more differentiated and specialised, the continued involvement of lay judges will ensure that the justice system is accessible and understandable by the people and always responds to changes in society.
3. Lay judges are an essential element of Civil Society. And therefore this Lay Judge Forum explicitly opposes the efforts of any individual European government and parliament to reduce or abolish participation of lay judges.
4. The Third Lay Judge Forum decided that the national organisations of lay judges will cooperate even closer by publishing a "European Charter of Lay Judges" and

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<sup>1</sup> The term lay judge covers several types of involvement in the delivering of justice and there a number of roles undertaken by the lay judge such as: lay magistrates, justices of the peace, arbitrators, judges in criminal and civil courts, lay assessors in criminals, expert judges as in juvenile, commercial or agricultural matters.