

The Academy of European Law's Strategic Vision for e-learning

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ERA's mission:

“... to promote the awareness and good practice of EU law by providing legal professionals with training and a forum for debate in the form of conferences, seminars, study visits, language courses, training projects and publications.”

- “Distance learning” has not traditionally been part of ERA's mission

ERA's tools:

1992: Conferences
Seminars
Study visits
Language courses
Training projects

2000: Publications

2007... Distance learning ...?

- ERA's toolkit has evolved over time: is it the moment to step into a new field?

Using IT to improve what ERA already does:

- **Online conference documentation**
- **Online discussion forums**
- **Online publications**

Online conference documentation

- Participants at all open conferences and many contracted events can now access a password-protected background documentation set one week before the event starts
- Speakers' contributions and additional texts often made available after the event too
- Consolidated online documentation on anti-discrimination legislation produced for legal practitioners as part of a European Commission-sponsored seminar series (2003-07). Public access at:
www.era.int/anti-discrimination

Online discussion forums

Pilot project in 2006:

www.era.int/frontierforum

Cross-border commuters posted real-life testimonies of the problems they encountered for a seminar on

“Social and Tax Law for Frontier Workers”

in the framework of the
European Year of Workers’ Mobility

Online publications

www.era-forum.eu

- *ERA Forum*, the Academy's quarterly legal journal, went online in 2006
- Notable increase in sales
- From 2007, publishing partnership with Springer (Heidelberg/Berlin/New York) focuses on online sales and marketing

Other e-learning related experience

- **Contribution to Spanish Judicial School's e-learning programme (with other partners, e.g. EJTN)**
- **Long-term projects (e.g. ICC for defence lawyers, Asylum law for civil servants from W. Balkans) often include own websites to supplement training**
- **Feedback from participants points to growing demand for discussions forums, webinars, podcasts...**

Conclusions from recent experience

- Demand for online *training* and online *debate* exists

- This demand represents *not only a shift from old forms* of training and debate but the *opening-up of demand among new target groups* who were not reached by traditional methods

- Why?
 - Allows user to choose most relevant content
 - Enables user to adapt to needs/availability

ERA's two-stage approach to e-learning

Stage 1: Building on our existing experience

Stage 2: Embarking on a new form of training?

E-learning: Stage 1

- **Preparatory modules for basic courses**
- **Background documentation and case studies**
- **Interactive self-evaluation procedure**
- **Follow-up through discussion forums**
- **Aim: ensure all participants at roughly same level**
- **Pilot project in Autumn 2007**

E-learning: Stage 2

- **Distance learning in the basics of Community law**
- **Background documentation, case studies and interactive self-evaluation**
- **Possibility to set up online tutorials with course director at set times**
- **Aim: provide most basic form of European law training, with the option of one-to-one as follow-up**
- **Should particularly help young judges/lawyers and those in new and future member states**
- **To be pursued on basis of experience with Stage 1 and in cooperation with appropriate partners**

Thank you for your attention

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