

Abuse of rights at the expense of the critical public & counter-strategies

Pioneering anti-SLAPP Training for Freedom of Expression

16.11.2023, 15h-18h

European House, Unter den Linden 78

10117 Berlin

Snacks and drinks on site.

Strategic Lawsuit(s) Against Public Participation SLAPPs - This phenomenon is a form of abuse of rights that seeks to suppress criticism through legal action. SLAPPs aim to intimidate critical voices and have a chilling effect on civil society discourse and critical public opinion, in the interests of corporations, wealthy individuals and political actors.

Since April 2022, the European Commission has been addressing the growing number of SLAPPs across Europe and has drafted a proposal for a Directive (52022 PC 0177 - EN - EUR-Lex). The proposal for a directive will be negotiated in the trilogue of the European institutions in summer and autumn 2023. In parallel, the Pioneering anti-SLAPP Training for Freedom of Expression (PATFox), a pilot project to train lawyers for mandates to defend journalists and media organisations, non-governmental organisations or activists against companies or government representatives who want to prevent legitimate criticism through lawfare, has been running in Germany and ten other European countries since January 2023.

While attention to the issue is growing among state and civil society actors, legal defence against SLAPPs is still a largely undeveloped field. Most lawyers have only a vague idea, if any, of what it encompasses, as the topic is still barely present in their studies and existing regular training.

Raising awareness of the part of the legal profession that is not primarily interested in SLAPPs as a business model is a key element in the fight against this form of abuse of power: The effective defence of journalists and activists against often baseless accusations often fails because of the lack of legal representation that is familiar with the SLAPP issue and knows appropriate defence strategies.

The next PATFox training will take place on Thursday 16 November 2023 in the European House in Berlin and will be led by Dr Jasper Prigge, lawyer. Based on international expertise as well as local expertise in legal practice and jurisprudence, practically useful knowledge regarding the defence against SLAPPs will be imparted. Continuing education credits can be obtained for the event through the Republican Lawyers Association (RAV).

PATFox is funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice. Blueprint for Free Speech runs these free trainings in Germany and would like to invite you to participate.

You can find more information about the background, claim and target group of the trainings below. If you are interested in participating or have any questions or comments about PATFox, please contact the project coordinator Philipp Wissing by 13 November. You will then receive further details on the trainings and all information on how to participate by email.

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Programme

15:00-15:15	Welcome	
15:15 -15.30	Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation - definitions and proposals at the European level	Keynote Prof. Justin Borg-Barthet
15:30-16:00	SLAPP in Germany - Significance of the European debate & case studies from legal practice	Discussion Dr. Jasper Prigge, lawyer
16:00-16:15	Break	
16:15h-17:45	Recognising SLAPPs, defending against SLAPPs	Input & group work Dr. Jasper Prigge
17:45 - 18:00	Summary & conclusion of the workshop	