

Promoting Pro Bono in Hungary and World Wide

Promoting Pro Bono is a program of **Public Interest Law Institute**, Budapest, Hungary (www.pili.org).

The Public Interest Law Institute works hand-in-hand with lawyers and public interest activists across the globe to build rights-respecting societies based on the rule of law. Founded at Columbia University in 1997 and now headquartered in Budapest, Hungary, PILI's mission is to stimulate public interest advocacy worldwide and to develop the institutions necessary to sustain it. In addition to its Budapest headquarters, PILI conducts its work from hubs in New York, Moscow, Belgrade and Beijing. Whether in Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, China, or the other locales where PILI works, its chief aims are to increase access to justice for poor and marginalized communities, strengthen public interest advocacy, and nurture the next generation of civil society leaders.

PILI programs

Promoting Pro Bono – Institutionalizing pro bono practice by law firms and individual lawyers in order to leverage private sector resources for the public good.

Legal Aid Reform – Improving state-supported legal-aid systems in order to enhance access to justice for socially vulnerable, poor and disadvantaged people.

Legal Education Reform – Fostering new generations of more effective and socially oriented lawyers by making legal education more practice-oriented, with an emphasis on clinical legal education.

NGO Advocacy – Building the advocacy capacity of civil society organizations.

Public Interest Law Fellowships – Assisting the professional development of future public interest leaders.

More information about PILI and a wide variety of resources can be found at www.pili.org.

About PILI's Pro Bono Program

Hungarian Pro Bono Clearinghouse

PILI has established a **Hungarian Pro Bono Clearinghouse**, which places pro bono matters arising from NGOs with participating law firms and promotes the development of pro bono practice in Hungary. PILI's Pro Bono Clearinghouse in Hungary was formally launched in 2006, thus far assisting 13 NGOs with 17 pro bono client matters.

Global Pro Bono Clearinghouse

PILI has also established a Global Pro Bono Clearinghouse to match needs in one country to resources in another, focusing particularly on Europe. As part of its global efforts PILI has served 13 NGOs in 30 pro bono matters. Over 30 law firms are participating in these combined efforts so far.

In Poland, PILI is partnering with the Legal Clinics Foundation, the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and Ashoka Foundation to promote pro bono work. In China, after successful roundtables in Beijing and Hong Kong, PILI is advancing the development of law firm pro bono programs by building relationships between firms and public interest organizations, laying the groundwork for an eventual pro bono clearinghouse. PILI is also supporting activities of Public Interest Lawyers Association (PILA) in the Czech Republic to establish Czech Pro Bono Clearinghouse.

Pro Bono Declaration

In 2006 several well-known international law firms with established Hungarian offices signed and endorsed a Declaration - (available in [English](#) and [Hungarian](#) at www.pili.org) developed with the assistance of PILI's pro bono project, in which they publicly affirm their commitment to advancing the public good by working for more clients who cannot afford to pay.

International law firms, which committed to offering Pro Bono services in Hungary by signing the Declaration are:

- Allen & Overy Iroda
- Berecz & Andr  k  Linklaters Law Office
- K ves Clifford Chance
- Nagy & Pint r Hogan & Hartson Law Office
- Ormai & Partners CMS Cameron McKenna
- R czicza White and Case LLP
- Siegler Law Office/Weil, Gotshal & Manges
- Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P. Er s Law Office

Annual European Pro Bono Forum

Public Interest Law Institutes organizes annually **European Pro Bono Forum** in Budapest, Hungary, a two-day conference on discussion on how to establish and maintain successful pro bono programs across Europe, and how to build linkages between law firms and NGOs. The first European Pro Bono Forum convened in October of 2007. One-hundred and thirty-three lawyers, NGO leaders and academics from 21 countries met for two days to discuss various pro bono issues in interactive panels and workshops. For more information about the First European Pro Bono Forum please see www.pili.org.

The **2nd European Pro Bono Forum** will be held on 6-7 November in Budapest, for registration and preliminary agenda will be coming soon, please revisit www.pili.org.