



Universiteit  
Leiden

The Hague Academy for  
local governance

**ONLINE AND IN-PERSON TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE FUNCTIONING OF  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS FROM THE FOLLOWING  
COUNTRIES:**

**ALBANIA, ARMENIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KOSOVO, MOLDOVA,  
MONTENEGRO, NORTH MACEDONIA, SERBIA, TÜRKIYE, UKRAINE**

**Online: 28 September – 09 October 2026**

**The Hague: 26 October – 06 November 2026**

**THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS**



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

## **The programme in short**

The *Matra Rule of Law Training Programme* is designed to strengthen institutional capacity in the field of rule of law within government organisations in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. We offer seven training programs each year, providing participants with insights into best practices across a wide range of rule of law topics.

Through interactive sessions that blend theory with practical skills, as well as study visits, our programme equips policy advisors, members of the judiciary, and other civil servants working in the government and justice sectors with the knowledge and skills needed to drive reforms within their respective countries.

In addition, by taking part in the training programme, participants become part of a large international network of alumni, lecturers, and public institutions in the Netherlands and in the target countries. This network serves as a platform for learning, exchange, and collaboration.

The *Matra Rule of Law Training Programme* is designed and delivered by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Leiden Law School, and The Hague Academy for Local Governance. It is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and administered by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) on behalf of the Ministry.

## **Target audience**

The training on Democratic Institutions is intended for English-speaking civil servants holding (mid to senior level) positions in state bodies, charged with policy enabling an open government. Candidates should be reflecting on how government institutions can be designed to foster democratic politics that embody participation and social justice, thus increasing confidence in the government and decreasing the distance between the government and the citizens. They can come from national, regional, and local government institutions.

Participants will be expected to offer an active contribution to the learning process and be in a position to implement the newly gained knowledge and insights in their respective organisation. The maximum number of participants per training is 27. The selection process will ensure gender balance and adequate representation of the countries concerned.

<b>Eligible countries:</b>	Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine
<b>Application:</b>	<b>Application deadline is Sunday 02 August 23:59 (CET).</b>
<b>Training period:</b>	<b>Online:</b> 28 September – 09 October 2026 <b>In-person:</b> 26 October – 06 November 2026
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Programme costs:</b>	The Netherlands Government will cover all costs related to this online and in-person training programme.
<b>Training location:</b>	Online and in-person training in The Hague, the Netherlands, with a study visit to EU institutions in Brussels, Belgium.

## **Background**

Well-functioning institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law and human rights are essential for a democratic society. They are also one of the key pillars on which the EU's identity and values are based. These institutions must guarantee and safeguard fundamental rights and freedoms. The "democratic compass" of the participants is central to this training. Effective, open, and democratic institutions that observe and fulfill the social contract with citizens are a strong antidote to populism.

In this training we not only look at international standards (the role of the Venice Commission and the Council of Europe), but also at practice: we look at the pillars of the democratic constitutional state and the relationship between the various institutions (executive, legislative, and supervisory power). We will also discuss the role of civil society and media, as well as concepts and tools for participatory policy making and inclusive governance. We pay attention to (the process of) elections, the rights of citizens (such as appeal and objection options) and the obligations of the government, such as open government and accountability.

## **Objectives**

The training programme aims to provide participants with an overview of concepts and policies that they can use within their area of expertise and how these can be set in motion and successfully implemented. The focus is on practical implementation. Presentations on the Dutch approach encourage the participants to reflect on the situation in their own country, to identify areas for reform, and additionally nurture exchange on practices in each other's countries. In skill sessions, participants will develop their presentation, teamwork, and change management skills. While developing and presenting a Back Home Action Plan, they will put these skills into practice. Ultimately, knowledge and skills of participants are improved and networks for the exchange of best practices created.

## **Approach and structure**

By being demand-driven in nature and by stimulating active participation, the training programme strives to achieve lasting results. When participants complete the training, they are sufficiently equipped to implement the newly gained knowledge and insights in their respective organisations. The online training programme offers a careful balance between theory and practice. The in-person part of the programme allows for further deepening of skills and knowledge and for networking. The in-person programme enables participants to learn from and to become acquainted with leading (Dutch and international) academics and professionals. Furthermore, it enables discussion between Dutch and EU practitioners and institutions in this field. Exchanging and comparing experiences is a key aspect of the programme.

Upon successful completion of the programme – which includes attendance to all components of the programme – participants will receive a certificate and become part of the Matra Rule of Law Training Programme alumni network.

## **Admission requirements**

- The participant should currently be a (mid to senior-level) civil servant;
- The participant should clearly demonstrate their professional interest in this training and the uses they would make of the insights gained from the training;
- The participant should have a good command of spoken and written English;  
The participant should be highly motivated;
- The participant should be comfortable sharing their knowledge with fellow participants (contributing during the live sessions and regular knowledge sharing in the digital learning environment is required);
- Participants should submit a signed employer's statement granting permission to participate in the training programme.

## **Required time commitment**

The participant should be able to dedicate sufficient time to the programme. For the 2-week online programme, 6-8 hours per week are required. For the 2-week in-person programme in the Netherlands, 8 hours per day are required. Furthermore, the participant should be available for several follow-up activities as described in this brochure.

## **How to apply**

Please read the admission requirements carefully. Candidates who meet all the requirements may proceed to complete the application form, which is available at [www.nhc.nl/matrarolt](http://www.nhc.nl/matrarolt).

Application forms need to be submitted in full to be eligible for selection. Applicants are required to upload a signed employer's statement granting permission to participate in the programme. Admission will be on merit and competitive basis.

Successfully uploaded applications will receive an automatic e-mail confirmation.

## **Information and training programme organisation**

### **Netherlands Helsinki Committee**

A non-governmental organisation that promotes human rights, the rule of law and justice in all countries of wider Europe. We consider it our mission to inspire, engage and support catalysts of change in building just and rights-respecting societies.

Website: [www.nhc.nl/matrarolt](http://www.nhc.nl/matrarolt)  
E-mail: [matrarolt@nhc.nl](mailto:matrarolt@nhc.nl)  
Phone: + 31 (0)70 392 6700

### **The Hague Academy for Local Governance**

A non-profit, non-governmental organisation that aims to strengthen local democracy worldwide. We offer practice-oriented training in The Netherlands and abroad.

Website: [www.thehagueacademy.com](http://www.thehagueacademy.com)

### **Leiden Law School**

Leiden Law School is one of the seven faculties of Leiden University, the first university established in the Netherlands in 1575. It currently ranks 23rd in the QS World University Ranking for best law faculties worldwide.

Website: [www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/law](http://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/law)