

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU

“in action”

TRAINING EVALUATION REPORT



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Introduction

The project *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union “in action”*, funded by Directorate-General for Justice of the European Commission, is coordinated by the Permanent Observatory of Justice of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and developed in partnership with the Institute of Human Rights of Catalonia (Spain), the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) and the University of Szczecin (Poland). Its main goal is to develop a comprehensive training programme for judges, prosecutors and lawyers focusing on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, contributing to the knowledge about the legal framework of fundamental rights, namely the content, application and relevance of the CFR, and for the sharing of experiences and good practices between judicial actors.

The evaluation of training is an important step of any training programme, allowing for the identification of good practices, obstacles, areas to improve, new training needs and the assessment of the quality of the training provided. The CFR “in action” project carried out this task through an anonymous questionnaire, applied at the end of every training session, focused on how participants reacted to the training¹.

According to the European Commission (2014: 104), assessing the effect of training activities in general is extremely important for the proper management of training. This assessment assists, namely, in understanding whether the training objectives have been achieved, whether the training needs initially identified were properly addressed and whether the target group of the respective training is satisfied by it. The importance of the evaluation of training is also recognized by the European Judicial Training Network (2017: 4-5), namely through the promotion of seminars, the collection of best practices on judicial training evaluation² and the development of

¹ See next topic on the chosen methodology.

² For more details, see European Commission, 2014: 104-110.

handbooks on the subject³. It has been recognized that the participants' reaction to training is essential to help determine the effectiveness of a programme and how it can be improved, since the motivation to learn is correlated with the positive reactions to training (Solter, Duc, & Engelbrech, 2007: 73).

Moreover, as pointed out by the European Commission (2014: 104), there is a close relationship between the assessment of training needs and the evaluation of training activities. Not only does the evaluation of training activities demonstrate if the training needs of the participants have been successfully addressed by training, but also the evaluation of training helps to identify new training needs. In fact, the feedback of participants was particularly important in the CFR "in action" project implementation as it allowed for the continuous updating of the training needs. As such, in Portugal, the CFR team and the trainers were able to adapt the programme and the contents of the training throughout time, in accordance with the information gathered in the evaluation questionnaires. Through the combination of different training needs assessment methods, the team was able to identify new training needs and ensure that the training programme addressed those needs in time.

The responses to the evaluation questionnaires also allowed conclusions for the improvement of other aspects of the training sessions. For example, in Portugal and Spain trainers were informed about the evaluation results, namely by the "pedagogical coordinator", which allowed them to recognize what was best and worst received by trainees and understand if and how they can improve their teaching style. Thus, apart from the content, the teaching methodology can also be updated throughout training in accordance with the observations made by trainees. Additionally, as recommended by the European Commission (2015), the training evaluation allowed for the comparison between the evaluation of different training activities implemented during the project and we hope to use evaluation results for future trainings, namely those carried out by UNIFOJ/e-UNIFOJ⁴.

³ For more details, see European Judicial Training Network, 2017.

⁴ The Unit of Legal and Judiciary Training of the Permanent Observatory of Justice of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. Cf. <http://opi.ces.uc.pt/unifoj/>.

Finally, in Portugal and Spain, the CFR team was able to gather, during the project implementation, a continuous positive feedback from the participants regarding the general organization and the contents of the training programme, which translated into an increase in the beneficiaries of the training. For example, several judges who act as trainers, acknowledging the importance and the quality of the training, brought their interns to future training sessions. Similarly, in the Netherlands, participants were, in general, satisfied with the organisation and content of training and some judges and prosecutors brought their clerks with them to the training sessions.

Methodology

The evaluation of training is traditionally made with reference to Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation model, a systematic way to evaluate training programmes. The CFR "in action" project only implemented the first level of evaluation ("reaction")⁵. There are several methods recommended for the evaluation of training programmes⁶. The CFR "in action" project fulfilled this task through an anonymous evaluation questionnaire, applied at the end of every training session. This method is frequently used by UNIFOJ/e-UNIFOJ for the evaluation of training activities. The same evaluation questionnaire was used by all partners.

The evaluation questionnaire allowed the CFR team to assess, from a scale of "very negative" to "very positive", multiple aspects of training (the structure of the training, the contents of the sessions, the articulation between theory and practice, the adequacy of the support material, the duration of sessions, the space suitability and the general organization) and the quality of the trainers (the accuracy in the presentation of topics, their precision in the treatment of contents and their availability to answer questions). Finally, there was also space on the questionnaire for trainees to write observations and suggestions, in the form of open questions, namely about the programme contents, topics they consider relevant to be lectured in future training courses on the subject and suggestions to improve this specific training programme.

Likewise, trainers were asked to provide an open comment about the training, considering the training programme, the profile of trainees, the difficulties in interaction, and other aspects they found relevant.

In Portugal, we obtained a total of 137 responses to the evaluation questionnaire, in Spain 62 and in the Netherlands 36. Even though the number of responses was not

⁵ For a detailed analysis of each level see European Judicial Training Network, 2017.

⁶ For more details, see European Judicial Training Network, 2017.

particularly high and it's not representative of the whole universe of participants, it still allows us to withdraw some conclusions on how the training was received by trainees. Also, we must emphasize that the observations and suggestions made by trainees and referred throughout our report were very low, since participants mostly answered the closed questions⁷.

⁷ These suggestions will be referred throughout the Portuguese report wherein appropriate, since they pertained several aspects of training, namely the contents, trainers and training aspects in general.

1. Evaluation of programme content

1.1. Portugal

On the topic “Evaluation of programme content”, participants were asked to evaluate from a scale of “very negative” to “very positive”, the following items: structure of training; contents of the sessions; articulation between theory and practice; adequacy of support material; duration of sessions; space suitability; and general organization. In cases wherein participants didn’t answer to the item in question or provided an invalid answer⁸ we used “non applicable”. The results were the following (expressed in %):

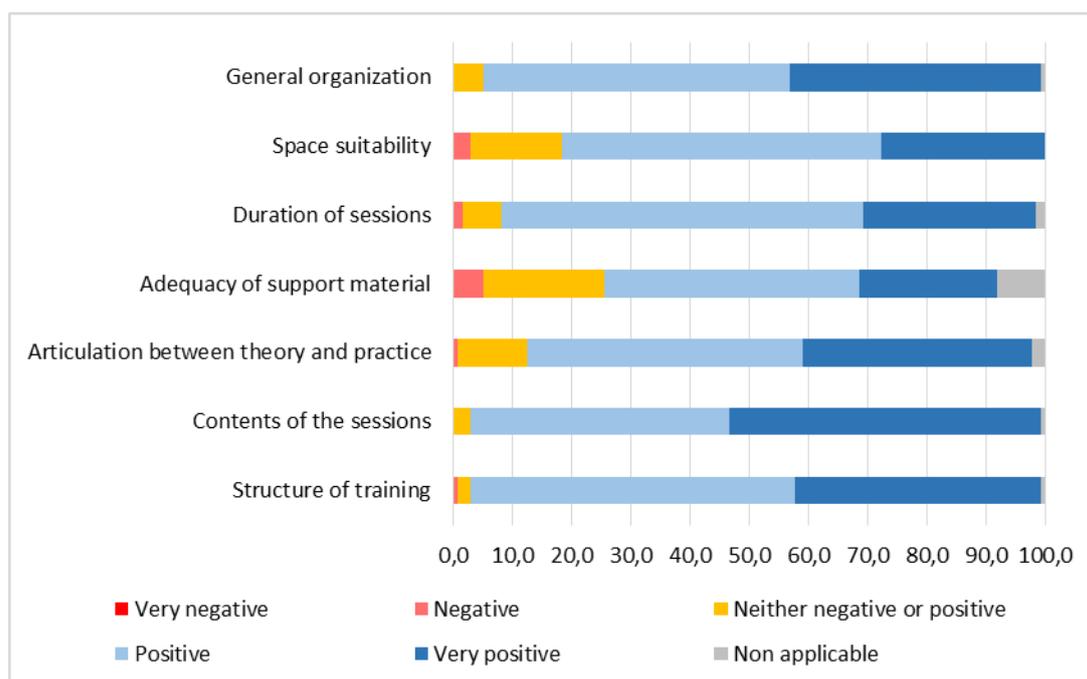
Chart 1 – Evaluation of programme content

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Structure of training	0,0	0,7	2,2	54,7	41,6	0,7
Contents of the sessions	0,0	0,0	2,9	43,8	52,6	0,7
Articulation between theory and practice	0,0	0,7	11,7	46,7	38,7	2,2
Adequacy of support material	0,0	5,1	20,4	43,1	23,4	8,0
Duration of sessions	0,0	1,5	6,6	61,3	29,2	1,5
Space suitability	0,0	2,9	15,3	54,0	27,7	0,0
General organization	0,0	0,0	5,1	51,8	42,3	0,7

Source: OPJ/CES.

⁸ For example, situations wherein participants checked more than one answer and it wasn’t evident which one they intended.

Chart 2 – Evaluation of programme content



Source: OPJ/CES.

An overall analysis of the answers to the training evaluation questionnaire allows us to conclude that participants were extremely satisfied with the training programme, with very little to no negative answers. Recognizing the relevance of the training on the Charter, participants were greatly pleased with the opportunity to attend training on the subject, which was valued as very useful and extremely important for their daily work and for an adequate protection of fundamental rights. As such, we can determine that, in general, the training programme succeeded in the satisfaction of the training needs of the participants and in the achievement of the learning objectives, promoting the knowledge, reflection and dissemination on the content, application and relevance of the Charter. Regarding the “general organization” of training, 51.8% of the respondents considered it positive and 42.3% very positive, which expresses the satisfaction of the participants with the training provided. We highlight the following observations:

“Proceed with the training on fundamental rights.” (Q 25)

“I suggest the repetition of the initiative/continuation of the work already developed concerning the topics at stake.” (Q 43)

“No suggestions, the training was very good regarding the questions of justice and law.” (Q 10)

The item with the highest very positive score was the “contents of the sessions”, with a total of 52.6% very positive answers. Participants considered that the contents of the sessions were extremely pertinent, diverse and well versed. In order to face a certain lack of knowledge on the Charter, result of the lack of training and reflection on the subject recognized in the training needs assessment survey, the training programme included, at an early stage, a common core curriculum aimed at all participants, focused on a more general training on the Charter. After the common core curriculum, the CFR “in action” team promoted specialized sessions with more interactive and practice-oriented training methodologies, which incorporated several topics suggested by participants in the evaluation questionnaires. This combination of general and specialized training and the importance given to the topics suggested by the participants was extremely well received, and sustained a diverse and exhaustive curriculum. We emphasize the following comments:

“The contents have the best practical relevance and the method through which they were brought to us is accurate, in the sense that the approach of the practical questions on the Charter, the CJEU and the national courts in its application, is the only one that allows us to understand and move forward in the knowledge of this subjects.” (Q 69)

“Both the content and the trainers were adequate to the presentation of the topics in question: assertive, coherent and available. Well-chosen.” (Q 115)

“[...] the presentation brought more practical and institutional content which is important for other sessions concerning the problems faced by migrants in its various categories.” (Q 10)

However, some participants pointed out the need for a better articulation between the training contents of different sessions. This was an observation limited to one training session in particular, which some participants thought to be a little repetitive.

In fact, and even though trainers have complete scientific and pedagogical autonomy, contents have to be articulated in order to avoid overlapping or training gaps. This was one of the main tasks of the “pedagogical coordinator”. Apart from informing the trainers of how the training was received, the “pedagogical coordinator” attended several training sessions and was able to observe the training dynamics and suggest necessary adjustments for future sessions, including the coordination and alignment of training contents.

“Yesterday’s afternoon session had some programmatic repetitions in comparison with the morning session, which withdrew innovation to the presentation.” (Q 108)

“[...] More articulation between trainers in order to avoid the repetition of contents in different presentations.” (Q 110)

“Concerning the training session of [...] I believe that the articulation between trainers could have been better in order for them to present different subjects. It occurred that both presentations were related to articles 51 and 53 Charter.” (Q 111)

“The content of the first two modules [...] was very similar. It would be useful the adjustment between trainers of the topics to address in order to avoid the repetition of subjects or so that they can be addressed in different perspectives.” (Q 114)

The “structure of training” and the “articulation between theory and practice” were considered positive, with a total of 54.7% and 46.7% positive evaluations respectively. The training on the Charter was developed through the combination of both classroom training and e-learning, ensuring the extended participation of the judicial actors in the training activities, namely by allowing the conciliation of professional duties with the attendance of training sessions. Overall the chosen methodology, mainly practice oriented, with the discussion of case law and concrete cases was extremely well received by participants, allowing them to discuss concrete situations and expose their daily difficulties in the implementation of the CFR and the protection of fundamental

rights. However, a few participants suggested the increase of the number of cases and examples presented by trainers and more time for debate.

“I appreciated with pleasure the expositive and practical methods of the training sessions [...] wherein the relevance and the theoretical and practical knowledge were assumedly the strengths to highlight, which contributed in a fluid manner to a better apprehension of the topics discussed.” (Q 80)

“Increase the practical aspects: how the Charter application has been failing in the Portuguese courts and what can be done to improve. Practical examples of an adequate invocation of the Charter. Practical relation with the criminal area, since that is the area I work in, without prejudice of other juridical areas that occupy the prosecutors, judges and lawyers.” (Q 106)

“Increase the number of the examples/cases mentioned in order to better cover or attend to social rights, such as education, health, security, social security [...]” (Q 113)

“Less interventions and more time for debate.” (Q 7)

“It would have been interesting to have a moment for presentation between participants.” (Q 126)

The “duration of the sessions” was also positively assessed by trainees, with a total of 61.3% positive evaluations. Through a combination of classroom sessions and e-learning, we were able to assure the balanced length of the training sessions but also, at the same time, allow sufficient time for individual study, critical reflection and knowledge consolidation. Very few suggestions were made concerning the duration of the sessions:

“Training less concentrated in time that allows a better approach and further development of the topics in discussion.” (Q 104)

“Lunch break – only 1 hour/ 1 hour and a half. Ending earlier.” (Q 109)

Although the general evaluation of the “adequacy of support material” and “space suitability” was positive (with a total of 43.1% and 54% positive evaluations

respectively), these were the items with more “negative” and “neither negative or positive” evaluations. In fact, a few participants pointed out in the observations that these items could benefit from some improvement.

The CFR “in action” project provided trainees with numerous support materials such as bibliographic references, legislation, case law of the CJEU and national courts, reports, Power-Point presentations, among others. This materials were primarily to be discussed in classroom training, but also to be studied, deepened and reflected by trainees during the e-learning phase. Nonetheless, and recognizing the importance and the quality of the support materials provided, a few participants suggested the provision of more, which they considered to be lacking, namely statistics, presentation slides and case law, and also the availability of support materials at the beginning of the training sessions, for a better following of the session. The suggestions made reflect the importance participants attribute to support materials and why training programmes must consider this a key aspect of training that contributes to the involvement of trainees and keeps them motivated to learn:

“I suggest the indication of bibliography/more case law on the topic.” (Q 43)

“Support slides with numbers and statistics.” (Q 23)

“Provide the support materials first.” (Q 41)

“[...] hand over some documentation at the beginning for a better following.”
(Q 81)

“Presentation slides help settling the content, especially when listing contents during the presentation.” (Q 16)

Also, a few participants pointed out the need for a wider space, suitable to the number of participants and more ventilated. This was a problem restricted to one training session that, due to the high number of participants, resulted in the full capacity of the classroom.

“Need for a wider and ventilated space.” (Q 2)

“The room should be bigger and the speakers should have a microphone.” (Q 20)

“Space adequate to the number of participants.” (Q 22)

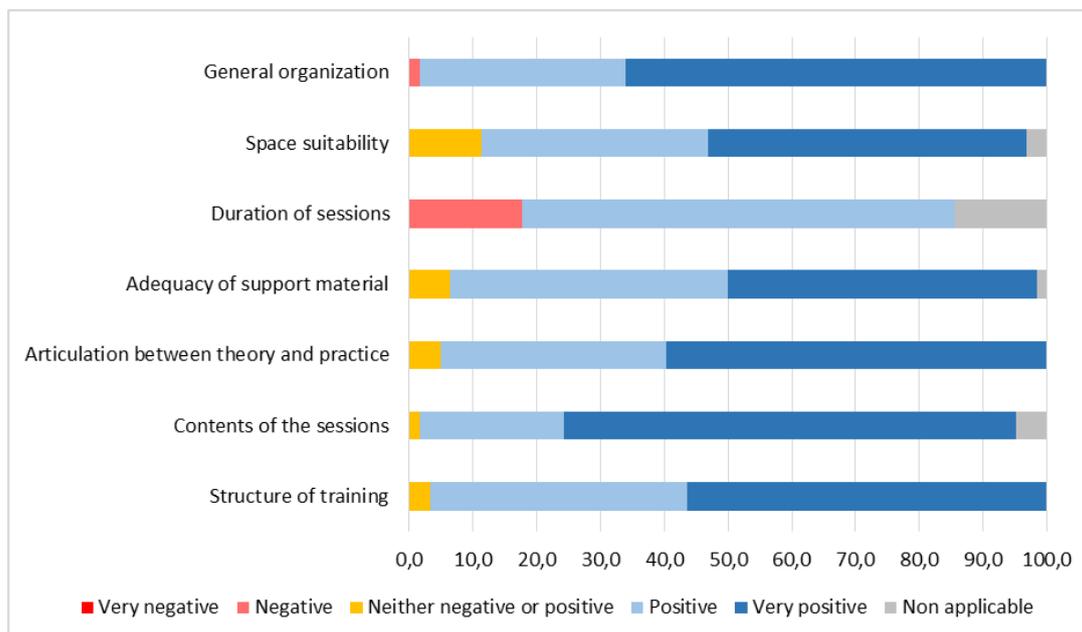
1.2. Spain

Chart 3 – Evaluation of programme content

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Structure of training	0,0	0,0	3,2	40,3	56,5	0,0
Contents of the sessions	0,0	0,0	1,6	22,6	71,0	4,8
Articulation between theory and practice	0,0	0,0	4,8	35,5	59,7	0,0
Adequacy of support material	0,0	0,0	6,5	43,6	48,4	1,6
Duration of sessions	0,0	17,7	0,0	67,8	0,0	14,5
Space suitability	0,0	0,0	11,3	35,5	50,0	3,2
General organization	0,0	1,6	0,0	32,3	66,1	0,0

Source: IDHC

Chart 4 – Evaluation of programme content



Source: IDHC

Structure of training. All the general training addressed to all the legal actors has been developed in a blended manner, on the one hand through aulavirtual.org (e-learning) and on the other through classroom sessions, which took place both in Barcelona and in Madrid. The approach to the topics discussed, which have been unanimously evaluated very positively together with the methodology (40.3% positive and 56.5% very positive), has been fundamentally practical through the analysis of judgments and the resolution of practical cases with the aim of promoting the capacity of legal reasoning. According to the people surveyed, the methodology applied has been ideal for the achievement of the planned objectives. The evolution of the Charter has served to address the most recent jurisprudence of the Court of Justice. The participants have achieved, in this way, a complete vision of the application and applicability of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

It has been highlighted, through the questionnaires, that the training cycle has been a good tool since there is, in general, low knowledge about European legislation and procedures. The content has been very adequate to contextualize the CFR and the

advantages of its use, as well as to acquire security for its use. As an example, one of the participants commented that “really no training has been as profitable as this one. My perspective in the matter of fundamental rights has changed as a result of the course, which has been highlighted that will be reflected in his judgments regarding VAT and other community matters and the procedural and penal-sanctioning instrumental rules”.

Finally, note that the e-learning platform has also been valued positively but the degree of participation has been lower than in the classroom sessions, since they are professionals who do not have much free time to be able to follow a training of this type , besides that they are not very used yet, especially those of more advanced ages.

Content of the sessions. The issues addressed have been assessed satisfactorily , although it should be noted that some participants have indicated that a more extensive introductory session on the community legal order and its principles (attribution, subsidiarity, interpretation, conformity, etc.) would be appropriate, as well as describing the legal institutions of the EU and the mechanisms of application of EU law. The need to put more attention to the content of the CFR or a session based on the jurisprudence of the ECHR has been highlighted among the judges who act as trainers.

The contents treated have been valued in a very positive way by the trainees (22.6% positive and 71% very positive), with which they have been adequate and pertinent. Participants have stressed that they have learned, and some have even claimed that they were unaware of the matter, so they will use the CFR more often especially for the approach of preliminary rulings in cases where the community regulations are related to a right collected with the Charter. In the case of prosecutors, note that those who raise a preliminary question are few, but point out that the training is useful for a future. Some of the participants, especially professionals of the legal profession, comment as a suggestion, which they would have liked to dwell more on the prejudicial question, through more practical cases and/or simulations of proceedings before the CJEU. Although a full session has been dedicated to this issue, it is intuited that there is a need to go deeper.

It is important to highlight that one hundred percent of the people who have answered the surveys indicate that the training, and also the materials administered, will serve them a lot for their daily work.

Articulation between theory and practice. The training cycle has followed a theoretical-practical methodology and has been developed in a semi-presential manner, although with more weight of the e-learning training in the case of the judges who act as trainers and more weight of the classroom training in the general programme. In this latter case, aimed at judges, lawyers and prosecutors, the e-learning part has been, a support tool with complementary materials, with a space for exchange and debate between the participants and the team of trainers in charge of each course. The teaching staff raised debates in the AulaVirtual on issues related to the CFR. The classroom sessions have contemplated a theoretical part but have been essentially practical. The subjects of study have been approached from a practical perspective and work has been carried out from different individual and collective exercises in order to promote the application of the CFR. In general, they have been very participative groups, which have generated a lot of debate both in the e-learning platform and in the classroom sessions.

In summary, the overall balance has been very positive for the vast majority of participants (35.5% positive and 59.7% very positive). They have indicated that the contents of the programme have been useful; there have been many examples of application of the CFR before Spanish courts and the ruling of the CJEU that can serve as a guide to increase the use of the Charter. It has been a very practical content and the trainers have been rated very satisfactorily.

Adequacy of the support material. The support material has been provided to students before and after the classroom sessions, through the AulaIDHC virtual platform, a tool specifically created for human rights training. The trainees have had theoretical and complementary material on the subject. They have had access, through the e-learning platform, to different texts, articles, audio-visual resources and reference documents related to the subject, previously selected by the teaching team of the different courses. They have also had generic documents related to the courses, which aim to make better use of it and the virtual platform. We refer to the following:

teaching plan, guide of use of the AIDHC, calendar (with dates of beginning and end of the course and of the didactic units) and legal library. Likewise, classroom sessions have been based on texts and practical documents, shared after the sessions through the virtual platform.

The assessment that the participants have given to the theoretical and complementary material has been positive or very positive (43.6% positive and 48.4% very positive) and they have valued its practicality and adaptation to the content of the course. They point out that the materials have been adapted to the purpose of the course in a satisfactory manner and that many examples of application of the CFR have been administered before Spanish courts, as well as judgments of the CFR, serve as a guide, for the approach of cases. The general materials have also been assessed as essential for the follow-up of the course.

Duration of sessions. The majority of participants have considered that the time spent has been sufficient and adequate (67.8% positive). Although, a few people have emphasized that perhaps the classroom sessions could last less time (suggest 3 hours), since the work schedule is difficult to reconcile. However, other participants have highlighted that they would have liked to have more sessions to be able to discuss more topics.

Space suitability. In all cases, the participants have positively assessed the space and also the e-learning platform (35.5% positive and 50% very positive) although this to a lesser degree because not everyone has used the platform as much as they would have liked, due, above all, to agenda issues that made it difficult for them to have more time to devote to e-learning training.

General organization. The overall balance of the organization of the course, the understanding of the sessions, the materials provided, the team of teachers and the interaction between the trainees themselves and between them and the team of trainers has been good (32.3% positive and 66.1% very positive). The vast majority has stressed that training has been very useful and that the knowledge provided will be applied in professional practice. As for expectations, the vast majority, minus two participants who are at intermediate levels, point out that they have been widely

achieved. The surveyed participants valued that the time used for the training was sufficient and that the materials provided are very practical and useful. Therefore, the overall satisfaction of the organization has been very positive.

It should be noted that for the good follow-up of the e-learning training, trainees had at their disposal a tutor from the IDHC team who answered logistical doubts about the course and warned about the upload of new materials, delivery dates for jobs, etc. These tutors have been valued by all the people surveyed in a very satisfactory manner. For the teaching team, there was one person in Madrid and another in Barcelona who acted as coordinator of the team of trainers.

The training cycle has managed to fulfil the objectives planned in a satisfactory manner. At the end of the trainings, the trainees have acquired a deeper knowledge of the Charter and its interpretation, of the instruments for its judicial application, and of its simulation for the resolution of cases in which the violation of fundamental rights of the individuals.

1.3. The Netherlands

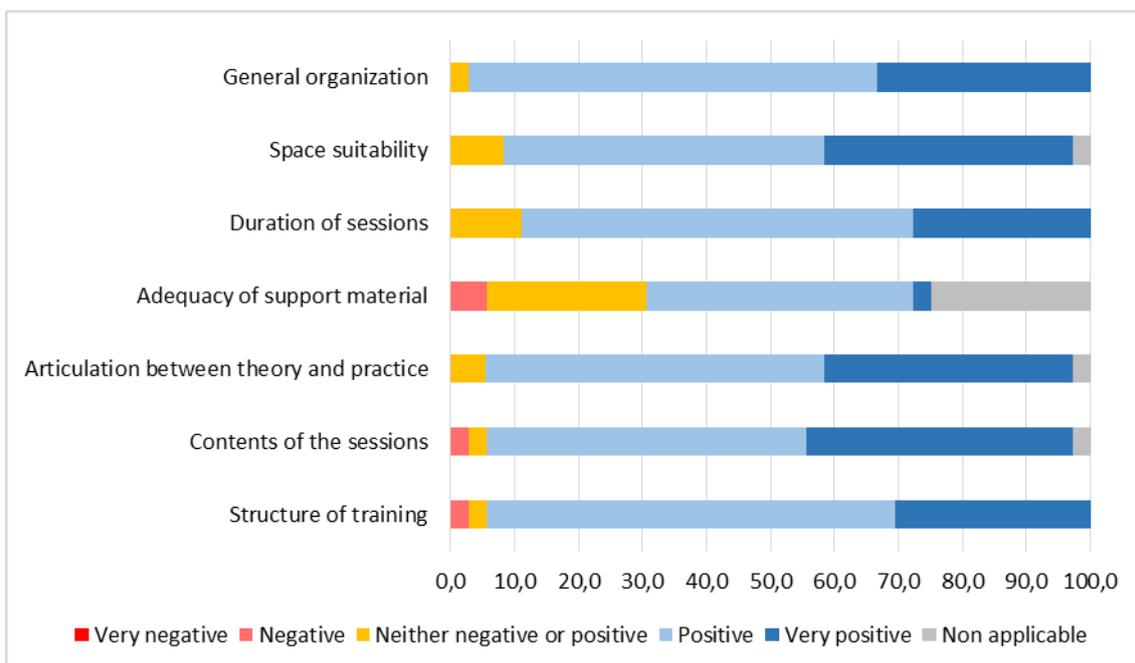
In the Netherlands we received a total of 36 replies. For the classroom training of 16 November, we received 8 replies, for the meeting of 17 November 2017, we received 9 replies. For the meeting of 23 November 2017, we received 19 replies. As can be observed in the two charts below, there was a general satisfaction with the content of the training programme offered in the Netherlands, with a slightly lower mark for the materials.

Chart 5 – Evaluation of programme content

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Structure of training	0,0	2,8	2,8	63,9	30,6	0,0
Contents of the sessions	0,0	2,8	2,8	50,0	41,7	2,8
Articulation between theory and practice	0,0	0,0	5,6	52,8	38,9	2,8
Adequacy of support material	0,0	5,6	25,0	41,7	2,8	25,0
Duration of sessions	0,0	0,0	11,1	61,1	27,8	0,0
Space suitability	0,0	0,0	8,3	50,0	38,9	2,8
General organization	0,0	0,0	2,8	63,9	33,3	0,0

Source: UU.

Chart 6 – Evaluation of programme content



Source: UU.

2. Trainers' evaluation

2.1. Portugal

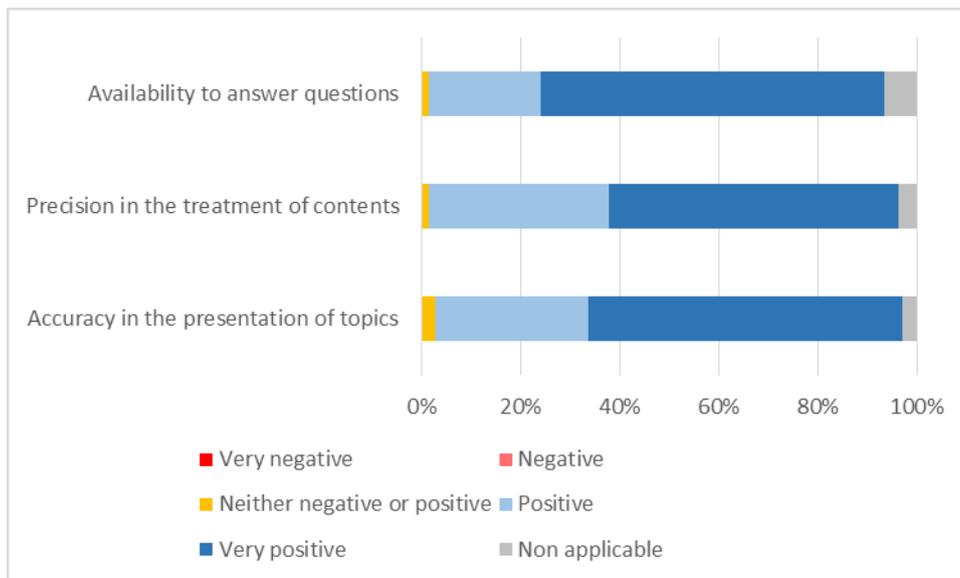
On the topic “Trainers’ evaluation”, participants were asked to evaluate from a scale of “very negative” to “very positive”, the following items: accuracy in the presentation of topics; precision in the treatment of contents; and availability to answer questions. In cases where participants didn’t answer to the item in question or provided an invalid answer we used “non applicable”. The results were the following (expressed in %):

Chart 7 – Trainers’ evaluation

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Accuracy in the presentation of topics	0,0	0,0	2,9	30,7	63,5	2,9
Precision in the treatment of contents	0,0	0,0	1,5	36,5	58,4	3,6
Availability to answer questions	0,0	0,0	1,5	22,6	69,3	6,6

Source: OPJ/CES.

Chart 8 – Trainers’ evaluation



Source: OPJ/CES.

Overall, the trainers' evaluation was very positive, with a total of 63.5% of very positive answers in the item "accuracy in the presentation of topics", 58.4% in the item "precision in the treatment of contents" and 69.4% in the item "availability to answer questions". Participants valued the high expertise and pedagogical skills of the selected trainers but also, and with special relevance, their ability to answer questions and clarify their doubts. The interaction between trainers and trainees was most noticeable in the classroom sessions, with participants being actively involved in the discussions promoted during these sessions and sometimes even staying after the end to congratulate or talk to the trainer. The space for debate was always enjoyed and actively seek out by participants and allowed them to place their questions, share their experiences and take into consideration other points of view. This interaction was also sought in the forum of the e-learning platform, which allowed for the compilation of questions and topics to be answered or elaborated by trainers in future training sessions, although it didn't quite reach the levels of the classroom sessions. Also, apart from trainers that technically master the subject, the CFR team selected trainers who develop work in fields as sociology of law and the protection and promotion of fundamental rights, which allowed different perspectives and promoted the critical reflection on the Charter on a multidisciplinary basis. As such, trainers were able to efficiently increase the knowledge of participants on the contents, application and relevance of the Charter and stimulate both the critical reflection and the debate on the subject.

Crucial to the preparation of trainers was the "*Training the Trainers' workshop*", promoted in all four partner countries, which aimed to clarify the training guidelines, the objectives of the project and the training methodologies. Furthermore, we must highlight the role of the "pedagogical coordinator". As previously stated, with respect for the scientific and pedagogical autonomy of the trainers, the "pedagogical coordinator" performed an important role in the coordination of the training contents and, after attending several training sessions, was able to observe the training dynamics and suggest necessary adjustments for future sessions.

Participants wrote several positive comments concerning the profile of the trainers and their training methodology:

“Very positive regarding the theme. The trainers were very good [...]. Clear presentation, good articulation with the audience, simulating speech and presentation [...]” (Q 81)

“Great knowledge of the trainers on the subject and the at ease (of some, more than others) allowed a better explanation and interaction with the trainees” (Q 104)

“[...] All trainers were precise in their presentations and revealed availability to answer questions [...]” (Q 106)

“Contents presented with excellence by the trainers.” (Q 113)

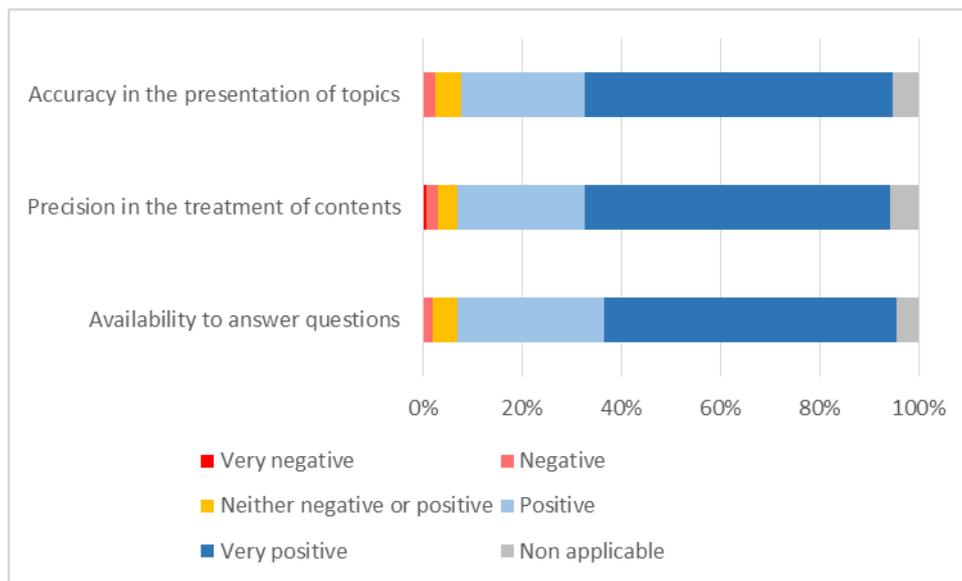
2.2. Spain

Chart 9 – Trainers’ evaluation

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Availability to answer questions	0,0	1,9	5,1	29,5	59,0	4,5
Precision in the treatment of contents	0,6	2,6	3,8	25,6	61,5	5,8
Accuracy in the presentation of topics	0,0	2,6	5,1	25,0	62,2	5,1

Source: IDHC

Chart 10 – Trainer’s evaluation



Source: IDHC

The assessment of the teaching staff, including the two coordinators, has been highly positive, since all the trainees have valued high-level teaching, among other things, because the teaching staff has extensive practical experience and a high degree of theoretical knowledge. The interaction between the teaching staff and the trainees in the training through the virtual platform and in the classroom sessions has been excellent, but it has not stood out for its great participation, with the exception of the course for judges who act as trainers, since the work agendas do not allow to participate in this type of training, in addition to being professionals still not used to this type of training. This contrasts with the participation in the classroom sessions, where the debate and the questions have been constant in all the sessions, especially among the judges. In any case, the virtual platform has been highly valued in general by the participants, highlighting its usefulness as support for the entire training programme.

Accuracy in the presentation of topics. The ability to express and make understood themselves, as well as the ability to resolve doubts and questions by the team of trainers has been valued very positively by all participants (25% positive and 62.2%

very positive). It also highlights the great dynamism of all trainers, with a proper balance between theory and practice with a special focus on the Charter.

Precision in the treatment of contents. The proficiency of the contents by all the trainers has been valued by the trainees in a very positive way (25.6% positive and 61.5% very positive). They highlight the extensive experience and knowledge of the subject by all trainers. It should be mentioned that the team of teachers of Barcelona has been rated a little better than the team of Madrid, and the high degree of complementarity that has been between them is underlined.

Availability to answer questions. As already mentioned before, in all cases the participants have highly valued the ability of trainers to answer questions raised in the classroom and highlighted their high level of knowledge, both theoretical and practical (29.5% positive and 59% very positive). In general, the dynamism of trainers, who have been able to generate useful debates in the classroom, which the participants have especially appreciated, is valued very positively.

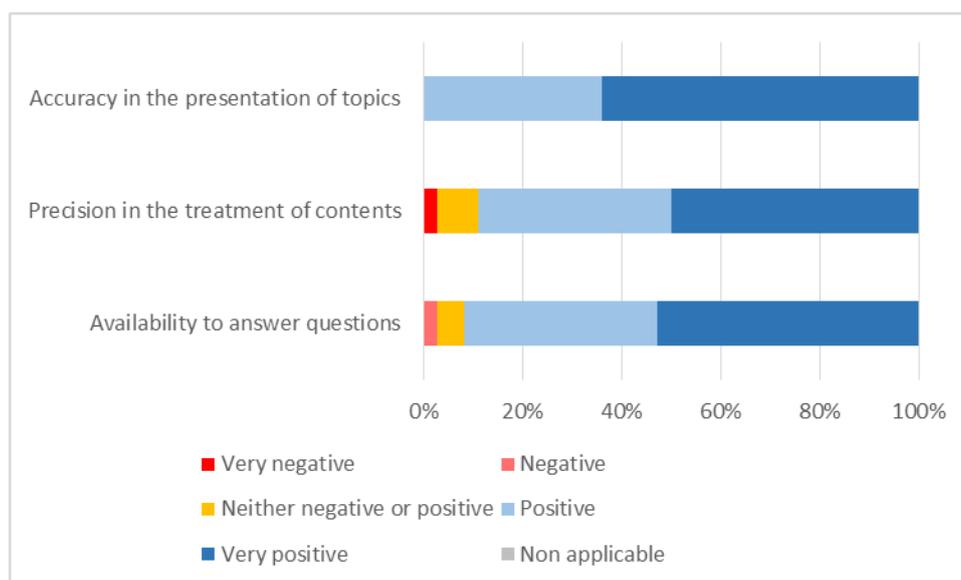
2.3. The Netherlands

Chart 11 – Trainers’ evaluation

	Very negative	Negative	Neither negative or positive	Positive	Very positive	Non applicable
Availability to answer questions	0,0	2,8	5,6	38,9	52,8	0,0
Precision in the treatment of contents	2,8	0,0	8,3	38,9	50,0	0,0
Accuracy in the presentation of topics	0,0	0,0	0,0	36,1	63,9	0,0

Source: UU.

Chart 12 – Trainers’ evaluation



Source: UU.

The positive outcomes regarding the trainers do not surprise us, as we were able to engage people who are nationally recognized as the top-specialists in EU law, Human Rights and the CFR.

3. Observations and suggestions

3.1. Portugal

As previously stated, the evaluation questionnaire also comprised open questions, which provided space for participants to write observations and suggestions on the following topics: “comments on programme contents and trainers”; “topics to be lectured in future training courses on this subject”; and “suggestions to improve this training programme”. Even though the number of responses to the evaluation questionnaire was considerable, with a total of 137 answers, most trainees only replied to the closed questions. Therefore, the observations and suggestions were low, representing only (approximately) 14 to 21% of the total number of questionnaires. Nonetheless, the CFR team was able to gather some information on how training was

being received and on how to improve the future training sessions. Most of the observations and suggestions were referred throughout the Portuguese part of the report wherein appropriate, to supplement and better understand the results of the closed questions. In this topic we highlight the importance of the open questions for the continuous assessment of the training needs of participants, which allowed for the adjustment of the contents of training in accordance with the topics suggested by participants.

Some of the suggested topics (most of them included in the training programme), were: the EU law in practice; the preliminary ruling mechanism of the CJEU; the practical application of the Charter in national decisions with examples; migrations and refugees; judicial cooperation in criminal matters, European Arrest Warrant, extradition, transfer of prisoners; data protection; freedom of expression and press; intra-family violence; the protection of social rights; the protection of consumer rights; environmental protection; human trafficking and illegal immigration aid; access to procedural information in cases of legal secrecy; rights of children; labour law, among others.

3.2. Spain

Some comments on the content of the programme, copied textually, were the following:

“While it is logical to deal more with the issue of the Charter and the preliminary question from the point of view of the judges, who are the ones who raise, it would have been appreciated that in some session the role of the Prosecutor had been dealt with somewhat more, may have shown reports of the Public Prosecutor raised in cases in which a preliminary question was finally raised.”

“An introductory session on the EU Legal System and its principles (attribution, subsidiarity, construed interpretation, etc.) would be appropriate.”

Some topics to take into account to be lectured in future training courses on this subject, collected textually from the surveys, could be:

“Carry out the preliminary ruling question, examples and case studies in more than one session.”

“Practice drafting requests to the judge for a provisional question.”

“Treat the direct actions before the CJEU by individuals.”

“Have someone specialized in community law to explain more specifically how this can be applied in the CDFUE successfully.”

“Judicial responsibility before the non-application or defective application of the community law, noticed that there is enough ignorance of the subject.”

Some of the suggestions or comments to improve the training programme collected textually, have been:

“Reiterate on the subject (CFR) and go deeper into a second programme.”

“This is the first course funded related to community law and to which I have had access in 10 years working as a judge. It has been enormously enriching.”

“It would be good to continue consolidating the subject so that the Charter is a useful element in Spanish courts.”

“Deep more in terms of methodology to try to escape from the classic method of the presentation.”

“To undertake at the beginning a general vision of European Law to better frame the CFR and thus to be able to organize in a more concrete way the final activity.”

“Congratulations, it has been one of the best training activities I have attended in my professional life.”

“You must advertise it more because it is a resource that is really worth it.”

3.3. The Netherlands

We understand from several remarks in the evaluation form, that some participants (lawyers) would have liked a more practice oriented approach, not only consisting of debates about case law, but with a deep focus on what are the best ways to present what arguments, in order to have better chances in court.

But the large majority of respondents is satisfied with the course, the trainers, the structures, the organisation, and the rooms.

However we received a comment from a judge where she stated that she felt awkward as a judge in a session with a lot of lawyers. Also there was a complaint about the amount of material for the preparation of the sessions.

Overall, we are satisfied with the outcomes of the evaluations, we think they show an overall satisfaction with the training programme developed.

Conclusion

In order to assess the training sessions carried out during the CFR “in action” project, the CFR team implemented an anonymous evaluation questionnaire, with both closed and open questions, aimed at understanding how participants reacted to the training. The evaluation of training is recognized as crucial by several training programmes (see, for example, European Commission, 2014; European Judicial Training Network, 2017). Not only does it provide important information on the assessment of the quality of the training provided, but also allows conclusions for the improvement of future training sessions, namely the continuous update of the training needs of participants. Although the effectiveness of the training programme can only be evaluated in a sustained way after some time, the perceptions of participants are an important parameter for the assessment of training and an easy and accurate representation of how training was received.

In Portugal, overall, the training programme was extremely well received by the participants, contributing to the improvement of their knowledge on the application of the Charter, and promoting the reflection and the exchange of experiences on the subject. The success of the training programme manifested itself not only in the results of the evaluation questionnaires, but also in the personal feedback of participants and the dissemination of the project among their peers. The constant feedback of participants, who requested additional bibliography on the subject and showed interest in the further development of some questions, expresses the importance of training on the protection of fundamental rights. In order to obtain the best training results, the e-learning platform will remain open after the end of the project, aiming to function as a forum for exchange of reflections, questions, materials, etc. Also, the participation of some judicial actors was a consequence of the dissemination of the results among other judicial actors.

Similarly, in the Netherlands, the training programme was considered very positive by the legal actors. In addition, we also received positive feedback from the organizer of

the training sessions that were held inside the courts, which was similar to the training sessions organised entirely by the Utrecht team. Overall, the experiences in the courts, with the participants and trainers and in the meetings was very positive. In that sense we feel that we have contributed significantly to the increase of knowledge on the CFR in judicial a prosecutions practice in the Netherlands.

In Spain, the training programme was, in general, extremely well valued by all participants, which manifested in the evaluation questionnaires, but also in the conversations held with the trainees throughout the sessions. They particularly highlighted the initiative (because there is no similar training in Spain), the teaching content and the high level of the trainers' teams. The semi-presential format has been assessed as extremely complete and enriching because it has allowed debates both in the classroom and in the virtual platform, such as the constant consultation of trainers by the trainees as well as the availability to obtain additional bibliography through virtual training. The programme has been useful in order to make both the High Council of the Judiciary and the Judicial School aware about the pertinence of this kind of training. An added value of the training is that the professionals can replicate the acquired knowledge to others, especially thanks to the training aimed to judges who act as trainers.

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