

Press release – 1 October 2026

# Karnov Group publishes “Inside the Legal Mind” – The European Legal Profession Survey 2026

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Seven out of ten lawyers see increased pressure on the rule of law – AI raises concerns about the next generation

*In a new industry report from Karnov Group, 3,129 lawyers in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France and Spain share their views on the rule of law, AI, working life and the next generation of legal expertise. The results show a growing concern about the development of the rule of law, but also about how AI can affect trust in the legal system and the skills of younger lawyers.*

Today Karnov Group launches *Inside the Legal Mind – The European Legal Profession Survey 2026*. The survey provides a broad picture of the issues that shape the future of the legal profession and shows both shared experiences and clear differences between countries, generations and different parts of the industry.

## Four key findings from the report:

- **72 percent** believe that the pressure on the rule of law has increased over the past three years.
- **39 percent** feel that people only have equal access to justice to a small or very small extent.
- **64 percent** see a high or very high risk of insufficient legal skills among younger lawyers as a result of AI.
- **37 percent** have considered leaving their current workplace in the past six months.

*"With this report we want to present a cross-European analysis of legal professionals' views on topics relevant to the legal industry. Legal professionals hold a central role as guardians and practitioners of the rule of law, and their perception of these developments provides an important "inside view" of the state of justice systems." says Pontus Bodelsson, CEO and President of Karnov Group.*

## The rule of law in Europe is perceived to be under increasing pressure

A total of 53 per cent believe that the rule of law is under pressure. At the same time, 72 per cent say that the pressure has increased over the past three years. Among those who already believe that the rule of law is under pressure, the corresponding proportion is 91 per cent.

The differences between the countries are great. In Spain, 85 percent believe that the rule of law is under pressure, and in France 78 percent. In Sweden, the corresponding proportion is 41 percent.

Among those who feel that the rule of law is under pressure, 80 percent point to political decisions as a contributing factor. This is followed by disinformation, 49 percent, and the influence and market power of large companies, 39 percent.

The report also shows widespread concern about access to justice. Almost four out of ten believe that people have only to a small or very small extent equal access to courts and other bodies where they can have their rights reviewed.

#### **AI creates opportunities – but raises questions about trust and competence**

AI is already part of many lawyers' everyday lives. Six out of ten use AI at least once a week, and 49 percent believe that the technology improves the quality of legal advice.

At the same time, the results show a clear concern about the consequences of the technology. Four out of ten believe that AI will have a negative impact on trust in the legal system. In addition, 64 percent see a high or very high risk that younger lawyers will not develop sufficient legal knowledge and skills as a result of the use of AI.

At the same time, younger lawyers are among those who use AI the most. The results therefore point to new requirements for education, supervision and knowledge transfer as AI takes over parts of the work that previously helped to build legal experience.

#### **More than one in three have considered leaving their workplace**

The report also examines what motivates lawyers and how they view working life and their career opportunities. Interesting work tasks are the main motivating factor and are cited by 48 percent. Contributing to the rule of law and the rule of law comes in second place, stated by 24 percent.

At the same time, 37 percent state that they have considered leaving their current workplace during the past six months. The results raise questions about how legal employers can offer development, meaningfulness and sustainable career paths at a time when both working methods and skills needs are changing.

The survey also shows clear differences between women's and men's views on career opportunities. 63 percent of the female respondents believe that it is more difficult for women to reach top positions in the legal profession.

#### **Four themes on the future of the legal profession**

*Inside the Legal Mind* Addresses four overarching areas:

1. increased pressure on the rule of law and access to justice
2. AI's entry into legal work and its impact on quality, trust and competence
3. motivation, working life and career structures
4. The next generation of lawyers and their view of the profession

The report contains in-depth results and comparisons between countries, generations and different parts of the legal profession.

**Read the full report at: <https://www.karnovgroup.com/inside-the-legal-mind>**

#### **About the survey**

*Inside the Legal Mind – The European Legal Profession Survey 2026* is based on responses from 3,129 legal professionals in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France and Spain. The survey was conducted in the spring of 2026 and the report has been produced by Karnov Group.

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