

1) Beginning lawyers tend to be concerned about the advent of artificial intelligence and the changes it will bring to the legal profession. Is there still any point in starting out in the legal profession?

Well, I'm not a fortune teller, so I should start with that disclaimer right away! But seriously: artificial intelligence has taken such huge leaps forward in just the last two years that it's hard to predict what its capabilities will be when today's first-year students start practicing. Still, I think that beginning lawyers should primarily ask themselves the same question that we asked ourselves when we began: whether the idea of working in the legal profession interests them and whether they believe they will enjoy the work. That is what will matter most for their job satisfaction and long-term success.

Artificial intelligence will probably somehow affect most professions based on intellectual work. But I am convinced that the legal profession will not disappear. Because law is just an instrument of justice, and justice will always be in the domain of human decision-making. Artificial intelligence can be an assistant for lawyers, but it will not replace final human decisions. Moreover, the deployment of AI will generate new types of issues that lawyers will have to deal with. And I dare say that in some fields of law where the "human factor" is central, such as family law and criminal law, artificial intelligence will not reduce the demand for lawyers anytime soon.

2) What is the best way to approach a legal career?

It is still essential to have a good overview of all branches of law. Even if part of the work is taken over by artificial intelligence in the future, you will still have to have the knowledge to be able to check the correctness of its outputs. And strong specialization without a certain degree of versatility can be limiting in some situations. That being said, specialization is indeed necessary today. Although you don't need to choose your niche while you're still studying, your studies should already help you to indicate where to direct your efforts. Because it is good to focus on an area that you understand and enjoy – then you will excel in it more easily.

And one more thing is important: "Soft skills". Technology may partially change the way we work and it is necessary to learn to use it. But it will never replace the ability to build and develop relationships with clients. A lawyer must have these social skills. A good lawyer is proactive – interested in, and understanding the needs of the clients, anticipating what they may need, energetically offering solutions, and willing to participate in the decision-making; clients usually do not expect academic legal analysis from a lawyer, but specific practical advice based on experience. More and more, a lawyer needs project management skills, the ability to coordinate experts from other legal areas ... This is also not taught at university. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of this side of the job and develop these skills as well.

3) Which legal fields have the most potential?

During my practice, the volume of legal regulation has increased quite significantly in all areas. I recall Dr. Baxa, then still the chairperson of the NSS, saying about ten years ago that the volume of legal regulation and its incomprehensibility are already leading to dysfunction. Nothing significant has changed since then. Therefore, there will still be a significant demand for advice in heavily-regulated areas, and in compliance. Then in areas related to data and IT: Personal data protection, cybersecurity, and the regulation of artificial intelligence... But traditional fields will remain strong too, for example, Labour law, and litigation (because conflicts will not go away). And Public procurement, and competition law. And I think that young colleagues can be successful with a number of "boutique" specializations; it's just that usually at the beginning of one's career one needs to be more broadly focused.

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