

BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF LEGAL ETHICS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

As artificial intelligence reshapes many industries, the legal field is facing its own crossroads. In recent years, an increasing number of legal professionals have adopted artificial intelligence tools to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Legal experts intend to integrate artificial intelligence into their daily operations and agree that the effective use of artificial intelligence will increase in the coming years as the most interesting phenomenon of this beginning of the century is the presence of Artificial Intelligence everywhere, in the judicial system, including in all legal professions. And for a correct perception of the role of lawyers in society, a sustained and long-term effort is needed by them, by the judicial system as a whole. In such a situation, maintaining ethical integrity in the activity of administering justice has a major role.

Keywords: *legal ethics, justice, legal professions, artificial intelligence, artificial intelligence law*

1. Argumentum.

We are interested in obtaining quality legal services in the shortest possible time. But do we really know what their value is? How much unseen effort is behind it? The office of the judge, lawyer or notary, to take just these examples, does not mean only the lawyer entrusted with the legal situation of the parties, it is an entire institution, made up of people with many responsibilities, whose training involves numerous human and material resources. For example, the judge is not a product of artificial intelligence that asks you to answer a set of pre-established questions to identify yourself and, possibly, put you on hold until a real person can answer you. The lawyer maintains a lively connection with the clients, from whom he obtains and to whom he communicates information, issues and records invoices, keeps the registers, archives the documents and much more. Is there an appointment for signing at the notary? Absolutely not, because, before signing, the notary goes through numerous public registers that must be checked for each person individually. Of course, under the conditions in which the platform works. Next comes the checks on the property. After the forced execution has been completed, the executor's job is not over, as he must complete the advertising formalities in the land registry, transmit or even directly make the entries in public registers and make countless reports, some of them based on instructions that are difficult to understand and follow. Statistical reports are made on various sections for the INS in order to facilitate statistical research. And if he has a problem, he has only one solution: to talk to the chatbot!²

If we look at all this, if we think a little about the responsibility that those who participate in the administration of justice bear when making these checks, communications or records, and if we understand that entering a single wrong number can generate serious consequences, we realize that the most important part of the legal field, for which they have prepared intensely, seems to remain somehow in the shadows. Finding legal solutions to the extremely complex problems that he faces every day, drafting documents, discussions with clients, these should occupy most of his time. On the other hand, he has assumed the importance of checks in the

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² Laura Badiu, *Duce notarul, dar cât mai poate duce?*, <https://www.juridice.ro/essentials/8212>.

matter of specific procedures, they lead to increased security of procedural documents, which is why the quality of checks should not be discounted, no matter how many there are. But, in addition to these, the multitude of administrative duties in recent years, their increasing responsibility for tasks that are not necessarily related to the skills they have acquired (if you are not good at it and you do not have a good IT employee, you have no chance of doing your job) put an extraordinary pressure on them. And it is difficult to understand why, in the context of the much-hyped digitalization of public authorities through the government cloud, work is still carried out disparately, with each institution uploading as much data as possible, but which remains isolated, usable only by the applicant, owner or creator. It is also difficult to understand why public institutions do not collaborate and do not access information from the archives of other institutions, thus so that the same data is not created and stored multiple times, doubling the workload but without any real efficiency. Isn't it specified everywhere by the authorities responsible for digitalization that in order to ensure an efficient and coherent flow of information, the integration of different data systems and ensuring their compatibility is of paramount importance in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure a fluent administration of public services?

The lack of interoperability of IT systems in public administration means, for example, that new tasks are imposed on public notaries, given that one of the purposes of the cadastre and land registry system is precisely the provision of data to public institutions of the state, as Law no. 7/1996 itself proclaims! Likewise, if the alienation of a property is already conditional on obtaining a tax attestation certificate from the local tax authority and an extract from the land registry issued by public registries, why are these tax/budgetary obligations not recorded in them? Why is it necessary to consult dozens of registers when all of this could be centralized in one? What is the point of digitization if the information is not correlated and must sometimes be searched manually, in PDF documents, as in the case of historical monuments? There are many questions, to which we will probably not receive answers. Many of these problems have already been reported. We wonder if and how much more the judicial system can take on the tasks and responsibilities that should be incumbent on other institutions? Or at least that they be truly utilized in the interest of the citizen! And after this gloomy picture of the administration of our justice, a possible panacea, the use of Artificial Intelligence in the legal professions.

2. Artificial Intelligence in the legal field

2.1. Clarifying questions regarding the presence of Artificial Intelligence in the legal field

Artificial intelligence, in a broad sense, represents the ability of computer systems to perform tasks that, traditionally, required human intelligence: pattern recognition, decision-making, learning from data. The European Parliament has defined artificial intelligence as “the ability of a machine to imitate human functions, such as reasoning, learning, planning and creativity. AI allows technical systems to perceive the environment in which they operate, to process this perception and to solve problems, acting to achieve a specific goal. AI systems are capable of adapting their behaviour to a certain extent, analysing the effects of previous actions and operating autonomously.”³

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a promise of the future, but a reality of the present. If a decade ago AI seemed reserved for technical fields, today we find it in medicine, education, art – and, inevitably, in the legal field. Justice, built on rigor, reasoning and tradition, seems, at first glance, incompatible with the automatism of an algorithm⁴. And yet, AI has not only penetrated legal practice, it is beginning to transform it. As artificial intelligence reshapes

³ „Ce este inteligența artificială și cum este utilizată?”, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics>

⁴ Serafima Prodan, *Etica utilizării AI de către avocați*, <https://www.juridice.ro/788880>

many industries, the legal field is facing its own crossroads. In recent years, a growing number of legal professionals have adopted artificial intelligence tools to increase efficiency and reduce costs. According to recent figures, almost 73% of legal experts intend to integrate artificial intelligence into their daily operations and agree that the effective use of artificial intelligence will increase in the coming years as the most interesting phenomenon of this beginning of the century is the presence of Artificial Intelligence everywhere. Therefore, also in the judicial system including in the forced execution of court decisions. There are already judges who use AI in drafting decisions, such as the case of Great Britain where this issue has been regulated. Indeed, AI represents an interesting phenomenon and at the same time a major challenge worldwide, as it has the capacity to produce significant changes in certain industries.

At the moment, in Romania, in the legal field there is no AI system implemented that would help us in the activity or study of legal issues, but a future implementation is not excluded if such a system supports the increase in the quality of the services provided. By the nature of the profession, lawyers have quite strong opinions, which can lead to disagreements ranging from small to large in interpersonal relationships. And yet they have to work and interact, and books teach us that we need to cultivate courtesy towards each other.

I think it is important to understand that legal professionals face the same set of human challenges as the vast majority of intellectual service providers. They are guided by the same feelings, emotions and aspirations that define them as professionals and as people. The legal job market is visible, dynamic and competitive. Current trends show that law firms are emphasizing efficiency, digitalization and professionals who not only know the law, but also understand the economic and business context in which they operate. Also, soft skills, such as negotiation, leadership and client relationship management skills, are becoming as important as legal expertise. On the other hand, for a constructive dialogue with office colleagues, judges, clerks, prosecutors and all the lawyers they come into contact with, a constructive dialogue is needed in which they listen twice as much as they speak, to make sure that they are understood, to be diplomatic in the conversation. Be aware that everything they do has a significant impact on the community. In a profession where knowledge is constantly evolving, investing in their own training is not only a necessity, but also an opportunity to become better prepared and more valuable integrated into the evolution of artificial intelligence.

2.2. The role of AI in the transformation of the legal professions

As a lawyer, scientific researcher and university teacher, I have discovered the potential of AI in the transformation of the legal professions. My experience with this tool has led me to a captivating duality: sometimes, I find AI fascinatingly good – a remarkable help in my work, but at other times, I notice that it makes major errors. This ambivalence has generated a wide spectrum of reactions in me, from fear in the face of a technology with such vast potential, to enthusiasm for such a promising tool and culminating in reflections on ethical implications, data protection and professional responsibility. In addition, we have noticed that almost all legal professions, especially in law and notary, have already started to develop various AI applications dedicated to improving and streamlining their work. Also, local platforms propose AI assistants specialized in the legal field, clear evidence that the integration of technology in the legal professions is no longer a mere perspective, but a rapidly expanding reality. According to the World Economic Forum forecasts⁵, by 2030, approximately 35% of the current legal tasks of the legal professions will be automated. In this context, the question that arises is: is AI a simple assistant to the legal professional or a competitor that questions the very existence of the profession? Beyond its undeniable usefulness, AI raises ethical challenges, risks generating professional imbalances and puts pressure on the concept of legal originality. We are, perhaps,

⁵ „Future of Jobs Report 2025”, Sursa: WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.

the first generation of lawyers who must decide how human reason coexists with algorithmic reasoning.

A separate branch of AI, which has been the subject of heated discussions recently, is generative AI (such as ChatGPT), which is capable of generating coherent text, constructing reasoning and drafting documents, including legal ones. It seems that lawyers are one step ahead, already using this tool for document review, jurisprudential analysis, rapid identification of applicable rules and even for drafting argument schemes. We are not talking about the future – we are talking about a present in which AI is part of the law firm. According to the World Economic Forum’s predictions⁶, – based on a large study involving over 1,000 companies in 55 countries and integrating the opinions of industry leaders, including the legal sector – by 2030, approximately 35% of the activities currently carried out by lawyers could be automated. These mainly target repetitive and low-complexity tasks: reviewing contracts, analyzing files or automatically drafting standard clauses. This is not surprising – AI can process huge amounts of information with a speed and accuracy that exceeds human capacity, thus optimizing the time dedicated to this type of activity.

But the transition does not mean disappearance, but rather transformation. The same report estimates that in parallel with automation, approximately 25% of new roles in the legal field will emerge, which will require technological skills combined with legal expertise. This will lead to the emergence of positions such as legal technology managers – those who implement and monitor AI solutions in law firms, legal analysts – who interpret the results generated by algorithms, or digital compliance experts – responsible for complying with data protection regulations and the ethical use of AI. Another study, conducted by Goldman Sachs, goes even further, suggesting that up to 44% of current legal work could be automated – a significant percentage, higher than in other industries. However, automation will not eliminate the role of the lawyer, but will give him or her exactly what is essential: the time and energy needed to focus on strategic aspects, personalized advice, negotiation and other activities with higher added value. Now, we are witnessing the reconceptualization of legal services. From simple one-off consultations, the profession is evolving towards long-term strategic advice, anticipating legal risks and building preventive solutions. It is an evolution that enriches the intellectual dimension of the profession. In this context, continuing education becomes a tool of excellence in itself. It can no longer be episodic, but must become a continuous and systematic process. High-quality expertise remains the surest path to international recognition and professional satisfaction. In addition, the digital transformation of justice through various means - online processes, electronic files, legal research tools based on artificial intelligence - all of these are not obstacles, but tools that can streamline the lawyer's work and improve citizens' access to justice. Instead of signaling the end of the profession, these trends rather foreshadow a mutation: from the task-executing lawyer to the strategic advisor lawyer, with unpredictable consequences, AI - an effective ally or a rival. AI can be a valuable assistant: it streamlines repetitive tasks, speeds up database searches, offers suggestions for the logical structuring of a text or strategies, thus freeing up the lawyer's time for activities that require critical thinking and intuition.

However, the way generative AI models work – by identifying patterns and imitating information already in their database – raises a key question: if AI can “mimic” legal thinking, could it also become a competitor for lawyers? Especially in the field of legal advice, the quick and accessible answers provided by AI may seem enough for clients looking for immediate and inexpensive solutions. Thus, lawyers who do not integrate these tools risk becoming uncompetitive against those who use them effectively. This trend is confirmed by a study

⁶ S. Prodan, op. cit., p. 3.

conducted by the Thomson Reuters Institute⁷, according to which 84% of law firms plan to increase investments in AI technologies, considering them a strategic advantage. But the enthusiasm comes with real risks: excessive reliance on AI can lead to a decrease in the rigor of legal analysis and even serious errors.

Even if we have not entered the heart of the ethical issues of the legal professions, it is legitimate to ask whether it is moral for a lawyer to charge the same rate for work performed partially or significantly with the help of an automated tool. How do we quantify, in a fair and transparent way, “human work” when repetitive tasks - such as drafting standard documents, analyzing large volumes of data or legislative research - are taken over by an AI system? On the one hand, the effective use of AI could contribute to the democratization of access to justice, allowing lawyers to provide services faster and at lower costs. Ideally, this technological progress would mean that more people - especially those on low incomes - could benefit from qualified legal assistance. On the other hand, there is a risk that the efficiency achieved through technology is used only to increase profit margins, without actually reducing fees. Clients could end up paying high prices for standardized services, delivered mainly by algorithms, without substantial intervention by the lawyer. In such a scenario, technology becomes a screen behind which the value of human work is diluted, while maintaining high costs, to the detriment of transparency and fairness. This confusion between “automated assistance” and “professional legal assistance” can erode trust in lawyers and in justice in general.

From a legal point of view, Article 50 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 on artificial intelligence establishes transparency obligations mainly on the part of providers of AI systems and, under certain conditions, on the part of users who make AI-generated content available⁸. The obligation to information to the public usually occurs when the interaction takes place in an open setting or when AI generates content with the potential for manipulation or misleading. Therefore, a lawyer who uses an AI tool in the internal legal drafting or analysis activity is not automatically obliged, according to art. 50, to inform his client that he has used such a tool, as long as there is no direct interaction between the client and the AI system, and the final content is assumed by the lawyer. However, in the near future, as case law, ethical norms and judicial practices adapt to the use of artificial intelligence, it is possible that the standards of information and professional assumption will become stricter, including in the legal field.⁹ Last but not least, there is the dilemma of the quality of the final result. Although a text generated with the help of AI may be coherent and well-structured, it often misses essential nuances, hidden contradictions and legal subtleties that can make the difference in a complex case or legal opinion. AI cannot be held liable for the errors it generates. Therefore, the lawyer remains responsible for any legal consequences of the delivered products. This requires not only a rigorous verification of any automatically generated content, but also a good understanding of how these models work – their limitations, the risks of hallucination, algorithmic bias or the lack of local legal context. Therefore, AI can be a valuable tool, but in the legal profession it cannot replace discernment, professional responsibility and the relationship of trust with the client. That is why its use requires transparency, ethical discernment and strict compliance with legal and deontological norms. Another subtle but profound risk is the dilution of legal creativity. To the extent that AI is trained on existing case law and texts, it sometimes faithfully reproduces, sometimes with stylistic variations, already established argumentative structures. This trend can lead to the standardization of legal thinking, inhibiting the innovation and

⁷ Report on the State of the US Legal Market Embracing Change in the Era of Innovation, Thomson Institute, 2025.

⁸ Regulamentul (UE) 2024/1689 al Parlamentului European și al Consiliului din 13 iunie 2024 de stabilire a unor norme armonizate privind inteligența artificială (Regulamentul privind inteligența artificială).

⁹ S. Prodan, op. cit., p. 5.

intuition of the lawyer, which are essential in high-stakes cases and, in general, in the development of the legal system. Faced with these challenges, the legal community must clearly answer: not if, but how can AI be integrated into the profession, without affecting fundamental values such as confidentiality, independence and loyalty to the client. In this regard, the need for an ethical framework is increasingly clear, which answers at least the following questions: is it necessary to inform the client when the lawyer uses AI in the provision of the service? What quality standards must be respected in AI-assisted drafting? What level of technological competence is expected from a lawyer? Who is responsible for errors generated by AI? All professional organisations and courts must work together to develop clear guidance on the use of artificial intelligence in legal practice. In this regard, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe¹⁰ has urged national, European and international institutions and regulatory authorities to contribute to the development of a coherent set of rules and principles to responsibly and ethically govern the integration of AI into the legal profession¹¹. The European Union introduced the first legal framework for artificial intelligence, directly applicable in the Member States, through Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of 13 June 2024¹². Developed over years of debate, driven by models such as ChatGPT, the regulation promotes safe and ethical AI. Although this regulation represents an important step, it is too general to be sufficient in the legal profession, where ethics, data protection and accountability require clear and precise rules. In the current legal landscape in Romania, artificial intelligence is not able to provide reliable solutions to complex legal questions, which require nuanced interpretations, the corroboration of several normative acts and a deep understanding of the legislative and jurisprudential context. The limitations of AI become even more evident in the face of the lack of uniformity of legal language, the ambiguity of some key terms and variations in meaning depending on the branch of law or the applicable regulation. There are areas where AI simply cannot provide clear answers: value conflicts, interpretations of fairness, complex legislative corroborations. In Romanian law, for example, the interpretation of terms such as “good faith” or “just compensation” cannot be reduced to an algorithmic formula. Moreover, the legislation itself is often inconsistent, fragmented, with terms appearing in isolation and without clear definitions. AI, which operates on the basis of correlations, can miss precisely these subtle connections, essential in sound legal reasoning. In this context, artificial intelligence can produce subtle but significant errors in the interpretation of legal norms - errors that may go unnoticed by a layperson. Moreover, the appearance of authority of the language generated by AI can mislead the user, causing him to accept wrong conclusions or even question the opinion of a qualified lawyer. Therefore, at the current stage, AI is not a substitute for a practicing lawyer, but at most an auxiliary tool that requires validation and supervision by a legal professional. Now that we understand that generative AI works by assimilating and processing already existing content – including legal articles, doctrinal opinions and court decisions, it becomes clear that the intellectual activity of lawyers indirectly feeds AI. Paradoxically, the efforts made by lawyers to clarify and develop the law contribute to building a mechanism that, over time, can diminish their relevance.

From this perspective, the question naturally arises: is there any point in writing legal articles if they are going to be digested by AI and reused without recognition? The answer, although uncomfortable, must be affirmative. Law is a living organism, and its development depends on interpretations, adaptations and nuances – precisely those elements that AI, for now,

¹⁰ CCBE (Consiliul Barourilor și Societăților de Avocatură din Europa).

¹¹ Declarația CCBE privind utilizarea inteligenței artificiale în justiție și în aplicarea legii/25.05.2023.

¹² Mircea Duțu „Dreptul IA se prefigurează ca o mare provocare civilizațională și se cuvine tratat ca atare”, <https://www.juridice.ro/essentials>.

only imitates. And, perhaps most importantly, artificial intelligence has no empathy. He does not know the moral context in which a dispute is taking place, he does not feel the human tension in a courtroom, he does not perceive the hesitations in an answer or the silences loaded with meaning in a negotiation. However, law is not a simple mechanical application of the norm – but a permanent negotiation of its meaning in relation to the complexity of real life. A good legal professional does not only offer solutions that comply with the law, but filters them through a deep understanding of the context, emotions and human stakes. Making a legal decision often means weighing not only what is legal, but also what is fair, opportune and reasonable. And these value judgments cannot be generated by an algorithm, no matter how well-trained, in an artificial intelligence race that has surpassed even the most powerful Formula 1 cars.

3. The real challenge of artificial intelligence

Globally, things are completely different - the division of spheres of influence in the world and the assumption of the role of a great world power - have made the discussions in Washington about artificial intelligence increasingly turn towards how the United States can win the AI race with China. One of President Donald Trump's first actions upon returning to office was to sign an executive order declaring the need to "sustain and strengthen America's global dominance in the field of artificial intelligence." At the AI Action Summit in Paris in February 2025, Vice President JD Vance emphasized the administration's commitment to ensuring that "American AI technology continues to be the gold standard worldwide." And in May, David Sacks, Trump's AI and cryptocurrency czar, invoked the need to "win the AI race" to justify exporting advanced AI chips to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia¹³. Given the prospect that AI could transform the power and prosperity of nations in the coming decades, it is better to win the race than to lose it. But determining who comes out on top depends on what winning means. A common conclusion is to be the first to cross the threshold of artificial intelligence. AI could unlock extraordinary breakthroughs in science, technology, and economic productivity—and the first country to develop it could reap significant benefits. Moreover, the military and intelligence agencies are capitalizing on the transformative potential of AI with a view to mitigating its destructive effects. Similarly, countries could gain a competitive advantage if they can adopt AI on a large scale across their economies and societies. And all must avoid a race to the bottom on AI safety by working together to manage the security risks posed by misused or rogue AI. Considering these aspects of AI makes the United States' position look precarious. While American companies maintain a significant lead on the frontier of AI research and development, Washington could lose other AI races. China has a significant advantage, and none of the superpowers seem eager to cooperate to avoid catastrophe. Given AI's world-changing potential, the stakes are high: losing it risks leaving the United States with economic dependence, military vulnerability, and diminished global leadership. To do so, the United States will need to put together a coherent AI strategy, one that balances innovation, integration, and risk mitigation to translate the country's immense technological dynamism into a sustainable strategic advantage. The race to AGI is more visible and immediate in the AI race. Private companies like OpenAI, Anthropic, and Google DeepMind in the United States, and DeepSeek in China, are rushing to innovate, backed by their governments. No one knows exactly how the technology will evolve. Large language models could be the first signs of emerging AGI, and they could manifest themselves when AI models surpass a certain threshold. In any case, AGI has enough potential to transform sources of national power and competitiveness that the world's two AI leaders have a substantial interest in securing their advantage. American AI labs currently have a fragile lead, aided by semiconductor export

¹³ Colin H. Kahl, *Adevărata cursă a inteligenței artificiale*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united>.

controls designed to maintain the United States' computational advantage over China. Its leading AI companies, such as DeepSeek, are developing technologies that are only months behind their U.S. counterparts. And Beijing's centralized approach could help China consolidate and leverage private-sector innovations more quickly than Washington can. Meanwhile, the United States' open system encourages innovation but is inherently vulnerable to espionage and the rapid diffusion of algorithmic advances. Advances in algorithmic design or alternative paradigms for developing AI could diminish the importance of U.S. semiconductor dominance, and their spread could allow Chinese AI labs to outpace American competitors. Even if the United States can maintain its leadership in the innovation race, that may not be enough. Current market trends suggest that frontier AI models are becoming so accessible and undifferentiated that they offer no clear technological advantage to anyone. If this trend continues when general AI emerges, victory will depend on its effective adaptation, and there is no guarantee that the United States will emerge victorious.

In the realm of national security, adapting AI requires both understanding the capabilities enabled by and the threats posed by AI, and integrating AI into existing structures in ways that provide a decisive military advantage. AI integration promises to improve information processing, accelerate data-driven decision-making, optimize logistics and resource allocation, enable sophisticated autonomous systems, and possibly even lead to the development of a "wonder weapon"—such as a cyber weapon that could cripple an adversary's critical infrastructure and command and control, or, used defensively, render a country invulnerable to cyberattacks. Meanwhile, China's authoritarian system facilitates civil-military integration, giving it a structural advantage in adopting AI. The People's Liberation Army has embraced AI and is actively seeking contributions from the commercial and academic sectors. Staying at the forefront of innovation is necessary, but not sufficient, to win the national security race. The winner of the AI race will need to integrate AI into the national economy – to ensure that AI is widely accessible and diffused across sectors such as education, energy, finance, healthcare, logistics and manufacturing.

The world's tech powers are racing to provide the digital infrastructure that will support the development, deployment and global use of AI. While this is primarily a competition between the United States and China, other established tech powers (France, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Taiwan and the United Kingdom) and ambitious emerging players (Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) are also joining the fray. Each participant aims to control the data, chips and data centres, as well as the fundamental models needed to use AI, and to influence global AI norms and standards. A rapidly approaching threat is the potential emergence of a superintelligence that is not aligned with human values or intentions, performing actions that endanger human well-being due to faulty design, ambiguous instructions, or unintended consequences. The growing evidence of frontier AI models exhibiting deceptive behavior makes this risk increasingly credible. Even if rogue AI does not lead to a global calamity, a major AI-related incident, whether accidental or negligent, would undermine trust in the technology.

Finally, policymakers must also act to help workers who will lose their jobs to AI in industrial sectors. This means significantly increasing investment in education, training, and reskilling and upskilling programs – services that would allow those made redundant by automation to quickly move into new roles, such as maintaining robots or supervising AI systems. To provide clarity for businesses and protection for workers in an AI-centric economy, labor laws and regulations need to be constantly updated. As companies increasingly use algorithms to schedule work shifts and more employees work on short-term contracts, wage and hour laws should be modernized to ensure transparent and fair compensation and clearly defined work schedules. Workplace safety guidelines will need to be revised to include

standards for safe human-robot interaction in factories. Strengthening unemployment benefits and other forms of direct income support for people disproportionately affected by automation will be crucial to mitigating the destabilizing consequences of significant workforce layoffs. AI powers must avoid compromising on safety in their rush to compete ethically.

4. Ethics of the Legal Professions in the Digital Age

4.1. Introductory Issues on Ethics

Since ancient times, the idea has been formed that ethics is based on reflection on the practical aspects of knowledge and action, aiming at learning through learning, namely the education of capacities regarding the human will and spirit. The term ethics comes from the Greek *ethos*, which means habit, custom or custom. In turn, the term moral is designated in Latin by the noun *mos*, *mores*, which signifies morals, that is, the customs and habits of a human community or a people. And in German, it seems that the term "morals" is at the origin of the word "morality", or "moral". The following meanings are related to the specificity and domain of morals: morals, law, rule, prescription.¹⁴ Ethics has been a branch of philosophy since antiquity, with the field of research being practical and theoretical issues of the moral world. It is a field of reflection, focused on what moral values, norms and principles represent in human life and society. Arising from the necessity of living together, moral norms are the basis for regulating relationships between people. The issue of morality is closely linked to the human being, morality encompassing both social and individual requirements. The reference to social requirements takes into account those related to the necessity of living together, an aspect that raises the question of the normality of interhuman and social relations. If the moral attitude, respectively the moral action, is that which proves the confrontation of man with the norms, the subjectivity of the one who does this is equally important. "A universe of desiderata and not of imperatives, morality involves in its structure the permanent and direct exercise of resolving concrete life situations according to the reason and affectivity of each individual when he becomes aware of the intimate need to assume himself by projecting himself exemplarily into the network of relationships with his peers."¹⁵

Ethics, as a philosophical discipline, respectively a science or theory about moral life, considers those constitutive elements that make up the moral universe; it is about moral norms, principles and values, all of which manifest themselves in the moral consciousness of people and the society that supports this consciousness. The problem of moral consciousness is complex; "it is one of the most important dimensions of human consciousness, which can manifest itself in various ways, having as its main function the censorship of our acts placed under the sign of moral values; of what is permitted and what is forbidden to man."¹⁶ But AI has no soul, it lacks morality. And then how do we, legal professionals, proceed in a world in constant change? The balance between the use of AI in the legal field and the preservation of human reasoning, as well as ethical issues, will be discussed further.

4.2. Ethics of legal professions

Ethics is a field of philosophy, more precisely of moral philosophy. The question then arises as to why it would interest a specialized field, such as law? The answer is that the legal professional must also pursue the good in his professional activity, as in any human activity, in order to be in agreement with his "root". Only in this way can his activity be considered moral or ethical. Otherwise, if he were to pursue only one of the other values (for example, he would pursue only the truth), but would not also take into account the value of the good, it cannot be said that he has performed a moral act, because the values can only be taken together¹⁷. It should

¹⁴ Livia Durac, *Etică și integritate academică*, <https://www.upa.ro/wp-content/uploads>.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 7.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Cristinel Ghigheci, *Ce este etica profesiilor juridice?*, <https://www.juridice.ro/492023>.

be emphasized, however, that, at present, within the ethics of the legal professions, not only abstract, purely theoretical issues are debated, but especially issues of applied ethics in the field of the legal professions. As has been said, moral philosophy has been marked, in recent years, by the singular development of its subfield known as "applied ethics", which tends to present itself as a new paradigm within practical philosophy, as a new model of conceiving morality, alongside and sometimes in competition with deontological and theological models. Since morality has been the subject of so many theological and philosophical debates over time, the conclusions of these debates cannot be ignored within the framework of ethics, even if it is strictly applied to the legal professions.¹⁸ The ethics of the legal professions therefore derives from the same need of man to seek the good, which animates him in most of his actions. Within it, man seeks the good in the exercise of the legal profession. I do not believe that the ethics of the legal professions would have as its source a need for professional recognition of individuals, because the need for recognition would be one of the forces behind political movements in the contemporary world.¹⁹ Recognizing this source of professional ethics means retaining the egoism of the person as its foundation, which would contradict the foundation of morality, which is based on altruistic foundations. Therefore, the source that underlies the acquisition of the ethics of the legal professions cannot be the professional's need to obtain recognition in the profession, but the achievement of the good.

5. Instead of conclusions, what is the role of the ethics of the legal professions?

The issue that I have submitted for debate is of particular interest since the role of the ethics of the legal professions is that of "former of professional conscience, of serving the truth without serving it and, thus, of subjectively avoiding any dissonance between professional performances and aspirations and the concrete reality it serves."²⁰ Indeed, ethics helps the legal professional to serve the truth at the factual level, not just at the theoretical level. Although correct, this is a too generic justification of the ethics of the legal professions. More specifically, the justification of legal deontology consists, in the vision of the same authors²¹ in that it helps the professional to: form the professional personality; achieve good through the profession; satisfy the aspirations of self-transcendence; mediate between morality and law; humanize the legal norm through knowledge of man; achieve justice through legal values; satisfy the feeling of justice; avoid judicial errors; offer vocational motivations to the profession; satisfy the need for social appreciation of the judge and, through him, of the profession; favor professional meta-discoveries; contribute to social-community progress; notify and resolve abuses of human rights violations; resolve conflicts of professional duties, in the sense that the natural ones precede the positive ones, the prohibitive ones precede the affirmative ones, the certain ones precede the uncertain ones, those of equity precede those of justice.

From the above, the conclusion follows that the legal professional has first natural duties, arising from natural law, and then duties provided for by law, and that the former should have priority over the latter, when there should happen to be an apparent conflict between them. Then, another conclusion is that first there is the professional's duty not to do something wrong and then the duty to do good, and if it should happen that the two duties come into conflict, the legal professional should choose the former. Likewise, between a certain, certain duty and an uncertain one, which perhaps exists only in the professional's imagination, the latter should choose the former. Finally, justice is the essential legal value, while equity is the essential moral value, and in case of conflict between the two values, the moral value of equity would have priority over the legal value of justice. For these reasons, we believe that by cultivating the

¹⁸ Idem, p. 2.

¹⁹ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism. Différence et démocratie*, Flammarion, 1994.

²⁰ Gheorghe Scripcaru, Vasile Ciucă, *Deontologie judiciară. Syllabus*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași, 2009, p. 232.

²¹ Idem, p. 42.

values of professional ethics, we can achieve the promotion of the principles underlying the science of law in the solutions adopted by the judicial bodies. The ethics of the legal professions thus contributes to strengthening the prestige of justice, ensuring the efficiency of the rule of law, because "Justice is placed right above the other powers systematized by Montesquieu, as long as no one is above the law and before which all are equal. In other words, the legal order in society depends on the integrity and fairness of the distribution of justice and, conversely, the loss of the authority of justice leads to social disorder."²²

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²² Ibidem.