



Litigation Officer: Job Description

Job title	LITIGATION OFFICER Full-time
Role summary	<p>Validity is seeking an experienced lawyer specialised in disability rights litigation to join our team. Across Validity’s European portfolio, the lawyer will help identify where litigation has the potential to advance Validity’s strategic objectives and manage cases to achieve that change. The Litigation Officer will work closely with national lawyers who represent our clients in courts, providing support, setting strategy, agreeing arguments and drafting international submissions so as to ensure strategic impact. A key component of the role includes identifying and capitalising on opportunities to compel implementation of judgments at national, regional and international levels.</p> <p>The Litigation Officer will have a sound knowledge of litigation processes in at least one European jurisdiction and be able to adapt this knowledge in a flexible manner to diverse contexts. S/he will be able to manage litigation partnerships in a collaborative manner with minimal supervision to achieve specified strategic objectives. S/he will be adept at translating a broad vision for change into concrete actions, keeping the bigger picture in sight, and adapting work swiftly and decisively when necessary.</p>
Location	Validity’s offices, Budapest, Hungary. Remote working is an option for applicants not currently based in Hungary.
Geographical scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target countries in Central and Eastern Europe, regional and international tribunals, and occasional advisory role in other jurisdictions.
Supervisor	Co-Executive Director – Litigation
External liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawyers and other legal professionals Representatives of NGOs and other civil society organisations Organisations of persons with disabilities Contracted consultants and researchers Representatives of the EU, Council of Europe, UN and other regional or international organisations as appropriate
Job Description	
<p><u>Litigation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses social, policy and legal systems and practices in target countries from the perspective of Validity’s strategic objectives and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to identify points where litigation has the potential to create systemic change. Works closely with Validity’s Impact Manager, other staff and partners to co-create strategies for change in each of Validity’s focus areas of work (legal capacity, community living, and inclusive education). Develops Validity’s legal networks at national, regional and international levels, and identifies opportunities for collaboration and shared litigation. Together with national lawyers, maps out litigation pathways and legal arguments to achieve the change sought and submits case proposals to the co-Executive Director (Litigation) for approval. Initiates and manages impactful litigation at administrative, civil, criminal, quasi-judicial and other legal fora in collaboration with national lawyers. Develops Validity’s networks with OPDs, legal aid organisations and NGOs providing social and psychological support to persons with disabilities. Ensures clients’ support needs are identified and addressed through direct support or referrals as appropriate. Seeks opportunities to influence international jurisprudence, including through third party interventions, at the European Court of Human Rights, the Court of Justice of the EU, the European Committee of Social Rights, and UN Treaty Bodies. 	



- Drafts international legal submissions.
- Follows up on implementation of national, regional and international judgments to ensure strategic impact through advocacy, capacity-building and follow up litigation as appropriate.
- Monitors and records strategic and other impacts of litigation.
- Drafts info-bulletins, press releases, legal articles and other communications for public dissemination.

Case management

- Ensures accurate documentation of cases, including maintaining the case docket for upcoming activities and up to date records of case progress using the case sheet for each case.
- Participates in external case file reviews to monitor progress, identify barriers and brainstorm solutions.
- Maintains comprehensive electronic case files to a high professional standard using Sharepoint, complete with scanned original documentation, accurate case sheets, client engagement letters and summary translations of national language documents.
- Keeps the Co-Executive Director (Litigation) abreast of developments in a timely fashion, raising opportunities and risks as they occur.
- Maintains regular communication with national lawyers and other stakeholders.

Other

- Cooperates closely with the Impact Manager and non-litigation staff to support advocacy and related activities.
- Contributes to reports to Validity's Board of Directors, donors and other stakeholders as requested.
- Assists in identifying potential fund-raising opportunities and preparing fund-raising applications and reports as requested by the Co-Executive Directors.
- Implements a strong collaborative work-ethic with the team and with partners externally, providing support to and seeking support from colleagues when necessary.
- Represents Validity flexibly and to a high professional standard to a diverse range of external partners and stakeholders.
- Willing to travel regularly within Central and Eastern Europe and occasionally internationally (travel is dependent on the progress of the Covid-19 pandemic and is currently suspended).
- Carries out other tasks as requested by the Co-Executive Director (Litigation).

Person Specification (for reference)

Note: Candidates must hold the right to reside and work within the European Union; preference will be given to people who self-identify as having a disability.

Qualifications and experience

- Postgraduate degree in law, human rights, rule of law, justice or related field (or an undergraduate degree plus a minimum of three years' relevant work experience).
- Minimum three years' experience working in the field of human rights and/or disability law or related field of which at least two years must be at regional or international level.
- Minimum one year experience in national litigation.
- Highly desirable: Membership of a national Bar association.
- Highly desirable: knowledge and experience of law and/or disability in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Desirable: Experience as a person with, or working with people with, mental disabilities and experience working with people from different cultures.

Knowledge, skills and attributes

- The highest commitment to Validity's mission and campaign goals, with a clear understanding of the need to end discrimination and promote equality for persons with mental disabilities.
- Fluency in written and spoken English; proficiency in one of the following languages highly desirable – Czech, Romanian, Slovak, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Slovenian.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong understanding of disability rights and international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the European Convention on Human Rights.• Knowledge of EU law and the CJEU an asset.• Excellent English legal writing skills.• Creativity and confidence to design and implement impactful litigation.• Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to work well with a wide variety of stakeholders in a multi-lingual, international environment.• The ability to make sense of imperfect and ambiguous information and to work across languages with translation.• A proactive and highly-organised approach to managing multiple and competing priorities within a fast-paced working environment, maintaining attention to detail within strict deadlines.• Strong and clearly evidenced analytical skill, with the ability to assess law and public policy, identify key legal duty-bearers, and develop innovative legal solutions.• A confident yet diplomatic approach exhibiting strong professionalism at all times with colleagues and externally.	
Review period	Annually