



# ENCJ NEWSLETTER



## ENCJ Newsletter April – June 2026

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European Network of Councils  
for the Judiciary (ENCJ)

Réseau européen des Conseils  
de la Justice (RECJ)

## European Network of Councils for the Judiciary

### ENCJ General Assembly: Adoption of the Declaration of Paris 2026 “Trust in the Judiciary”

“Trust in the Judiciary” was the topic chosen for the 2026 ENCJ General Assembly, held in Paris on 3-5 June. The stunning *Grand’Chambre* of the French Supreme Court (*Cour de Cassation*) served as a venue for discussing ‘Trust in the Judiciary’. The overarching topic consisted of three building blocks: digitalization, communication and perception of the court users.

ENCJ President Madeleine Mathieu emphasized the importance of the event for the exchange of opinions and the strengthening of public confidence in judicial systems. The discussions were opened by the Presidents of the French Council for the Judiciary (*Conseil supérieur de la Magistrature*), Christophe Soulard and Rémy Heitz, as well as the President of the European Association of Judges, Sabine Matejka, and of the Consultative Committee of European Judges (CCJE), José Igreja Matos. ACA-Europe was represented by Ilias Mazos.

During the Members Only Session, the new ENCJ President, Brian O’Moore, was elected together with seven new members of the Executive Board: Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature, France (nominated representative Ms. Madeleine Mathieu) National Judicial Council, Hungary (Ms. Ágnes Hild), Consiglio di Presidenza della Giustizia Amministrativa, Italy (Ms. Laura Patelli), Teslietu Padome, Latvia (Mr. Aigars Strupišs), Raad voor de Rechtspraak, Netherlands (Mr. Rémy van Leest) and Sodni Svet, Slovenia (Mr. Matej Čujovič). The newly elected President and Executive Board will serve until 2028. The representative from CGPJ Spain (Mr. José Maria Fernandez Seijo) will still be part of the Executive Board until 2027.

The Assembly was further enriched by the intervention of two speakers invited by the ENCJ: Laurence Pecaut-Rivolier, president of the French authority for the regulation of audiovisual communication and digital affairs (ARCOM), spoke on the challenges in digitalization, and Hans Nijenhuis gave a presentation titled “Communication and Trust in the Judiciary”.

The Members and observers were also delighted to assist a keynote from Koen Lenaerts, President of the Court of Justice of the European Union, entitled “In Courts we Trust: The Guardians of European Values”, which focused on the respect for the rule of law enshrined in

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, and the important role of Judicial Councils of its enforcement.

After fruitful discussions in the subgroups, the ENCJ Members adopted the [Declaration of Paris 2026](#). The document emphasises that at a time when democratic institutions face growing scepticism and increasing pressure, maintaining public trust in the judiciary is more important than ever.

According to the Declaration, judicial independence and accountability are inseparable, and public trust depends on both. For this reason, institutions responsible for judicial governance must be independent, supported by adequate resources and protected from political interference.

The important role of Councils for the judiciary in the selection of judges and judicial careers is underlined. Upholding high standards of judicial ethics is essential.

In order to strengthen the public trust, the Declaration emphasises how transparency, digitalisation, proper use of artificial intelligence and communication between judges and citizens are crucial.

The conclusion stresses that sustaining public trust in the judiciary depends on ongoing commitment to independence, professionalism, transparency, and accountability. It highlights that Councils for the Judiciary should take a leading role in managing key transformations, especially in communication and digitalisation.

It also emphasizes that, while embracing technological innovation such as artificial intelligence, these Councils must ensure that such tools support rather than undermine judicial independence, human decision-making, and fundamental rule-of-law values. To conclude, modernization must go hand in hand with strict respect for these core principles to preserve public trust.





## **European Forum of the Legal Professions**

The 5th annual conference of the European Forum of the Legal Professions, organised by the Academy of European Law (ERA), will be hosted by the Council of the Notariats of the European Union (CNUE) in Brussels on 16 November 2026 (with online participation available).

The event brings together leading representatives of European legal and judicial organisations to address the growing threats facing legal professionals and the justice systems they uphold.

The Forum of Legal Professions is an inter-professional platform establishing a dialogue for legal professionals to discuss common challenges and concerns to formulate joint positions.

Against a backdrop of declining respect for the rule of law, rising digital risks, and increasing pressure on the independence of the judiciary, the participants agreed on the following topic: Protecting Legal Professionals to Safeguard Justice Systems: Integrity, Cybersecurity and Personal Protection. The event will examine three interconnected challenges: the physical and personal protection of judges, lawyers, and other justice professionals; cybersecurity and data protection within justice systems; and the integrity of European legal institutions in the face of political pressure, corruption, and public trust deficits.

The ENCJ hosted the Spring Meeting of the European Forum of the Legal Professions in Brussels on Monday, 16 March 2026. The meeting brought together representatives of the participating organisations to discuss possible themes for the next Annual Conference, as well as other practical and organisational matters.

Through a keynote address, scene-setting presentations, and three dedicated roundtables, participants will explore topics including the Luxembourg Convention, harassment of justice professionals, digital sovereignty, the use of AI in justice, judicial appointment procedures, and the threat of infiltration by criminal organisations. The event aims to foster cross-professional dialogue and identify best practices that can strengthen the resilience and independence of justice systems across Europe.

Click [here](#) for more information about the European Forum of the Legal Professions.





## European Commission

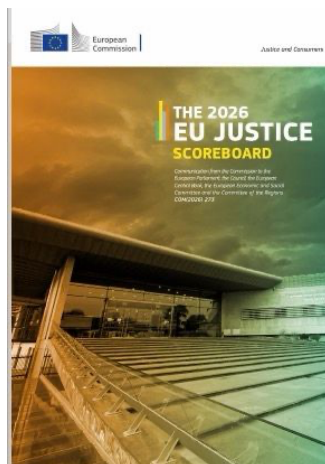
### EU Justice Scoreboard 2026

The European Commission published the 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard on June 4. Every year, as part of the EU's Rule of Law toolbox, the Justice Scoreboard includes indicators on the efficiency, quality, and independence of justice systems of the Member States of the European Union.

Furthermore, the Scoreboard plays a central role in the Commission's work in monitoring and strengthening the justice systems. It provides useful information for the annual Rule of Law Report, and it serves as a practical resource for Member States for comparative data and highlighting best practices to support national reforms.

The ENCJ has contributed once again to this project by providing key data on judicial independence through its Members and Observers. For the first time, the scoreboard presented a comparative indicator from ENCJ measuring safeguards regarding probationary periods for judges (figure 55 on page 48).

Click [here](#) to read the full report.





## Council of the European Union

### Conference on Accession to the European Union: European Union Common Position on Ukraine's Fundamentals

On June 24 2024, the European Union held the first intergovernmental conference at ministerial level to open accession negotiations with Ukraine. Since then, the candidate country has been engaged in respecting and promoting the fundamental values of the Union, in accordance with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

On June 12 2026, the European Union officially presented a common position after the [Accession Conference with Ukraine](#), on the implementation of cluster 1. The document explains how the Union considers that the candidate should proceed by implementing the EU *acquis* on the following topics: Judiciary and fundamental rights; Justice, freedom and security, Economic criteria; Public procurement; Statistics; Financial control.

The first of six negotiating clusters, known as the "fundamentals" addresses the implementation of core EU values, including respect for the Rule of Law and the administration of justice. To meet the requirements to join the EU, Ukraine must align with key elements, including:

- Relevant European standards regarding functioning of the judiciary.
- Strengthening of independence and capacity of judicial and prosecutorial governance bodies.
- Meritocratic selection of members of judicial and prosecutorial bodies, and streamline judicial governance.
- Improvement of management and resources of courts.
- Consolidated accountability and integrity at all levels.
- Ensuring accessibility, quality, and efficient delivery of justice in compliance with the EU *acquis* and European standards.

The common position also emphasized the need to enhance independence, accountability, and quality across judicial systems, including full-scale digitalization.

The opening of this first cluster represents a historic milestone and a unique opportunity for these two ENCJ Observers on their path toward EU accession.

Click [here](#) to find more information on the accession of Ukraine to the European Union.



## European Judicial Training Network

### General Assembly

On 18–19 June 2026, the ENCI Director attended the European Judicial Training Network General Assembly (EJTN), convened under the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Assembly was dedicated to the future of European judicial training and the implementation of the European Judicial Training Strategy 2025–2030.

The meeting brought together EJTN members and partner organisations to discuss how to strengthen judicial training across the Union and improve coordination at European level.

As part of the programme, Ms. Milda Treigē, took part in a panel on EJTN's cooperation with partner organisations on training related to the Rule of Law, where the ENCI's contribution to training needs assessment was underlined, collaboration in the Judges@Europe Forum and ENCI's support for long-term judicial exchanges at the Court of Justice of the European Union and European Court of Human Rights were highlighted.





## Venice Commission

### **President of the Venice Commission Addresses Italian Senate Conference on Countering Hate Speech**

On 18 June, Marta Cartabia, President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, delivered the keynote address at the conference Countering Hate Speech in Public Discourse, hosted by the Italian Senate.

Opening her remarks, President Cartabia stressed that "Countering hate speech is not censorship: it is democracy." She warned that dehumanisation lies at the core of hate speech and reaffirmed the Venice Commission's commitment to combating racism and discrimination. Referring to the Commission's Updated Rule of Law Checklist, she underlined that equality and non-discrimination are essential pillars of any democratic society founded on human rights and the rule of law.

Describing freedom of expression as "the beating heart of a democracy", President Cartabia noted that social media, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies have significantly amplified the spread of hate speech. She emphasised the importance of assessing the impact of AI systems on equality and non-discrimination throughout their entire life cycle, and called for responses that are proportionate, preventive and timely.

While recognising that criminal prosecution remains necessary for the most serious forms of hate speech, President Cartabia reiterated that it should be used only as a last resort. Instead, she advocated for a comprehensive preventive approach based on independent monitoring, media literacy, platform accountability and restorative justice.

Reflecting on the role of restorative justice, she observed: "If it is true that hatred stems from the denial of the other, then restorative justice, centred on encountering the other, can offer an antidote to the spread of aggression." She also referred to the Venice Declaration on the Role of Restorative Justice and relevant Council of Europe recommendations on restorative justice and victims' rights.

In closing, President Cartabia called for a shared commitment by public institutions, civil society, the private sector and citizens and particularly young people to strengthen democratic resilience against hate speech and disinformation.

Click [here](#) to read the text of the speech.

## **Republic of Moldova - Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) of the Council of Europe on the draft legislative amendments on the integrity checks and the evaluation of judges**

By letter dated 5 May 2026, the Republic of Moldova requested an opinion from the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe on the draft of legislative amendments concerning integrity checks and the evaluation of judges in the Republic of Moldova ([CDL-AD\(2026\)013](#)).

The draft law in question is part of a procedure of judicial vetting initiated in Moldova in recent years. The Venice Commission and the DGI highlighted the importance of maintaining independence and non-arbitrariness during the process.

The substantive analysis of the draft law focused on several key points: (1) the transfer of competence from the Board for the Selection and Evaluation of Judges (a body within the Superior Council of Magistracy – SCM, hereinafter CSEJ) to the Evaluation Commission of Judges (hereinafter the Evaluation commission) regarding the assessment of financial integrity; (2) an enhanced financial integrity review, where failing the financial indicator will directly result in a “failed evaluation”; (3) the uncertainty of consequences and lack of a clear legal basis in case of an integrity assessment failure; (4) the current unavailability of necessary procedural safeguards; (5) the feasibility of the proposed timeframe; and (6) the risk of repeated application. To conclude, the Commission and DGI make the following key recommendations:

1. Institutional capacity should be increased to empower the CSEJ to review and reassess the relevant laws.
2. The methodology of the proposed model should be reviewed so that it allows for broader individual assessment based on balanced analysis of judicial performance.
3. The draft Law should indicate clear and foreseeable legal consequences of a failed integrity assessment, in line with the requirements of legal certainty, due process, and proportionality.
4. The necessary procedural safeguards available under the vetting framework (Law No. 252/2023) should be extended to the new model.
5. Judicial review of the financial integrity evaluation should be sufficient and should be conducted in a manner consistent with the standards set out by the European Court of Human Rights.
6. Legal provisions should be included guaranteeing the temporary character of the proposed model.

7. Safeguards against repeated application of the proposed mechanism to the same judges should be available.

You can find the full text of the Opinion [here](#).



## Consejo General del Poder Judicial

### There is No Law without Independent Judges

On the occasion of the closing ceremony of the Conference of Presidents of Magistrates' Courts, which took place in Granada, Isabel Perelló, President of the Spanish Supreme Court and the General Council of the Judiciary, delivered a [speech dedicated to the independence of judges](#).

The central message was unequivocal: there is no Rule of Law without independent judges. Ms. Perelló's intervention highlighted a principle that lies at the heart of democratic constitutional systems, namely that the judiciary must be able to perform its functions freely, without external pressure or interference, and with the guarantees necessary to uphold citizens' rights and the legality of public action.

Ms. Perelló recalled that judicial independence is not an abstract institutional concept, but a practical safeguard for the functioning of democracy. It ensures that judges can decide cases impartially, protect fundamental rights, and act as a check on the exercise of public power. She also stressed that public confidence in justice depends on courts that are not only independent, but also responsible, transparent and committed to the highest professional standards.

She further underlined that the strength of a justice system depends on more than legislation alone. A credible and resilient judiciary requires well-trained judges, strong institutional support, and a firm commitment to constitutional values, human rights and the rule of law. In this regard, her intervention also served as a reminder of the importance of protecting judges in the exercise of their duties, particularly in environments where they may face pressure, criticism or attempts to undermine their authority.

This message is especially relevant in the current European context, where judicial independence remains a cornerstone of democratic resilience and a key element in the protection of the Rule of Law. Ensuring that judges can perform their role independently is

essential not only for the proper administration of justice, but also for maintaining trust in democratic institutions as a whole.