



ENCJ NEWSLETTER



ENCJ Newsletter July – December 2025

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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

Adoption of a Statement on the situation in Romania

The ENCJ Executive Board issued a statement addressing the current challenges facing by the judiciary in Romania. The statement identifies three primary concerns: hostile media coverage, lack of meaningful consultation, and instability of magistrates' status.

The ENCJ calls on the Romanian government and media outlets to end unfounded attacks on the judiciary, stop spreading misinformation about individual judges, and instead support the judiciary.

The ENCJ also calls Romanian government to carry out proper consultation with the Superior Council of Magistracy on all aspects of the proposed legislative amendments, carefully considering the opinion of the judiciary.

Click [here](#) to read the statement.

Adoption of a Statement on On Pressure and Intimidation of Judges through Media

On 17 December 2025, the ENCJ Executive Board adopted a [Statement on pressure and intimidation of judges](#), exercised by different actors through media outlets.

The Executive Board noted that democratic states and societies require continuous maintenance. This encompasses constant vigilance to identify threats to judicial independence and the Rule of Law.

The Board underlines a concern for negative trends of pressure on judges and even intimidation, including regular hostile media campaigns by political actors in several ENCJ members and observers, including those recently witnessed in France, Hungary, Moldova and Romania. While mainly related to the decisions in high profile cases, some are aimed at putting pressure on the judiciary as a whole.

While judges should and do accept legitimate criticism, the statement notes that ongoing negative comments have wider implications. It threatens judicial independence and weakens the separation of powers. They have a long-lasting impact on the image of the judiciary, undermining the trust of society in the judiciary and contributing to the erosion

of the Rule of Law. Such actions also affect individual judges, as they may even encourage physical attacks on them.

The Executive Board emphasizes that respect for the Rule of Law requires that the executive and legislative branches of state power refrain from attempting to gain inappropriate power over the judiciary through ill-founded or baseless public criticism. The executive and legislative branches are under a duty to provide all necessary and adequate protection where the functions of the courts are endangered by attacks or intimidation.

Consultative Council of European Judges Opinion No. 28

Opinion No. 28 (2025) on the importance of judicial well-being for the delivery of justice

On 14 November 2025, the Council of Europe's Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) adopted a new [Opinion on the importance of judicial well-being for the delivery of justice](#).

The adopted Opinion underlines the link between the quality of justice and judicial wellbeing and examines the ways to protect and promote judicial wellbeing to enhance the quality and efficiency of judicial work and support judicial independence and impartiality.

The opinion provides a conceptual framework, lists the main challenges of judicial work (such as heavy caseloads, under-resourcing, political and media pressure), provides an overview of initiatives to protect judicial well-being, and concludes with a set of recommendations on necessary measures and actions.

V. Recommendations

59. It is of utmost importance that systematic efforts are made to protect and promote judges' well-being.
60. Accordingly, the CCJE recommends that initiatives to protect, promote and support judicial well-being should respect the following principles:
- (i) Judicial well-being is essential for the delivery of justice. The judiciary must take ownership of developing and maintaining a robust governance framework that recognises the well-being of judges as an essential prerequisite to judicial independence, impartiality, quality and efficiency, and the rule of law.
 - (ii) The judiciary must fully engage with and support initiatives that protect, reinforce and enhance the positive features of judicial work (for example, purpose and meaningful work, autonomy and independence) while minimising its negative features. Initiatives should raise awareness of the need to ensure that judges' working conditions, such as their workload, physical environment, and remuneration, are reasonable to support their well-being.
 - (iii) Initiatives should focus on preventing extreme and unnecessary judicial stress and should be organised with the active participation of judges to ensure that relevant, realistic and practical changes are made.
 - (iv) It is vital that effective systems, processes, and monitoring systems are in place in all courts to evaluate and monitor threats to the physical, psychological and digital safety and security of judges. It is the duty of the state to investigate and prosecute criminal acts affecting the safety and security of judges and implement additional measures to protect judges and their families when their safety and security are at high risk.
 - (v) Efforts must seek to combat stigma in the judiciary so that judges feel confident to speak up about concerns they may have regarding their safety, security, and well-being.
 - (vi) Human resources policies must be fair and transparent to support the recruitment and retention of judicial appointments. Policies and processes must support judges' career progression, professional security, and offer opportunities for learning and development and work-life balance.
 - (vii) Positive leadership practices should be fostered and effective channels of communication established so that all judges have full clarity and certainty on all matters which affect them.
 - (viii) Inclusive court cultures and social networks should be developed to support collegiality, professional identity, inclusion and belonging among judges, recognising the benefits of such positive social interactions to judicial well-being.
 - (ix) Assistive technology should only be used to support and enhance the rule of law and should not be used to predict or replace an individual judge's decision-making.
 - (x) Appropriate channels of communication should be established to ensure that judges are properly informed about, and have the opportunities to participate in, the design, development, and improvement of technology.
 - (xi) Judges should be provided at the national and European level with timely support and should have access to training to help them carry out their roles safely and effectively. Cross border exchanges and training at European level would allow for the exchange of best practices.
 - (xii) Training should cover effective stress management and specialised topics such as managing difficult cases and responding to vicarious trauma. All judges should have access to training and education programmes to support their well-being at all stages of their career.
 - (xiii) Individual judges must take active steps to maintain their well-being. To help them do this, judges should have access to individual support measures to supplement universally provided training programmes. Such measures should be personalised to meet individual needs and support judges with any particular challenges they may be experiencing. Access to occupational health services should be funded and available to judges on a voluntary basis.
 - (xiv) Where physical or psychological illness or injury has resulted in a period of absence from judicial duties, measures should be taken to accommodate the safe return to office, with appropriate individual support as required.



**CONSILIUL SUPERIOR
AL MAGISTRATURII**

Superior Council of Magistracy of the Republic of Moldova

The Superior Council of Magistracy Defends Judicial Independence in the Face of a Wave of Intimidation

The Superior Council of Magistracy firmly condemns the coordinated acts of intimidation directed against judges who issue judgements in high-profile public interest cases, as well as threats against members of the Council. In a recent case, the judge who examined the case of Evghenia Guțul was subjected to continuous pressure and serious threats:

- direct messages containing death threats,
- macabre images showing murdered individuals,
- repeated phone calls, including during the night.

A member of the Superior Council of Magistracy was also targeted with similar threats, intended to force him into acting against the law and his conscience. These are not isolated incidents, but signs of a concerted campaign aimed at undermining the independence of the judiciary.

We also denounce defamation campaigns initiated by politically exposed persons – including politicians under criminal investigation – who, through inflammatory rhetoric and defamatory statements, discredit the judicial system and incite public distrust.

Against the backdrop of these unprecedented attacks, the Council:

- salutes the courage and professionalism of the judges who, despite pressure, continue to fulfill their duties with honesty and responsibility;
- encourages all magistrates to report any form of undue influence;
- reaffirms the State's obligation to act promptly in protecting those who serve the cause of justice.

Today, we send a clear message:

To those orchestrating or participating in such actions – whether from anonymity or from public office: you will be met with firm responses from the judiciary and state institutions. Justice will not be intimidated.

To the judges facing pressure: you are not alone. Dear judges, you are not alone. The Council stands with you and will act institutionally to support every magistrate who is confronted with pressure or threats. We will use all legal means to ensure your protection and to guarantee that you can exercise your function without fear.

Your independence is the cornerstone of justice. We know that issuing judgements in high-profile cases, in the face of pressure, is an act of courage and dignity. We encourage you to continue performing your duties with the same determination, free of fear, guided solely by the law and your conscience. In this fight for justice, the SCM will be your shield.

We call on the Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to investigate these actions as a matter of priority, to identify those responsible, and to prevent further escalation.

We urge judicial professional associations to stand in solidarity with these messages.

We defend not only individuals, but the very idea of an independent judiciary. This is a red line that must not and will not be crossed.

Justice is not negotiable.

Justice does not bow to fear.



Venice Commission Opinion on Spain

The Manner of Election of the Judicial Members of the General Council for the Judiciary

Adopted by the Venice Commission
at its 144th Plenary Session
(Venice, 9-10 October 2025)

On 13 October 2025, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (known as the Venice Commission) of the Council of Europe published an [Advisory Opinion No. 1248/2025](#), adopted at its 144th Plenary Session. The Venice Commission responds to the request submitted by the General Council of the Judiciary of Spain concerning the reform proposals included in its February report. The request was submitted with the intention of determining whether the proposed reforms could be adjusted to the European standards.

In the summer of 2024, the governing body of judges in Spain was renewed after nearly six years of an unprecedented deadlock, as this constitutional institution had remained in an interim situation since 2018, when its renewal was due.

Following the appointment of new members, Organic Law 3/2024 of 2 August amending Organic Law 6/1985 of 1 July on the Judiciary was enacted. The law tasked the CGPJ with drafting, within six months, a report identifying and assessing the systems for selecting judicial council members in Europe.

In February 2025, the CGPJ presented a report setting out two alternative proposals for reform. Option A provided that members of judicial origin would be nominated either by a judicial association or by twenty-five judges, with candidates being directly elected by their peers. Option B allowed a certain degree of involvement by judges, although the final decision is left to Parliament. The Venice Commission noted that Option A as this option aligns with the European standard that judges should elect at least half of the council's judicial members, though it warns of risks of internal politicisation through associations. The Venice Commission stated that it does not regard Option B, as being in line with the European standards.



European Forum of the Legal Professions

The Need for Constant Vigilance - The Role of Legal Professions in Maintaining Democratic Values

The fourth edition of the European Forum of the Legal Professions took place on 14 November 2025 in Brussels, under the theme “*The Need for Constant Vigilance - The Role of Legal Professions in Maintaining Democratic Values.*”

Representatives from Councils for the Judiciary, judges, lawyers, bailiffs, and rechtspflegers discussed the challenges facing their professions and explored actions they can take, both individually and collectively, to safeguard democratic principles.

The European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) was represented by three speakers. **Professor Frans van Dijk** presented the findings of the Survey among Judges 2025. **The ENCJ President Madeleine Mathieu** spoke about activities undertaken by the ENCJ to maintain judicial independence and the rule of law, including project group work and solidarity initiatives. **The ENCJ Executive Board member Gabriele Juodkaite**, in her speech, outlined common challenges to judicial independence, such as politicized appointments to higher courts, attacks through media, executive-driven digitalisation, and the lack of consultation on relevant legislation.

All the interventions are available online on the website of the European Forum of Legal Professions: <https://euflp.eu>.

National Courts Administration of Norway

Guide Judges under Stress. Navigating Modern Threats to Judicial Independence

The Norwegian Courts Administration developed a new guide entitled “Judges under Stress. Navigating Modern Threats to Judicial Independence - A Guide for Judges.”

The guide is a follow-up of the international conference led by the Norwegian and Lithuanian courts administrations together with partner institutions in Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania. The conference was inspired by the University of Oslo’s research project *Judges under Stress. The Breaking Point of Judicial Institutions*. This guide is a continuation of this work – bringing theory into practice and offering judges concrete tools for moments when independence is tested.

Its message is clear: Judges cannot stand alone. Independence must walk hand in hand with accountability, transparency, and openness—so that society can see, trust, and defend its courts when they come under attack.

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The report can be found [here!](#)

This is not a manual to be shelved, but a living resource—an invitation to discussion, teaching, adaptation, and action. Each day brings new “stress tests” for the rule of law; this guide offers lessons, examples, and strategies to meet them. If you have comments or suggestions, please contact the Norwegian Court Administration at internasjonaltsekretariat@domstol.no.

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