

**Roles and Responsibilities of the High Council of Justice:  
Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary**

**Date: March 10 to 12, 2023**

**Location: Offline in Lviv and Online via Zoom**

**Objectives:**

- Review the institutional role of the High Council of Justice (HCJ) in strengthening the rule of law and ensuring an independent and honest judiciary that is respected and trusted by the public.
- Introduce newly appointed and elected HCJ members to international and European standards for judicial selection, ethics, and discipline, including lessons learned and best practices from judicial governance institutions in other countries.
- Identify ways to optimize HCJ operations, including issues related to strategic planning, performance management, communications and public outreach, automation, and professional development.
- Identify needs and agree upon next steps in building the institutional capacity of the HCJ.

**Day One: Friday, March 10, 2023**

09:30           **Opening Remarks**

10:00           **Session 1: High Councils of Justice and Judicial Governance Institutions in Europe: Mission and Values**

*Dalia Vasariene, President of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (Online)*

*Prof. Jan Mazak, President of the Slovak Council for the Judiciary and former President of the Constitutional Court of Slovakia (Online)*

*Nuria Diaz Abad, Member of the Spanish Council for the Judiciary and former President of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (Online)*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

During this session, representatives of the [European Network of Councils for the Judiciary](#) (ENCJ) will present the activities of the ENCJ, its mission and role. A broad overview of the ENCJ activities, including the main standards and tools developed for the institutions, representing independent judiciaries, will be provided and an ongoing project on the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Councils for the judiciaries will be presented. Personal experiences and challenges in applying them in everyday work will be shared.

11:30           **Coffee Break**

12:00           **Session 2: Role of the High Council of Justice in Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary**

*Representative of the Dutch High Council of Justice (TBC) (Online)*

*Merethe Eckhardt, Director of Development at the Danish Court Administration and Member of the CEPEJ Working Group of the Quality of Justice (Online)*

*Ben Wilson, Head of Communications, National Infrastructure Commission (UK), former Head of Communications, UK Supreme Court (Online)*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will address the role of the High Council of Justice in building public trust and confidence in the judiciary, including how to establish principles of and promote transparency and open media relations. Participants will discuss the importance of establishing sustainable partnerships and cooperation with various partners and pro-active communication with the public and civil society. This will include establishing a standing committee between judicial stakeholders to discuss matters of mutual interest including uniform standards of judicial candidate assessment. Speakers will also highlight the need to regularly monitor and evaluate public perception of the High Council of Justice as an institution.

13:30 **Lunch**

14:30 **Session 3: Selection and Appointment of Judges: Standards and Practices**  
*Justice Adèle Kent, Chief Judicial Officer Emerita, National Judicial Institute, Canada (Online)*  
*Pavol Zilincik, former Member of the Slovak Council for the Judiciary*  
*Mirosław Wyrzykowski, former Judge of the Constitutional Court of Poland, former Member of the 255 Panel Selecting Judges of the Court of Justice of the European Union*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will cover international and European standards and practices for selecting judges, including developing judicial competences and evaluating the quality of judicial candidates. Participants will learn about tools and techniques for screening, investigating, interviewing candidates together with organizational aspects including integrity and ethical considerations. Continuing educational programs and requirements for serving judges to promote enhanced judicial competencies will be discussed.

16:00 **Coffee Break**

16:30 **Session 4: Disciplinary Liability of Judges: Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating Complaints of Judicial Misconduct**  
*Reiko Callner, Executive Director, [Commission on Judicial Conduct](#), US State of Washington (Online)*  
*Judge Jose Manuel Cardoso, Judge of the Court of Appeal of Lisbon Judicial District, Former Head of the Vice-President Cabinet of the High Council of the Judiciary of Portugal, Former Member of the High Council of the Judiciary of Portugal (Online)*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

During this session, experts will share international and European best practices and lessons learned in holding judges accountable for incompetence and misconduct, including grounds for discipline and formal and informal sanctions. Participants will discuss the importance of ensuring a strong and effective disciplinary process covering issues related to standards of proof, confidentiality, investigative policies and procedures, conduct of disciplinary hearings, and drafting well-reasoned decisions. A requirement on the part of judges to cooperate when disciplinary proceedings are initiated against them and a requirement on the part of public bodies to cooperate with the High Council of Justice when disciplinary proceedings are brought will also be discussed.

18:00      **Wrap Up of Day One**

**Day Two: Saturday, March 11, 2023**

09:30      **Session 5: Integrity of Judges, Why It Is Important and How to Assess It**  
*Mirosław Wyrzykowski, former Judge of the Constitutional Court of Poland, former Member of the 255 Panel Selecting Judges of the Court of Justice of the European Union*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will be dedicated to the importance of integrity as a prerequisite to accomplish the essential goal of delivering justice to citizens. Ethical behavior by judges has an essential role in the legitimacy of the judicial system, as necessarily based on a bond of trust with the involved community. The way how to assess the integrity in the process of selecting candidates for judges will be discussed.

10:30      **Coffee Break**

10:45      **Session 6: Disciplinary Practices of the High Council of Justice: Results, Challenges and Solutions**  
*Andriy Boiko, Former Member of the High Council of Justice, former Dean of the Law Faculty at Lviv National University*  
*Oleksandr Serdyuk, Director of the Analytical Center at the Institute of Applied Humanitarian Research (Kharkiv), Doctor of Law*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will focus on the previous experience and practices of High Council of Justice in disciplining and dismissing judges. It will include a discussion of current challenges related to managing the backlog of disciplinary complaints, setting up the Service of Disciplinary Inspectors, and suspending judges from office. Participants will identify solutions for addressing these challenges and agree upon a plan for implementing them.

11:45      Coffee Break

12:00 **Session 7: High Council of Justice Auxiliary Bodies: Ethics Council**  
*Justice Lev Kyshakevych, Chair, Ethics Council*  
*Lavly Perling, Member, Ethics Council*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will focus on how to effectively establish appropriate foundations to develop and implement internal policies and procedures for evaluating the integrity and professional ethics of judicial candidates, judges, and judicial officials. Participants will learn about the internal operations of the Ethics Council, including what worked and did not work and why in processes aimed at improving the evaluation of candidates and overall quality of the judiciary.

13:00 **Lunch**

14:00 **Session 8: High Council of Justice Auxiliary Bodies: Selection Commission**  
*Members of the Selection Commission (Online)*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will focus on how to effectively establish appropriate foundations to develop and implement internal policies and procedures for evaluating the integrity, professional ethics, and professional competence of judicial candidates, judges, and judicial officials. Participants will learn about the internal operations of the Selection Commission, including what worked and did not work and why in processes aimed at improving the evaluation of candidates and overall quality of the judiciary.

15:00 **Coffee Break**

15:30 **Session 9: External and Internal Communication: Key Principles, Tools, and Audiences**

*Anna Ostapko, EU Pravo Justice Communication Expert on Judicial reform, Journalist, Expert on Communication of State Authorities, former Media Manager*

*Ivan Gisem, EU Pravo Justice Communication Expert on Judicial Reform, Political Analyst, former Media Manager*

*Iryna Khymchak, Partner, BeCentric Communications and Marketing Group*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

During this session, participants will learn about the importance of developing a strategic approach to both external and internal communications, including the role of HCJ members, staff, and press office in this process. Experts will share key principles and tools for building a good reputation as well as risk assessment techniques to avoid crisis situations. This will include a discussion of best practices in organizing effective internal communications to make HCJ members and staff ambassadors in creating and promoting a productive working

environment within the institution, while also effectively engaging with civil society, the general public and other important audiences.

17:00           **Wrap Up of Day Two**

**Day Three: Sunday, March 12, 2023**

09:30           **Session 10: Role of the High Council of Justice in Defending Judicial Independence**

*Mirosław Wyrzykowski, former Judge of the Constitutional Court of Poland, former member of the 255 Panel Selecting Judges of the Court of Justice of the European Union*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will concentrate on the importance of the High Council of Justice as a guardian of judicial independence as one of the fundamental elements of the rule of law. Potential threats and risks for the judicial independence will be discussed, as well as challenges faced by the HCJ in identifying them. Questions will be addressed as to when and how the High Council of Justice should react.

10:30           **Coffee Break**

11:00           **Session 11: Optimizing Operations of the High Council of Justice**

*Dr. Pim Albers, Judicial Performance Evaluation Expert (Online)*  
*Reda Moliene, former Head of the State Judicial Administration of Lithuania, EU Pravo Justice, international expert*  
*Sergey Suchenko, Legal Advisor, USAID Justice for All Activity*

**Moderator:** Member of the High Council of Justice (TBC)

This session will address practical HCJ operational issues, including strategic planning, performance management, budgeting, automation, as well as professional development of HCJ members and staff. Participants will discuss how to best ensure transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in overall HCJ operations, including committee structures, member working groups, interview panels, and rapporteurs.

12:30           **HCJ Needs and Priorities, Next Steps, and Closing Remarks**