

Agreement

which was reached

on the one hand by the Ministry of Justice (represented by Dr. Bence Tuzson - Minister)

on the other hand:

by the Curia (represented by Prof. Dr. Andras Varga Zs. - President)

by the National Office of Judiciary (represented by Dr. György Barna Senyei - President)

and by the National Judicial Council (represented by dr. Péter Szabó - President)

(hereinafter collectively referred to as the Parties)

at the place and on the date indicated below, as follows:

I. Introductory provisions

I/1.

The Parties mutually agree that the efficiency of the judiciary is essential for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the members of the Hungarian society, legal certainty and the competitiveness of Hungary.

The Parties affirm that the judicial professions, in particular judges and judicial staff, play a key role in the stability, order and justice of the State and society. The judicial system is the cornerstone of the democratic state based on the rule of law. On the basis of the constitutional principles of judicial independence and impartiality, the parties agree that judges are independent in their judicial activity.

I/2.

The Parties affirm that independence and impartiality of judges and decent working conditions of judges and court staff must be maintained continuously, maintaining high standards in their profession is essential for public confidence.

I/3.

On the basis of the above the Parties mutually agree that they will work together to improve the efficiency of the administration of justice, in particular for the proper financial appreciation, the efficiency of the organisational system and for improving the quality of justice.

II. Financial appreciation of the legal profession orders

II/1.

The judge shall be entitled to a remuneration which guarantees independence commensurate with the dignity and responsibility of his or her office and the seriousness of his or her duties.

II/2.

Ensuring an adequate level of income is essential to enable judges and judicial staff to carry out their work in financial security. The remuneration of judicial staff contributes to making these professions more attractive, thus helping to maintain high professional standards and to ensure a supply of new staff. An adequate income guarantees that judges make decisions solely on the basis of law and legality, freeing them from any financial dependence and influence.

II/3.

The Parties mutually agree to implement a three-stage salary increase for judges and court staff from 1. January 2025 to 1. January 2027, so that the average salary increases by 2027 compared to the 2024 base,

- in case of judges by 48% reaching HUF 2.250.000 HUF gross per month
- in case of courts secretaries and trainees by 82 %, reaching 50 % of the judicial salary, i.e. 1.125.000 HUF gross per month,
- in case of additional courts staff by 100 %, reaching 38 % of judicial salaries, i.e. 850.000 HUF gross per month.

II/4.

The Parties affirm that in order to reach the aim expressed above the budget of Hungary will ensure an additional amount of 212 billion HUF for increasing the salaries of judges, prosecutors, court staff and staff of prosecutory offices, of which 135 bn HUF will be used exclusively to increase the income of judges and court staff, with the amount increasing at approximately the same rate over the period compared to the previous year.

II/5.

The Parties attach particular importance to the proper recognition of judicial staff with non-legal qualifications, and therefore the renewal of their status is a priority. They consider it necessary to create a statute for judicial officers and to apply the Act 125 of 2018 on government administration to their status and remuneration, with derogations for the specific features of the statute and the separate branch of government.

III. Improving the efficiency of administration of justice

III/1.

The parties state that in order to maintain the high quality of the work of the court, it is necessary to ensure that the highly experienced judges who perform their work excellently should be able to continue their judicial relationship up to the age of 70 after reaching retirement age, upon application, subject to objective eligibility criteria.

III/2.

The Parties agree that as a result of the increasing complexity of life relations and the continuous increase in the complexity of legal disputes, judicial tasks can be carried out efficiently, confidently and on a time by those lawyers who, in addition to sufficient life experience, have sufficient professional practice and experience.

In view of this, the evaluation of life and professional experience should be emphasised. It is justified to raise the current age of 30 to become a judge to 35, to evaluate experience gained in other legal fields emphatically, to expect such several years of practical experience. Only those who have fulfilled the conditions for further training required for the performance of the profession could become judges.

III/3.

The Parties set as their objective the provision of uniform, central training for those with a law degree who are preparing for the legal profession performing tasks in the judiciary and subject to a bar examination or bailiff's examination, such as judges, prosecutors, lawyers, notaries and independent bailiffs, in order to prepare theoretically and practically for the bailiff's professional examination. It is also appropriate to examine the possibilities of implementing vocational training for bar exam holders in the same way as the above.

III/4.

The Parties agree that in order to maintain the different workload of the courts and to maintain continuous high-quality adjudication, it is appropriate to review the operation and organisation of courts, thus ensuring that the working conditions of judges and court staff meet the expectations of the modern age, and to increase citizens' trust in the judiciary. The aim of the Parties is that

- a) the task of the Curia should be primarily to ensure the uniform application of judicial law,
- b) the regional courts of appeal and tribunals can carry out their work efficiently, with the appropriate allocation of national resources, and in an appropriate organizational order, especially with regard to the high level of cases received by the Metropolitan Court and Court of Surroundings of Budapest,
- c) in order to standardise the burden on district courts, the district judge's operation should extend to the entire area of jurisdiction of the tribunals, so that local district courts operating within its organisational framework should also be preserved,
- d) the judicial system should not be left out of technological advances either, so online presence should be possible for trial participants, the public and law students alike, subject to appropriate guarantee conditions,
- e) in order to reduce unnecessary administrative burden and increase the time available for substantive work, a regulation should be established according to which detailed reasoning for judgments in civil cases are only required if the parties are likely to wish to exercise their right of appeal,
- f) in order to reduce administration and strengthen substantive judicial work – in addition to creating an IT background – the court's decisions related to the registration of companies and other legal entities, which are simple, can be automatized, should be channelled into an administrative path while retaining judicial guarantees.

The Parties undertake to take all possible measures to further the achievement of these objectives.

22 November 2024

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Dr. Bence Tuzson

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Prof. Dr. Andras Varga Zs.

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Dr. György Barna Senyei

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Dr. Péter Szabó