

ANNEX 4

SCM activity in the field of European and international funded programmes

The European and International Projects Unit continued in 2023 the implementation of projects with non-reimbursable external financing started in previous years, as follows:

1. The project “TAEJ-Transparency, Accessibility and Legal Education by Improving Public Communication in the Judicial System” (SIPOCA Code 454/MySMIS Code 118765), financed under the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity 2014-2020, was implemented between 5 September 2018 and 30 June 2023, by the Superior Council of Magistracy in partnership with the National Institute of Magistracy, the National School of Clerks, the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Inspection and the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice.

The overall objective of the project was to improve and unified approach to public communication at the level of the judiciary in order to strengthen its image, to ensure greater transparency within and outside the system, as well as to improve access to justice by increasing the level of information, awareness of citizens’ rights and the development of legal culture.

Among the relevant activities carried out during the reference period, we mention:

- Regarding the dissemination of the Communication Strategy, ensuring the sustainability of the actions carried out, as well as for the strengthening of communication skills for the staff of the judiciary, the *e-learning* communication training modules developed within the project were included in the continuous training curricula of the National Institute of Magistracy and the National School of Clerks, being available during 2023 for interested persons.
- With reference to the outcome proposed in the project, on transparency and clarification of the relationship with the executive and legislative powers, during 2023, the two deliverables developed under the project were bilaterally assumed. Thus, *the Guide on good practices in the relation of the judiciary with the executive power* was approved by Memorandum in the Government meeting of 17 May 2023, as well as by the Decision no. 89/2023 of the Plenum of the Superior Council of Magistracy. *The guide on good practices in the relationship of the Superior Council of Magistracy with the legislative power* was approved at the Permanent Office of the Romanian Senate on 20 March 2023, as well as by Decision No 46/2023 of the Plenum of the Superior Council of Magistracy. Both guides were printed in 200 copies each, which were distributed to the beneficiaries, including at the final conference of the project, which took place on 22 May 2023.
- Regarding the outcome of the project consisting of increasing the

transparency and accessibility of the services provided by the judicial system by carrying out an information campaign for citizens, developing the presence within the social media space/platforms, diversifying the means/channels of the communication of the judiciary to the public, including the development of audio-video material on the services provided by courts/prosecutor's offices, the circuit and the way to deal with applications, the following developments were recorded in 2023:

- a) Running and completing the integrated public information campaign, under the slogan "*People for Justice. Justice for People*", which ran over six months, from 12 August 2022 to 8 February 2023. The campaign was broadcast nationwide, both in the off-line environment, through TV, radio and street panels, as well as in the online environment, through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube channel and www.justitiepentruoameni.ro.
- b) Distribution at the headquarters of all courts and prosecutors' offices in the country of four information leaflets in the fields of *Enforcement in Civil Matters*, *Citizens' Rights*, *Criminal Procedure comprehensible for all* and *Civil Law*, printed in 80.000 copies.

The complexity of the activities carried out and the results obtained within the project were recognised internationally during June 2023, when the Superior Council of Magistracy received the *ENCJ Award for positive change*, at the General Assembly of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary. On this occasion, the SIPOCA 454 project ranked first in the *Positive Change 2023 competition*, an initiative designed to award the most innovative projects and/or best practices implemented at the level of the justice systems in the Member States of the Network, which generated a change.

2. The project "*Strengthening the organizational and administrative capacity of the Superior Council of Magistracy*" (SIPOCA/MySMIS code 760/135225), which started on 4 August 2020, in 2023 was in the last year of implementation.

We remind that the overall objectives of the project were: the development of a modern justice system, adapted to the needs of contemporary society, by improving strategic and managerial skills, strengthening operational capacity, as a decision-maker responsible for the sound management of the judicial system, for ensuring the conditions for the organisation and functioning of courts and prosecutor's offices, as well as for the correct and balanced management of the careers of judges and prosecutors.

During 2023, the following significant activities were carried out in the implementation of the project:

In the implementation of the public procurement contract for the provision of physical and electronic archiving services of the documents of the Superior Council of Magistracy, the archiving activities of the documents created within the departments of the institution continued, using the new archival classification, approved by Decision No 145/11.10.2022 of the Plenum of the Superior Council of Magistracy and confirmed by

the National Archives of Romania.

Moreover, continued the implementation of the public procurement contract for “Services on development of an integrated IT system at the level of the Superior Council of Magistracy, for the management of the work of the technical and networking apparatus with other institutions/organizations inside and outside the judiciary (CSMapp)”, which was signed on 19 September 2022.

Through the implementation of the information system “CSMapp”, the Superior Council of Magistracy aims to have a functional application, able to meet its digitisation needs, using the latest technologies.

The CSMapp IT system will ensure integration with national systems such as ECRIS and the institution’s website, but also with other IT applications that are currently being developed or to be developed in the coming period within other projects.

In summary, according to the calendar, the following activities were carried out: development/implementation of software applications and products, testing and optimisation of the CSMapp IT solution, users’ training and development of administration and users’ manuals, final testing-acceptance of the CSMapp information system.

As regards the institutional capacity building by providing training for staff, for the development of managerial skills and also in other areas of reference established by correlation to the scope of activity of the Council, we mention that, throughout the project implementation period, vocational training courses in various fields have been delivered, as follows: ECDL (standard and advanced); project management; organizational management: management techniques and methods; Internal managerial control and risk management at public entities (SCIM); English language; Rules and procedures regarding the legislative techniques; Public procurement management – planning, procedures and quality assurance; Protection of personal data in public institutions (GDPR).

A total of 190 people from the target group participated in the training sessions carried out in the project, 126 of whom were registered once as a participant in the completed training sessions.

The closing conference of the project took place on 27 November 2023.

3. The project “*Optimisation of management in the judicial system*”. The Courts Component” (SIPOCA code 751/My SMIS code 129513).

The project, implemented by the Superior Council of Magistracy, starting with 2.10.2019, had as general objective to identify the mechanisms necessary to create a modern justice system, adapted to the requirements of the contemporary society and is developed through the following specific objectives:

1. Identifying and developing the necessary mechanisms to reduce the length of proceedings, improve the resolution rate, decrease the length of cases;
2. The development and implementation of standard integrated management

tools, to be implemented at the level of the courts, allowing for the improvement of managerial practices, to ensure predictability in decision-making regarding the proper functioning of courts and, at the same time, to allow the adaptation of managerial solutions to the specifics of each court.

In the light of the further steps to generalise the category of staff – support of the assistant of judge, given the positive impact of the work carried out during the pilot exercise reflected in the disposition time of cases in courts, in the deadlines for drafting judicial decisions and, in general, on the act of justice, this category of staff was assumed, in the light of these results, by Government Decision No 436/2022, which adopted the new Strategy for the Development of the Judiciary System 2022-2025 and its Action Plan, we would point out that, following the completion of all the stages of the legislative process, the Law no. 393 on the status of the assistant of the judge was adopted and was published in the Official Gazette no. 1132 of December 14th 2023.

On 17 March 2023, the public procurement contract *for the development of the Integrated Court Management Information System (OptiMapp)* was signed, designed to support the management and administrative activities of the courts.

The new IT system contains functionalities that facilitate the conduct of administrative activities within the courts, being a useful tool for both senior judges and prime clerks and chief clerks by creating virtual workflows, much faster and more efficient than those currently used. The new application will also provide judges and other judicial staff with a number of specific modules, which will ensure easy transmission of useful information, as well as access to virtual libraries and modern electronic document management solutions.

During the implementation of the contract, were carried out activities such as: detailed analysis, during which a series of meetings and interviews took place with the staff of the courts with managerial duties, in order to collect the data necessary for shaping the existing situation and structuring the requirements for the future IT application; design of the IT system, the *development and testing* of the modules of the new IT system, the training of the personnel for the use and administration of the system, as well as final acceptance.

We would note that, during stage 2 of the contract, the IT equipment (hardware components and licenses) necessary for the development and commissioning of the Integrated Information System for Court Management (“OptiMapp”) were delivered and received quantitatively and qualitatively.

The closing conference of the project took place on 8 December 2023.

4. Project “CPCI – Increasing institutional performance and quality by improving the evaluation and psychological assistance system in the judicial system” (SIPOCA/MySMIS code 762/135456)

The project, implemented by the Superior Council of Magistracy in partnership with the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, the

National Institute of Magistracy and the Judicial Inspection since 4.8.2020, was in 2023 in the last year of implementation.

We remind that the overall objectives of the project were: improving the systems of recruitment of judges and prosecutors and their assistance and psychological evaluation throughout professional development, including access to senior positions, with the ultimate aim of increasing the quality of justice and improving the professional performance of the judiciary as a whole.

During 2023, the following significant activities were carried out:

Public procurement procedures have been completed for services of developing the integrated IT solution for assessment and psychological assistance at the level of the judiciary and for the development/adaptation services of psychological testing and assistance tools. The public procurement contracts were concluded on 27.4.2023 and 9.3.2023 respectively.

In the first phase of the development/adaptation services of psychological testing and assistance tools, an in-depth survey was conducted among judges and prosecutors and a series of workshops were organised in Bucharest, between 17-19 May, with the participation of judges and prosecutors, aimed at defining the psycho-professional profile specific to the professions of judge and prosecutor for admission to the profession, periodic psychological evaluation and for filling of management positions.

The first phase of implementation of this contract was completed by the reception, on 28.6.2023, of the Research Report and associated results, as the first research document for the development of occupational profiles specific to the professions of judge and prosecutor.

In the second phase of the implementation of the contract, a Report on the in-depth analysis of the judiciary was prepared and received on 4.7.2023.

On the basis of these research papers, the following have been drawn up: a psycho-professional profile for the position of judge; a psycho-professional profile for the position of prosecutor; a psycho-professional profile for the management positions occupied by judges; a psycho-professional profile for the management positions in the prosecutor's offices; a common trunk with regard to the two profiles, which will be used in the procedures for admission to the profession, these deliverables were endorsed by Decision No 131/13.07.2023 of the Plenum of the Superior Council of Magistracy and received on 17.7.2023.

In the implementation of the public procurement contract for the development of the integrated IT solution for the evaluation and psychological assistance at the level of the judicial system, the hardware equipment was delivered and was also received the analysis report prepared by the provider, as a first step in the development of the information system.

The analysis of the compliance and risk assessment system regarding the processing of personal data and the definition of security tools was carried out, building on the mandatory provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament

and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. This analysis started from the evaluation of all the documents and procedures considered in the psychological evaluation procedure and the optimal mechanism of maximum security of the data obtained regarding the psychological test batteries and the implemented IT application was identified, with the assurance of all security guarantees.

The batteries of psychological tests aimed at measuring the compatibility between the identified individual profile and the requirements resulting from the psycho-professional profile specific to the professions of judge and prosecutor, as well as the psychological test batteries designed to assess the psychological profile at the time of admission to the profession, evaluation of candidates for management positions and periodic evaluation every 5 years, as well as permanent psychological assistance at the request of the person in need, were finalised and accepted.

Moreover, the secured IT solution for the proper management of the evaluation and psychological assistance process, which will operate exclusively on the IT units of the Superior Council of Magistracy, the courts of appeal and the prosecutor's offices attached to the courts of appeal, the High Court of Cassation and Jurisdiction, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice, the National Anti-Corruption Directorate, the Directorate for the Investigation of Organised Crime and Terrorism, the Judicial Inspection and the National Institute of Magistracy, was completed and accepted. The IT solution developed includes several modules adapted to the needs of the judicial system, identified in the previous stages and incorporates the test batteries developed on the three components (ideal psychological profile for access to the profession, evaluation of candidates for management positions and periodic evaluation every 5 years), ensuring all the necessary security conditions for the security of stored, processed and accessed data, according to the compliance system analysis and risk assessment regarding the processing of personal data carried out during the project.

The training of staff responsible for implementing improved evaluation and psychological assistance mechanisms (psychologists employed in the judiciary, trainers from the National Institute of Magistracy and IT administrators) has also been carried out.

Also, within this project, the network of structures for the implementation of the psychological evaluation and assistance system was improved, by providing furniture and technical equipment to the specialised offices where psychologists operate, organised at the level of the courts of appeal and the prosecutor's offices attached to them, the High Court of Cassation and Justice, the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice and the specialised structures – DNA and DIICOT.

The results of the project have widely been disseminated within the judicial system as part of an information and awareness campaign, by presenting the steps underlying the development of the psychological evaluation and psychological assistance mechanism, of all the measures taken to ensure data security and compliance with the legislation on the protection of personal data. A second purpose of the campaign was to

obtain concrete data on: the expectations of judges and prosecutors from the new psychological assistance system, possible objections and observations on how the evaluation will work, useful suggestions regarding the future approach of using the IT application, data materialised in a Satisfaction Assessment Report, which includes the finding of possible vulnerabilities, suggestions and proposals for improvement, evolution forecasts.

The visibility of the project at national level was supplemented by the final conference on 6 December 2023.

5. Project “*Professional training and capacity building at the level of the judiciary*” financed under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (MFN 2014-2021)

The financing contract related to the project *Judicial training and institutional capacity* was signed on 28 February 2019, the activities being implemented by the Superior Council of Magistracy, as Project Promoter, in partnership with the National Institute of Magistracy, the National School of Clerks and the Norwegian Courts Administration, in order to achieve the general objective of strengthening the judicial system by improving its efficiency, as well as developing the concept of European legal culture at the level of the Romanian judicial system.

During 2023, the implementation of the project’s activities continued, 31 professional training sessions being organised in the following areas: public procurement (2), rules of procedure applicable to administrative disputes (2), tax procedure (3), judicial cooperation in civil matters (1), judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters (3), ECtHR case law and fundamental rights (4), enforcement of judgments in criminal matters (6), techniques for hearing minors (6), access to justice for the Roma population and vulnerable groups (4).

Moreover, the procedure for endowment of the hearing chambers of minors in 50 courts at national level was completed, and the number of final beneficiaries in September 2023 was supplemented by the introduction of 3 new final beneficiaries.

Last but not least, in September 2023, the predefined project was restructured by introducing new activities and supplementing certain existing activities to ensure a high absorption of funds. Thus, new activities were introduced to generate added value for the predefined project, namely: organising a mission of best practice to improve training in the judiciary; organising training sessions on the use of juvenile hearing chambers at court level, as well as a training mission in the field of techniques for hearing minors.

Also, in the output 4, during 2023, the previously completed endowment of central institutions and courts was extended with the procurement of IT equipment for the Superior Council of Magistracy, the National Institute of Magistracy, the National School of Clerks, with audio-video equipment, as well as refrigerating and office equipment for the Superior Council of Magistracy.

6. The project “*The Optimisation of management at the level of the judiciary. Prosecutors’ Offices component*” (SIPOCA/MySMIS code 761/133850) was started by signing the financing contract on 4 August 2020, with the objective of improving the managerial capacity of the Public Ministry, as an essential part of the criminal justice system, by implementing standard integrated management tools at the level of the territorial units of the prosecutor’s offices, in order to create the necessary premises for a predictable managerial decision-making process, in particular regarding the human resource components, the capacity to manage the workload, the correct estimation of the human resource needs and the distribution of tasks at the level of prosecutors within the same territorial unit.

The project was implemented by the Superior Council of Magistracy, in partnership with the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice.

During 2023, activities 2, 3 and 4 of the project were implemented, consisting of:

- carrying out the IT application for calculating the complexity and workload of prosecutors/prosecution units. The IT solution has been designed so that it can then be replicated, improved and adjusted according to the specifics of competence and logistics of the other prosecutor’s offices operating at national level. The implementation of the IT module aimed to achieve the following benefits: (1) the implementation of an automatic mechanism for the automatic extraction of data from ECRIS necessary to calculate the scores associated with the indicators established by the methodology for calculating the volume and complexity of the prosecutor’s activity; (2) the implementation of an automatic mechanism for calculating the scores associated with the indicators established by the methodology for calculating the volume and complexity of the prosecutor’s activity and presenting the scores obtained based on the implementation of the methodology to the stakeholders – prosecutors with execution functions and prosecutors with managerial positions; (3) the availability of mechanisms for analysing the volume and complexity of the activity of prosecutors and prosecutors’ offices for senior prosecutors; (4) ensuring prosecutors with leading positions with modern tools for carrying out analyses of the volume and complexity of the activity, graphic representation of information in the form of dashboards to ensure the aggregate display of information.
- in August 2023 the work started to test the complexity and workload calculations at the level of the pilot prosecutor’s offices (the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the Bucharest Tribunal, the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the First Instance Court of 3rd District Bucharest, the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the First Instance Court 6th District Bucharest, the Prosecutor’s Office attached to First Instance Court Craiova and the Prosecutor’s Office attached to the First Instance Court Cluj Napoca). The activity was

completed in October 2023 and its conclusions were included in the reports drawn up by the registrars appointed for this purpose by the Order of the Prosecutor General of Romania.

- assessment of the impact of the implementation of the *Integrated Standard Management Review at prosecutor's office level*, carried out between December 2022 and November 2023. Thus, based on the conclusions of the management analysis and taking into account the amendments made to the justice laws, the analysis of the legislative framework was carried out in order to identify the ways in which it can be improved, at the level of primary and/or secondary legislation, in order to create the necessary framework for the implementation of the conclusions drawn from the management tool approved by the Prosecutors Section of the Superior Council of Magistracy. A workshop was also organised on 2-3 October 2023. The deliverable *Legislative Analysis Report from the perspective of optimising the activity of the prosecution units* was endorsed by the Section for Prosecutors of the Superior Council of Magistracy on 8 November 2023.
- as regards the development of a human resources development plan at prosecutor's office level, a workshop was organised from 4 to 5 October 2023. The deliverable *Human Resources Strategy at prosecutor's office level* was endorsed, on 8 November 2023, at the level of the Prosecutors' Section of the Superior Council of Magistracy.

Deliverables made under the project are available at <https://sites.google.com/csm.csm1909.ro/sipoca761/rezultate>.

Last but not least, the final conference of the SIPOCA 761 project was organised on 14 November 2023, a visibility event involving representatives of the prosecutor's offices at national level, as well as representatives of the Superior Council of Magistracy and the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice.

The implementation of this project was completed on 4 December 2023 by fully accomplishing the results and the objectives of the project.

7. National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)

On 23 February 2023, the Superior Council of Magistracy signed Financing Contract No 5/84920/2022/23.02.2023 related to the project *Improving digitalisation at the level of the Superior Council of Magistracy*. The project is funded by the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism under component 7 – “Digitalisation of the judiciary” in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. As a beneficiary, the Superior Council of Magistracy will implement the project for 18 months, until 23 August 2024.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Superior Council of Magistracy to ensure the proper fulfilment of the tasks, by providing digital resources, to create the necessary premises for improving e-government and

accelerating the digital transformation in the judicial sector.

In particular, the IT infrastructure and IT security of the institution will be supported by:

- technological upgrade of the technical platform in the meeting rooms of the institution, with equipment enabling safer communication in social distancing conditions, interconnection with remote audio-video communication systems, online transmission and recording of high quality public meetings;
- increasing the level of security for the Council's cyber infrastructure as well as virtualisation facilities;
- endowment with technical means for carrying out work both within the Council and working at home.

During 2023, at the level of the Superior Council of Magistracy, steps were taken to prepare, launch and carry out the public procurement procedure for the procurement of the equipment provided for in the project, a procedure completed in October 2023 by awarding public procurement contracts for products. Also, steps have been taken to purchase information and publicity materials, in accordance with the rules specific to the financing mechanism.

8. Project “Development of the Case Management System – Ecris V” (My SMIS code 142520)

The Superior Council of Magistracy, together with the Bucharest Court of Appeal and the Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice (Public Ministry), participates, as partners, in the project “*Development of the Case Management System – Ecris V*” implemented by the Ministry of Justice within the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity.

The overall objective of the project is to make the judicial system more efficient by providing it with a modern IT system adapted to the current needs, to support its specific activity.

The project is currently being implemented in the development and testing phase of the IT system functionalities.