

Annex

Training of Justice Professionals

I. Trainings organized by the National Institute of Justice

In 2024, 64 candidates for junior magistrates (30 junior judges; 19 junior prosecutors; 15 junior investigators) completed the mandatory 9-month training; 227 newly appointed judges, prosecutors and investigators completed the mandatory induction training and 46 judges participated in the training for promotion from district to county level.

As of 31.12.2024, within the framework of the ongoing training - at national level, as well as within the framework of the international cooperation and exchange of magistrates, 357 trainings have been held in face-to-face, distance and mixed form, in which a total of 6 693 participants took part, including 2341 judges, 805 prosecutors, 307 investigators, 1606 judicial officers (including 494 judicial and prosecutorial assistants), 84 lawyers and 1550 other members of the professional community. 849 are new users of the e-learning portal and the NIJ digital library has 248 new users in 2024.

The changes in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (SG 106 of 22.12.2023), which gave the courts the right to refer cases to the Constitutional Court, were reflected in the training activities of the NIJ. 100 representatives of the professional community took part in training sessions on the topics “Immediate application of the Constitution” and “Referral to the Constitutional Court by a court under Article 150, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria - current issues”.

As a continuation of the Institute's 2023 training campaign on the amendments to the Commercial Law, promulgated in issue 66 of the State Gazette of 1 August 2023, held in the period October - December 2023, by appellate districts, and aimed at judges hearing commercial insolvency and stabilisation proceedings, which involved 203 participants, including 175 judges and 28 judicial assistants, in 2024. The NIJ held 3 training sessions on the new institution in commercial law, the variable capital company, with the participation of 70 judges and 5 judicial assistants. In addition, within the framework of the Regional Training Programme and in partnership with the Blagoevgrad District Court, one training on “Practical Problems in Bankruptcy Proceedings. Allocation of liability for costs in civil proceedings”. In the framework of the zonal meeting of the judges from the region of the Court of Appeals of Sofia, the topic related to insolvency proceedings was also addressed in a separate module.

The topic of alternative dispute resolution is part of the compulsory initial training of junior judge candidates, which includes a module on mediation. In the framework of the current training, as of 2023, the topic “Mediation or litigation - a matter of informed choice” was included in two training sessions, with the participation of 51 trainees.

In 2024, NIJ is actively involved in the organisation of a joint training in partnership with the Regional Cooperation Council and the HELP Programme of the Council of Europe on “The Importance of Quality Justice in Mediation”. NIJ nominated a judicial trainer who joined a joint team with a Portuguese expert. 18 representatives of judicial systems from South East European countries participated actively in the training, which took place online over a month. On the Bulgarian side 2 judges and 6 lawyers participated in the training. Along with the above, the issues related to the application of mediation in resolving parental conflicts are addressed in the ongoing trainings on family law and child justice, and the experience of the Norwegian judicial system was shared within the framework of the NIJ projects implemented under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

In 2024, the Institute continued the tradition of holding professional meetings (master

classes) with Judge Alexander Arabadzhiev of the Court of Justice of the European Union to build on and develop the skills and competences of the professional community for the effective application of European Union law to the representatives of the legal community. The event also featured an analysis of the preliminary references made by constitutional courts to the CJEU, developed by Judge Arabadzhiev, which included an in-depth study of the place and role of constitutional courts in the Member States of the European Union.

On 10.07.2024. The National Institute of Justice and the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (HSIF) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to provide quality professional training in the field of financial and economic knowledge and skills to judges, prosecutors and investigators. The cooperation also provides for the development of self-learning resources and training materials in this field. In the period October-November 2024, four training courses on "Introduction to Accounting" were held, aimed at acquiring and upgrading the economic knowledge of magistrates, including in terms of expertise in insolvency proceedings.

II. Within the framework of the signed cooperation agreement with the Bulgarian Competition Law Association, a training on "Affecting trade between EU Member States and (in)effective application of Article 101 and Article 102 TFEU in Bulgaria: problems and challenges for the CPC and national courts" was held on 13.09.2024, aimed at the application of the European legal framework in the field of competition.

A total of 75 trainings on counteracting money laundering and terrorist financing were conducted, covering 824 prosecutors and 436 investigators. Numerous seminars and conferences were organized by the Prosecutor's Office on the issues of discriminatory and hate crimes, computer crimes, crimes against the financial interests of the EU and organized crime.

III. The training institutions of the Ministry of the Interior conduct courses for initial training of investigating police officers, as well as subsequent training for updating and improving professional qualifications.

In 2024, the following training courses were conducted at the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior:

- two attendance and one distance learning course for investigating police officers, with the participation of a total of 79 employees;
- a course for professional specialization of investigating police officers - 11 employees;
- a course on the topic "Corruption and corrupt behaviour. Counteraction to corruption" - 10 employees;
- two courses on the topic "Current problems of counteraction to corruption" - 159 employees.
- "Investigation and criminal prosecution of money laundering and financing of terrorism" - 56 employees;

Trainings conducted in other national and foreign training institutions or organizations:

MOI officials have taken part in the following trainings held by:

1. The National Institute of Justice:

- "Protection of the financial interests of the European Union. Criminal formations. Functions of OLAF. European Public Prosecutor's Office";
- Corruption crimes. Bribery. Bribery of an official.

2. International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA):

- "Fighting corruption in the public sector"

3. Basel Institute of Management:

- "Corruption in infrastructure projects and public procurement";

Research and Training Point Foundation:

"Cooperation in the detection and prosecution of crimes against the financial interests of the EU"

Other trainings conducted within the framework of international projects or with the participation of international partners:

- "Investigation and documenting official crimes. Tracing cash flows acquired from corruption crimes. Operational reporting in the Ministry of the Interior. Improving the selection, study and management of voluntary associates" - Norwegian Financial Mechanism – 32 employees
- "Discovering and investigation of crimes committed by cross-border organized crime groups specializing in the illegal production, trafficking and distribution of excisable and non-excisable goods, tax crimes and trafficking in cultural property"
- "Financial investigations and recovery of funds";
- "Joint investigation teams - leadership";
- "Crime scene investigation";
- "Cryptocurrency investigations";
- "Detecting corruption: Introduction to asset recovery techniques and financial investigations";
- "Environmental crimes - investigation";
- "From darkness to light. Investigations of dark web markets";
- "Intellectual Property Justice";
- "Breakthrough: Building Pathways to Better Internet Investigations";
- "Joint Investigation Teams - Implementation";
- "Cryptocurrency Trends from a Law Enforcement Perspective";
- "Investigating Digital Piracy Cases".

In the framework of professional on-the-job training, classes have been held covering the provisions of the Criminal Code relevant to the crimes of "corruption" and "bribery", as well as methods for detecting and countering corruption.

During the period, the implementation of the project *"Enhancing the Capacity of the Directorate General for Combating Organized Crime (DGCOC) for More Effective Investigation of Organized and Transnational Crime"* was completed, co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, including various training activities and exchange of experience aimed at improving the professional qualifications of experts, magistrates and DGCOC employees in preventing, identifying, investigating and effectively prosecuting various forms of cross-border and organized crime.