

NEWSLETTER

Contents

Face to face again – the SCM candidates' interviews continue

What does the new draft law that will regulate the work of the NAC provide for?

Some – yay, some – nay: the new Vetting Commission reports announce who was successfully vetted and who was not

Ilan Șor against everybody – what do the judges say?

First hearings of candidates running for membership of the Board for Selection and Evaluation of Prosecutors

High-level corruption in the Republic of Moldova: GRECO recommendations to prevent this phenomenon

Radiography of attacks on civil society organizations and human rights defenders in 2023

IN BRIEF

FACE TO FACE AGAIN – THE SCM CANDIDATES' INTERVIEWS CONTINUE

In March 2024, the Pre-Vetting Commission (Commission) resumed interviewing the candidates running for the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), after the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) in August 2023 invalidated the decisions of the Commission to fail these candidates (details in the [LRCM Newsletter No. 60](#)).

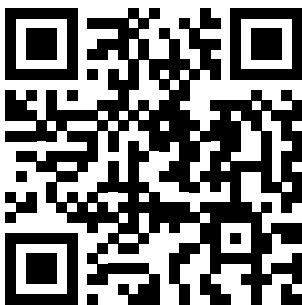
At the resumed hearings, Ion Chirtoacă, a judge at the Chișinău Court of Appeals, requested that his parents also be interviewed in a public hearing. The Commission did not interview his parents during the initial assessment – a decision the candidate challenged at the SCJ. At the repeated hearing, the Commission asked the candidate to address the Commission's serious doubts about failing to declare a bank account in his name, to which his parents regularly made transfers. At the same time, the Commission asked him to explain the origins of his parents' financial means in 2012-2015, as well as the candidate's father depositing a sum of money into a deposit account, which also belonged to the candidate's father. The parents were asked about their official and unofficial income earned abroad, the period they worked abroad, and the accuracy of certain statements they attached to the reassessment process. Following the hearing of the candidate's parents, there was a wave of criticism online. In response, the Commission representatives said that the judge himself had requested that his parents be interviewed.

In the case of judge Veronica Cupcea of the Orhei District Court, the Commission was suspicious about the origin of funds used to purchase two buildings by the candidate's family; undeclared savings in the declaration of income and personal interests for 2019, as well as undeclared financial contributions in the annual declaration for 2020 (contributions that were used for the payment in three instalments for the repayment of a loan, contracted in 2018).

While repeatedly interviewing the judge of the Chișinău Court of Appeals, Aureliu Postică, the members of the Commission expressed their suspicions about his financial and ethical integrity. These suspicions related to his failing to pay tax penalties (late payment surcharges), his wife's income for the two companies she manages; the privatisation of a service house by the candidate's family in 2008, as well as its extension with the allocation of a living space; and the difference in his income and expenses for 2017. At the same time, the candidate reiterated that



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The Pre-Vetting Commission resumed their interviews and focused on suspicious financial and ethical issues, while some candidates questioned the need for repeated assessments.

the Commission's suspicions have been [addressed at the SCJ](#), which is already a judged fact, and the Commission should no longer examine them. The candidate also mentioned, that with the election of SCM members from among the judges by the General Assembly of Judges on 28 April 2023, he does not agree with the need to evaluate candidates running for the SCM, this being a futile exercise.

WHAT DOES THE NEW DRAFT LAW THAT WILL REGULATE THE WORK OF THE NAC PROVIDE FOR?

On 21 March 2024, the Parliament [approved](#) in its first reading [the draft law](#) amending [the Law](#) on the National Anticorruption Centre (NAC). The changes were made in the context of the de-coupling of the competences of the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO) and the NAC, which the LRCM wrote about in Newsletters [No. 60](#) and [No. 63](#). The direct author of the draft law is the NAC, but the draft law was registered by three MPs of the PAS parliamentary majority. The purpose of the amendments, according to the authors, is to standardize the anticorruption legislative framework and to implement the actions foreseen in the national strategies in this field.

Among the most important changes is the revision of the grounds for dismissal of the Head of the NAC, by removing "failure to meet the requirements for appointment to the post" as grounds for dismissal. According to the authors, such a ground for the termination of employment is ambiguous and unclear, i.e., presents risks of abusive removal from office. In June 2019, the former Head of NAC, Bogdan Zumbreanu, [was removed from office](#) on a similar ground – lack of irreproachable reputation upon appointment, and in 2021, another former Head of NAC, Ruslan Flocea, was dismissed because the NAC's work was allegedly insufficiently effective in preventing and combating corruption.

The draft also provides for strengthening the NAC's role in carrying out operational, tactical, and strategic anticorruption analysis. Under the current regulations, the NAC cannot obtain sufficient information from the authorities. The draft law would remedy this shortcoming by specifying that information classified as state secret, official information with limited accessibility and personal data will be used in the analytical work. In addition, the NAC has been given the task of carrying out special investigative activities to search for persons avoiding prosecution, with a view to holding them criminally liable.

Adjustments have been made in the area of NAC employee guarantees and incentives. The payment of the one-off seniority allowance has been revised. Thus, NAC employees who will be released from service due to reaching their age limit, not meeting health criteria or retirement will receive an allowance of 20 average salaries if they have a minimum of 20 years of service. For employees with up to 10 years' service, the allowance will be five average salaries. In addition, an allowance has been included for anticorruption officers who have a secret identity and who carry out special investigative work in high-risk conditions. For them, the special pensionable service will be calculated at the coefficient 1 to

Parliament wants to strengthen the legal framework for NAC's activity. Increasing the stability of the NAC Head's mandate, giving additional guarantees to anticorruption officers, and revising the way the NAC Civil Council is set up – are just some of the changes made by the legislature.

1.5. At the same time, in order to increase the efficiency and quality of human resources management, the categories of NAC employees have been renamed, the conditions of employment, modification and termination of service relationships have been adjusted, and aspects related to professional training and disciplinary regime have been clarified.

The draft provides for the revision of the mechanism for the NAC Civil Council set-up. This is the Board made up of three representatives of civil society, who monitor NAC's work. Under the current law, two members of the Council are to be appointed by civil society and one by the Legal Committee for appointments and immunities. The authors of the draft proposed that nominations for this Council should be proposed by the NAC, following a public competition.

SOME – YAY, SOME – NAY: THE NEW VETTING COMMISSION REPORTS ANNOUNCE WHO WAS SUCCESSFULLY VETTED AND WHO WAS NOT

In March 2024, the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) examined and approved the reports of the Vetting Commission (Commission) on the evaluation of seven candidates running for judgeship at the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ), who were interviewed back in January and March 2024. According to the Commission's reports, five candidates: [Aurelia Cazacliu](#), [Aliona Ciocanu](#), [Stela Procopciuc](#), [Diana Stănilă](#) and [Adrian Cerbu](#), met the criteria of financial and ethical integrity and passed the external evaluation. Candidates [Mihail Lvovschi](#) and [Ion Buruiană](#) did not pass the external evaluation. The LRCM reported about the last two candidates' interviews [in the LRCM Newsletter No. 65](#).

At the same time, in March, a series of interviews for candidates running for judgeship at the SCJ took place: [Ion Munteanu](#) – acting Prosecutor General; [Stella Bleșceaga](#) – judge, Chișinău District Court; [Vladislav Gribincea](#) – program director, LRCM. The Commission did not raise any ethical or financial integrity issues for these candidates – these issues were clarified earlier.

During the hearing of SCJ judge [Anatolie Țurcan](#), the Commission was suspicious about two aspects: the existence of unjustified wealth in 2012, 2013 and 2018, which falls within the assessment period; and the ethical aspect, related to the judge's role in the delivery of several judgments in which the Republic of Moldova has been condemned at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The Commission members also asked about the judge's unjustified absence from work on a working day and how this behaviour could have affected the work of the Supreme Court and the reputation of the office he held.

At the same time, on 13 March 2024, the candidate running for judgeship at the SCJ, [Ludmila Ouș](#), informed the Vetting Commission about her refusal to attend the hearing scheduled for the same day. According to the Law on external evaluation of judges and candidates for the position of SCJ judge, the evaluation can proceed based on information collected even if there will be no public hearing.

Dumitru Racoviță – the first judge to pass the evaluation for the position of member of the Board for Selection and Evaluation of Judges.

In March 2024, the lawyer [Sergiu Băieșu](#), former Dean of the Faculty of Law, nominated by the Parliament to the SCM, was also interviewed. The hearing of SCM candidate Sergiu Băieșu focused on potential unexplained wealth issues for some years related to the evaluation period, as well as clarifying the situation related to inconsistencies between the papers submitted by the candidate in the Q&A sessions and those received by the Commission from the authorities. The Commission members asked the candidate several questions to clarify these issues.

Also in March, the hearing of candidates for membership of the SCM Board for Selection and Evaluation of Judges took place. The Commission had previously [notified](#) judge [Dumitru Racoviță](#), a candidate from the Ungheni District Court, that the Commission has no suspicions about his integrity. And on 8 April 2024, [the Commission announced](#) that the candidate met the conditions of ethical and financial integrity.

At the hearing of legal expert [Mihaela Pascal](#), the Vetting Commission members asked the candidate to clarify an integrity issue related to the reduced price of buying and selling a car between 2021 and 2022.

At the [hearing](#) of judge Adrian Cerbu, from Criuleni District Court, the Vetting Commission members asked the candidate to clarify two integrity issues: the difference between his income and expenses for 2020 and why he did not disclose in the declarations of assets and personal interests from 2012-2016 holding several bank accounts.

Lastly, at the [hearing](#) of judge Petru Păun, Chișinău Court of Appeals, the Commission raised suspicions related to his integrity, prompted by his failure to declare the right to inhabit an apartment where the candidate lived between 2011 and 2012.

ILAN ȘOR AGAINST EVERYBODY – WHAT DO THE JUDGES SAY?

This month has been marked by several court cases initiated by people close to Ilan Șor. The disputes concerned challenges to acts that hindered their work or the declaration of the “Șor” party as unconstitutional.

On 4 March, [the European Court of Human Rights \(ECtHR\) notified](#) the Moldovan Government of the application filed by the “Șor” political party. The application concerns the declaration of the party as unconstitutional in June 2023 (see details in [the LRCM Newsletter No. 58](#)). The party claims that its declaration as unconstitutional is contrary to freedom of expression and freedom of association. It is unclear whether the case is being treated as a priority. Usually, at least two years pass from the communication of the case to the adoption of the ECtHR decision.

The Constitutional Court has declared two laws unconstitutional, and the ECtHR has begun examining the application deploring the ban on the "Şor" party.

On 5 March, [the Constitutional Court ruled unconstitutional the law](#) changing the way value-added tax and excise duties on goods and services purchased in ATU Gagauzia are refunded. According to this law, from November 2023, the refund was to be paid from the budget of the ATU, not from the state budget. The leadership of ATU Gagauzia, currently led by people close to Ilan Şor, did not agree to this change. The Constitutional Court (CC) noted that, although the Parliament held consultations on the draft with the representatives of the autonomy, they were not effective because the Parliamentary Commission did not convincingly justify why it did not accept the arguments put forward by the representatives of ATU Gagauzia. This was in breach of Article 111 para. (1) of the Constitution, which refers to the economic autonomy of the region. Judges Liuba Şova and Nicolae Roşca formulated separate opinions. The CC ruling does not prevent the adoption of a new law with the same content, but only after genuine consultations have taken place and the other stages of the legislative process have been respected.

In 2022-2023, people close to Ilan Şor organised protests in Chişinău. Some of these protests were dispersed by the police under a provision of the Commission for Exceptional Situations (CES). Marina Tauber, Ilan Şor's ally, challenged the CES provision in court, arguing that the CES had no right to restrict protests, as the reasons for introducing the exceptional situation (the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis) had nothing to do with the protests. The action was dismissed by the Chişinău Court of Appeals on 11 December 2023 because the meetings were not banned, but only the possibility of limiting them was introduced, the limitation was temporary, and the war in Ukraine justified this limitation. On 20 March 2024, [the Supreme Court of Justice \(SCJ\) dismissed the appeal](#) against the Court of Appeal's ruling as not falling within the grounds of appeal.

On 26 March 2024, the CC examined the constitutionality of a law adopted on 4 October 2023. It introduced a three-year restriction on persons under international sanctions, who had previously been excluded from elections or who had been involved in acts that led to a party being declared unconstitutional to stand for election. Under this law, several candidates close to Ilan Şor were excluded from local elections held in autumn 2023. [The CC concluded that the law is contrary](#) to the right to be elected guaranteed by Article 38 of the Constitution because the restriction is applied quasi-automatically based on criteria that do not allow for an analysis of each person's behaviour, it has a fixed duration of three years regardless of the seriousness of the offence committed, and the safeguards against abusive application of the restriction are not sufficient. The Court did not explain what the effect of its ruling is and whether it can lead to the invalidation of local elections. No judge has issued a separate opinion.

Failing to comply with the regime for filing declarations of assets and personal interests – a key issue identified when interviewing candidates running for the Board for Selection and Evaluation of Prosecutors.

FIRST HEARINGS OF CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD FOR SELECTION AND EVALUATION OF PROSECUTORS

The Commission for the Evaluation of Prosecutors (Commission) held on 26-27 March 2024 the first hearings of candidates running for membership of the Board for Selection and Evaluation of Prosecutors of the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP).

[Tatiana Rotaru](#), a lawyer, was questioned at the hearing on one issue – her failure to submit a declaration of assets and personal interests for 2016. At [Elena Demian's](#) hearing, a university lecturer, the Commission was suspicious about the low price of the property (garage), which was purchased together with her husband in 2020. She and her husband put different prices in their annual declarations of assets and personal interests. Similarly, the Commission was also suspicious about her purchasing a car in 2021 for MDL 10,000, as well as the different values of the car indicated in the spouses' annual declarations of assets.

At the public hearing of candidate [Aliona Chisari-Rurak](#), university lecturer, the Commission was suspicious about her omission or late submission of the declarations of assets and personal interests for the years 2017, 2021 and 2022; the confusion of the declaration of some data related to the plot of land and the purchase of an apartment; failure to include in the declaration of assets and personal interests the money transfer received from the candidate's father; the donation of the apartment to her mother; as well as the acquisition of a plot of land, in 2019, by decision of the Chişinău Municipal Council. During the hearing of lawyer [Sergiu Beşliu](#), the Commission was suspicious about his imbalanced income and expenses for 2013. The Commission asked him to provide clarifications.

HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: GRECO RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT THIS PHENOMENON

On 12 March 2024, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) published a [report](#) on the fifth round of its assessment of the Republic of Moldova. This time, GRECO assessed the effectiveness of the measures put in place to prevent and fight corruption in top executive positions [President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister, State Secretary, etc. and in law enforcement institutions (Police and Border Police)].

GRECO has developed 25 recommendations categorised into two blocks: (i) prevention of corruption in executive management positions and (ii) prevention of corruption in law enforcement institutions. In the first category, the recommendations include the adoption of codes of conduct for senior executives and the organisation of training courses on integrity issues, as the Moldovan authorities have stated that no such code of conduct exists. GRECO also found

GRECO is concerned about the widespread phenomenon of promoting interim managers to senior positions, which is characterised by a lack of transparency.

that lobbying is not regulated – there are no rules or procedures governing the disclosure of contracts between senior executives and third parties or lobbyists seeking to influence the decision-making process. At the same time, it was noted that post-employment restrictions are not applied even though the heads of the institutions are obliged to take measures to ensure compliance with the legal regime of post-employment restrictions. It is therefore requested that these deficiencies be remedied.

According to the findings, given the extremely high number of declarations submitted to the National Integrity Authority (NIA) in one calendar year, integrity inspectors were only able to examine a small proportion of them. Similarly, there is no control to ensure consistency in decision-making by integrity inspectors, which can undermine public trust in public institutions. Thus, GRECO recommends improving NIA's in-depth scrutiny of the asset declarations of senior executives in terms of ensuring consistency of decisions of integrity inspectors and equal and fair distribution of workload. GRECO believes that the insufficient resources of the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (human, financial and technical) hinder the effective investigation of high-level corruption.

In the second category, GRECO calls for measures to be taken to eliminate the practice of promoting interim managers, as this practice shows a lack of transparency and meritocracy in the process of promotion to top positions. Similarly, it is recommended to develop specific codes of conduct on all relevant integrity issues, to organise regular in-service training for Police and Border Police employees and to set up a confidential ethics and integrity counselling mechanism.

The Moldovan authorities must meet the 25 recommendations by 30 June 2025.

RADIOGRAPHY OF ATTACKS ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN 2023

In March 2024, the LRCM [launched](#) the 7th edition of the Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the Republic of Moldova. This detailed report documented approximately 90 attacks that took place between 1 January and 31 December 2023. The document is meant to draw attention to the attacks orchestrated against CSOs and HRDs, to urge public authorities, companies and individuals involved to stop these actions and allow the CSOs and HRDs to carry out their activities freely. It also allows affected CSOs and HRDs to react to the attacks against them.

The nature of the attacks in 2023 has been varied, including denigrating public statements, hate speech, stigmatisation, threats and the issuance of orders aimed at blocking the work of some CSOs, limiting access to requested public interest information and violating human rights and freedoms.

Attacks on CSOs and HRDs have shifted from traditional media to the Telegram platform, which, unregulated, becomes a favourable space for promoting various controversial political figures and actively distributing false information and narratives anonymously.

The Radiography revealed that although the number of attacks on CSOs and HRDs in 2023 remained at a comparable level to the previous year, how these attacks were propagated changed significantly. Specifically, there was a decrease in their presence in traditional media, television and radio, and an increase in incidents on social media. In particular, there has been a proliferation of various anonymous Telegram channels and the number of attacks carried out on this platform. This phenomenon may be due in part to [the decisions](#) of the Commission for Exceptional Situations (CES), which suspended the licences of some TV stations and websites considered dangerous for information security, thus triggering the transition to the Telegram platform. The fact that this platform is not regulated also facilitates the uncontrolled distribution of false information and narratives. In addition, there has been a tendency for Telegram channels to support and protect the image of controversial political parties or politicians, while also addressing a dynamic of mutual support, with the same publications being frequently redistributed among themselves.

The attacks in 2023 were closely linked to justice reform and targeted, in particular, organisations and their representatives who promoted or were actively involved in this process. The attacks also centred around events such as the November 2023 general local elections, the Moldova Pride LGBT+ Community Festival and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruling of 17 January 2023, which called on Council of Europe member states to adopt legislation recognising and ensuring the protection of same-sex couples.

CSOs have often been accused of politicisation and monopolising key public functions, being called a 'criminal gang', 'executioners of the system' or 'secret police of the government', serving foreign interests and disguising themselves as social projects, and even exaggerating them to obtain as much funding as possible. They have also been associated with the concept of 'GONGOS' – non-governmental organisations funded or controlled by the government to promote political interests. Media organisations and investigative journalists investigating former or current officials and politicians involved in alleged corruption have also been the target of many of these attacks.

Among the CSOs most frequently attacked in 2023 were the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), the LRCM, the Soros Foundation Moldova (SFM), the Independent Journalism Centre (IJC), the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ), the Public Association 'Media Alternativa' (TV8) and the Independent Press Association (IPA). These organisations have often been accused of serving the interests of the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) or foreign interests, of being politicised and of exploiting social problems to obtain funds.

The attacks were not limited to organisations, but also targeted human rights defenders, such as investigative journalist Mariana Rață, documentary journalists Viorica Tătaru and Andrei Captarenco, the director of Ziarul de Gardă (ZdG), Alina Radu, LGBT+ activists Angelica Frolov and Leo Zbancă. They were accused of being complicit in "PAS crimes", of being paid "with envelope prizes, grants and excessive salaries" and of representing "a mess, filth and breakdown of society",

with even calls for physical aggression against some of them being published. In addition, activists and the LGBT+ community as a whole continued to be the target of denigrating statements, stigmatisation and incitement to hatred, and a manipulative tool frequently used in the populist speeches of many politicians in Moldova.

I IN BRIEF

As of **11 March 2024**, judge Stela Procopciuc is the acting President of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ). [The decision of the Plenary of the Superior Council of Magistracy \(SCM\)](#) was taken in the context of the secondment of SCJ judge Aliona Miron to the SCM (see more details in [LRCM Newsletter no. 66](#)).

On **18 March 2024**, the LRCM sent to the Ministry of Justice conceptual proposals on the amendment of the Civil Procedure Code. LRCM's legal experts propose changes in the following procedural actions: summoning and correspondence with the parties; preliminary hearing; extending the possibility to use teleconferencing; taking minutes and hearing witnesses; higher court fines and others.

On **20 March 2024**, Adrian Cerbu started as interim Head of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The Plenum of the Superior Council of Magistracy, based on the appointment order of the Minister of Justice, seconded judge Adrian Cerbu from the Criuleni District Court to the NIJ for 18 months. This secondment comes with the [amendment to the Law on the National Institute of Justice](#). At the same time, the judge has resigned from his previous position as a member of the NIJ Council.

On **21 March 2024**, [the Constitutional Court rejected the Superior Council of Magistracy's request](#) (SCM) for an interpretation of Article 116 of the Constitution. The request concerned the mechanism for the reappointment of judges whose initial five-year term of office had expired by 1 April 2022. On 1 April 2022, constitutional amendments came into force, which excluded the procedure for the reappointment of judges. The Court explained that the legislation already provides the questions raised. Judges whose terms of office have expired by 1 April 2022 are to be proposed to the President of the country for reconfirmation by the SCM, and the Council's discretion is limited in this respect. The SCM can only refuse this if, after the Judicial Inspectorate's checking, it still has suspicions about the judge's integrity or violation of the law. The SCM must take decisions on more than 10 judges in this situation. They cannot issue rulings but receive salaries.

On **21 March 2024**, [the Supreme Court of Justice \(SCJ\) rejected the appeal](#) of the former acting President of the SCJ, Tamara Chișca-Doneva. In July 2023, the external vetting of SCJ judges began. According to this law, within 20 days, SCJ judges had to decide whether to accept external vetting. Tamara Chișca-Doneva resigned, suggesting that she did not agree to be subject to external evaluation. However, she requested that her resignation request take effect from 14 June 2024, when she reaches retirement age. On 25 August 2023, the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) accepted the resignation request, but with immediate effect.

Judge Chișca-Doneva challenged the SCM's decision, and three judges of the SCJ rejected the challenge as unfounded. The SCJ has not yet made public the reasons for rejecting the appeal.

On **21 March 2024**, the Parliament [adopted](#) a draft law interpreting the [Law on the Public Prosecution Service](#) about the interim office of the Prosecutor General. The new interpretation provides that if the position of the Prosecutor General becomes vacant, the interim Prosecutor General will continue until a new Prosecutor General is appointed, eliminating the need for a new nomination or other formal requirements. Thus, the mandate of the current interim Prosecutor General, Ion Munteanu, has been extended for an indefinite period, until the appointment of a fully-fledged Prosecutor General. His mandate was due to expire in April 2024.

On **21 March 2024**, Parliament [voted](#) in its first reading on the draft law introducing postal voting, with the support of [56 MPs](#). The draft aims to allow Moldovan citizens with voting rights in Canada and the United States to vote by post, given the increasing number of citizens living in these countries. The procedure, proposed by the draft law, involves pre-registering voters and sending them a voting package containing the ballot and the necessary instructions 23 days before election day. Identification of the voter will be carried out by digital means or by proving identity to the electoral authorities, and if the envelope does not reach the addressee, he or she will be able to vote at the polling station. However, the parliamentary opposition opposed the legislative initiative because, if approved, it would not be applicable in all countries, including the Russian Federation. The draft law will be subject to further parliamentary debate.

On **25 March 2024**, the anticorruption portal anticorupție.md [published a journalistic investigation](#) on the alleged integrity problems of the President of the [Pre-Vetting Commission](#) – Herman von Hebel. He was blamed for the failure to implement a framework reform at the International Criminal Court in The Hague while he headed its Registry from 2013 to 2018. Specifically, the reform allegedly resulted in the Court being ordered to pay redundant persons EUR 660,000 in compensation. Herman von Hebel also allegedly held the position of substitute judge at a Dutch Court of Appeal, which would be incompatible with his position as a member of the Pre-Vetting Commission, given the [law's](#) restrictions on external evaluation. In response, the Commission's secretariat issued a [reaction](#), rejecting the accusations. In a [television broadcast](#) on 28 March 2024, Herman von Hebel stated that he saw no reason to resign as President of the Pre-Vetting Commission.

On **27 March 2024**, nine NGOs, including the LRCM, signed the [Declaration](#) on the new legal mechanism for suspending the licences of audiovisual media service providers. The signatory NGOs express concern about the lack of quality standards of the law allowing for temporary or permanent suspension of audiovisual media service providers' licenses by the Council for the Promotion of Investment Projects of National Importance (CPPIIN). The signatories note that such legal mechanisms have previously been declared [unconstitutional](#), as their application leads to a lack of transparency in the decision-making process

and violates the right to free expression of the press. The statement was made in the context of the [temporary suspension](#) on 21 March 2024 of the validity of two broadcasting licenses (Channel 5 and Maestro FM) by CPPIIN as a preventive measure “following the finding of reasonable suspicion of the involvement of the company’s beneficial owners in activities affecting state security”.

As of **28 March 2024**, the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) has a new member – Mariana Cherpec, a prosecutor in the Chişinău Municipal Prosecutor’s Office. Mariana Cherpec [passed the external evaluation](#) on 8 June 2023, and following the General Assembly of Prosecutors on 22 December 2023, she was elected as an alternate member of the SCP among the territorial prosecutors’ offices (see details in the [LRCM Newsletter no. 64](#)). The position of SCP member became vacant after the resignation of SCP member Oleşea Vîrlan, requested by her colleagues after the failed competition for the position of Prosecutor General (details in the [LRCM Newsletter no. 66](#)).

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