

## NEWSLETTER

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In Brief

## WHITE SMOKE AT THE SCP—THE NEW PROSECUTOR GENERAL SELECTED IN THE SECOND ATTEMPT

On 30 May 2024, the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) held [hearings](#) to select a candidate for prosecutor general. This was a repeated competition for this position as the first one had been canceled following the discovery of unjustified discrepancies in the points awarded by former SCP member Oleseă Vîrlan (details are available in [Newsletter 68](#)).

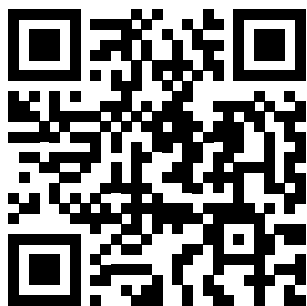
Of the four candidates who [entered the competition](#), three qualified for the hearings: [Alexandru Cernei](#), a prosecutor from the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO), [Octavian Iachimovschi](#), interim deputy chief prosecutor of the APO, and [Ion Munteanu](#), interim prosecutor general. The latter two had previously participated in the canceled competition.

Their evaluation [was based](#) on six criteria: the motivation for getting appointed, the conception of the management system, professional competency, critical analysis skills, and finally integrity, ethics, and good reputation. For each of these criteria, candidates could receive from 1 to 10 points. The total score was calculated as the average of the scores awarded per criterion. The hearings lasted more than six hours, of which almost four were for deliberation to allow the SCP members to award points and make decisions. Ion Munteanu received an average score of 9.21, Octavian Iachimovschi—8.80, and Alexandru Cernei—7.92. In the initial competition—the one that had been canceled—Iachimovschi had scored highest, with 8.53 points, and Munteanu came in third, with 8.16 points (details are available in [Newsletter 66](#)).

Munteanu's [management concept](#) provided for improving the capacity and efficiency of the prosecution system by creating new positions and granting extended powers to chief prosecutors to allow the transfer of prosecutors between offices. Presumably, these measures would increase flexibility and adaptability in dealing with new criminal phenomena and ensuring the continued specialization of prosecutors. Munteanu also proposed revising the geographical organization of territorial prosecution offices in line with the new courts map law. As for criminal and judicial procedures, Munteanu proposed simplifying them and fast-tracking the evidence collection



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The selection and appointment of a new prosecutor general through a public, transparent, and meritocratic competition—one of the outstanding conditions for the negotiations for joining the European Union—has been completed.

process. Another aspect was the development and implementation of the e-file system not just as a practical tool, but also as a tool interconnected with other national information systems. Improving communication, ensuring cooperation with state institutions, the donor community, and CSOs that monitor and provide technical assistance to the prosecution system also featured high among Munteanu's priorities.

By law, the winner must undergo the vetting process. If successful, the candidate gets nominated for being appointed as prosecutor general by the president of the country. The selection of Munteanu fast-tracked this process as he simultaneously applied for Supreme Court justice. In March 2024, [the Prosecutor Vetting Commission \(PVC\)](#) gave him a positive appraisal, and on the same day, the SCP sent his file to the president for appointment. On 1 June 2024, Maia Sandu signed [the decree appointing](#) Ion Munteanu as prosecutor general for a seven-year term.

## THE PRESIDENT APPOINTED FIVE NEW JUDGES TO THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE. WHAT IS NEXT?

The reform of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ), adopted in the spring of 2023, transformed the SCJ into a court that ensures the unification of judicial practice and reduced the number of justices of this court from 33 to 20. Along with the reform at the SCJ, the spring of 2023 saw the start of the vetting in the justice sector—that is, the verification of the financial and ethical integrity of judges and prosecutors. Before the vetting began, 22 of the 25 Supreme Court justices had resigned (details are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 54](#)). Of the three remaining justices, one, Aliona Miron, passed the vetting and was elected by her colleagues to the Superior Council of the Magistracy (SCM). Regarding another one, Anatolie Țurcan, the [Vetting Commission for the judiciary \(JVC\)](#) recommended not to pass him and this recommendation is currently under examination at the SCM. The last judge, Mariana Ursachi, failed to appear at the hearing organized by the JVC three times, citing health issues.

On 10 April 2023, the SCM announced a competition for vacancies at the SCJ—11 for career judges and 9 for candidates from among lawyers, prosecutors, and university professors. In addition to the three incumbent justices of the Supreme Court, [32 more candidates](#) applied. To secure appointment, the 32 candidates had to pass the vetting and the competition organized by the SCM. By 1 June 2024, 13 of them passed the vetting, 4 withdrew from the competition, and 4 failed the vetting. As for the remaining 11 candidates, the SCM has yet to decide on the vetting findings concerning them. 3 of these 11 candidates have already received a negative appraisal from the JVC, but the SCM has not yet examined the reports regarding them. The other 8 are still awaiting the conclusion of the JVC.

On 21 May and 5 June 2024, the SCM organized hearings for the candidates

Only five of the 21 candidates for Supreme Court justice ended up being nominated by the SCM for appointment. As a result, the SCM announced a new competition.

who had passed the vetting. In total, the SCM held hearings with 11 candidates. Adrian Cerbu was found incompatible because he was serving as interim director of the National Institute of Justice, and Ion Munteanu withdrew from the competition [following appointment as prosecutor general](#) on 1 June 2024.

The evaluation of candidates was based on [a regulation approved by the SCM](#). Under this regulation, only candidates who scored more than 75 points (out of a maximum of 100) qualify for appointment as Supreme Court justice by the president of the country. The final result represents the median score offered by each member of the SCM. Before the hearing, the candidates took a psychological test. In addition, the SCM asked them to present, beforehand, at least ten documents prepared by them. During the hearings, which lasted more than an hour, each candidate had to answer standard questions about complex legal issues. The hearing committee members also tested the candidates' knowledge of English, French, or German. To ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, the hearings took place behind closed doors and the video recording of the hearings was published online after the completion of the last hearing.

Four judge candidates had [hearings on 21 May](#), and [six lay candidates and one judge candidate](#) had hearings on 5 June. At the end of 21 May, [the SCM announced the scores](#) of the first four judges. Career judges Viorica Puica and Stela Procopciuc obtained 93 points each, Diana Stănilă obtained 85 points, and Aurelia Cazacliu—57 points. The SCM nominated Viorica Puica, Stela Procopciuc, and Diana Stănilă for appointment as Supreme Court justices. In the evening of 5 June, [the SCM announced](#) that lawyer Vladislav Gribincea obtained 92.5 points and judge Stella Bleşceaga from the Chişinău District Court obtained 84 points. Both were nominated for appointment. The other five candidates were not nominated because they obtained less than 75 points. Lawyer Aliona Ciocanu obtained 38 points, lawyer Leonid Chirtoacă obtained 62.75 points, prosecutor Sergiu Brigai obtained 69.5 points, prosecutor Iuri Lealin obtained 65.75 points, and former judge and university professor Aliona Corcenco obtained 48 points.

On 3 June 2024, President Maia Sandu issued the decrees appointing judges Viorica Puica, Stela Procopciuc, and Diana Stănilă justices at the Supreme Court, and on 10 June 2024, she appointed Vladislav Gribincea and Stella Bleşceaga. Without streamlining the way of examining cases, the five fresh appointees are not going to significantly increase the SCJ's capacity to process the more than 10,000 cases on its docket list. A few months ago, judges Procopciuc and Stănilă were temporarily transferred to the SCJ, and now are already working there. Viorica Puica is currently a justice at the Constitutional Court, and her mandate expires in November 2029. The number of justices at the Supreme Court will increase only when Gribincea and Bleşceaga join them. After these appointments, the SCJ will have 10 justices effectively serving there, including Anatolie Turcan, whom the JVC proposed the SCM not to pass based on the vetting results, and Mariana Ursache, whose vetting report is yet to be issued.

After the five appointments, the SCJ still has at least four vacant posts for career judges and eight for lay candidates. Currently, [five judges and six lay candidates](#) remain in the competition for these positions. Regarding candidates Teșcu, Rotari, and Ciobanu, the JVC recommended not to pass them, but the SCM has yet to make the final decision. For this reason, on 10 June 2024, the SCM announced a new competition for all Supreme Court justice positions expected to be vacant by the day the hearings are over.

## TATIANA RĂDUCANU'S RESIGNATION FROM THE VETTING COMMISSIONS AND THE AUTHORITIES' REACTION

On 14 May 2024, Tatiana Răducanu announced her [resignation](#) from the Pre-vetting Commission, which verifies the integrity of candidates for member in the SCM and the SCP. Răducanu resigned a few hours after [a letter from Chief Anticorruption Prosecutor Veronica Drăgălin](#) appeared on a web portal that previously promoted the image of oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc. According to this letter, on 30 April 2024, the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO) started a criminal investigation against Răducanu on suspicion of corruption, abuse of power, and ties with Veaceslav Platon and Ilan Șor. The suspicion is based solely on the two-year old private correspondence between two controversial people (Șor's lawyer and former judge Aureliu Colenco and Veaceslav Platon). In her resignation letter, Tatiana Răducanu emphasized that the accusations against her were false. In a [statement for zdg.md](#), Răducanu said: "I am not responsible for what scammers and idiots may say behind my back."

On 15 May 2024, the LRCM [published its position](#), criticizing how the circumstances of the alleged involvement of Tatiana Răducanu were presented. According to the LRCM, a preliminary fact-checking of the published information would have easily shown that the main assumptions made by the chief anticorruption prosecutor in her letter were false. Ms. Răducanu [voted for lifting the immunity of former judge Colenco](#) and [never ran for the headship of the SCM](#) as cited in the correspondence of the two individuals. Addressing the letter to the people who failed the vetting, just two weeks after the start of the criminal case, without a public record check, and based only on the ten-year old discussions between two controversial figures betrays the true intention of this action—that of blocking the verification of anticorruption prosecutors' integrity, a reform Veronica Drăgălin had publicly disagreed with.

On 16 May 2024, Parliament [approved](#) the draft decision regarding the termination of membership in the Independent Commission for Vetting the Integrity of Candidates for Member in the Self-administration Bodies of Judges and Prosecutors. Meanwhile, Parliament's Legal Commission [invited](#) the chief of the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office to the following session to provide explanations regarding the accusations against Tatiana Răducanu. In a

President Maia Sandu and members of Parliament are waiting for concrete evidence supporting the charges against the resigned member of the Pre-vetting and Vetting Commissions.

televised show, President Maia Sandu said that she [was waiting for concrete evidence](#) that would confirm the charges brought by the APO's chief Veronica Drăgălin against member of the Pre-vetting and Vetting Commissions Tatiana Răducanu.

On 20 May 2024, Tatiana Răducanu [filed a complaint](#) with the Prosecutor General's Office against the APO's chief Veronica Drăgălin. On 24 May 2024, Răducanu also reported the actions of the anticorruption chief prosecutor to the Superior Council of Prosecutors, requesting the initiation and application of disciplinary sanctions. Interim Prosecutor General Ion Munteanu, to whom the complaint was addressed, forwarded it to the chief of the APO for examination.

Ms. Răducanu, a former Supreme Court justice, served as a member of the Superior Council of the Magistracy between 2013 and 2016. From 2018 to 2022, she was a member and chairperson of the LRCM's Board of Directors.

## THE PRE-VETTING COMMISSION: A REPEATED HEARING OF THE LAST JUDGE CANDIDATE FOR SCM MEMBER AND NEW DECISIONS

In May 2024, the Pre-vetting Commission [completed](#) the repeated vetting of judges [Aureliu Postică](#) and [Nicolae Şova](#), who applied for member of the Superior Council of the Magistracy, or SCM. (Details about the repeated hearing of judge Aureliu Postică are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 67](#).) Both failed the repeated vetting. The Pre-vetting Commission found that they did not meet the criteria of financial and ethical integrity.

On 7 June 2024, the Pre-vetting Commission held a repeated hearing of judge [Alexei Paniş](#). The candidate had had a repeated hearing on 17 April 2024, after the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) [admitted](#) his appeal on 1 August 2023 and ordered repeated vetting (details about the repeated hearing are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 68](#)). However, considering the resignation of commissioner Tatiana Răducanu, the lack of a decision regarding the judge at the time of her resignation, and the lack of quorum, the Pre-vetting Commission decided to organize a third hearing as a continuation of the April hearing.

During the repeated hearing, Paniş was asked to provide additional information and clarifications regarding the source of income for a MDL 300,000 loan from his father, the use of money from his father's salary card, and the ethics of such a situation, given that, at that time, his father was the subject of three inquiries conducted by the National Integrity Authority. The candidate was also asked about possible conflicts of interest and damage to the public interest from his father being a company manager while also holding a public office. The candidate was unable to clarify how he had spent the MDL 300,000 loan.

During the hearing, Alexei Paniş brought—once again—accusations against former commissioner Tatiana Răducanu, citing the letters of Chief

Judge Alexei Paniş appears at the third hearing organized by the Pre-vetting Commission, held after the resignation of national commissioner Tatiana Răducanu.

Anticorruption Prosecutor Veronica Drăgălin, and criticized—once again—the vetting process.

Before the hearing began, Alexei Paniș [had criticized](#) the Pre-vetting Commission for sending him the additional information from the State Tax Service just one day before the hearing. Lawyer Vadim Vieru [noted](#) that the fact of submitting this information just 24 hours before the hearing limited one's ability to prepare an adequate response and could be perceived as an attempt to improperly influence the results of the vetting. In a public reaction, the Pre-vetting Commission [explained](#) that that data was not new as it was part of the initial vetting file to which Alexei Paniș had access during both the initial and the repeated vetting procedures. The Pre-vetting Commission assured the candidate that he would have sufficient time to provide any additional information deemed necessary.

## 24 JUDGES “FRESHLY” NOMINATED BY THE SCM FOR APPOINTMENT—HOW THEY WERE APPOINTED AND WHO THEY ARE

In May 2024, the Superior Council of the Magistracy (SCM) in its current membership completed the second competition for the appointment of new judges. The first competition ended in November 2023, when the SCM nominated 15 judges for appointment (details are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 63](#)). On 18 October 2023, before that competition ended, [the SCM announced a new competition](#) for 36 judge vacancies at district courts. None of those vacancies was for the Chișinău District Court. 24 of them were filled following the end of the competition on 23 May 2024.

The competition completed in May 2024 had 57 candidates. The [interviews with the candidates](#) took place on 16, 20, and 21 May. During the hearings, the candidates had to talk about their motivation for becoming a judge, challenges facing the judiciary, and issues of integrity. They also had to solve a few test cases. Each hearing lasted approximately 15 minutes. In the competitions organized by previous members of the SCM, hearings lasted no more than five minutes and candidates did not have to solve test cases.

Under the law, 60% of the score in the competition consist in the average mark at the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) graduation examination, 20% consist in the score offered by the Judges' Selection Board (JSB), and another 20%—the score offered by SCM members based on the hearing and the candidate's application file. An examination of the published results revealed that some candidates obtained quite different scores from the NIJ and the JSB, which can be explained by the different criteria used by these entities.

The results came out on 23 May, and [the candidates chose their positions](#) in the descending order of [the score obtained in the competition](#). The last available position was chosen by the candidate who ranked 30<sup>th</sup>. This

In six months, the SCM proposed the appointment of 39 new judges, which covers 10.5% of all judge positions in district courts. Another 15 positions were put up for competition in May 2024.

happened because six candidates turned down the position that fell to them following the competition, perhaps hoping to get a position closer to Chişinău in the following competitions. A candidate may refuse the position assigned to them only once. The SCM rejected another candidate—a former judge from the Economic Court of the Republic of Moldova—even though he ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the competition and could choose a position.

15 of the 24 judges nominated by the SCM were former graduates of the NIJ. Out of the top ten candidates, seven were NIJ graduates, three of whom took the top available positions. The other nominated judges were candidates with a minimum of five years of experience in the judicial system.

On 28 May 2024, [the SCM announced a new competition](#) to fill another 15 judge positions at district courts. This time, too, none of the positions was in Chişinău. The positions in Chişinău were filled in 2024 exclusively by transferring incumbent judges from outside the capital city. On 18 May 2024, the SCM filled at least three vacancies at the Chişinău District Court.

## A TIMELINE OF THE HEARINGS WITH CANDIDATES FOR THE SCP'S PROSECUTOR SELECTION AND EVALUATION BOARD AND DISCIPLINE AND ETHICS BOARD

On 30 May 2024, the [Prosecutor Vetting Commission](#) (PVC) completed the vetting of [three candidates](#) for member of the Prosecutors Selection and Evaluation Board of the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP). The PVC found that university lecturer [Elena Demian](#) and, prosecutor [Mariana Gornea](#) of the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) met the criteria of ethical and financial integrity and passed the vetting. Regarding candidate [Aliona Chisari-Rurak](#), a university lecturer, the PVC found that she did not meet the integrity criteria and, as a result, failed the vetting (details about the hearing are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 67](#)).

From May through June 2024, the PVC also held several hearings with candidates for member of the SCP's Prosecutor Selection and Evaluation Board and Discipline and Ethics Board.

During the hearings, Interim Deputy Prosecutor General [Marcel Dimitraş](#) was asked about the financial sources for the purchase of a car, the significant difference between its contractual price and market value, and the failure to declare some cash savings in his annual assets declarations.

SCP member [Constantin Şuşu](#), who applied for both boards of the SCP, was asked to explain how he had obtained a land plot free of charge in the District of Sîngerei for the construction of a house and the failure to meet the one-year deadline for building the house. The PVC wanted to clarify the circumstances of failure to meet the one-year deadline for the construction of the house,

Recent findings of the vetting of candidates have raised common questions about financial sources, including those of their family members, fictitious amounts in sales contracts, discrepancies in the data presented in asset declarations, significant differences between income and expenses, and potential conflicts of interest.

which was one of the local government's conditions for allocating the land plot. Şuşu also had to explain the reasons for selling the received land plot and the failure to declare this sale to the tax authorities for taxation purposes. In addition, he had to explain the wire transfers totaling USD 20,000 from his mother-in-law in Israel during the period of 2008 through 2011 and a bank loan of MDL 30,000. The PVC also requested clarifications about a disciplinary sanction applied in 2008, specifically a reprimand for failing to notify the PGO of the initiation of revision proceedings in a case in his administration.

**Corneliu Lavciuc**, interim chief prosecutor of the PGO's Anti-cybercrime Division, was asked to explain a potential conflict of interest in the examination of the motion for the revision of a criminal case regarding his former co-worker from the PGO's Division for Investigations and Crimes in the Armed Forces Ivan Grosu. He was asked about his relationship with Ivan Grosu.

**Alexandru Nichita**, deputy chief prosecutor of the Prosecution Office of the Municipality of Chişinău and chief of the Prosecution Department of the Borough of Ciocana, was asked about the financial sources for the purchase of a land plot and the construction of a house in Cricova, a bank deposit of EUR 60,000 opened in 2011, the sale of several apartments at prices below the cadastral value, and the failure to declare the real price collected from these transactions. He was also asked about loans totaling EUR 17,936 from his family members, the family members' sources of income, and the amount of EUR 13,700 received from abroad.

**Tatiana Gulea**, chief prosecutor of the PGO's Criminal Investigation Division, was asked for detailed explanations about two complaints against her. The first one, filed with the PGO, expressed objection to the way a group of prosecutors, including herself, had investigated certain criminal cases. That complaint is still pending examination by the PGO. The second complaint referred to the candidate's allegedly illegal request for a civil case pending before the court. The case concerned a complaint assigned to Tatiana Gulea, by which the complainant challenged the refusal of a territorial prosecution office to start criminal investigation. Following the verification, the refusal decision was canceled and, since not all the circumstances were clarified, the initiation of criminal investigation was ordered. The criminal case was sent to the territorial prosecution office for investigation. The candidate had to explain the substantive and procedural aspects as well as her position on those complaints. She was also asked about a loan of MDL 220,000 taken in 2019 from an acquaintance.

**Vasile Buzu**, a prosecutor from the Prosecution Office of the Municipality of Bălţi, was asked about his income during his stay in Romania from 2012 through 2016. At the time of the hearing, he was unable to provide complete information about the offices and income he had had during that period. The candidate also had to explain the reason for not declaring a car purchased and donated by his father and to clarify the circumstances under which he was fined for a traffic violation in 2017.



[Natalia Andronic](#), a prosecutor from the District Prosecution Office of Chişinău, was asked about several bank accounts that she had frequently opened and closed at different banks, the reasons for those actions, and the failure to declare those accounts. She also had to explain some amounts held in cash and why she had not declared them, as well as the purchase of a car with money donated by her parents, the parental house donated and later sold, and why she had not declared that transaction. The PVC requested clarifications regarding the beneficiaries of the money obtained from bank deposits, the source of her parents' income starting with 2007, and the income and assets owned by her spouse. The candidate also had to clarify an action of challenging the finding of the National Integrity Agency, which intended to send her case to the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO) for investigation, and a notification informing her of the initiation of a criminal case at the prosecution office, a case which later ended in an order refusing to start criminal investigation.

[Ghenadie Pîrlîi](#), a chief prosecutor at the PGO, was asked about his family's financial sources, including the purchase of an apartment and a car by his father-in-law, and the sources of income of his mother, who had purchased three cars, even though she did not have a driver's license. It is worth noting that those cars were used by his family. The PVC also sought to clarify the discrepancies between the family's income and expenses in 2008, the sanctioning of the candidate for the late submission of the declaration of assets in 2022, and a criminal complaint examined by the APO, which never ended in criminal prosecution.

On 24 May 2024, the PVC [announced](#) the start of the vetting of the APO's prosecutors. The PVC received the list of the prosecutors to be vetted from the SCP. These prosecutors have 20 days to submit their declaration of assets and personal interests for the past five years, including the list of close people working in the judicial system, the prosecution system, and the civil service. They must also complete and submit an ethical integrity questionnaire.

## NEW PASS-FAIL DECISIONS OF THE VETTING COMMISSION AND THE SCHEDULE OF THE NEXT HEARINGS

In May and early June 2024, the judges' Vetting Commission (JVC) completed the vetting of the ethical and financial integrity of several candidates. It found that lawyer [Sergiu Băieşu](#), nominated by Parliament for membership in the Superior Council of the Magistracy (SCM) as a representative of civil society, satisfied the criteria of financial and ethical integrity and passed the vetting.

The JVC also vetted four [candidates](#) for Supreme Court justice and one incumbent Supreme Court justice. Lawyer [Rodica Chirtoacă](#), prosecutor [Ion Teţcu](#), judge [Andrian Ciobanu](#) of the Bălţi Court of Appeals, (details about

Out of the seven candidates the JVC has vetted in May and June, only three satisfy the ethical and financial integrity criteria. Nine of the 12 subjects invited for the hearings scheduled for mid-June have already confirmed their participation.

these hearings are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 65](#)), incumbent Supreme Court justice [Anatolie Țurcan](#), and lawyer [Alexandru Rotari](#) (details about these hearings are available in the [LRCM's Newsletter 67](#)) did not meet the criteria of financial and ethical integrity according to the findings of the JVC and did not pass the vetting. In addition, the JVC completed the vetting of two candidates for member of the Judges' Selection and Evaluation Board from the SCM, namely judges [Ghenadie Mîra](#) and [Ion Talpa](#), finding that they met the criteria of financial and ethical integrity and passed the vetting process.

On 7 June 2024, the JVC [published](#) the schedule of hearings for the period 11–13 June, to which it invited 12 candidates for Supreme Court justice and other positions in the judiciary's self-administration bodies. Only nine of the 12 subjects confirmed their availability to participate. The other three hearings were cancelled.

## I IN BRIEF

On 24 May 2024, the Prosecutor Vetting Commission (PVC) [announced the start](#) of the vetting of prosecutors from the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO). Under the [special law](#), the APO's prosecutors are the first to undergo the vetting. The Superior Council of Prosecutors has sent the [list of anticorruption prosecutors](#) who would undergo the vetting to the PVC. The APO's prosecutors must submit their declarations of assets and personal interests for the past five years, including lists of close people working in the judicial system, the prosecution system, and the civil service, within 20 days. They also must complete an ethical integrity questionnaire.

On 24 May 2024, the LRCM [submitted](#) a legal opinion on the [bill](#) regarding the organization of the judiciary and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to the Ministry of Justice. The changes proposed by the author of the bill and the LRCM's recommendations for improving it mainly refer to the procedure for delegating judges and judge inspectors to participate in seminars, conferences, etc.; the rules regarding incompatibilities, prohibitions, and restrictions applicable to judges; the reduction of the number of judges in the panel that will examine appeals from SCM decisions; the composition of the NIJ's admission and graduation committees; aspects related to the psychological evaluation of the NIJ's trainees; the procedure for evaluating entrance examination results, namely the raising of the minimal mark required for admission to the NIJ; the rule that the SCM make inquiries about candidates' professional integrity with the Information and Security Service; as well as changes in the procedure and effects of registering NIJ graduates as candidates for judge or prosecutor.

On 28 May 2024, the LRCM in partnership with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the EcoContact Association [held a closeout event](#) to summarize the results of the project "[Shields for Human Rights Defenders—Supporting Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova](#)." The goal

of the project was to empower [human rights defenders](#) (HRDs) to operate in a safe and enabling environment in compliance with their rights and freedoms. During the 40 months of the project, 464 HRDs and 35 institutions benefitted from various activities, including training in personal and digital security, training in other topics, and legal assistance for HRDs entangled in legal actions. The project has documented attacks on civil society and HRDs and published the findings of this activity in three [reports covering the years 2021–2023](#). The project has produced a significant amount of [communication materials](#), specific guides for HRDs in emergency situations, and legal documents designed to improve the regulatory framework.

On 28 May 2024, the LRCM [held a training session](#) for journalists about how to approach topics related to justice, the fight against corruption, and human rights in a professional way. This training covered various topics, including an introduction to the national legal system, key aspects of the judiciary and anticorruption bodies, the judicial process, and current justice reforms. The training agenda included sessions focused on case studies and the practical application of their findings with the aim of developing skills necessary for the professional information of the public about legal events and topics.

On 30 May 2024, within plenary session, the Parliament [voted](#) on the draft decision on the appointment of a new member to the Prosecutor Vetting Commission. Virginia Moraru, former chief inspector at the National Anticorruption Center's General Directorate for Corruption Prevention, was appointed member and vice-chairperson of the Prosecutor Vetting Commission, filling the position previously held by Tatiana Răducanu, who [had resigned](#) on 15 May 2024. Virginia Moraru's candidacy was accepted by [the vote of 63 MPs](#).

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