

## NEWSLETTER

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IN BRIEF

## CREATION OF THE ANTICORRUPTION JUDICIARY – AGAIN ON THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

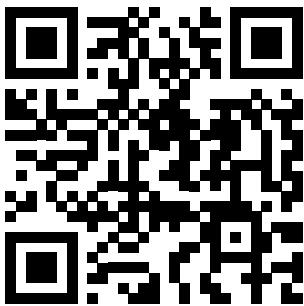
On 27 November 2024, the Legal Commission for appointments and immunities held [public consultations](#) on a draft amendment to the [draft law](#) on the formation of the anticorruption judicial system, which is to deal with cases of “high-level corruption”. The draft was registered in June 2023 and voted in its first reading in November 2023. The final vote, planned for December 2023, was postponed, and adoption was put on hold for over a year. The process was relaunched following the [Supreme Security Council meeting](#) on 11 November 2024, which recommended urgently adjusting the legal framework to ensure an effective fight against corruption, especially political corruption, considering the significant challenges faced in the 2024 referendum and presidential elections.

The initial draft proposed a three-tiered anticorruption system: the Anticorruption Court with 15 judges, the Anticorruption Board of the Chişinău Court of Appeals with six judges and the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) as the last instance. The Venice Commission [endorsed](#) the draft in October 2023 and mainly recommended intensifying the external evaluation of judges and assigning corruption cases to judges who have been successfully vetted. It also proposed eliminating the pre-selection of candidates by an ad-hoc commission and assigning the selection of anticorruption judges exclusively to the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) (more in [Newsletter No. 62](#)).

The draft amendment of November 2024 includes some of the Venice Commission's recommendations but conceptually changes the approach initially proposed. The main notable novelty concerns the dropping of establishing a specialised substantive court and creating specialised anticorruption boards within the Chişinău District Court and the Chişinău Court of Appeals, with 15 and six anticorruption judges, respectively. The SCJ will not be part of the specialised system but will settle on appeal the cases assigned to the boards. The possibility for non-judge career lawyers to apply for the position of anticorruption judge has also been excluded, with a minimum of three years of experience as a judge required. The pre-selection procedure carried out by the ad-hoc commission has been abolished, and the selection will be carried out exclusively by the SCM, which will assess both professional competence



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Parliament changes course: Specialised Anticorruption Boards within the Chişinău District Court and Chişinău Court of Appeals instead of an anticorruption court.

and ethical and financial integrity in line with [the Law on the Evaluation of Judges and Prosecutors](#). At the same time, benefits such as increased salaries for judges and ancillary staff, state protection, a service housing or rent allowance, if necessary, are also foreseen.

The LRCM formulated [a legal opinion](#) on the draft, recommending that passing the external evaluation mechanism be made a precondition of eligibility for judges of specialised anticorruption boards. The LRCM also proposed organising interviews for anticorruption judges following the procedure laid down in the [SCM Regulation for the selection of SCJ judges](#).

## LATEST GRECO REPORT ON MOLDOVA: NOTABLE PROGRESS, BUT FURTHER EFFORTS NEEDED

On 28 November 2024, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) published [its third interim compliance report](#) on the Republic of Moldova. The report examines progress in implementing the 18 recommendations made in the [2016 assessment report](#), which focused on preventing corruption among members of parliament, judges, and prosecutors.

GRECO found that the Republic of Moldova has satisfactorily implemented 72% of the recommendations (13 out of 18) and partially implemented 22.2% (4 out of 18). Regarding the [conduct and ethics of MPs](#), GRECO expects the project to be strengthened and finally adopted.

On ensuring transparency, the report recognises that although progress has been made in timely publishing draft laws, the transparency of the decision-making process at the parliamentary level remains weak. Among the main areas for improvement are the frequent use of the urgency procedure for adopting draft laws and the failure to respect the legal deadlines for consulting citizens, especially in the case of legislative initiatives by MPs. The recommendation of establishing rules for MPs in their relations with third parties trying to influence the legislative process (lobbying) still needs to be implemented.

All GRECO recommendations for judges have been implemented, and the external evaluation process (pre-vetting and vetting) has produced positive results. A notable result is that the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) is fully functioning, adopting reasoned decisions on judges' appointment, transfer and career (more in [Newsletter No. 68](#)). To ensure the integrity and independence of judges, GRECO underlines the importance of adequate salaries and encourages the authorities to continue efforts in this respect. GRECO also welcomed measures taken to address the backlog of cases, including adopting the Law on the Revision of the Judicial Map and implementing the decision to specialise the judges of the Chişinău District Court in examining corruption and related cases.

As regards prosecutors, an autonomous and specialised Inspectorate of Prosecutors has been established, and its capacity needs to be strengthened.

GRECO welcomed the measures taken to prevent corruption in the judiciary, underlining that the external evaluation process generates positive results.

Decisions in disciplinary cases appear to be reasoned, and disciplinary misconduct is more clearly defined. However, there has been no progress on the composition of the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP), which implies that the Minister of Justice and the President of the SCM are no longer ex officio members. The Minister of Justice only [ceases to be a member](#) of the SCP on 1 January 2026.

Notable advances include [introducing integrity checks](#) for candidates for the positions of judge and prosecutor at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) admission. Candidates are subject to integrity checks, and non-compliance with this criterion disqualifies them from the competition. In addition, NIJ auditors are required to submit declarations of assets to the National Integrity Authority (NIA). GRECO also underlines the importance of strengthening NIA's capacity to ensure effective verifications of assets and personal interests, conflicts of interest and incompatibilities. NIA is understaffed and has operated without an institutional strategy since its establishment. Further, national authorities must inform GRECO of progress made in implementing recommendations that remain outstanding or partially implemented.

## A NEW APPEAL IRREVOCABLY SETTLED BY THE SCJ SETS A PRECEDENT IN EXTRAORDINARY EVALUATION

In November, the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) published its [reasoned judgment](#) on another appeal settled under the [Law on the External Evaluation of Supreme Court Judges](#). The case concerns an appeal lodged by a lawyer against his failing the external evaluation. The Vetting Commission (the Commission) identified a more than one million MDL discrepancy between the candidate's income and expenses during the assessed period.

The applicant argued before the SCJ that the Commission and the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) had wrongly assessed the discrepancy between the family's income and expenses and his parents' financial capacity.

The SCJ rejected the candidate's appeal and devised a detailed reasoning on several principled issues. The SCJ explained that the SCJ does not personally make a separate assessment but only verifies the correctness of the assessment report based on the materials submitted by the Commission and the applicant. In this regard, the SCJ explained that the burden of proving that the doubts on financial integrity are not well-founded rests with the applicant after the Commission has established the doubts. The principle of the Administrative Code, according to which any doubt should be interpreted in favour of the applicant, does not apply to the external evaluation of judges. The SCJ reiterated that, in case of contradiction between the provisions of Law No. 65 and those of the Administrative Code, the special law takes precedence over the latter.

The SCJ also noted that judicial review of acts issued in the framework of the external evaluation is limited to the examination of factual circumstances, which

SCJ: Receiving donations from parents who do not have sufficient sources to make such donations may be questionable and may lead to failing the assessment if there are serious doubts about their financial capacity.

could change the result of the evaluation, and serious procedural errors of the Commission, which affect the fairness of the procedure. In this regard, the SCJ emphasised that even if the subject's arguments regarding the donations obtained would have been credible and would have been accepted, the applicant could not justify the wealth for two more years (2019 and 2021). The negative balance for these two years is more than 435,000 MDL, exceeding 20 national average gross salaries in 2023.

The SCJ rejected the applicant's argument regarding the incorrect assessment of the margin of error between his consumption expenditure and the population consumption expenditure index (PCE), following the National Bureau of Statistics data. The SCJ admitted that a margin of error of 5% could be accepted for these calculations. Still, given the considerable difference between the plaintiff's negative balance of more than one million MDL and the value of 20 national average gross salaries, the possible error could not change the assessment result.

## THE DIGEST OF THE HEARINGS OF CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR SCP BOARD MEMBERSHIP

In November 2024, the Commission for the Evaluation of Prosecutors (the Commission) finalised the evaluation process of several candidates for the positions of members in boards subordinated to the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP). Following the evaluation of candidates for the position of member of the Board for the Selection and Evaluation of Prosecutors, the acting chief prosecutor of a section of the General Prosecutor's Office, [Nicolae Zanevici](#), and lawyer [Sergiu Beşliu](#) passed the evaluation. On the other hand, prosecutors [Octavian Lazarev](#), from the Chişinău Municipal Prosecutor's Office, and [Dumitru Triboi](#), from the Călăraşi District Prosecutor's Office, did not meet the criteria of ethical and financial integrity. As for the candidates for the position of member of the Disciplinary and Ethics Board, only prosecutor [Alexandru Lozan](#), from the General Prosecutor's Office, passed the evaluation, while [Ion Bunica](#), from the Chişinău Municipal Prosecutor's Office, did not meet the criteria of ethical and financial integrity, thus did not pass the evaluation (more details about the hearings in the LRCM Newsletters [no. 72](#) and [74](#)).

At the hearings held in November 2024, the Commission assessed [Ina Fencovschi](#), Chief Prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office of the Ocniţa District and candidate for the position of member of the Board for the Selection and Evaluation of Prosecutors under the SCP. The candidate was asked about the discrepancies between the purchase price and the price indicated in the annual declarations of wealth and personal interests for two cars purchased by her husband, as well as about the undervaluation of the purchase price for one of them. She was also asked for clarifications on the acquisition of several real estate properties in 2016 at prices significantly below market and cadastral values. At the same time, imbalances between income and expenditure for 2015 were reported, as well as the non-declaration or under-declaration of real estate owned between 2012 and 2022.

Discrepancies between income and expenses, differences between purchase and declared prices for goods, and failure to declare or under-declaring property, donations and assets used – are among the main shortcomings identified when assessing candidates for the SCP board positions.

In November and before 2 December 2024, the Commission also audited candidates running for membership in the SCP's Disciplinary and Ethics Board.

Thus, [Iancu Zaporojan](#), Chief Prosecutor of the Nisporeni District Prosecutor's Office, was questioned about obtaining a construction plot in the city of Drochia free of charge in 2011 without finalising the attribution process, as well as about failing to declare a flat under construction contracted in December 2019, which was to be paid in three instalments, but was omitted from the annual declarations for the period 2019-2023. Although, according to the Commission, the candidate had contracted several loans during that period, which would represent the price of the apartment mentioned in the contract, with the last instalment being paid in July 2024, the candidate specified that the deed of sale had not yet been concluded. In addition, the Commission analysed the circumstances in which he obtained social housing in the town of Nisporeni, although the candidate owned at least 11 properties, which goes against the eligibility criteria for granting such property. The Commission also found significant inconsistencies in the schedule of monthly payments for the apartment and utilities. The candidate was also questioned about the apartment purchased by mortgage by his mother in the city of Nisporeni in October 2021, intended for the candidate, as well as the use of his mother's bank account, which was regularly replenished and used for payments both before and after her death.

[Corneliu Popescu](#), a prosecutor at the Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organised Crime and Special Cases (PCCOCS), was asked about the purchase of two apartments and a car from his brother in 2017, which he had been using since 2014 based on a loan agreement. The candidate was also asked about issues related to his ethical integrity, particularly those related to the case of [Eșanu v. Republic of Moldova](#), in which he was asked to explain the reasons, which allegedly justify his repeated requests to extend the pre-trial detention of a businessman for seven months. In addition, the candidate was asked about the sanction imposed by the SCP in 2019, in the form of a severe reprimand, for allegedly failing to properly fulfil his duties, which was subsequently challenged by the candidate in Court and later declared unfounded. The last set of questions concerned a disciplinary proceeding in which the candidate was sanctioned for the unauthorised transmission of personal data in 2014 when he provided a lawyer with the legal file of an LLC, which was later submitted in a case pending before the Court of Appeal.

[Ion Tețcu](#), a prosecutor at the Prosecutor's Office of the Călărași district, was questioned about his right to housing established by a 2009 court judgment, which has not been enforced so far, for which he has applied with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). He was asked to clarify the right of usufruct over a vehicle registered in his sister's name between 2015 and 2022 and about his failure to declare donations and international transfers amounting to 11,450 EUR and 2,090 USD. The applicant was also asked about the negative gap of 143,274 MDL between income and expenses in 2021 and his involvement in a domestic violence case, subsequently examined by the ECtHR in the case of [Eremia v. Republic of Moldova](#). This is not the first assessment the candidate has been subjected to.

Previously, he was assessed by the Vetting Commission as a candidate running for the position of judge at the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ). On 14 May 2024, the Commission decided that he did not meet the financial and ethical integrity criteria, which is why he did not pass the assessment.

## WHAT DOES THE NEW CONCEPT FOR REORGANISING AND OPTIMISING THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SYSTEM PROVIDE?

On 28 November 2024, at the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) meeting, Prosecutor General Ion Munteanu presented the [Concept of Reorganisation and Optimisation of the Prosecutor's Office System](#) (Concept). Among the objectives mentioned in the Concept are the development of the functional capacities of the Prosecutor's Office, the standardisation of practice and workload, the improvement of the quality of the administration of justice, the increase of institutional performance, the creation of the possibility of specialisation of prosecutors within the territorial prosecutor's offices and the alignment of the prosecutor's office system with [the judicial map](#).

To strengthen the subdivisions of the Prosecutor General's Office (PG) responsible for anticorruption, the Prosecutor General proposed the creation of the Anticorruption and Money Laundering Section, which will contribute to the unified implementation by the PG's Office of the state policy in the field of combating corruption and money laundering, as well as other crimes assimilated or related to them. In addition, the Concept establishes two other sections within the PG's Office: the Section for Combating Environmental Crimes and the Section for Prosecution before the Supreme Court of Justice.

The Concept foresees the establishment of district prosecutor's offices (prosecutor's offices at the level of the Court of Appeals) and a clear definition of their role, place, and tasks. These units' prosecutors will mainly represent the state prosecution in all criminal cases pending before the cassation and appellate courts, including cases referred by specialised prosecutor's offices. It will be necessary to regulate a salary increment to motivate specialised prosecutors.

To align the map of the prosecutors' office with the judicial map, the number of territorial prosecutors' offices will be reduced from 36 to 14 subdivisions: Chişinău Prosecutors' Office, Bălţi Prosecutors' Office, Edineţ Prosecutors' Office, Cahul Prosecutors' Office, Străşeni Prosecutors' Office, Anenii Noi Prosecutors' Office, Căuşeni Prosecutors' Office, Cimişlia Prosecutors' Office, Criuleni Prosecutors' Office, Drochia Prosecutors' Office, Hânceşti Prosecutors' Office, Orhei Prosecutors' Office, Soroca Prosecutors' Office, and Ungheni Prosecutors' Office. Prosecutors from the territorial prosecutors' offices can specialise in different areas, including the fight against corruption, economic crimes, and environmental crimes.

Also, on 28 November 2024, the SCP issued [written consent](#) to approve the new structure of the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO) following the APO's

The Concept envisages aligning the Prosecutors' Office map with the judicial map, specialising prosecutors within territorial prosecutors' offices, establishing district prosecutors' offices, and creating new departments within the Prosecutor General's Office.

[request](#) on October 4. As a result of the changes to the APO structure, the North (based in Bălți municipality) and South (based in Cahul municipality) offices are to be liquidated, with two positions of deputy chiefs to the chief prosecutor of the APO being removed. Similarly, the number of anticorruption prosecutors will be reduced from 59 to 54. [According to the APO](#), this restructuring will enhance the institution's capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption at the highest levels of the state and private sector, transforming the APO into an institution like the National Anticorruption Directorate (NAD) in Romania.

On 2 December 2024, the SCP [approved](#) the Concept after considering the Prosecutor General's submission.

## **PRE-VETTING COMMISSION HEARINGS DIGEST: ANOTHER REPEATED ASSESSMENT COMPLETED, AND THE SCJ ISSUES A FINAL DECISION ON AN APPEAL**

On 8 November 2024, the Pre-Vetting Commission (the Commission) announced the completion of the repeated assessment of judge Victor Sandu, a candidate running for Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) membership, representing judges. The repeated evaluation occurred after the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) [upheld](#) his appeal on 1 August 2023 and ordered the re-evaluation. The judge [was heard repeatedly](#) in open court on 15 July 2024 (more in [Newsletter No. 71](#)). The decision to fail the repeated assessment was sent to the candidate and the SCJ. Sandu refused to consent to the decision being published.

On [25 November 2024](#), the SCJ rejected the appeal of Nicolae Şova, a candidate running for the SCM membership. In the repeated assessment, the Commission identified several doubts of financial integrity, namely: (i) procurement of the apartment at a preferential price in the Chişinău Municipality; (ii) the purchase of the candidate's apartment by her daughter together with her husband; (iii) the underestimation of the value of two immovable assets and the non-payment of capital gains tax in the manner required by law.

The complainant stated that the Commission had found that the candidate had tendentiously and abusively concealed the information regarding the purchase of the apartment at a preferential price in Chişinău Municipality. The information referred to his wife's ownership of a donated apartment, where the candidate lived with his family, and that he had a house under construction. The candidate also claims that his assessment was biased.

Concerning the purchase of the apartment by the family of the applicant's daughter and the transactions involving approximately 25,000 EUR, the applicant stated before the Court that the source of the funds for the purchase of the apartment by the applicant's daughter and her husband were subsequently disclosed. The applicant also affirmed that the Commission had as well obtained the written

SCJ: “[...] it is imperative that persons who are to accede to self-administrative bodies must have an immaculate reputation so that there is no doubt about them. Otherwise, the decisions taken by this body will not be credible and will not be able to convince the public of its righteousness”.

answer as to the origin of the funds intended for the apartment purchase from the applicant by the daughter of judge Şova and her husband. The applicant claims that, although the documents and information received clarified the situation, the Commission ignored this evidence and formally maintained serious doubts.

As regards the third doubt – underestimation of the value of two immovable assets and failure to pay capital gains tax as required by law – the applicant stated that the independent valuation reports were missing, and that the Commission’s decision was not supported by relevant evidence, such as the information provided by the real estate exchange “LARA”. The Commission also applied the legal provisions in a discretionary manner.

The SCJ found that Şova did not present sufficient evidence to support the allegations of differential treatment of similar cases or procedural irregularities, which could have influenced the outcome. It also upheld the Commission’s assessment of financial discrepancies related to real estate transactions and loans, noting that Şova’s evidence was incomplete and inconsistent, reinforcing doubts about his integrity.

The entire SCJ panel, in its decision, found that the Commission members carried out their duties with the utmost diligence. Where certain uncertainties were found (caused by inconsistencies between the statements submitted by the applicant himself to the relevant authorities), the Commission allowed the assessed candidate to clarify them by submitting additional data and information.

The SCJ did not find circumstances that could have led to the positive outcome of the candidate’s assessment. The decision is irrevocable.

## VETTING COMMISSION: PRE-VETTING ASSESSMENT AND REPORTS ON THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR SCJ JUDGESHIP FINALISED

In November 2024, the Vetting Commission (the Commission) finalised the assessment of the last candidate running for the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) membership – [Ştefan Starciuc](#), judge at the Comrat Court of Appeals. The Commission found that he did not meet the ethical and financial integrity criteria and, therefore, did not pass the evaluation. Of the six candidates assessed, only two passed, while four did not meet the criteria of ethical and financial integrity.

On 13 November 2024, the Commission formally [announced](#) the conclusion of the evaluation pertaining to [Law No. 26/2022](#), which regulates the pre-vetting process in continuation of the mandate of the Pre-Vetting Commission. Thus, out of the 31 candidates for membership in the SCM and its boards, 19 passed the assessment, five withdrew or were withdrawn by the SCM, and seven did not pass the assessment.

The Commission also completed the evaluation of two candidates for the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) judgeship on 21-28 November 2024, i.e., [Grigore](#)



The Vetting Commission has evaluated all candidates under the Pre-Vetting Law. Of the 31 candidates, 19 passed the evaluation, five withdrew or were withdrawn by the SCM, and seven did not pass. As of 20 November 2024, the Commission had completed 50 assessments, adopting 26 decisions and approving 24 reports, which were forwarded to the SCM. Of the 26 decisions on candidates to the SCM and its boards, 19 were favourable and seven unfavourable. The 24 reports submitted to the SCM included 13 candidates passing and 11 failing the evaluation.

[Manoli](#), judge at the Chişinău District Court, and [Vladimir Adam](#), prosecutor at the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office, did not meet the criteria of ethical and financial integrity and did not pass the evaluation (details on the candidates' hearings in the [Newsletter No. 73](#)). Following the failure of Mariana Ursachi (Pitic), a judge at the SCJ, to pass the evaluation, the SCM approved the Commission's report on 2 December 2024, with eight votes in favour, failing her and ordering her dismissal (more in [Newsletter No. 74](#), [No. 73](#) and [No. 70](#)). As a result, the judge was disqualified from holding the office for seven years and deprived of the one-off dismissal allowance.

In November 2024, the Commission also [announced](#) the start of the external evaluation of judges of the Bălţi, Cahul and Comrat Courts of Appeal, notifying 23 judges of completing the Declaration of assets and personal interests for the last five years. According to the Commission, [only eight judges](#) returned the completed forms, three being from the Bălţi Court of Appeals, three from the Comrat Court of Appeals and two from the Cahul Court of Appeals.

The Commission also presented a report on its activity, revealing that by 20 November 2024, it [had completed](#) the evaluation of 50 candidates, adopting 26 decisions and sending 24 evaluation reports proposing to the SCM the passing or failing of candidates. According to the Commission, the most common reasons for failing the evaluation were financial discrepancies, i.e., significant differences between the declared income and wealth and the actual expenses. In most cases, the differences exceeded the legally admissible limits, and in the absence of justification of the financial sources, candidates did not pass the assessment. In terms of ethical integrity, in some cases, breaches of the rules of ethics and professional conduct were found, including conflicts of interest incompatible with the judge's office.

## I IN BRIEF

On **7 November 2024**, the Vetting Commission (Commission) announced the initiation of the evaluation of all Bălţi, Cahul and Comrat Courts of Appeal (CA) judges. The first documents on the initiation of the evaluation of 15 judges from the Bălţi CA, four from the Cahul CA and four from the Comrat CA have been received. The notified judges are asked to fill in and submit to the Commission the Declaration of assets and personal interests for the last five years, the Declaration on close persons in the judiciary, prosecution, and public administration, as well as the Ethics Questionnaire, which is mandatory. CA judges have 20 days to submit the completed forms, starting from the date of notification. The Commission has also notified three candidates for the position of judge at the Supreme Court of Justice, proposed by the Superior Council of Magistracy for evaluation. They are Dumitru Calendari (prosecutor at the Cahul Prosecutor's Office), Alexandru Negru (judge at the Chişinău District Court, Buiucani headquarters) and Iurie Chirica (lawyer). They have 10 days to complete and submit the five-year Declaration and the Ethics Questionnaire without consequences related to dismissal from office in case they fail to submit the documents.

On **7 November 2024**, the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) [interviewed](#) the three candidates for the position of Chief Prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organised Crime and Special Cases (PCCOCS). Victor Furtuna scored the highest score (75.56 points) and was proposed to the Prosecutor General for appointment to the position. He began his career in 2017 at the Prosecutors' Office of the Buiucani headquarters of the Chişinău District Court; then, in April 2019, he was appointed prosecutor at the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office, and since January 2023, he has held the position of interim head of the PCCOCS. Victor Furtuna is the prosecutor who led the detention of former Prosecutor General Alexandr Stoianoglo and examined his own complaint on Stoianoglo's alleged illegal actions.

On [12-13 November 2024](#), the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) held a competition to fill vacancies for judges at the Bălţi Court of Appeals and the Chişinău Court of Appeals. The SCM announced the competition winners on [13 November 2024](#), close of business. The winning candidates for the judge position at the Bălţi Court of Appeals were Parii Ivan and Grosu Stanislav. At the Chişinău Court of Appeals, the following candidates were declared winners: Caşcaval Andrei, Bagrin Lucia, Budeci Vitalie, Roşca Constantin, Dimitriu Sergiu, Pîslariuc Vitalie, Badan-Melnic Eleonora, Manoli Grigore, Pascari Roman, Stratulat Gheorghe. At the same time, the SCM proposed to the President the appointment of candidates Pîslariuc Vitalie, Bagrin Lucia and Grosu Stanislav as judges of the Courts of Appeal of Chişinău and Bălţi, given their passing the external evaluation. In the case of judge Manoli, given the fact that he is also a candidate for the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ), on [21 November 2024](#), the Commission announced that the latter did not pass the external evaluation. On 10 December 2024, the SCM decided to suspend consideration of the report on judge Manoli until the SCJ issues a decision on a different case.

On [12 November 2024](#), the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) announced a competition to fill five vacancies of judge at the Supreme Court of Justice by temporary transfer. Applications for the competition are to be submitted to the SCM by 28 November 2024, inclusive.

On [12 November 2024](#), the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) announced the competition to elect a judge for SCM membership from the judges of the Courts of Appeal. The announcement was published on the SCM's website, and applications to participate in the competition were to be submitted by 30 December 2024.

On **19 November 2024**, the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) [ordered](#) the Chişinău Court of Appeals to retry the case of former Security and Intelligence Service Director, Vasile Botnari, convicted in 2020 for abuse of office in [the expulsion of Turkish citizens](#). The SCJ upheld the legality of restoring the victim status to Galina Tufekci, the wife of one of the plaintiffs, but criticised the Court for not examining her request to toughen Botnari's sentence. The retrial will examine whether the fine, as the principal penalty, is sufficient and proportionate to the seriousness of the crime.

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